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Written for the Messenger.

A MIGHTY CONTEST.

SUGGESTED BY READING THE HENDERSON-CAMPBELL-FINLAYSON CONTROVERSY.

Wouldst dispute the vanquisher of vanquishers?
Meet the light, the hope, the very beacon star
Of all intelligence! The ray, the very heart
Of that great superstructure, which was reared
By the mighty theologians of Westminster!
Aid by tradition and man's discipline
Made sacred, and handed down to us--
Not the prop which doth repair the ravages of
time.

And other fierce denominational storms
With scripture; which I torture into mortar,
Where with I stop the seams
Which my opponents would feign make believe
Were made by their long arguments.

Infant baptism, is it? 'Tis right; and, forsooth,
Why? 'Tis not in the book, that I acknowledge.
But--well--I--s--s--y. But; but, yes, well, but yes
Truth to tell:

Unless we have this as a story,
Reason, with its invincible fall,
Will undermine and sap away--
And down will come our church pell-mell.

Mind! infants they are sinners born.
'T is the one of our refrain.
This teach at noon, and night, and morn;
On mountain, valley, hill and plain.

Get them with us while they're young,
Make them think that we are right;
Bear them thus with us among.
This is at least, three-fourths the fight.

Then let Parson "B." and Campbell shout,
That we are wrong and they are right;
Mind, we know what we're about--
And this, you know, is half the fight.

Onsaver.

THE RELATIONS OF BAPTISM TO THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

[By Thos. J. Melish, Editor of the Journal and Messenger, Cincinnati, O.]

The very fraternal and Christian approach of the Disciples to the Baptists, at the Ohio Convention in 1870, which was most cordially and fraternally received, has invested the doctrinal differences of Baptists and Disciples with more than usual interest, and made a demand for a kinder and more courteous discussion of these differences. It is, therefore, not in a polemic spirit, but actuated by a supreme desire to clarify the issues, and, if possible, to lessen the doctrinal differences of the great and rapidly increasing family of Immersionists, that the following paper on the relation of baptism to the forgiveness of sins has been prepared.

IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION.

This question forms one of the chief differences between these two families of Immersionists. Indeed, in the judgment of the writer, the principle differences may be narrowed down to two: the Work of the Spirit in conversion, and the Design of Baptism. Upon the work of the Spirit the prospect seems hopeful that the chasm will be bridged; that upon the just scriptural statement that regeneration is the product of both the personal Spirit of God and the Word of God--the one as the Agent, and the other as the Instrument--both parties will ultimately, perhaps very soon, come to stand in doctrinal harmony.

THE DISCIPLES' VIEW.

Upon the Design of Baptism, on the other hand, there seems at present no prospect of harmony. Upon nothing are the Disciples more united than on the doctrine that baptism is a condition of forgiveness to a believing penitent; that justification is not by faith without baptism, but by faith and baptism; that baptism is to be administered in order to forgiveness; that the true sense of Peter's direction to the convicted Jews on Pentecost Day (Acts 2: 38) is: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." They do not teach that there is any merit in baptism or in faith, but that justification is purely of grace, faith and baptism being "conditions of appropriation," of God's own appointment. Neither do they teach that faith and baptism are essential to the soul's salvation--conditions sine qua non--in the sense that God may not exercise his sovereign mercy toward those who have neither faith nor baptism, if he pleases; but that these conditions are all we are authorized to state as revealed will of God.

THE BAPTIST VIEW.

On the other hand, in nothing are Baptists more united than in the denial of these affirmative positions. They teach that justification is by faith without works--of either Jewish or Christian law, that baptism is a fruit of justification (righteousness); and not a

condition for receiving it; that baptism is not in order to the remission of sins, but only a symbolical setting forth of the efficacy of Christ's blood, received and enjoyed wholly by faith; that the true sense of the Greek words used by the Apostle Peter in Acts 2: 38, is not "in order to the remission of sins," nor, as in our common version, "for the remission of sins," which to the ordinary reader carries the same meaning.

DISCIPLES' VIEW NOT NEW.

It deserves to be stated that this view of baptism as a condition of forgiveness is not at all peculiar to the Disciples, neither has it ever been held by professing Christians to be heresy. The Romish, Greek, Armenian, English, Lutheran, and some of our American Protestant churches, give the statement in their symbols that "baptism is for the remission of sins," generally accompanied by such exegetical statements as show they regard the words to mean "condition of forgiveness." And in the interpretation of Acts 2: 38, as meaning in order to forgiveness, there are some names of eminence, even among Baptists--(see Dr. Hackett's and Prof. Ripley's commentaries on Acts ii: 38)--who give precisely the exegetical interpretation for which the Disciples contend--"baptism in order to the forgiveness of sins." And one of our modern Protestant versions (the French of David Martin) translates Acts ii: 38: "Amendez vous, et que chacun de vous soit baptise--en nom de Jesus Christ, pour obtenir le pardon de vos peches"--Repeat, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, to obtain the pardon of your sins." Of course, ever so much authority does not prove a wrong exegesis right; but a fact like this ought to mitigate the asperity of sectarian conflict.

OBJECTIONS.

The grave objections which lie against the doctrine of "baptism in order to the forgiveness of sins" in the minds of most Baptists are briefly these: 1st. If baptism is a condition of forgiveness to the sinner, it ought to be clearly revealed. So far from this being the case, it rests on the authority of isolated texts, whose meaning is in perpetual dispute among Christians.

2d. Christ, in his own personal ministry, never required baptism as a condition of forgiveness in a single instance; if John the Baptist baptized in order to forgiveness, and the Apostles, after Pentecost always baptized in order to forgiveness, it is strange that the ministry of the Savior should not follow the same rule.

3d. The Apostle Paul, who was specially fitted, both by the Holy Spirit and great natural endowments, to be the teacher of Christians--the theologian of the gospel--gives us two or three epistles--Romans, Galatians, and perhaps Hebrews--whose burden is to teach how the sinner is justified before God, and never is baptism mentioned as one of the conditions. The silence of the Epistles when speaking on the specific subject of forgiveness to mention baptism, is a convincing evidence that Paul did not consider baptism one of the conditions.

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH?

But these reasons, while very forcible to Baptists, are not so to the Disciples. They claim that certain texts here, and there certainly teach that baptism is to be administered in order to the forgiveness of sins; therefore, the personal acts of Jesus while on earth, were the exercise of his own unlimited sovereignty, and exceptional; and that if Paul did not mention baptism with faith as conditions of the sinner's justification, it is always implied. They quote the language of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the Kingdom of God," the terms of the Commission; "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," the direction of Ananias to Saul; "Arist and be baptized, and wash away thy sins"; Peter's statement, "Baptism doth also now save us"; Paul, to Titus; "According to his mercy be saved us; by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." But the Theropeiae of the Disciples--the narrow pass into which the whole battle converges--is the expression of Peter in Acts ii: 38: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for (by which Disciples understand in order to) the remission of sins."

The Disciples urge very justly that if Peter, to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given, and acting under the miraculous endowments of the Holy Spirit, on the very day when the visible Church of God was formally constituted; did interpret his commission to mean that convicted sinners, crying out "What shall we do?" should be directed to baptism in order to forgiveness, then we all ought to do the same. We have no right to deviate from so authoritative an example on an occasion so unique. The interest they show in the interpretation of this passage proves that they regard it as the key of their position. It certainly does govern the situation; the interpretation of the other texts being doubtful and greatly dependent on the construction given here.

The controversy on the Design of Baptism, then narrows itself down to this: "Did John the Baptist baptize in order to pardon? Did Peter command the Pentecostian converts to be baptized in order to pardon?--The Disciples affirm this; the Baptists very generally deny. The writer of this essay believes that the affirmative position, whether taken by Disciples, or Protestants, Romanists, Anglicans, or by some eminent Baptists--is an exegetical mistake; that the original Greek does not justify it; and that our present English version of Acts ii: 38, and kindred passages, conveys a wrong impression, and is greatly responsible for the doctrinal disagreement.

EXEGETICS OF ACTS II, 38.

The Greek words translated, "Be baptized for the remission of sins," are *Baptisthai eis aphesis hamartion*. The inquiry turns on the meaning and force of the preposition *eis*. In connection with *Baptisthai*. Does the *us loquendi* of the New Testament justify or allow such a rendering as "Be baptized for, or in order to?" The proper way is evidently to marshal all the passages in which the preposition *eis* is used in connection with baptize. They are not very numerous, and below will be found an example of every case found in the New Testament, omitting duplicate passages for the sake of brevity:

Peter said to the penitent Jews on the Day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ into the remission of sins." In this he gives an inspired model for all gospel preachers. We all may and must direct all truly penitent and believing souls to be baptized into the pardon of sins; but not for, or in order to pardon. So that if the Disciples will cease telling penitents to be baptized in order to pardon, and unite with us in telling them, with Peter, to be baptized into pardon, we may join hands in a common obedience to the authoritative example of the inspired apostle, to whom were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

And now, having a word that properly gives us the meaning of the original Greek, let us ascertain its doctrinal value. What is the doctrinal meaning of being baptized into the forgiveness of sins? It is clear that it does not mean that these people were to receive pardon by being baptized. Look now at all the passages again, and see whether in any case the noun which follows the preposition *eis* refers to anything the subjects were to receive. John's converts did not receive repentance by being baptized into it. When John dipped penitents into the Jordan, it was not for the purpose of swallowing a portion of the stream. When the great commission directs that all believers shall be baptized into the name of the Triune God, it is not something they are to receive. When the Jews were baptized into Moses, just as when christians are now baptized into Christ, into his death, into his body; in no case does it express as the *terminus ad quem* some personal favor which the baptized receive in the act.

So Acts ii, 38, does not teach that the believing Jews should be baptized in order to be pardoned of their sins. Nothing indeed is said of their individual sins. Although the Disciples quote the passages continually as if it read: "Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, nothing of the sort appears in the text. They were to be baptized into the commission of sins; and the *us loquendi* demands that we shall give no more personal application to the words than in the kindred phrases, baptism into repentance--into the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit--into the Jordan

into Christ--into his death--into his body--into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Therefore we conclude that christian baptism is into Christ, into his death, into his body, into forgiveness; but it is not in order that the baptized may receive any one of these.

But this is merely negative. If our view is correct, the Disciples are wrong in regarding this text as teaching baptism as a condition of forgiveness. What, then, is the affirmative idea involved in the expression, "Be baptized into the forgiveness of sins?" We answer: It is a highly tropical expression designed to set forth the teaching of baptism--its doctrinal relation to the Trinity, to Christ, to his death, to the forgiveness of sins. When John the Baptist is said historically to have baptized his converts into the Jordan--literally dipped them into Jordan--we have the bare and literal fact. When he is said to baptize into repentance, we have a tropical use of language which literally means to dip into a substance. "To dip a child into the sea conveys to us a plain and literal image; "to dip a penitent man into Christ, into his death, into his body, into the pardon of sins," is undoubtedly highly poetic and figurative language, but its tropical use ought to convey no idea radically different from its literal use. It must never be forgotten that the radical idea of baptism is a dipping into. Hence its relations to Christ, to his death, to pardon, to his body, would naturally find expression in such expressions as baptizing into these.

JUSTIFICATION IS PURELY OF FAITH.

God gave a system of law to the Jews whose cardinal principle was: "He that doeth these things shall live." The law by reason of sin was a failure as a plan of justification; no one was ever justified by his perfect obedience. Then God brought in the gospel; and what is the gospel? Paul says it is "that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures." This is its first and principal article. This gospel that "Christ tasted death for every man," is to be preached to every creature as good news, and it must be believed before any one is fit for baptism--believed with all the heart--the whole affections of our nature must take the truth that Jesus died for us--took our place, and bore our punishment--paid our debts and leaves us nothing to pay.

This is the gospel, and must be believed in order to baptism. But when it is believed, the soul necessarily walks out of the prison-house of self-condemnation.

The New Testament does not represent God as being now unreconciled to the world, although receiving the price of Christ's offering; but as being reconciled. Every man's sins are atoned for; and all he needs to make him happy is to believe it. Hence, faith itself is not presented as a condition of obtaining forgiveness, but only as a means of knowing and enjoying it. It must have this once necessarily. The governor might have made out a pardon for every man in the penitentiary, but if he did not believe it or would not walk out of prison, of what value would it be? Faith is indispensable to knowing and enjoying the atonement Christ has made for us; but baptism has no such relation to our justification; and neither it nor faith are in the usual sense conditions for obtaining it.

This, then, is the mistake which the Disciples have made, in our judgment. They conceive of God as remaining unforgiving toward each individual sinner until certain conditions are complied with; then he becomes reconciled, and exercises pardon then and there toward the sinner. On the other hand the scriptures say: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their sins unto them." We do not have to preach to men to do anything to reconcile God to them; but to believe that he is reconciled already, and thus reconcile their own alienated hearts to him. Christ has given his life a ransom for all men; all that any man needs is to fully believe this truth--to embrace it with his affections--and the result must be peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He who does not receive comfort from the thought that Christ has paid his debt does not believe it.

JUSTIFYING FAITH COMPREHENSIVE.

The faith which appropriates the atonement of Jesus, necessarily includes repentance--it is a repentant faith in its very nature. No one can truly believe

that the Son of God took his place and atoned what he deserved, and feel no compunction.

This faith also is an obedient faith. No one can really love the dying Christ, and believe him to be the Lord of glory, and not have the spirit of obedience, leading to consecration, to purity, to loving devotion.

A PARALLEL PASSAGE.

In conclusion, it may be useful to notice a passage--having no reference to the ordinance of baptism--where the same words are used: *eis aphesis hamartion* for (into) the remission of sins. It is Matt. xxvi, 28 where Jesus says at the Holy Supper: "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" express that truth here; and if they do so here, they do so also in Acts ii, 28.

We answer: While the fact of the shedding of the blood of Jesus as an indispensable condition of forgiveness is elsewhere plainly revealed and constantly reiterated, yet this passage under consideration does not assert it. Jesus says: "This is my blood of the New Testament poured into the forgiveness of sins for many, a highly figurative and mystical expression, which declares no more than that into the fathomless ocean of God's forgiving love Jesus pours his blood. We can not learn the doctrine of the atonement from this mystical expression. In any case the two expressions can never be regarded as being parallel in meaning, though exactly similar in word.

CONCLUSION.

These thoughts are offered in the sincere and fraternal desire that they may be useful in solving a doctrinal controversy, which has divided the Immersionists of the west into two nearly equal parts. May the good Spirit of Christ overrule all for his glory, and the spread of his truth; and give us all teachable spirits, heart untroubled by prejudice and unclouded by passion.

Statistics of the Bible.

A "Reader" of Zion's Herald, sums up the statistics of the Bible; thus:

The Scriptures have been translated into one hundred and forty-eight languages and dialects, of which one hundred and twenty-one had, prior to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Societies, never appeared. And twenty-one of these languages existed without an alphabet, in an oral form. Upwards of forty-three millions of those copies of God's Word are circulated among not less than six hundred millions of people.

The first division of the Divine Orders into chapters and verses, is attributed to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of King John, in the latter part of the twelfth century, or beginning of the thirteenth. Cardinal Hugo, in the middle of the thirteenth century, divided the Old Testament into chapters as they stand in our translation. In 1661, a few of Amsterdam divided the section of Haggai into verses; a French printer had previously (1661), divided the New Testament into verses as they now are.

The Old Testament contains 39 books 229 chapters, 28,214 verses, 592,439 words, 2,728,100 letters.
The New Testament contains 27 books, 260 chapters, 7,550 verses, 184,253 words, 558,880 letters.
The entire Bible contains 66 books, 1,159 chapters, 31,764 verses, 776,692 words, 3,667,680 letters.

The name Jehovah or Lord, occurs 6,855 times in the Old Testament.

The word "and" occurs in the Old Testament 35,343 times.

The middle book of the Old Testament is Proverbs.
Chapter 1 is the 29th of Job.
Verse 11 of Isaiah, xx, 17, is the first verse of the New Testament in II Thessalonians.
Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, of the book of Acts, are the last in the Bible in Romans 1, 17.

Verse 11 of the Bible, Psalm cix, 8, is the first verse in the Bible in II Corinthians 1, 16.

The least verse in the Old Testament, is I Corinthians 1.
The least verse in the Bible is John 21, 38.
If Kings xiv, and Isaiah xxvii, are the same. In the 21st verse chap. vii of John, are all the letters of the alphabet, I and J considered as one.

The Apocrypha (not inspired, but sometimes bound between the Old Testament and the New) contains 14 books, 187 chapters, 16,851 verses, 132,185 words.

The preceding facts were ascertained by a gentleman in 1718. Also by an Englishman residing at Amsterdam in 1772, and it is said to have taken each gentleman nearly three years in the investigation.

There is a Bible in the library of the University of Göttingen, written on 3,476 palm leaves. A day's journey was 33 1/2 miles.
A Sabbath day's journey was about an English mile.
Ezekiel's rod was eleven feet, nearly.
A hand-breadth is equal to three and five-eighths inches.
A cubit is 22 inches, nearly.
A finger's breadth is equal to one inch.
A shekel of silver was about fifty cents.
A shekel of gold was \$20.00.
A talent of silver was \$1,216 33.
A talent of gold was \$118,500.
A piece of silver for a penny was 18 cents.
A farthing was three cents.
A gosh was one cent.
A mite was one and a half cents.
A Homer contained seventy-five gallons and five pints.
A bin was one gallon and two pints.
A ark was seven pints.
A cub was three pints.
A lig was one and half pints.
An omor was six pints.
An ephah or bath contained 7 gallons, 5 pints.

Lewis Linnball, of Kentucky, is put forward as the boldest man on the face of the earth.