

# THE ACT

OF

# CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

By J. R. GRAVES

## CHAP. VIII. MISCELLANEOUS MATTER.

From the overwhelming mass of proof submitted, every candid reader must conclude that immersion was the act Christ commanded, and the apostles and primitive churches observed. He can fully appreciate the statement of Prof. Moses Stuart (Pedobaptist), "I can not see how it is possible for any **candid** man who has examined the subject to deny this," and he will concede that the strong assertion of Prof. Paine, D. D., of the Bangor Theological Seminary (Pedobaptist), is not too strong, viz., "Any scholar who denies that immersion was the baptism of the Christian church for thirteen centuries, betrays utter ignorance or sectarian blindness." This being the established and admitted fact, the following conclusion is inevitably follow:

I. If Christ commanded his apostles to immerse professed believers for baptism, in or into the name of the Trinity, he certainly forbade them to sprinkle or pour a few drops of water upon their heads in his name. The commission is the express law for baptism, and is to be construed as any other law. It is a fundamental principle of interpreting law that the specification is the limit of the act.

This maxim is as old as the Julian Code—"Specificatio, unius, exclusio alterius"—the specification of one thing is the prohibition of every other thing.

If Christ specified immersion in water in his name, he as positively forbade any other act, as sprinkling of water upon the subject in the name of the Trinity, which means by the authority of. It is a most daring act for a Christian minister, in open violation of Christ's express command, to sprinkle and pour, and then solemnly declare before God and men that he does it by the authority of Christ! and by the authority of God the Father! and by the authority of the Holy Spirit! I would not do it for a thousand worlds!! And if it could be worse to sprinkle an infant, a **non-believer**, when Christ specified a believer, thus positively and expressly forbidding the baptism of an infant as well sprinkling for baptism.

This we are all justified in saying—and, if we are the friends of Jesus we are in duty bound to say—that such a human substitution for the act Christ commanded is no baptism, and far worse than no baptism.

But Dr. N. L. Rice (Old School), in his work on Baptism, asserts:

2. The second fact, that where there is no scriptural baptism there can be no churches, no ministers, and no Christian ordinances.

This, then, is the conclusion from which there is no escape; that Pedobaptist societies are not Christian or evangelical churches in any sense, and their preachers, not being baptized, are not members of a church of Christ, and are not ordained, and are without the shadow of authority to baptize others, any more than any other unbaptized men.

3. The third fact is that all who have received the office of "baptism" at their hands by any act, are before God unbaptized. This seems a hard sentence, but it is the **fact**, just as certainly as immersion was commanded by Christ, which no candid man will deny, and duty to the misled and faithfulness to the truth constrains me to say it. And it is a fact that not less than ten thousand a year, including ministers as well as members,

acknowledge the force of it, and come to Baptists for Christian immersion. It is evident, if Pedobaptist ministers are unbaptized themselves, they can not administer valid immersions—can not give what they themselves do not possess.

4. But if Pedobaptists and Campbellite societies are not churches, because unbaptized, they have, as Dr. Rice says, no Lord's Supper; the rite they celebrate not being that Supper, and, therefore, it is as wrong for any to partake of it as that ordinance, as it would for a company of unbaptized converts to presume to celebrate the Supper without a church and without baptism. No conscientious Baptist could desire, or would presume to participate in such a transaction.

The fact of those societies being unbaptized—and they are as certainly as that **baptizo** means **to dip in or under water**, as all scholars agree that it does, and never to sprinkle—settles the whole question of intercommunion between the members of those societies and Baptist churches, or the members of Baptist churches and those societies. Surely to one disposed to accept and to submit to the truth, nothing more need be said on Intercommunion between Pedobaptists and Baptists.

5. But there is another thing—the above facts should settle forever in the minds and conviction of all Baptists, viz., the question of

### **"ALIEN IMMERSIONS."**

If Pedobaptists and Campbellite societies are not churches—and they are not if Christ commanded the immersion of professedly regenerated persons in water—they can no more administer valid baptism than they can a scriptural Lord's Supper; no more than could a Lodge of Masons or Odd-Fellows, if every member was a devout Christian.

Dr. Rice says, what every Pedobaptist on earth will agree to, that a body of unbaptized Christians is no church, and can not administer valid ordinances.

Therefore the immersions of all those societies, **not scriptural churches**, are as null and void as their sprinklings would be, and they can no more be accepted by Baptist churches. No rightly instructed Baptist church will receive the ordinances of unbaptized societies as valid or scriptural.

The Campbellites certainly immerse, but their immersions are no better than those of the Greeks or Roman Catholics, since they immerse for the selfsame purpose, *i. e.*, in order to secure the remission of sins, regeneration, and the blessing of salvation, as all know.

The question, 'What does baptism introduce the recipient into?' is an open question with some Baptists, and they are principally confined to the South and West. It is urged by these, contrary to the universal practice of the denomination, and **their own practice**, that baptism introduces into the kingdom only—after which, if the subject desires to unite with a local church, he applies upon his certificate of baptism, and, after examination, must be received, by a unanimous vote, into the church! This feature of the question is purely **theoretical** as yet. In forty six years of membership, in four different Baptist churches, in as many different States, I have never witnessed or heard of an addition on this wise, save some few who were irregularly baptized by army chaplains or ministers. In some places, towns and cities, all received into the church by baptism, or letter, since the last communion, just before the administration of the Supper, are called forward by the pastor, and a charge delivered, and the right-hand of fellowship extended by the pastor, sometimes, and it should always be, followed by all the church. This is a purely formal act, not an ordinance, or the completion of an ordinance—the persons having been previously received into the church by baptism or letter. If, to all these, the Articles of Faith and the church Covenant were read, and they were called upon to rise with the whole membership of the church, to indorse the faith, and to enter into covenant, the practice would be most commendable. This theory is grounded upon the assumption that baptism is an ordinance of the kingdom, and not of the church, and, therefore, it inducts into the kingdom, and not into the church—"the kingdom being the vestibule of the church" (Gardner); but the kingdom, as we have seen (Chapter IV), has neither executive

officers nor ordinances, and, therefore, the theory is groundless. The practical evil that is cropping out of the theory, in some quarters, to the great disturbance of the churches, is that ministers claiming to be officers of the kingdom are assuming the control of baptism, and baptizing whom they please, and where they please, whether in a Baptist Church—as was the immersion of Dr. Weaver, of Louisville, Ky., by Prof. Jas. P. Boyce without consulting the church,—or fifty miles away. But the unscripturalness of this is evident from the fact that the ordinances, both, or all, were delivered to the churches and not to the ministry; and ministers, therefore, have no more authority to administer baptism, to whom they please, and where they please, than to administer the supper to whom and where they please. It is a presumptuous and unscriptural assumption of power that does not belong to them. Our churches should be admonished that "Eternal vigilance is the price of their safety," in this regard, as well as others.

### THE ONE-DOOR THEORY.

There are those who object to baptism being **the door** into a church, because, they say, there is but **one** door—who said so?—and those who are excluded would have to be put out the way they came in!

This class is wise above all that is written or practiced before their eyes. Ask a Mason or Oddfellow if his order has a specific rite of initiation into the lodge? He will answer "Certainly."

Ask him if that rite has to be **reversed** to exclude a member? Marriage is the only rite by which a man and woman enter into the marital relation; but does the court marry them backward to divorce them? It is too simple to expose, and yet we hear it from the lips of the learned, who have taught it to the unthinking. It is not intimated in the Bible, and common sense certainly does not suggest the idea, that there is but one door to a Church of Christ, or, indeed, a **door** at all. That term is a mere **figure** of speech. A church is presented to us as an organized body, and, as such, there are various ways to enter, and various ways to get out of it. We receive by **letter**, by **recantation** and **restoration**, as well as by baptism; and we put members out by **exclusion** and **erasure**—i. e., drop them out—and there is

the great door of death, which the church neither opens nor shuts. It was J. Newton Brown, editor of the "Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge," who suggested, if we considered a local church as a house of God, "then it had several doors, as well as other sensible and conveniently built houses."

There are the **two front doors** that are entered, the one by baptism, the other by letters of credit. There is the door of restoration on the right side, and the door of exclusion on the left side of the house; and the **trap-door** in the passage, which might be named "dropped," down which go into obscurity all whose names are erased from the church books; and then the great back door--death. That the keys of all these doors, save the last, are committed by Christ to his churches. From what has been demonstrated in this Tract, we learn—

**1. That there is but one religious organization on earth that administers immersion, to the professedly regenerated alone as a symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.**

**2. That only an orderly member of a local Church is scripturally entitled to partake of the Lord's Supper, and then only in the Church of which he is a member.**