

The Relationship of Infant Baptism to Popery

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From *Infant Baptism: Part and Pillar of Popery*, 1851

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My first position is, that infant baptism is a part and pillar of Popery; and that by means of it Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations.

The phrase, infant baptism, is employed here and throughout this discussion, in accordance with common usage, although properly speaking, the practice to which it is applied, should be designated infant sprinkling.

That unwritten traditions are regarded by Papists, as of equal authority in faith and practice with the Holy Scriptures, none can doubt who are at all conversant with their writings. The Council of Trent asserts, that "traditions respecting both faith and manners, orally delivered, and successively preserved in the Catholic Church, are to be received with equal affection of piety and reverence, as the Books of the Old and New Testaments." (Session IV. *Decreta de Canone Scripturæ*)

Popish writers even prefer tradition to Scripture. Thus Bellarmine says, "The Scriptures, without tradition, are neither simply necessary nor sufficient; but unwritten traditions are necessary. Tradition alone is sufficient; but the Scriptures alone are not sufficient." (*De Verbo Dei*, c. IV. Sect. 1, 6)

Another of their writers affirms, that

"the authority of ecclesiastical traditions is more fit than the Scriptures, to ascertain anything doubtful, even that which may be made out from Scripture since ecclesiastical traditions and the common opinion of the church are clearer, and more open and truly inflexible; while, on the contrary, the Scriptures have frequently much obscurity in them, and may be drawn hither and thither, like a nose of wax, and, as a leaden rule, may be applied to every impious opinion." (Pighius, *Apud Rivet. Cathol. Orthodox*, Tract I. Quest. 6. p. 99)

Bailey, the Jesuit, thus expresses himself,

"I will go farther and say, that we, have as much need of tradition as of Scripture; yea, more, because the Scripture ministers to us only the dead and mute letter, but tradition, by means of the ministry of the church, gives us the true sense, which is not had distinctly in the Scripture. In tradition, therefore, consists the Word of God rather than in the written letter alone. It is sufficient for a good Catholic, if he understands it is tradition; nor need he inquire after anything else."(*Apud Rivet*, p. 142)

By tradition, these Popish authorities mean, not tradition handed down in the Scripture, but without it, and distinct from it; unwritten tradition, apostolical tradition, so called tradition, not delivered by the Apostles in their writings, but, as it is pretended, communicated by word of mouth to their successors, or to the churches. That we may not mistake them, Andradius tells us, that "of necessity, those traditions also must be believed, which can be proved by no testimony of Scripture."

And Petrus a Soto still more plainly and openly affirms, "It is a rule infallible and Catholic, that whatsoever things the Church of Rome believes, holds, and keeps, which are not delivered in the Scriptures, the same came by tradition from the Apostles. Also, all such observances and ceremonies, whose beginning, author, and origin are not known, or cannot be found, were, beyond doubt, delivered by the Apostles." This is the sense which Romanists attach to apostolical tradition. (See the *Abstract of the History of Popery*. Part II. pp. 252, 253)

Now, upon this assumed apostolical and ecclesiastical tradition, all the essential peculiarities of Popery are based. This is the prolific fountain from which they all spring. This is the standard to which they are all brought, and by which they are all confirmed. And what is there, be it ever so absurd or impious that may not be proved by it, if once it be admitted as an authoritative rule? It is upon this ground, that Papists assert and maintain the observation of Easter and Lent; the adoration of images and relics, the worship of the virgin Mary, the sign of the cross, the invocation of saints, the sacrifice of the mass, transubstantiation, the withholding of the cup from the laity, holy water, extreme unction, prayers for the dead, auricular confession, the sale of pardons, purgatory, pilgrimages, monastic vows, and other superstitious opinions and practices, more numerous than we have space to mention.

Among pretended apostolical traditions, infant baptism is to be reckoned, and here lies the chief support to which its advocates appeal. Origen, who lived in the former part of the third century, and who was the first ancient writer that distinctly approved of infant baptism, represents it as a tradition from the Apostles. The words ascribed to him are these: "For this"—that is, for original sin—"the church has received a tradition from the Apostles, even to give baptism to infants."(Origen, Comment in *Epistolam ad Romanos*. VI. Tom. II. p. 543)

There is, however, little reason to regard the passage as genuine. A large portion of the works of Origen has perished; and those that still exist, have, for the most part, come down to us, not in the original Greek, but in a Latin translation by Rufinus, a writer of the fourth century, by whom they are known to have been extensively interpolated. So clearly has this been ascertained; that no judicious critic will place confidence in any writing of Origen, which is to be found only in the translation of Rufinus.

Augustine, who was a warm advocate for infant baptism, also, defends it as a custom of the church not to be despised, and as an apostolical tradition generally received.¹ But as he was contemporary with Rufinus, he probably took the hint of infant baptism being an apostolical tradition from the Latin translation of Origen made by the latter since no other ecclesiastical writer previously speaks of it in this manner. The uncertainty of any apostolical tradition in favor of infant baptism seems to be conceded by Jeremy Taylor, when he says,

"Now a tradition apostolical, if it be not consigned with a fuller testimony than of one person, whom all after ages have condemned of many errors, will obtain so little reputation amongst those who know that things have upon greater authority pretended to derive from the Apostles and yet falsely, that it will be a great argument that he is credulous and weak that shall be determined by so weak probation in matters of so great concernment." (*Liberty of Prophesying Works*, Vol. V. p. 552. Eden's ed. London, 1849)

Yet it is by "a probation" thus "weak," that many are "determined" in the matter of infant baptism, for not only do Popish writers, as Bellarmine and others, make it an unwritten, apostolical tradition, but even some Protestant Pedobaptists show

a good will to place it among the unwritten sayings of Christ, or of his Apostles, and satisfy themselves with a supposition so gratuitous.

Thus Mr. Fuller, a late Pedobaptist writer, says, "We do freely confess that there is neither express precept nor precedent in the New Testament for the baptizing of infants, yet, as St. John tells us, that Jesus did many things which were not written, (John 21:25) appears to the contrary, infant baptism may have been one of them." (*Infant's Advocate*, p. 71, 160) In like manner, Mr. Walker argues,

"It does not follow that our Saviour gave no precept for the baptizing of infants, because no such precept is particularly expressed in Scripture, for our Saviour spoke many things to His disciples concerning the kingdom of God, both before His passion, and after His crucifixion, which are not written in the Scriptures; and who can say, but that among those many unwritten sayings of His, there might be an express precept for infant baptism?" (*Modest Plea*, p. 268)

And Mr. Leigh, one of the disputants in the Portsmouth Discussion, suggests, that "although infant baptism is not to be found in the writings of the Apostle Paul extant in the Scriptures, yet it might be in some writings of his which are lost, and not now extant." (*Narrative of the Portsmouth Disputation*, pp. 16-18) All this is plainly giving up infant baptism as contained in the Sacred Writings, and placing it upon unwritten, apostolical tradition, and that, too, conjectural and uncertain.

Now, infant baptism, with all the ceremonies attending it, for which also apostolical tradition is pretended, makes a very considerable figure in Popish pageantry. Romanists administer the rite with circumstances of great pomp and show; such as the consecration of the water; the presence of sponsors, who answer the interrogatories, and make the renunciation, in the name of the child, exorcisms, exsuffiations, crossings, the use of salt, spittle, and oil. Before the baptism, the water is consecrated with much solemn parade.

First, the priest makes an exorcism, breathing three times into the water in the figure of a cross, and saying, "I adjure thee, O creature of water!" Then he divides the water after the manner of a cross, and makes three or four crossings. Next, he takes a horn of oil, and pours it three times upon the water in the form of a cross, and makes a prayer, that the font may be sanctified, and the Eternal Trinity be present, saying, "Descend from heaven, and sanctify this water, and give grace and virtue, that he who is baptized according to the command of Thy Christ, may be crucified, and die, and be buried, and rise again, with Him."

The sponsors, or sureties, then recite on behalf of the child, the creed and the Lord's Prayer, renounce the devil and all his works, and answer the questions put in the name of the child. The form of interrogation and reply according to the Roman ritual, is this, "The name of the infant being called, the presbyter must say, Dost thou renounce Satan? Answer, I do renounce. And all his works? Answer, I do renounce. And all his pomps? Answer, I do renounce." Three times these questions are put, and three times the sureties answer. The interrogations are sometimes made by a priest, sometimes by a presbyter, and sometimes by an exorcist. The following question is also added, "Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?" To which the sponsors reply, "I do believe."

Previous to being baptized, the infant is breathed upon, and exorcised, that the wicked spirit may be driven from it, and that it may be delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the kingdom of Christ. The following is the formula for this part of the service prescribed by the Papal code. "Let him—the minister, priest, deacon, or exorcist—blow into the face of the person to be baptized, three times, saying, Go out, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." That of Gregory is slightly different. "I exorcise thee, O unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou go out and depart from this servant of God."

After the infant has been exorcised and blessed, salt is put into its mouth, as a token of its being seasoned with the salt of wisdom, and as an intimation that "by the doctrines of faith, and by the gift of grace, he shall be preserved from the corruption of sin, experience a relish for good works, and be nurtured with the food of divine knowledge." The priest first blesses the salt after this manner, "I exorcise thee, O creature of salt." And then, having blessed it, he puts it into the mouth of the infant, saying, "Receive the salt of wisdom unto life everlasting."

The nostrils and ears of infants at their baptism are also touched with spittle by the priest to indicate that their senses are opened to receive the savor of the knowledge of God, and to hear his commands ; and that "as sight was given to the blind man mentioned in the Gospel, whom the Lord, having spread clay on his eyes, commanded to wash them in the waters of Siloam, so by the efficacy of holy baptism, a light is let in on the mind which enables it to discern heavenly truth."

Formerly spittle was put upon the eyes and the tongue, but that part of the ceremony seems now to be laid aside. And yet no farther back than the birth of King James I, it appears to have been in use since, at his baptism, his mother sent word to Hamilton, archbishop of St. Andrews, who was to officiate on the occasion, to forbear the use of spittle, saying, "She would not have a pocky priest to spit in her child's mouth." (*Abstract of the History of Popery*, part I, p. 114) The prelate, it was well known, had led so licentious a life, as to have become diseased through his debaucheries.

In queen Mary's reign, the practice seems to have been common, for when the martyr, Robert Smith, was asked by Bonner, in what particulars Papists dissented from the Word of God in the administration of baptism, he answered, "First, in hallowing your water; in conjuring the same; in baptizing children with anointing and spitting in their mouths, mingled with salt and with many other lewd ceremonies, not one point of which is able to be proved in God's order." (*Fox's Acts and Monuments*, folio, vol. III, p. 400) All of which he calls "a mingle-mangle," and "a shameful blasphemy against Christ."

Chrism is another ceremony used both before and after baptism. The parts anointed, are the breast, shoulders, and head; the breast, that no remains of the latent enemy may reside in the person baptized; the shoulders, that he may be fortified and strengthened to do good works to the glory of God ; and the head, to denote, " that from the moment of his baptism, he is united as a member to Christ, his Head, and engrafted on his body; and that he is, therefore, called a Christian from Christ, as Christ is so called from Chrism."

This anointing is made in the form of a cross. On applying it to the shoulders, the priest says, "Flee, thou unclean spirit, give honor to the living and true God." On applying it to the breast, he says, "Go out, thou unclean spirit, give place to the Holy Ghost." And when he applies it to the head, he says to the candidate, "I anoint thee with the oil of salvation, that thou mayest have life everlasting."

The next ceremony is that of signing the infant with the sign of the cross. This is made in several parts of the body, especially the forehead, eyes, and ears, to declare, that "by the mystery of baptism, the senses of the person baptized are opened and strengthened, to enable him to receive God, and to understand and observe his commandments" and to signify that he is now consecrated by the cross to the service of Christ, and to a manful resistance against Satan. In ancient times, honey and milk, or wine and milk, were given after baptism, though the practice has now fallen into disuse. Infants were also admitted to the Lord's Supper. This custom continued for several centuries in the Latin Church, and is still preserved in the Greek Church.

Should the reader require proof of the use of these various observances, he may consult an able treatise *On the Ancient Rites and Ceremonies of Baptism*, by Joseph Vicecomes, a learned Papist, as he is denominated by Dr. Wall, where he will find them largely treated, and the authorities for them fully cited. These ceremonies are also fully rehearsed and condemned by the ancient Waldenses, in a tract on Antichrist, supposed to have been written early in the twelfth century.

It may, perhaps, be asked, to what purpose is this account of the ceremonies observed by Papists in the administration of baptism to infants, since they are not used by Protestant Pedobaptists? I answer, it is to show what a prominent place infant baptism, with the ostentatious ritual attending it, holds in the system Popery; and that, being thus interwoven with its very structure, and contributing largely to its pomp and parade, it may with propriety be called a part of it.

Besides, although the ceremonies above described are not all practiced now by any class of Protestant Pedobaptists, yet several of them are still retained by many who call themselves Protestants. Of this kind, are sponsors, the interrogations made to them, and the answers given in the name of infants, the renunciation of the devil and all his works ; and signing with the sign of the cross. And since these and the others all claim apostolical authority, and most of them, if not all, have as good and as early a pretension to it as infant baptism itself; those, who admit that on this footing, ought to admit these, its adjuncts, also. On this subject the reader is referred to a treatise by me, entitled, *The Argument from Apostolical Tradition in Favor of Infant Baptism Considered*.

Most of the ceremonies which have been mentioned are noticed by Basil, who lived in the fourth century, as then in use, and as derived, not from Scripture, but from tradition. Speaking of the sign of the cross in baptism, he says,

"We sign with the sign of the cross. Who has taught this in Scripture? We consecrate the water of baptism and the oil of unction, as well as him who receives baptism. From what Scriptures? Is it not from private and secret tradition? Moreover, the anointing with oil, what passage in Scripture teaches this? Now a man is thrice immersed; from whence is it derived or enjoined? Also the rest of what is done in baptism, as the renouncing of Satan and his angels; from what Scripture have we it? Is not this from private and secret tradition?" (*De Spiritu Sancto*, c. 27)

And, in like manner, Augustine speaks of exorcisms and exsufflations in baptism, as derived from ancient tradition, and of universal use in the church. (*De Peccato Orig.* L. II. c. 40. *De Nupt. et concup.* L. I. c. 20: L. II. c. 18) Now, whoever receives infant baptism on the ground of apostolical tradition, ought to receive these also, since they rest on precisely the same foundation.

The various ceremonies noticed above, however they may have been subsequently modified and extended, all go back to a very remote antiquity. They are coeval with infant baptism itself, and some of them even preceded it. Pedobaptism was first recognized as an established institution of the church, in the early part of the fifth century. Several doctors in the preceding century had, indeed, espoused and asserted it, and the practice had gradually spread, especially in North Africa. But it was not until the provincial Council of Mileve, more correctly called the Council of Carthage, held about A.D., 418 that any canon was passed in its favor. This Bishop Taylor acknowledges. (*Liberty of Prophecy Works*, Vol. V. p. Eden's ed.)

Grotius also takes the same ground, and affirms this to be the first council in which the custom was mentioned with approbation. And Augustine, in his book against the Donatists, written before the meeting of this council, while he asserts that the church had always held infant baptism, and that it was most rightly believed to have been delivered by apostolical tradition, nevertheless confesses that as yet it had not been instituted or sanctioned by the decree of any council.

What, however, had not then been done, was effected soon afterwards, and, probably, in a great degree, through his own influence. At the council mentioned above, over which he himself presided, the following canon was enacted. "Also it is our pleasure, that whosoever denies that new-born infants ought to be baptized—let him be anathema." (Dupin's *Eccl. History* Vol. I. p. 635. Dublin, 1623)

The decrees of this council were sent to Pope Innocent I., and by him approved, thus identifying the then nascent Papacy with the earliest canonical sanction of infant baptism. If then, this rite first received the authority of law from a Popish council, and was first confirmed as an established rule by the Pope himself, may it not well be called a part of Popery? The two are in fact indissolubly united—one in their origin, their growth, and their results. The same mother-heresy—Baptismal Regeneration—which gave birth to Popery, gave birth to Infant Baptism. They were engendered in the same dark womb of ignorance and superstition. They came forth together. They grew up together. Together they overspread the nations. And together shall they disappear before the light of Christ's Gospel, and the brightness of his coming.

Further, baptism by immersion, which for thirteen hundred years was generally observed in the Latin Church, and is still universally practiced in the Greek Church, was first changed into sprinkling by the Papists. This was not a mere change in the form of baptism. It was the abrogation of baptism itself. For it is not, as some consider, a matter of indifference whether much or little water is used in baptism. Immersion belongs to the very essence of baptism, and without it, there can be no baptism. As Sir John Floyer observes, "it is no circumstance, but the very act of baptism." (*Essay to Restore Dipping*, p. 44) The same writer also declares, that "aspersion, or sprinkling, was brought into the church by the Popish Schoolmen, and that the English Dissenters adopted it from them. The Schoolmen employed their wits to find out reasons for the alteration to sprinkling, and brought it into use in the twelfth century."

And it must be observed, to the honor of the Church of England that it has not established sprinkling in baptism to this day; sprinkling being permitted only when it is certified, that the child is weak, and not able to bear dipping. In all other cases, the Rubric orders the priest to dip the child warily. The legal sanction of sprinkling in Great Britain came from the Presbyterians during the civil war. The Westminster Assembly of Divines decided for sprinkling against dipping by a majority

of only one; twenty-five voting for it, and twenty-four in opposition to it. On their recommendation, it was established by Act of Parliament in 1664. They borrowed it from Geneva; and Geneva borrowed it from Rome.

That this innovation had its rise from the authority of the Pope, Dr. Wall himself acknowledges, when he affirms that the sprinkling of infants is from Popery:

"All the nations of Christians," he says, "that do now, or formerly did, submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, do ordinarily baptize their infants by pouring or sprinkling. And though the English received not this custom till after the decay of Popery, yet they have since received it from such neighboring nations as had begun it in the time of the Pope's power. But all other Christians in the world, who never owned the Pope's usurped power, do, and ever did, dip their infants in their ordinary use." (*History of Infant Baptism*, Vol. II. p. 414. Oxford, 1838)

Thus does it appear that infant baptism, both with respect to its subjects, and the mode in which it is now administered, may with great propriety be called a part and branch of Popery. But not only is it a part of Popery, and thus contributing to strengthen it, as a part does the whole. It is, moreover, its pillar and main support. It is the source from which Romanists, in contending with Protestants, draw the strongest arguments in favor of their traditions, and of the authority of the church to alter the rites of divine worship, on which, as we have seen, the essential characteristics of Popery depend.

Papal disputants sadly embarrass Protestant Pedobaptists when they bring forward infant baptism and urge their opponents to prove it by Scripture, both in its subjects and in its mode, and if they cannot do this, then either to give it up entirely, or allow of unscriptural traditions and the authority of the church. Thus adding the perplexing question that if they admit unwritten traditions and the custom of the church in one case, why do they reject them in others? This way of arguing, as Mr. Stennett observes (*Answer to Russen*, p. 173, et sequiter), was used by Cardinal Du Perron in his reply to King James I, and by Mr. John Ainsworth against Mr. Henry Ainsworth, and by Fisher, the Jesuit, against Archbishop Laud.

An amusing incident of a similar kind is told concerning a Mr. Jeremiah Ives, a Baptist minister, famous for his talent at disputation, who lived in the time of King Charles II. The king having heard of his peculiar skill sent for him to dispute with a Romish priest. This he did, in the presence of the king and of many others, dressed in the habit of an Episcopal clergyman. Mr. Ives pressed the priest closely, showing that to whatever antiquity Romanists pretended, their doctrines and practices could by no means be proved to be apostolical since they are not to be found in any writings which remain of the apostolic age.

The priest, after much wrangling, at last replied, that this argument of Mr. Ives was of as much force against infant baptism, as against the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. To which Mr. Ives answered, that he readily granted what he said to be true. On this, the priest broke up the conference, saying that he had been cheated, and would proceed no farther, for he came to dispute with a clergyman of the established Church, and it was now evident that this was an Anabaptist preacher. The behavior of the priest afforded his majesty, and all present, not a little diversion.'

As Protestant Pedobaptists are urged by this argument to admit the unwritten traditions of the Papists, so Pedobaptist Dissenters are pressed on the same ground to comply with those ceremonies of the Church of England which have been retained from the Church of Rome. Dr. Whitby employs this argument with special force, when, after having pleaded for some condescension to Dissenters, in order to reconcile them to the Church, he adds,

"And, on the other hand, if notwithstanding the evidence produced, that baptism by immersion is suitable to the institution both of our Lord and His Apostles, and was by them ordained to represent our burial with Christ, and so our dying unto sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life, as the Apostle clearly maintains the meaning of that rite, if I say notwithstanding this, all our Dissenters"—Pedobaptist Dissenters he must mean—"do agree to sprinkle the baptized infant, why may they not as well submit to the significant ceremonies imposed by our Church?"

"For, since it is as lawful to add to Christ's institutions a significant ceremony, as to diminish a significant ceremony which He or His Apostles instituted, and use another in its stead, which they never did institute, what

reason can they have to do the latter, and yet refuse submission to the former? And why should not the peace and union of the church be as prevailing with them, to perform the one, as is their mercy to the infant's body, to neglect the other?" (Protestant Reconciler, p. 289)

Thus infant baptism is used as the grand plea for compliance with the ceremonies both of the Church of Rome and the Church of England. It is, therefore, the chief prop of these Antichristian Hierarchies—the final appeal to which they resort for countenance in their unscriptural practices. And so triumphant is this appeal, that no Pedobaptist Protestant or Dissenter has ever been able to stand before it.

Further, it is by means of infant baptism that "the Man of Sin" has spread his baneful influence over many nations. This is abundantly evident from the fact, that through the christening of children, introduced by him, he has made whole nations nominally Christian, and has applied to them the designation of Christendom, thus extending the limits of his universal church, over which, as the pretended Vicar of Christ on earth, he claims absolute power and authority. By the same means, he retains his influence over these nations, keeps them in awe of his spiritual prerogatives, and holds them in servile subjection to his will.

With this view, he sedulously inculcates the pernicious dogma that by their baptism, received in infancy, they are brought into the fold of the church, within which there is salvation, and out of which there is none, and that therefore, if they renounce their baptism, or apostatize from the church, they consign themselves to inevitable damnation. Thus, by his menaces and anathemas, he maintains his usurped dominion over the submissive and trembling nations. And if, at any time, one of these nations has courage to oppose him, and to act in disobedience to his mandates, he immediately lays under an interdict, suspending the sacraments, all public prayers, burials, and christenings, closing the churches, and forbidding the clergy to administer their functions to any but those who at a great price purchase the privilege from Rome. (*Abstract of the History of Popery*, Part I, p. 468)

By a superstitious dread of these prohibitions, particularly that which withholds baptism from children, nations are induced to comply with the demands of the Papal power, however oppressive and tyrannical they may be. For it appears most dreadful to parents, that their children should be deprived of baptism, by which, as they are taught to believe, they are made Christians, and without which there is no salvation. Hence whole kingdoms have been known to yield to the most arbitrary exactions of Rome, rather than lose what is deemed so very important. What a tremendous influence, therefore, must infant baptism give to Popery; and how cunningly is it adapted to uphold its power.

But the baneful influence, which Antichrist has extended over the nations, through infant baptism, is yet further seen in that poisonous notion propagated by him that the sacraments, and especially baptism, confer grace by their intrinsic efficacy "*ex opere operato*" [*Latin, meaning "by the work worked"*] from the mere fact of their administration. In other words, he has taught that baptism takes away sin, regenerates men, and saves their souls. This is charged upon him by the ancient Waldenses in the treatise on Antichrist to which I have already referred. Speaking of the corruptions of the Papal Hierarchy, they say, "The third work of Antichrist consists in this, that he attributes the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit to the dead, outward act of baptism. In this faith, he baptizes children, teaching that salvation is thus to be obtained. On this ground, he confers orders and other sacraments; and thereon builds all his Christianity. All which is against the Holy Spirit." (*Morland's Hist. of the Churches of Piedmont*, p. 148)

The same Popish notion is argued against and exposed by Robert Smith, the martyr, in his examination before Bonner. In reply to a statement of the latter, that "infants are damned if they die without being baptized," he asked this question, "I pray you, my lord, show me, are we saved by water or by Christ?"

To which Bonner answered, "By both."

"Then," said Smith, "the water died for our sins, and so must ye say that the water hath life, and it being our servant, and created for us, is our Saviour. This, my lord, is a good doctrine, is it not?" (*Fox's Acts and Monuments*, folio, Vol. III, p. 400)

The leaven of this old and destructive error yet remains even in some Protestant churches, which have retained it from Rome. Hence a child, when baptized, is declared to be regenerate, and thanks are returned to God, that it is regenerate.

And when it is capable of being catechised, it is taught to say that in its baptism, it was made a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

Such instruction cannot but have a powerful tendency to take off all concern from persons when grown up, respecting any vital change of heart, as necessary to prepare them for heaven, and to encourage in them the fatal presumption that, notwithstanding their evident want of grace, they yet are members of Christ, and shall never perish —are children and heirs of God, and, therefore, must certainly inherit eternal life.

The father of lies himself, as Dr. Owen justly observes (*Theologoumena*, L. VI. o. III. p. 477), could not have devised a more pernicious doctrine, or one more calculated to insure the final ruin of the soul. If then, through infant baptism, this fatal heresy reigns supreme in lands Papal, and is still widely diffused and powerful in lands Protestant, are we not warranted in saying, that by means of infant baptism Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over the nations?



The Commission Was Given to the Church _

O. W. Taylor

From *The Plains Baptist Challenger*, July 2014

The nature and the performance of the duties set forth in the Commission require the idea that the Commission was given to the church.

If given to the apostles only, the Commission ended when they died. But the duties enjoined were to continue “even unto the end of the world.” This called for an organized body to carry on through the centuries after the apostles and after other workers died.

There was a church before the Commission was given. “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom” (John 3:29). “The bridegroom” was Christ. “The friend of the bridegroom” was John the Baptist. What was “the bride,” if not the church in its initiatory stage? Was “the bride” non-existent when “the friend of the bridegroom” said, “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom,” referring to the time then present? Evidently the bride was existent. This same body was later called “the church which was at Jerusalem.”

Jesus gave “commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen” (Acts 1:2). One of these was the Commission. The apostles were “set ... in the church” (1st Corinthians 12:28). The apostles corporately considered were the initial church. To it the Commission was given.

The duties in the Commission could be performed “unto the end of the world” only by an organized body carrying on when individual workers died. Only such a body could furnish the necessary workers and support for the program. Left to people unorganized, the work would not and could not be done. The body which meets the specifications is the church.

“Teach” carries, of course, an individual responsibility. But to “teach all nations,” and that “unto the end of the world,” requires the idea of an organized body, the church, sponsoring the program.

“Baptizing them” is enjoined. If this was entrusted simply to individuals, then no church as an agency in relation to it is in view in the Commission and no baptism into a church is indicated. But this conflicts with I Corinthians 12:13, which teaches that the New Testament idea is baptism into a church. It is logically unthinkable, therefore, that Jesus commissioned men to baptize independently of the church. And the duty of making and baptizing disciples among “all nations” to “the end of the world” requires the concept of church sponsorship of the program which brings the duty into exercise.

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Admittedly, one of the things included here is the Lord’s Supper. With men reasonably instructed in the Word of God, the proposition calls for no argument that no individual has the right and authority to administer the Lord’s Supper on his own. Then neither does he have the right and authority to baptize on his own. These duties and the other things in the Commission were entrusted to the church as the organized and authorized body to carry on the program through the centuries.

Only the church is the sponsoring body; logically, it’s in the concept of the Commission considered as a whole.



A Brief History of the Baptists

Norman H. Wells

From *The Church That Jesus Loved*, 1973 (Chapter 19)

This history of the ancient churches is very obscure. Much of the early recorded history was either lost or destroyed. A great part of the history that remains was changed to suit the interests of the Roman Catholic Church. All of church history has been involved in much controversy and was subject to the whims and fancies of each particular age. In very broad outline we want to look at the history of the church.

THE FIRST 300 YEARS OF CHURCH HISTORY

Jesus Christ, during His earthly ministry, founded the first church in Jerusalem in approximately the year 30 A.D. This first church was commissioned to go forth preaching the gospel, winning the lost to Christ, baptizing and teaching the converts and establishing new churches. On the pages of the New Testament we find the record of the growth of Christianity and the founding of many New Testament Churches.

Nero, the Roman Emperor, blamed the Christians for the burning of Rome in 64 A.D. and began the first of ten persecutions the Christians were to receive at the hands of the Romans. Despite all the persecution, Christianity grew. At the end of the first 300 years the religion of Jesus Christ was established all over the then known world. There were churches in every town and community.

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR DURING THE FIRST 300 YEARS

In the first two centuries the individual churches rapidly multiplied and some of them became very large. The church at Jerusalem had possibly as many as 50,000 or more members! These large churches each had several preachers or elders. Some of these bishops or pastors began to assume authority over smaller churches. This corrupted the original democratic policy and government of the churches and led to the kind of hierarchy we see in the Roman Catholic Church today.

In the first two centuries the false teaching of "baptismal regeneration" began to spread. This error led to infant baptism and many other errors. It has to be remembered that these changes did not come about all in a day, nor within a year. They came about slowly and never within all the churches. Some of the churches vigorously repudiated these errors. In about the middle of the third century the lines were clearly drawn. Those churches that remained loyal to the Scriptures were now clearly separate from those that had gone into error and apostasy.

CONSTANTINE RULED AS EMPEROR OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE FROM 306 TO 337 A.D. AND HIS REIGN WAS TO MARK ONE OF THE GREAT TURNING POINTS IN CHURCH HISTORY.

During a battle in 312 A.D. Emperor Constantine believed he had a vision of a flaming cross and above it the words, "By this sign thou shalt conquer." He decided to fight under the banner of Christ and Christianity came into favor in the Roman Government. In 313 A.D. Constantine gave a call for all the churches to come together and pronounced himself as the head of the churches. Many, but not all, of the churches came. The true churches would have no part in this error.

This hierarchy or body of church rulers that Constantine formed was the definite beginning of the Roman Catholic Church. Many of the errors of Catholicism had already had their beginning but now they were organized into a definite system. Constantine made "Christianity" the "State Religion." Up until this point the persecution of the Christians had been done either by Judaism or Paganism. Now came a change. Christians (in name) began using the law to compel all Christians to join the organization. The true churches that refused were persecuted.

The division was now complete. The true churches refused to line up with the errors of the "state church." The church of Constantine became what we know as Roman Catholicism. BAPTISTS WERE NEVER PART OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM. They remained true to the Scriptures and rejected the error.

After the organization of the churches into a hierarchy and their acceptance as a "State Religion" the true, loyal churches that rejected this error were identified by various names. It is not to be understood that each of these groups was entirely free from error or entirely embraced the truth. Through these groups can be traced the people called Baptists. In these groups are to be found the true churches ... not in Catholicism.

Montanists, Paulicians, Novationists, Paterines, Donatists, Albigenses, Anabaptists ... these were some of the names used to identify those who refused to identify with Rome.

THE DARK AGES

The period from 426 A.D. to 1628 A.D. is called the "Dark Ages." With the establishment of the new Catholic temporal power a bloody persecution began. Loyal, New Testament churches, by whatever name they were called, were hunted and hounded to the utmost limit by this new Catholic power. The now established Catholic Church began a war of extermination upon all who opposed her. It is reliably reported that 50,000,000 died of persecution during the Dark Ages. During the bloody times of persecution, as Catholicism tried to exterminate the true churches, many of the false doctrines of the Catholic church of today began to take place.

THE INQUISITION — 1198-1700

The Inquisition was instituted by Pope Innocent III and perfected under Pope Gregory IX. It was a "Church Court" established by the popes for the trying and punishing of "heretics" ... a heretic being anyone who did not agree with Roman Catholicism. The Inquisition lasted for 500 years and was a time of indescribable horror. During all this persecution Baptist churches continued to exist.

THE REFORMATION

The conditions within the Catholic Church had become so corrupt that many voices were raised within the church in protest. Among these voices was that of John Wycliffe (1320-1384), John Huss (1373-1415), Savonarola (1452-1498), Zwingli (1484-1531), John Knox (1505-1572), John Calvin (1509-1564), and Martin Luther (1483-1546). The combined effort of these men, along with many others, brought about the Reformation. All these Reformers started new churches. This was the beginning of Protestantism. ALL PROTESTANT CHURCHES HAD THEIR BEGINNING IN THE PERIOD OF THE REFORMATION OR SINCE THAT TIME.

Baptists continued to exist through the Reformation as they had since the time of Christ. Since the Reformation the Baptists have had a glorious history.



Different Families, But One Blood

Joseph Angus

From *Christ Our Life*, 1853

A thousand years before the Vedas were written, (B. C. 1400) and at least 1800 before the laws of Menu, which form the basis of Hindoo jurisprudence, were composed, (B. C. 600) the descendants of the second father of the human family (who had been miraculously saved from a fearful flood) began to multiply on the earth. As they multiplied, they removed from the mountain districts of Armenia to the well-watered plains of Shinaar, between the rivers Hiddekel (Tigris) and Euphrates, "the swift-flowing" and "the fruitful." Here, in very early times, men were formed into families, and established in towns and villages. Here also they followed agriculture, built cities, and practised many of the arts of civilized life.

As they grew in numbers they grew in wickedness, till at length, partly as a punishment of their sins, and partly as a consequence of failing pasture and deficient produce, they became scattered. Each band retained the civilization and the fragments of religious truth which the better men among them had preserved. From a book of demonstrable antiquity, containing records that can be traced to within a comparatively short period of the time when these events took place, we gather that, even then and for ages later, there was a general belief in the unity of God, in the creation and preservation of all things by Divine power, in a general and particular Providence, in a Divine law fixing distinctions between right and wrong, in the fall and corruption of man, in the doctrine of atonement through vicarious suffering, in direct Divine spiritual influence, in human responsibility, and in the necessity for practical holiness.

True religion, in fact, has ever been faith and obedience; a humble, submissive repose of the heart on Divine truth, and appropriate holiness. Whether it be regarded as a system of truth—objective religion, or as a system of holy affection—subjective religion, it has never changed. Nor is it difficult to account for either the completeness or the diffusion of this knowledge. The flood of waters occurred in the life-time of the third generation from Adam, our first parent. He had been created by God in his own image, but yielding to temptation he fell, and involved us all in his rain. For many years Lamech was his contemporary. Lamech again was the father of Noah, and the contemporary for many years of Shem, as Shem was of Abraham, the father of the people "of whom, according to the flesh, Christ came." (Rom. 1:3)

Methuselah, again, was for more than two hundred years a contemporary of Adam, and for six hundred years of Noah, and through him, or other similar channels, might the knowledge of the true God have been transmitted and preserved. During the whole of this interval, too, many eminently holy men appeared—Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah, all of them preachers of righteousness, and valiant for the truth upon the earth.

In spite of these influences, however, human nature soon showed its true character, and its lamentable tendency to deterioration. Before the flood, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5), and the flood left them unchanged. As early as the days of Shem, the son of Noah, idolatry was openly practised in Chaldea, the country of Abraham, and not more than a hundred years after the death of Noah, the whole district of Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed in consequence of the guilt of its inhabitants. Fire from heaven, combined with the bitumen and sulphur of that region, consumed them. The plain is now filled with the Dead Sea, whose waters exhibit in their saltness, and slimy bituminous qualities, evidences of the fearful catastrophe with which it was visited.

As the first settlers in Shinaar were dispersed, they went in different directions, and according to the families to which they belonged. The sons of JAPHET, the eldest-born, travelled northward, Madai and his descendants settling on the borders of the Caspian, and Gomer and his descendants on the borders of the Black Sea. Here their numbers increased; till at length, many of the descendants of Madai moved down into Hindustan, while many of the descendants of Gomer moved westward (with other branches of the same great family) into Europe.

The primeval inhabitants, therefore, of India, those who first spoke the Sanskrit tongue, and nearly all who afterwards migrated among them from the north, were, ethnographically, Caucasians (So called from the range of mountains near which they had originally settled), and belonged to the same division of the human family which have since made the inhabitants of the western world, and of Britain especially, the moving spirits of the earth. India and Europe are allied, therefore, not only through a common interest, but through the close connection of the races that first peopled them.

From SHEM, whose descendants remained at Shinaar, and ultimately occupied Arabia and Syria, were descended the Chaldeans, the Persians (The Shemitish Persians, however, were early overcome by tribes descended from Japhet. Modern Persians, therefore, belong chiefly to the Caucasian race, some to the family of Ham), the Assyrians, the Jews and the Mohammedan nations, who have since modified the character of the population of the east, either by migration or conquest. Through this branch of the great family of man, India has closer ethnographical connection with the natives of Palestine than Europeans, and it is clear that if Europe has received the Messiah of the Jews, it is not because He is of her race, but because she is convinced of the divinity of His claims.

The descendants of HAM settled in Egypt and in other parts of Africa, and have had frequent intercourse by sea with India. From that country, indeed, it is generally thought, they imported their arts and learning.

If we seek for further evidence of this connection between Europe and "utmost Ind" it is found in the affinities which subsist between Mythology and the languages and the mythologies of the two regions. The polluted streams of Greek, Slavonic, and Hindoo mythology have, evidently, a common source, their myths a common basis, and their rites and ceremonies a common authority. Many of the gods which crowd the Pantheon of the East were known, under appropriate names, to Homer and Hesiod, and to our Saxon forefathers. The Indra and Yama of the East are the Pluvius and Pluto of Rome. The god of the waters (Peruna), and the goddess of love (Rembha) are the Neptune and Venus of the West.

The very names of the days of the week are called, in India, by names taken from the same deities as preside in Western calculations over those portions of time. This general conclusion is not affected by the fact, that the religion of each of these nations was influenced by peculiarities of position and of climate. The German and the Briton kindled their devotion beside their blood-stained altars, in the depth of the forest; the Roman blended his religion with luxury or war; the Greek with poetry, philosophy, or art.

But these differences refer rather to the forms of devotion most popular among these various tribes, than to the objects of their worship. The people had really the same gods, though the services offered to them changed with the national character and circumstances of the worshippers. To complete this evidence, it must be added, that nearly all the branches of the Shemitish nations were monotheistic, and, instead of supplying Europe and Asia with idols, borrowed them when guilty of idolatry, from the descendants of Japhet or of Ham.

Further, it is notorious that the Sanskrit language, with its numerous derivatives, is closely connected, both in matter and in form, with the Greek, Latin, German, and Slavonic tongues. There are in Sanskrit no less than nine hundred words having the same root as corresponding words in the languages of the West, while affinities of form supply evidence of a common origin no less striking and decisive ; indeed it is indisputable, that the ancestors of those who now speak the Sanskrit and the Gothic, (including, under the former, most of the derivative dialects of the East, and, under the latter, the Slavonic, the German, high and low, and the classic languages of ancient Europe,) had once a common tongue, and interchanged their thoughts by similar elements of speech.

So true is the Scripture declarations that men were divided "according to their families," though made of one blood, and possessing, first in Adam, and then in Noah, a common progenitor. This truth,—the identity of India and Europe,—is completed when we add to it the fact, that both have fallen through a common calamity, and are, in Christ, invited to an interest in what is emphatically a "common salvation." (Jude 3)



Is the Advent Pre-Millennial?

Pastor Alfred Harris, Baltimore, Md.
From *Primitive Paths in Prophecy*, 1891

The first proof we offer that the coming of the Lord will be Pre-Millennial is the significant fact that the Word of God does not place anything between us and that blessed hope. It never says the Lord shall come after such and such an event, date or period. But let it be remembered that the Scriptures make a broad distinction between the *coming of the Lord* and the *day of the Lord*. The coming of the Lord is represented by the Morning Star, the day of the Lord by the Sun of Righteousness. Christ as the Morning Star has to do more particularly with the Church and the first resurrection; as the Sun of Righteousness He has to do with Israel and the nations. The Morning Star precedes the day; the rising Sun of Righteousness introduces the day—the Day of the Lord.

We know of many things which shall take place before the Day of the Lord. The same confusion that now exists in many minds existed in the Thessalonian Church. It had been reported among them that the Day of the Lord had actually come, and they were troubled about it because, if this was a fact, they were left behind. As the Scripture says, "One shall be taken, and the other left." (Matt. 24:41)

And there was another thing that troubled them: In the cemeteries of Thessalonica the graves of their loved ones, who had died in the Lord, were undisturbed. The trumpet of the first resurrection had certainly not reached them. If the Day of the Lord had passed with the first resurrection, and their loved ones were still entombed, they had good reason for being troubled. The Apostle Paul comes to their relief and corrects their error in the second chapter of his second epistle. He assures them that the Day of the Lord has not come and would not come until three events had occurred:

- (1) The coming of the Lord, or the descent of the Lord into the air, and our gathering together unto Him.
- (2) The great apostasy, "A falling away."
- (3) The manifestation of Antichrist. "For that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." (II Thess. 2:3)

These things were to precede the Day of the Lord, but neither there nor in any other part of Scripture are we told of anything intervening before the coming of the Lord; so that if we love His appearing, we may look for it to occur at any time, even at the present hour.

One of the many convincing proofs that the coming of Christ will be before the Millennium is found in the accounts we have of the first resurrection. The characteristics of that first resurrection are:

- (1) It will be a resurrection of the just. "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14:14)
- (2) It will be elective. "But they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." (Luke 20:35)
- (3) A proof or manifestation of sonship. "[They] are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." (Luke 20:36)

Now when will it take place? At the second coming of Christ. "But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (I Cor. 15:23) Will that be before or after the Millennium? The answer is unmistakable: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be the

priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:5, 6) Thus the second or general resurrection comes after the thousand years, or the Millennium, and is a thousand years after the first resurrection which takes place at the beginning of the Millennium; as that resurrection is simultaneous with the coming of Christ, it follows that Christ will come before the Millennium.

Again, if the coming of the Lord is not Pre-Millennial, there are scores of most important prophecies, concerning the earth, Israel and the nations that must remain forever unfulfilled. I refer to the second Psalm, where Christ is inaugurated as the King of Israel, and of all the earth; to the 72nd Psalm, where we have the millennial reign of Christ, to Jer. 18, where it is said Jerusalem shall be called "the throne of the Lord," etc.

In connection with this read Isaiah second chapter, and especially the twenty-fourth chapter and twenty-third verse: "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously." I refer again to the thirty-second chapter of Jeremiah and the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah. In the fourth verse of this latter chapter we have the following remarkable prediction: "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

This prediction is still unfulfilled, and it never can be fulfilled if the coming of the Lord is Post-Millennial. This is evident from what is said in the remainder of the chapter. The Lord does not come in the fourteenth of Zechariah as the final Judge of the quick and the dead, but He comes as the King of all the earth. "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth." "In that day there shall be one Lord, and His name One." (v. 9)

And what follows all this is not the general conflagration of the elements (II Pet. 3), but the Kingdom—the subjection of the nations to Christ. "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations, which came against Jerusalem, shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts." (v. 16)

I refer also to Zeph. 3:13-17, and to Luke 19:12, where our Lord likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a nobleman going to a far country "to receive for himself a kingdom and to return."

Bearing on the same subject, we have the testimony of the Apostle Peter in Acts 3:20, 21. "And he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: whom the Heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Last of all I refer to Luke 1:32, 33. In announcing the birth of Christ, the angel said to Mary, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever."

Now these prophecies, and many others which I might name, will remain forever unfulfilled, unless the coming of the Lord is Pre-Millennial. In the Scripture we have a prophetic history of - the order of events which fill up the interval between the ascension and the second coming of Christ. The whole thing is mapped out before us in the parables in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, and in the Book of Revelation. And with this prophetic map before us I would like any one to show where there is a place for a Millennium between the ascension of Christ and His Second coming.

Take the parable of the tares. This covers the whole ground, or history, between the personal ministry of Christ on earth, and His future Advent. He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seed are the children of the Kingdom; the tares are the children of the wicked one. Both were to grow together till the harvest. The harvest is the end of the world—the age—the present order of things. There is no room for a Millennium here. According to this and the other parables there will be a mixed state of good and evil until Christ shall come. "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity—then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13: 37-43)

So in the Book of Revelation we find no place for a Millennium until Christ comes. But after opening the seventh seal which ushers in the Millennium of the earth, what do we hear? Voices in Heaven saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11: 15)

Thus the testimony of the whole Scriptures concerning the Kingdom proves that the coming of Christ is Pre-Millennial. Christ will set up His Kingdom in person. (Dan. 7:13-27. Luke 19:11-15) But when will He do this? At the end of the times of the Gentiles. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The times of the Gentiles are the times of Gentile dominion and supremacy. They include that portion of history covered by the four universal kingdoms referred to in Dan. 2:31-45.

What is to succeed the times of the Gentiles? The Kingdom of God ; the Kingdom of the Son of Man. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for-ever." (Dan. 2:44)

The sovereignty of the earth is to be given to the Son of Man as the second Adam. (Psalms 8; Heb. 2:5-10) Christ is to sway the scepter of unlimited empire over the nations, for a thousand years of blessedness. Under His reign all things will be brought into subjection to God. His will shall be done in earth as it is in Heaven. All the enemies of God will be subdued. Death will be destroyed. And at the time when Post-Millenarians say that Christ will come, He will have already have been here for a thousand years; subduing evil, and making all things new. After the final purgation of unrighteousness, He will deliver up the restored Kingdom, in glory and blessedness, to God. In all the earth there will be no unsubdued evil, no rebel sinner, no enemy of God or man. And now God will be all in all.

But it may still be asked: Must not the world be converted before Christ comes? The New Testament does not teach this, but the very reverse. "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) In the last days there will come perilous times. (I Tim. 4: 1-3; II Tim. 3: 1-5) "And as it was in the days of Noe so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." (Luke 17:26)

When Christ comes, the world will be in the condition it is in now, .full of scoffers and unbelievers, asking, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (II Pet. 3:4) Iniquity will abound, and the love of many wax cold. There will be "wars and rumors of wars," at the very time when Christ shall come. (II Pet. 3; Matt. 24) It may be asked again, Is not death the same as the coming of the Lord? The New Testament carefully distinguishes between death and the coming of the Lord. (John 21: 21-23)

Many overlook what is clearly revealed in Scripture, that the second coming of Christ is His coming in bodily presence, in His glorified humanity. "This same Jesus shall come again in like manner," etc. (Acts 1: 10, 11) The New Testament only speaks of two comings, the first and the second. "To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." (Heb. 9:27, 28)

Now I have four indictments to bring against the Post-Millennial theory:

1. It perverts the Word of God. It figurizes God's mind out of His Word ; and for God's facts and testimony substitutes human fancy and theories that were never heard of for two hundred and fifty years after the apostolic age. Let those who are guilty of this treatment of the divine Word ponder, Rev. 22:19.

2. It destroys the blessed hope of a weary wailing church. Christians who are looking, waiting, longing daily for the coming of the Bridegroom and the Deliverer, feel this blessed hope as an uplifting power, filling them with gladness and stimulating them "to attempt great things for God, and to expect great things from God." But Post-Millenarians come to these hoping, rejoicing Christians, and say, "You are foolish in cherishing such a hope. The Bridegroom will not come until the end of the millennium. What you are to look for is death, not that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

3. It destroys the force of the Lord's coming as the great motive of Christian life. I do not know of a single instance in the New Testament where death is used as a motive. The great motive of the New Testament is the coming of the Lord. If we

are looking daily for the coming of the Lord, saying in the morning, "He may come before the evening," and in the evening, "He may come before the morrow," we cannot live in sin, in worldliness and unfaithfulness. And this hope will impel us to diligence and to tremendous earnestness in evangelistic and missionary labors for the Lord whom we love and expect here at any time. (Luke 21:34-36)

Now if we should teach that the coming of the Lord is not at hand, but that it is far off in the distant future, what effect will its postponement produce? Precisely what Christ predicted: "And if that servant say in his heart, my Lord delayeth His coming, and shall begin to beat the men servants and the maidens, and to eat and to drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder " (Luke 12:45)

4. Last of all, Post-Millenarians cannot use all the inspired prayers of the Bible. Here is one: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." They must say, "We cannot pray this prayer and hold these post-millennial views. We cannot say, Come quickly, when we believe in our hearts that He will not come until the close of the Millennium, and we do not know how many centuries may roll away before the Millennium shall be ushered in.

But someone may say, "How could Christ say three times in the last chapter of the Bible, Behold, I come quickly,' when He knew that He would not come at least for eighteen hundred years." Our life is confined within the narrow limits of threescore years and ten, but Christ works on a vast and eternal scale. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." On the dial plate of the eternal future eighteen hundred years are less than a day, less than an hour, a mere moment of time. Measuring time by this Divine standard, Christ says, "Surely I come quickly." And let all the redeemed say, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20)



What Christ Gave

He gave His head to the crown of thorns.

He gave His back to the cruel lash.

He gave His cheeks to those who plucked out the hairs.

He gave His face to dirty human spittle.

He gave His shoulders to be draped with the robe of mock royalty.

He gave His clothes to murderers.

He gave His mother to the Apostle John.

He gave His hands and feet to be nailed to the accursed cross.

He gave His blood to this earth for the remission of sins.

He gave His body for the life of the world.

He gave His Spirit to the Father.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).