

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Infant Baptism

By Cecil Cox

Many churches today practice infant baptism. Each year thousands of people have their babies baptized. Possibly many of them never stop to ask is the practice authorized in the New Testament. Many do it realizing that it is possibly nothing more than a rule or regulation of their denomination. The Bible teaches that doctrines which have their origin with man make one's religion **vain (Matthew 15:9)**. This should point out the importance of teaching only the doctrine of Christ.

Please note the following reasons why infant baptism is contrary to the doctrine of Christ.

1. Teaching is a prerequisite to baptism. Christ told His apostles, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (**Matthew 28:19**). Please observe here that those who

were to be baptized were those who had been taught. Infants cannot be taught, therefore they are not subjects of Bible baptism.

2. Faith is a prerequisite to baptism. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (**Mark 16:16**). Infants cannot have faith in Christ, therefore they are not subjects of Bible baptism.

3. Repentance is necessary before baptism. Peter told those believers in Acts the second chapter, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (**Acts 2:38**). Repentance involves a change of one's mind or will with regard to sin. Infants cannot change their minds with regard to sin, therefore infants are not subjects of Bible baptism.

4. The Bible teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins. Look again at the passage

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given above, **Acts 2:38**. Notice that the apostle said that baptism is "for" (unto, ASV) remission of sin." Infants do not have sins, therefore they are not subjects of Bible baptism. "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for such is the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 19:14**).

Ignoring the Main Point

By Cled E. Wallace

The Baptist and Reflector is persistent in its efforts to establish as a fact that salvation is a gift of grace bestowed upon the sinner before and without obedience to the gospel. Since Baptists believe this, I have no quarrel with their persistence in teaching it. Nearly every issue of the **Baptist and Reflector** features it in one way or another. Since I do not believe it and think it a hurtful theory calculated to make void the grace of God, I owe nobody any apology for pitching into its advocates as often as I think the cause of truth demands it. The Book says, "he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (**Heb. 5:9**) I believe it. Such obedience

is the "obedience of faith" and in no wise contradicts what the scriptures say about salvation by grace. It is said that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." (**Acts 6:7**) This obedience was necessary to their salvation. Peter asks the question: "What shall the end be to them that obey not the gospel of God?" (**I Pet. 4:17**) Does the Baptist and Reflector seriously think that their end will be salvation? Paul says that when the Lord comes he will take vengeance on them "that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (**2 Thess. 1:8**) This does not look like salvation by faith before and without obedience to God. As "Rev. W. J. McDaniel" says on the front page of the Baptist and Reflector "God is consistent and the Bible is consistent. There is no contradiction to be found in the Word of God." I believe that "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" and that the specified obedience that the Lord requires is consistent with this grace, faith and the gift that is involved. Here is an issue, the issue in fact.

Naturally, the fight is over whether or not baptism can

have any thing to do with salvation. I believe it to be a divinely stated condition of the remission of sins. The **Baptist and Reflector** with its views of grace, considers such a position absurd and a reflection on the grace of God, if not something worse. One main point that we insist on is uniformly overlooked, or ignored, and it has often been called to the attention of the advocates of salvation by faith before and without baptism. We propose to keep on pressing that point as long as the need requires. I shall arrive at it shortly, but first a word from the **Baptist and Reflector**:

"Baptism is a 'figure' (symbol, illustration) of saving truth (**Rom. 6:3-5; I Pet. 3:21**). Therefore, it does not have any saving virtue. It is not a sacrament. Likewise, in the Lord's Supper 'ye do show the Lord's death' (**I Cor. 11:26**). It, too, is only a picture. It is not a sacrament." We do not use the term "sacrament" in connection with either baptism or the Lord's Supper but accept exactly what the Bible teaches about each and both. Editor Taylor defines a "sacrament" as "an ordinance or observance interpreted as having a saving significance, as being conditional to or

contributory to salvation. It is a Roman Catholic idea which has been accepted by many." He sidesteps the issue as far as we are concerned. We do not entertain the Catholic idea. Is the editor afraid to step up and meet the real issue? Baptism is a condition of remission of sins when properly submitted to, because the Lord has by divine fiat made it so. There is no "saving virtue" in water, or in any act that a man may perform, be he saint or sinner. There is no such virtue even in the faith that a man exercises. Believing is something that a man does. The virtue is in the blood of Christ and salvation is by the grace of God. God who saves has the right to propose the conditions to be performed by man in order to be the recipient of the proffered salvation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, said the Lord. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins."

It is often urged and that sometimes boisterously, that God can save a sinner without water and that a sinner does not have to take a dip into the tank to find Christ. Baptists have not always refrained from ridicule in discussing this question. Is that

meeting the issue? I trow not! We are told that; "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." (**Heb. 11:30**) Did the children of Israel have "virtue" in themselves to believe the walls down, or to march them down? God tore down those walls when the people "by faith" did what they were told to do. Does the **Baptist and Reflector** think there was any sacramental value in marching, shouting and blowing trumpets? Would those walls have fallen had the people not obeyed God? Was it a matter of "grace through faith?" Did they make void the grace of God when they obeyed God? Why? Naaman, the leper, had the sentence of death written in his body. No human help could reach him. He sought divine aid and was told to dip himself seven times in the river Jordan and he would be healed. Was there any sacramental "virtue" in the water that flowed in the channel of the river Jordan? Naaman rebelled against the idea and thought it foolish and absurd. He remained a leper until he obeyed God. Did he make void the grace of God when he dipped? Who healed Naaman anyway and why? It would be real refreshing to have

the Editor of the **Baptist and Reflector** march up and make some sort of an attempt to meet the real issue. When he does, I promise to make it interesting for him. The cry of "baptismal regeneration" will not help him any as far as we are concerned. The fact that the baptism of a proper subject brings to him the promise of remission of sins, while the dipping of an improper one leaves him just wet, properly disposes of that false charge. Baptism is for the remission of sins, only to a penitent believer, and that only because God says so. It "is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

We are told that baptism "does not have any saving virtue" because it is a "figure," and **I Peter 3:21** is cited. This text states positively that baptism "doth now save you." The play that is made on the term "figure" is a glaring perversion of the teaching of the text. The apostle affirms of Noah and his family that "eight souls were saved through water." The fact that their salvation was "through water" does not argue that it was not by grace through faith. The grace of God in the whole proceeding is obvious. It

is clearly stated that "By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." (**Heb. 11:7**) The apostle makes the salvation of these "eight souls through water" a type of baptism. The **Baptist and Reflector** gets things "hind part back'ards" and gets his "figure" in the wrong place. A straight look at the text spoils the Baptist theory. "Eight souls were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism..." God saved Noah and his family by grace through faith, but not without water. It was "through water." This water is a type. What is the anti-type? "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism." God saves today by grace through faith, but it is not without baptism but through baptism.

Editor Taylor missed the main point in all this. All efforts to prove that baptism does not save, do not explain Peter's statement but contradict it, and constitute a very vicious form of interpretation. Peter explains in the same connection that baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good

conscience toward God..." It is not a carnal ordinance such as Jewish washings to cleanse from carnal impurities. The man who submits to baptism is in all good conscience reaching out toward God for the promised blessings. His is the obedience of faith. Of such Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." All talk of "saving virtue" in the water or in the act is beside the point and designed to confuse. If God, who saves, proposes to do it "through water," it is most unbecoming in men, especially editors and preachers, to set up a howl of protest about it.

It is inferred for some unaccountable reason, that if baptism is a "symbol, illustration" it can "therefore not have any saving virtue." **Romans 6:3-5** is cited and it proves to be an unfortunate citation for one who is almost frantically interested in eliminating baptism as a condition of remission of sins. Why should it be thought incongruous that "a picture" of the burial and resurrection of the Lord should be made a condition of remission of past sins to an alien sinner who had believed in the Lord and repented of those sins? Baptists are meriting a rather wide reputation for

begging the question in this connection. "It is only a picture, exclaims Editor Taylor. Let Paul express himself. "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" Paul says that water baptism brings us "into his death" that we are "baptized into Christ Jesus." Can a man be saved out of Christ or without coming into his death? A lot of loose talk about pictures and symbolism will not serve to obscure the facts in the case.

--- **Bible Banner** -
January 1942

"Apologizing does not always mean you are wrong and the other person is right. It just mean you value your relationship more than your ego."

"The man who wins may have been counted out several

times, but he didn't hear the referee."