

**HELPFUL  
ARTICLES  
ON  
BAPTISM**

**Compiled by Dave Miller**

# HELPFUL ARTICLES ON BAPTISM

— REV. J. H. WATKINS —

## The Necessity of Baptism and Acts 22:16

Some have suggested that the grammar of Acts 22:16 demonstrates that salvation precedes water baptism. In reality, just the opposite is true. Here are the grammatical features of the verse:

*anastas* is an aorist **active participle**: “having arisen” or “rising”  
*baptisai* is an aorist **middle imperative verb**: “get yourself baptized”  
*apolousai* is also an aorist **middle imperative verb**: “get your sins washed away”  
*epikalesamenos* is an aorist **middle participle**: “you will have been calling”

An adverbial participle is a participle that is used as an adverb to modify the verb. “Calling” is an adverbial participle of manner. It shows the manner in which the main verbs are accomplished. The verbs (“baptized” and “wash away sins”)—joined by the coordinate conjunction “and” (*kai*)—are “causative middles”<sup>1</sup> in the aorist tense and so relate to the aorist middle of the participle that follows (“calling”). Hence, a literal translation would be: “Having arisen, get yourself baptized and get your sins washed away and you will have been calling on the name of the Lord.” In other words, Ananias was telling Paul that the way to accomplish “calling on the Lord” was to be baptized and have his sins washed away.

To “call” upon the Lord is used throughout Scripture as a euphemism or idiomatic expression to mean *accept God by complying with His commands*. (To call upon the “name” of the Lord refers to submitting to His *authority*—see Acts 4:7). In any given context, the commands to which one must submit vary. Read carefully the following verses where the literal sense of opening one’s mouth and audibly calling on the Lord cannot be intended: (Gen. 4:26; Ps. 145:18; Is. 55:6-7; Acts 9:14,21; Rom. 10:12-14; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:22). It is simply a generic expression similar to “name the name of Christ” (2 Tim. 2:19) or “follow Jesus” (Matt. 8:22; Mark 8:34). In the case of initial conversion, water baptism and washing away one’s sins constitutes “calling on the name of the Lord.” Notice that the connection between baptism and the “name of the Lord” was made by Peter also in Acts 2:38. A person has not “called on the name of the Lord” until and unless he/she is baptized in water.

Dave Miller  
Brown Trail School of Preaching

---

<sup>1</sup> A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 808.

May 12, 1949

## "The Retrospective Use of the Greek Preposition 'Eis'"

G. C. BREWER

The heading of this article is the heading of an article in Southwestern News, upon which we are requested to comment. That paper is a "publication of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas." The article captioned as above indicated appeared in the issue for January, 1948, and it was written by Dr. Ray Summers. The good Doctor in the seminary is endeavoring to help some Baptist brother who was having trouble with Acts 2: 38. The heading of the article states the point he thinks he establishes, and then, having arrived at the conclusion that *eis* is "frequently used in a retrospective sense," he moves deftly into the position that Acts 2: 38 is one of those frequent passages where *eis* is so used! But our guess is that the troubled Baptist who applied to the Doctor for help had already found out that *eis* cannot mean "because of" in Acts 2: 38, and that he was looking for a different explanation. If he has studied or argued over Acts 2: 38 enough to know that the English preposition "for" in that passage is from *eis* in the Greek, the chances are ten to one that he knew that Dr. Summers had naively "put his neck out," and he must have shuddered at the thought of the falling axe of logic and truth. However, before we decapitate the dear Doctor, we will let him tell us "how he pleads" in the case. Here is his article *verbatim* and entire:

"(This was written in response to an inquiry from a man who was having trouble with the use of the preposition *eis* in Acts 2: 38.)

"A close study of the Greek preposition *eis* in the New Testament reveals that it is frequently used in a retrospective sense rather than a sense of purpose. The following are examples of such usage:

"Matt. 14: 31: 'And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him up and said to him, Oh you of little faith, wherefore did you doubt.' The word 'wherefore' is a translation of *eis ti*—'because of what.' It looks back to the thing which caused Peter to begin to sink. He did not begin to sink in order that he might doubt but because he had doubted.

"Matt. 12: 41: 'The men of Nineveh shall be raised up in the judgment day with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented because of the preaching of Jonah (*eis to karugma Jona*) and behold a greater than Jonah is here.' Obviously the men of Nineveh did not repent in order that Jonah might preach; they repented because Jonah had already preached.

"Matt. 3: 11: 'I indeed baptize you in water because of repentance [*eis metanoia*].' Did John baptize in order that men might repent or because they had already repented? If the former is true, we have no scriptural confirmation of it. The entire context indicates that John baptized because people had already repented of their sins. (1) He refused to baptize some because they gave no evidence of repentance. (Luke 3: 7, 8; Matt. 3: 7-9.) (2) He baptized those who confessed and repented. (Matt. 3: 6.) (3) He demanded a new life to prove sincerity in repentance when the multitudes, the publicans, and the soldiers asked what they should do to prove that they had repented. (Luke 3: 10-14.)

"Thus we see that *eis metanoia* means 'because of repentance.' In this connection the testimony of a first-century writer indicates that John baptized people only after they had repented. Josephus, 'Antiquities of the Jews,' book 18, chapter 5, section 2: 'John was a good man, and commanded Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness toward one another and piety toward God, and thus to come to baptism; because the washing with water would be acceptable to him not in order to the putting away of sins because he supposed that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.'

"Acts 2: 38: 'Repent, all of you, and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ because of the remission of your sins [*eis aphesin*].' Here the preposition *eis* is used in the same way as above. The people were asked to be baptized not to put away sin but because sins were already put away. Verse 41 shows the proper sequence: 'those therefore, who received his word were baptized.' Receiving the word of God brings salvation; baptism should follow to show to the world that we have died to sin and are raised to a new life in Christ. If the reader of the King James version is bothered by the English translation 'for remission of sins' let him remember that the English 'for' is also used to mean 'because of.' A man is executed for murder; i.e., because he has murdered someone, not in order that he may murder someone."

### REPLY

1. If His Claim Were (for it is not) Correct, His Conclusion Is Crooked. The Doctor says a "close" study of *eis* in the New Testament will reveal that the preposition is frequently used in a retrospective sense. Such a use is "frequent," but it takes a close study to find it; the ordinary reader of the Greek New Testament is not expected to have discovered this. It requires a "close" study, and is only known by careful scholars—such as teach in the Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. This use of *eis* was never discovered by such great Baptist scholars as Hackett, Hovey, Harkness, Broadus, Wilmarth, and A. T. Robertson. But Doctor Ray Summers, by "close" study, has discovered that *eis* is "frequently" used in a retrospective sense—to mean "because of" or "on account of"—and he cites three passages where he thinks the preposition is so used. Other scholars had seen those passages too, and we shall examine their testimony along with the claim of Dr. Summers before we are through.

But so far as the point at issue is concerned—which is the meaning of *eis* in Acts 2: 38—we may grant his claim and still reject his conclusion. Would any Baptist want us to agree that if *eis* "frequently" has the meaning of "because of"—which it does not—that it always has that meaning? If it is retrospective in three passages, or even in a dozen passages, would we be sane in concluding that it has this meaning in all the two thousand places where it is used in the New Testament? No one will answer that in the affirmative. Then how will we determine when *eis* is prospective and when it is retrospective? when it looks forward and when it looks backward (assuming that it does sometimes look backward)? Surely any reader can see that the meaning would have to be determined by each passage in which *eis* occurs. Then what sort of logic is it that will cite three passages to illustrate a cer-

tain sense and then jump to the conclusion that it also has that sense in another passage? Especially why do this when the construction of the fourth passage—Acts 2: 38—will not even allow the sense that is claimed for *eis* in the other three passages? The preposition *eis* is used nine times in Acts 2, and not one of the verses in which it is used would allow the meaning "because of," even if it could be proved that it means "because of" anywhere. In verse 20 Peter says: "The sun shall be turned into [*eis*] darkness, and the moon into [*eis*] blood." Then in verse 34 Peter says: "David is not ascended into [*eis*] heaven." Suppose we try to make *eis* mean "because of" in these verses! Why not, since it has that meaning in three places, a la Dr. Summers? But you say it cannot mean "because of" in those verses. No, it cannot; nor can it have that meaning in verse 38. Let us look at a passage that is parallel with Acts 2: 38—has the same prepositional phrase. Here is the parallel: Matt. 26: 28: "This is my blood . . . shed . . . *eis* the remission of sins." Greek, *eis aphesin hamartion*. Acts 2: 38: "Repent ye, and be baptized . . . *eis* . . . remission of sins." Greek, *eis aphesin hamartion*. Did Christ shed his blood "because of" remission of sins? Why not? *Eis* means that in three passages, a la Dr. Summers!

2. Acts 2: 38 Is Tortured. Surely it is plain to everyone that it is not logical to assume that *eis* means "because of" in Acts 2: 38 even if it does have that meaning in three other passages (which it does not). But that is exactly what Dr. Summers assumes and states. He says: "The people were asked to be baptized, not to put away sin, but because sins were already put away." We have been seeing and hearing Acts 2: 38 perverted for a half century, but here is something new. This is the first time in life that we ever heard that Peter "asked" the people to do anything in this verse. Wonder if the Doctor ever looked at grammar in his "close" study! Would it be too much to expect him to know what is meant by the "imperative mood"?

The Holy Spirit, through Peter, commanded these convicted—pricked-in-the-heart—sinners to do something *eis*, in order to obtain, the remission of their sins. What did he tell them to do? Well, what did our Lord tell him to preach *eis* the remission of sins, beginning at Jerusalem? Read it: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance [*eis*] and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24: 46, 47.) Notice repentance *eis* remission of sins. Now, the people of Pentecost asked: "Brethren, what shall we do?" Do for what? Why, to escape the consequence of their sins which Peter had charged upon them. According to Dr. Summers, Peter calmly and kindly replied: "I'll ask you to be baptized because your sins have all been put away"! And they had heard nothing about repentance *eis* remission of sins! Oh, you say, Dr. Summers teaches that Peter told them to repent *eis* remission of sins! Does he now? Then how will he get that other verb out from between the verb *repent* and the preposition *eis*? Peter told—commanded—these people to do two things *eis* remission of sins. The two verbs are connected by the coordinate conjunction "and."

Hear him answer these convicted inquirers: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *eis* the remission of your sins." What were they to repent "for"? For the remission of sins. What were they to be baptized "for"? The same thing, of course. If *eis* means "because of" here, then they were told to repent "because of" the remission of sins, and a seminary professor should be able to see that even if he had not made a "close" study of the Greek New Testament.

The Baptist scholar, Hackett, in his "Commentary on Acts," says: "*Eis aphesin hamarton*, in order to the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26: 28; Luke 3: 3), we connect naturally with both the preceding verbs. This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized. It enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other."

Dr. Wilmarth, another Baptist scholar, in commenting upon the idea that *eis* means "on account of" in Acts 2: 38, says: "This interpretation compels us either to do violence to the construction or to throw the argument or course of thought in the context into complete confusion. Indeed, we can hardly escape the latter alternative, even if we choose the former. (a) For those who contended for the interpretation 'on account of remission' will hardly be willing to admit that Peter said 'repent' as well as 'be baptized on account of remission of sins.' This is too great an inversion of natural sequence. Yet to escape it we must violently dis sever 'repent' and 'be baptized,' and deny that *eis* expresses the relation of *metanoesate* as well as of *baptistheto* to *aphesin hamarton*. But the natural construction connects the latter with both the preceding verbs. It enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other," as Hackett says."

But Dr. Summers "violently dis sever" the verbs and has Peter "commanding" in the first one and "asking" in the second one, and makes *eis* mean "in order to obtain" as to the verb "repent" and "because you have already obtained" as to the verb "be baptized!"

It is hard to believe that such torturing of the word of God comes as a result of "close" study.

The Doctor leaves his Greek and comes back to the English and shows that the preposition "for" sometimes means "because of," and in this he is correct; but when "for" has this retrospective sense, it is not from the Greek *eis*, as it is in the Authorized Version of Acts 2: 38. There are three or four Greek prepositions that are translated by the English "for." *Eis* never has the retrospective sense; it never looks backward—never.

(In another article which will follow this we shall examine the three passages which are supposed to contain *eis* with a retrospective meaning.)

## Dr. Summers and the Preposition "Eis," Again

G. C. BREWER

In our issue of May 12, 1949, I reviewed what Dr. Ray Summers had said concerning the preposition *eis*. I showed clearly that, even if his contention concerning the preposition in the three passages that he cited is true, we could not say that *eis* has that same meaning in all the other places

where it is used; and if we could cite one hundred passages where the preposition is used with the meaning of *on account of*, that would still not justify the conclusion that it has this meaning in all the two thousand places where it is used. If it could be established, therefore, that *eis* does sometimes look backward and have the meaning that the Baptists claim for it—because of—it would still be necessary for us to determine just when the preposition has this meaning and when it does not, and the one passage that troubles the Baptists is Acts 2: 38. Here *eis* cannot mean *because of*, any more than it can have that meaning in Matt. 26: 28. This was shown in the article of May 12. We promised, however, at some future time to examine the three passages which Dr. Summers cited to illustrate his point, and we stated that *eis* never means *because of*, and even these passages are misused or misunderstood.

We had never fulfilled the promise to examine these passages, because we doubted that there was any interest in this study. The Summers article was more than a year old before it reached us, and it came through the Gospel Advocate office, and I did not know who sent the request for review. This preposition has been discussed so often, and there is so much in print on the question, that we supposed a further discussion was not now desired; however, the following letter from Brother Shewmaker will supply the information as to who requested the review of Dr. Summers, and also will supply the reason for this article. Here is the letter:

"Pampa, Texas,  
"225 North Sumner,  
"June 11, 1949.

"Mr. G. C. Brewer, Staff Writer,  
"Gospel Advocate Company,  
"110 Seventh Avenue, North,  
"Nashville, Tenn.

"Dear Mr. Brewer:

"In the May 12, 1949, issue of the Gospel Advocate I see you have answered an article written by Dr. Ray Summers. When I received the paper with the article in it written by Dr. Summers, I wrote him a letter and asked him to explain some other passages for me, and I could not even so much as receive an answer from him. I waited about a month and wrote him again, and still received no answer. At that time I asked him to enter my name as a sub-

scriber for the Southwestern News, the paper in which the article appeared, and I would send the price if he would inform me the amount, but I failed to hear or to receive the paper either.

"Being unable to hear from Dr. Summers, I wrote to Dr. J. Frank Norris, whom I understood to be of the same religious belief. I heard from Dr. Norris. He stated in substance that he thought that it was not a matter for him to enter into.

"After having tried for some six months or thereabouts to get a reply, and being unable so to do, and having seen that the Advocate paper did answer questions, I wrote to the company and asked for a reply. I wish to thank you for your reply in the paper, and I would like to see the further remarks which you mentioned would come in a later issue.

"Thinking that possibly Dr. Summers would be glad to have the remarks you have made, I am sending him a copy of the article.

"Again thanking you and the Advocate company for your courtesy, I am,

"Yours truly,

"O. F. SHEWMAKER

"P.S. (Blind): I subscribed for the Advocate, and Dr. Summers is on the mailing list now. If this is not correct, will the Advocate please check and reply, and I will mail the money for his subscription.

"Thanks again very much, Brother Brewer."

### REPLY

We are glad to give brief examination to the passages Dr. Summers cited, as we promised to do in the former article. The passages are as follows: Matt. 14: 31; 11: 41; 3: 11. We may admit that the English of these references could be understood in the sense of *cause*. In the first passage Jesus asked: "Wherefore did you doubt?" This might be understood to mean *what caused you to doubt?* But when we know that the Greek preposition is here used, we will have to look for a meaning that will be consistent with that Greek word; and since we know that the meaning of the word is *into, unto, toward, etc.*, we will see if this basic meaning of the word can still be found in this sentence, and it does not take a scholar to see that the question could easily mean *for what purpose did you doubt—what did you hope to gain by doubting?* Jesus knew the cause of Peter's doubting. He reproved him for showing little faith. The cause of the doubt is thus explained: he lacked faith. He saw the billows, and they filled him with fear, and his fear was stronger than his faith; consequently he began to sink. When the cause of his doubting is so plainly expressed, Jesus certainly would not ask the question hoping to get an answer that would enlighten him on the cause of Peter's sinking. Even the English makes this plain enough, and the Greek, therefore, shows that Jesus showed him the folly of doubting by indicating that there was no good purpose served: he could not achieve the thing he wanted to do by doubting. What he wanted to do was to walk upon the water. How could doubt aid him in this purpose?

The second passage tells us that the men of Nineveh "repented at the preaching of Jonah." Here again the English reader might understand that the people repented *because of* the preaching of Jonah. But

again we remind the reader that the Greek preposition here used would not have been understood by the Greeks, and the sense in which it is here used could not be any better explained than the following note from J. W. McGarvey explains it. This is quoted from his commentary on Matthew and Mark. We shall let this suffice for our treatment on Matt. 12: 41. Here is what Brother McGarvey says:

"The preposition here rendered *at* is *eis*, which usually means *into*. Some writers have contended that it here means *because of* or *in consequence of*, a meaning quite foreign to the word. It is true, as a matter of fact, that the Ninevites repented *in consequence of* the preaching of Jonah; but

if it had been the purpose of the writer to express this thought, he would have used the preposition *dia* instead of *eis*. The thought of the passage is quite distinct from "They repented into the preaching of Jonah." This is not idiomatic English, but it conveys the exact thought which a Greek would derive from the original. The term *preaching* is put for the course of life required by the preaching, and it is asserted that they repented into this. Their repentance, in other words, brought them into the course of life which the preaching required. If Jesus had merely said that they repented in consequence of Jonah's preaching, he would have stopped short with the external change which they underwent; but he chooses to go further, and indicate the terminus of their repentance, that it brought them into the condition which the preaching demanded. The rendering 'at the preaching,' does not bring out the idea at all, but it would be difficult to translate the passage any more accurately without adopting an awkward circumlocution."

The other passage tells us that John baptized people "unto [*eis*] repentance." And Dr. Summers argues that John required repentance before he would baptize anyone, and, therefore, concludes that this expression means he baptized them because they had repented. But here again our Greek preposition must be reckoned with, and we shall see if there is a meaning which the Greeks would have understood from this passage. There clearly is such a meaning, and a little thoughtful consideration will enable the English reader to see it. The meaning here is similar to that given by Brother McGarvey in the quotation submitted above. The people were baptized into a state of repentance or into a changed life. A fine explanation of this passage has been given by a Baptist scholar, and he ought to be good authority with Dr. Summers. He clearly states that the preposition does not have the meaning of *on account of*, and he says that those who construe it to have this meaning here misunderstand it. This scholar was Dr. J. W. Wilmarth. He was editor of the Baptist Quarterly in 1877. He wrote at length upon the Greek preposition *eis*, and gave a very full treatment of the subject. In 1908, J. T. Shepherd, who was at that time office editor of the Gospel Advocate, republished Dr. Wilmarth's explanation of *eis* in a tract. Dr. Wilmarth was still living in 1908, and he gave permission to Brother Shepherd to reprint his essay. I shall close this article with the quotation of what Dr. Wilmarth said upon Matt. 3: 11. Here is his statement:

John also said (Matt. 3: 11): 'I indeed baptize you in water unto [*eis*] repentance.' This has been misunderstood. *Eis* does not here change its ground meaning, is not equivalent to *on account of*. John's baptism looked to the future, to the near approach of Messiah, whose people must be prepared for him. Those baptized by John were indeed required to repent, but also to stand pledged unto repentance, thenceforward to have a changed heart and life, so as to be in a state of readiness for Messiah's coming. So, Olshausen says that John's baptism 'aimed at awakening repentance'; only his remark is too unqualified, present as well as prospective repentance being required. (Matt. 3: 2, 7, 8.)

This explains the phrase *eis metanoian*—unto repentance. In harmony with this also was John's teaching of faith. 'John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him who should come after him; that is, on Jesus.' (Acts 19: 4.) After Christ's ascension we met no more with the phrase *baptized unto repentance*, because baptism now acknowledges the Messiah already come, and faith and repentance, as conditions of remission, are conceived of as wholly in the present. But the phrase *baptized unto remission* remains—is used by Peter. (Acts 2: 38.) Those who render *eis* in Matt. 3: 11 *on account of* furnish a notable instance of missing an important idea through failure to understand the force of the Greek preposition."

believe, stumble; they who stumble are also appointed for stumbling", J. A. Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, ET 1863, V, 55). Whatever construction we put on the notoriously difficult *skeuē orgēs katērtismena eis apōleian* in Rom. 9:22 ("the objects of his wrath, fit only for destruction"), it must be noted that (i) *katērtismena* should be distinguished from *ha prohetoimasen* (Rom. 9:23); and (ii) God would hardly be said to have "tolerated most patiently" a situation that he himself had ordained.

But whether *eis* ever expresses a purpose that is actually realized (consecutive or ecbatic *eis*), as opposed to a result that is simply aimed at, has been an issue hotly debated by grammarians and commentators. That *eis* sometimes expresses result (cf. the occasional ecbatic use of *hina*) seems now to be generally recognized (see, e.g., C. F. D. Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 70; A. Oepke, *eis*, *TDNT* II 429-431). In a thorough article that deals with "The Articular Infinitive with *eis*" in both cl. and Hel. Gk. (*JBL* 15, 1896, 155-167), I. T. Beckwith concludes that in 8 NT passages (viz., Rom. 1:20; 7:5; 12:2; 2 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 3:17; Phil. 1:10; Heb. 11:3; Jas. 3:3) a consecutive sense for *eis* with the articular infinitive is highly probable. Oepke (*op. cit.*) gives further examples, in which ecbatic *eis* is followed by articular or anarthrous substantives (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:17; 2 Cor. 7:9 f.). In Rom. 10:10 *eis dikaiosynēn* means "[for with his heart a man believes] and so is justified", although earlier (v. 4) the same phrase may bear a telic sense "[Christ is the end of the law] viewed as a means of gaining righteousness". (Compare a similar alternation of senses for *eis to* with the infinitive in Rom. 4:11, 16, 18.) Finally, if the consecutive sense of *eis* is recognized in Rom. 12:2, Paul's point is not that the aim of the transformation of character is the discernment of God's will (= telic *eis*), but rather that the Christian's ability to ascertain ("determine by scrutiny"; cf. Lk. 12:56) God's will naturally results from the renewal of the mind (cf. ecbatic *eis* with verbs denoting renewal in Col. 3:10; Heb. 6:6). Often, however, the categories of purpose and result merge, for a result may be a *designed* consequence. Therefore it is sometimes impossible to determine which is intended (e.g., in the phrase *eis doxan theou* in 2 Cor. 4:15; Phil. 1:11; 2:11; but in 1 Cor. 10:31 it is undoubtedly telic), especially when a divine action is spoken of (e.g., *eis hen sōma ebaptisthēmen*, 1 Cor. 12:13).

3. *Causal eis*? Can *eis* be retrospective, giving the cause, as well as prospective, defining the purpose or result? Such a sense for *eis* seems unlikely in any one of the passages sometimes adduced (see, e.g., J. R. Mantey, "The Causal Use of *Eis* in the New Testament", *JBL* 70, 1951, 45-48): Mk. 15:34 (and Matt. 14:31, "why?"); Matt. 3:11 (see below, III. A. 3. (a)); 10:41 (*eis onoma prophētou*, "within the category 'prophet'" = "because he is a prophet" - Arndt 577, s.v. *onoma* II; cf. M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, § 106); 12:41 (= Lk. 11:32; "at the preaching of Jonah"); Acts 2:38 (see below, III. A. 3. (a)); 7:53 ("as delivered by angels," RSV); Rom. 4:20 ("looking to the promise of God"); 11:32 ("consigned to disobedience"; cf. Ps. 77:62, LXX); 2 Tim. 2:25 ("repentance that leads to a knowledge of the truth"); 2:26 ("entrapped by him to do his will", Weymouth); Tit. 3:14 ("to supply the necessities"); Heb. 12:7 ("it is for the benefits of discipline [or, as a discipline] that you have to endure"); 1 Jn. 5:10 ("he has refused to believe the testimony"). Liddell-Scott list no causal uses of *eis*.

4. *logizesthai eis*. This phrase, which in the LXX renders *ḥāšab l'*, occurs in the quotation of Gen. 15:6 found in Rom. 4:3 (cf. vv. 9, 22); Gal. 3:6; Jas. 2:23:



# Person And Number In Acts 2:38

Kippy Myers

A common argument used by denominational preachers in order to keep baptism out of the command in Acts 2:38, involves the change in person and number found in this verse.

The argument usually goes like this: Peter says, "Repent ye [second person plural] and let him be baptized [third person, singular] for the remission of your [second person, plural] sins, and ye [second person, plural] shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Since Peter puts "repent," "your sins," and "will receive" in the second person, plural, he must mean for these phrases to go together and apply to the same people. But since "be baptized" is a third person, singular, it must be separated from these other phrases and must refer to a different audience. Therefore, only repentance should be connected with receiving remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is not to be so connected. One proponent says, "It is evident, then, that repentance and baptism in Acts 2:38 cannot be combined so as to have both modified by the phrase, 'for the remission of sins'." (Bob Ross, *Acts 2:38 and Baptismal Remission*, p. 47.) As they say, a verb must agree with its subject in person and number. Since there are different persons and numbers in verse 38, all of the persons and numbers cannot have reference to the same subject or audience. Such a phenomenon is nowhere found in the entire New Testament, so they say. Not even one time is such a thing to be found. Their conclusion? Repentance is necessary. Baptism is not!

Is this person and number ploy a reasonable argument? Let us note the two points of evidence offered in their behalf: 1—Rule of Grammar, and 2—No New Testament Example.

The rule of syntax is correctly stated. A verb must indeed agree with its subject in person and number. This rule and its application to Acts 2:38, however, has no real bearing upon a discussion of the necessity of baptism. It is not a grammar problem, as such. The reason "be baptized" is in the third person, singular form is that it has reference to "each one of you" which technically requires a third person, singular verb. Peter could not have used a second person, plural verb with the phrase "each one of you." Yet, "each one of you" composes the very same group also addressed with "repent ye." The former phrase is simply a different way of speaking directly to every individual making up the group. So, the same group is referred to by using both a second person, plural verb and a third person, singular verb.

Thus, we need not be discussing a rule of syntax to explain this change of person and number. We need

to refer to a rule of rhetoric. It is common in speech or writing to switch one's form of address. The preacher says, "We are happy you [2nd, pl] are here today and hope that every one of you [3rd, sg] can stay for the following meal." This is a rhetorical device employed to make the message more lucid, more personal, and less monotonous. Peter uses this device in Acts 2:38. "All of you repent and every one of you be baptized."

As to the non-existence of such a usage in the New Testament, please note these examples of a writer or speaker addressing a group while changing person and number:

Luke 13:15: Ye (2nd, pl) hypocrites, doth not each one of you (3rd, sg) . . .

John 16:32: Ye (2nd, pl) shall be scattered, every man to his own (3rd, sg)

Acts 3:26: Unto you (2nd, pl) first God sent his child . . . to bless you (2nd, pl) in turning every one of you (3rd, sg)

Romans 12:1, 3: I beseech you, therefore, brethren (2nd, pl) . . . for I say to every man among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought (3rd, sg)

1 Corinthians 16:1, 2: So also do ye (2nd, pl) . . . let each one of you (3rd, sg)

1 Thessalonians 2:11, 12: As ye (2nd, pl) know how we dealt with each one of you (3rd, sg)

1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4: Ye abstain (2nd, pl) . . . that each one of you know how to possess himself (3rd, sg)

Hebrews 6:11, 12: That each one of you (3rd, sg) may show the same diligence . . . that ye (2nd, pl) be not sluggish

These are just a few of the many New Testament passages where a particular audience is addressed with changing forms of number. Any time the same audience is spoken to for some time (see the sermon on the mount) this phenomenon will usually occur. It is perfectly natural to address an audience as a group, then to divide the group into individuals while still addressing the entire group and not excluding any member of it. This style can also be found in the Septuagint, Hebrew Old Testament, and ancient Greek literature.

Peter employs a common rhetorical device in Acts 2:38. He varies his form of address so as to address his audience both as a group and on an individual basis. This is just another example of a simple New Testament command which has been complicated by the divisive antics of denominationalism.—P.O. Box 536, Hooks, Texas 75561



# The Third Person Imperative in Acts 2:38

CARROLL D. OSBURN  
Pepperdine University

The phrase "for the remission of sins" in Acts 2:38 is commonly understood as modifying both of the preceding imperatives, "repent" and "be baptized." For instance, Lake and Cadbury<sup>1</sup> observe that "ἐλς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν should be connected with μετανοήσατε as with βαπτισθήτω (cf. Luke iii.3, βάπτισμα μετανόας ἐλς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν) since this association of ideas is shown to be Lukan by xxiv. 47 . . . and Acts v. 31." When Markus Barth<sup>2</sup> suggests that "for the forgiveness of sins" in Acts 2:38 means that baptism is received *in hope of* forgiveness, even the Baptist writer G. R. Beasley-Murray<sup>3</sup> points out that "this is surely pressing language expressive of purpose in a manner never intended." As Beasley-Murray (p. 105) puts it, "Peter calls for his hearers to repent and be baptized, with a view to receiving forgiveness and the Spirit," and Eduard Schweizer<sup>4</sup> writes, "2:38 teaches nothing other than that for Luke baptism belongs to the much more important fact of conversion." Even the Roman Catholic writer Schnackenburg<sup>5</sup> takes to task the Baptist writer Schneider<sup>6</sup> for separating conversion and baptism, thus virtually denying any inner connection between the two.

In this connection, there is a certain argument about Acts 2:38 couched in this way:

MAJOR PREMISE    Since verbs must agree with their subjects in person and number and

---

<sup>1</sup>K. Lake and H.J. Cadbury, *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part I, The Acts of the Apostles*, eds. F.J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake (London: Macmillan, 1933) 4:26. See, among others, F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), p. 98; G.H.C. Macgregor, *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1954) 9:49.

<sup>2</sup>M. Barth, *Die Taufe ein Sakrament?* (Zürich: Zollikon, 1951), p. 140.

<sup>3</sup>G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), pp. 102-108.

<sup>4</sup>Schweizer, "πνεῦμα," *TWNT* 6:411.

<sup>5</sup>R. Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul*, trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), p. 63, fn. 122.

<sup>6</sup>J. Schneider, *Die Passionsmystik des Paulus* (Leipzig, 1929), p. 34, fn. 2.

## RESTORATION QUARTERLY

- MINOR PREMISE    since "repent" here is second person plural and "be baptized" is third person singular,  
CONCLUSION       it necessarily follows that repentance and baptism in Acts 2:38 cannot be combined so as to have both modified by the phrase "for the remission of sins."

Ben Bogard,<sup>7</sup> for instance, former dean of the Missionary Baptist Institute in Little Rock, argued in his debate with N. B. Hardeman in 1938: "You can't join the second person plural to the third person singular by the conjunction 'and' with the same predicate to save your life without violating the rule of Greek, Latin, and English grammar." Similarly, in his debate with Thomas Warren, L. S. Ballard<sup>8</sup> argued that "'repent' cannot have the same nominative or subject that 'be baptized' has, neither can 'be baptized' have the same nominative or subject that 'repent' has." However, running bits of Greek grammar through the syllogistic mill is methodologically dubious in that it omits significant idiomatic usage. The appropriate syntactical question which must be asked is how does the third person imperative function in Acts 2:38?

Initially it must be observed that normal Greek usage expects concord in person and number between subject and verb. Robertson,<sup>9</sup> however, notes several idiomatic Greek usages in which such agreement in person and number does not exist between subject and verb. 1) For instance, in Attic a neuter plural inanimate subject takes a singular verb. This idiomatic usage continues in various NT texts, such as John 9:3, "in order that the works of God (nominative neuter plural) may be made manifest (third person singular)" and Luke 8:30, "many demons (nom. neut. pl.) entered (third person singular)." 2) Another established idiomatic usage in which concord between subject and verb does not exist is in the so-called "Pindaric construction," in which, when several subjects are united, the verb is put in the singular, as in James 5:2-3; Matthew 6:19; Mark 4:41; and 1 Corinthians 15:50. 3) Similar idiomatic usages without concord in person and number are "collective substantives," such as "multitude" and "crowd," which often take singular verbs, as well as the tendency for the verb to have the singular when it serves a subject having both a singular and a plural, as in John 2:2; 3:22; 18:15; and Acts 11:14. It is vital to observe that these idiomatic usages are not "violations of a rule," but established usages in their own right. Consequently, it is syntactically incorrect to appeal to a "rule" about concord in person and number between subject and verb, while overlooking established idiomatic usages which vary from the usual.

<sup>7</sup>Hardeman-Bogard Debate (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1938), pp. 106-107.

<sup>8</sup>Warren-Ballard Debate (Jonesboro, Ark.: National Christian Press, 1979), pp. 168-169.

<sup>9</sup>A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 821.

Aside from passing remarks in descriptive grammars,<sup>10</sup> there is a paucity of precise information concerning the third person imperative. Goetchius<sup>11</sup> has noted that the third person imperative is not always imperatival and introductory primers employ such auxiliary words as "let" or "may," but Nida<sup>12</sup> rightly cautions that this use of auxiliary words is not always appropriate for the third person imperative. Heidt's<sup>13</sup> study is limited to matters of tense, and Bakker's<sup>14</sup> analysis of the imperative is limited to the aspectual differences between the present and aorist imperatives in Greek prayers. Other studies do not treat fully the third person imperative.<sup>15</sup> Ray Elliott<sup>16</sup> has listed NT instances of the third person imperative, but provides no analysis.

In a recent MA thesis at Harding Graduate School of Religion, however, Judy Glaze<sup>17</sup> has addressed the function of the third person imperative in the Septuagint, isolating several idiomatic usages, one of which is pertinent to the usage in Acts 2:38. Glaze observes that the third person singular imperative does function idiomatically in concert with a second person plural imperative so as to allow the speaker addressing a group to address members of that group individually. In this distributive imperatival usage, the speaker attaches such tremendous importance to the command that he makes it clear with the third person singular imperative that not a single member of the group is exempt. For instance, in Exodus 16:29 the keeping of the Sabbath is expressed with the sec-

<sup>10</sup>J.H. Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908) 1:175; Robertson, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, p. 943.

<sup>11</sup>E.V.N. Goetchius, *The Language of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 332.

<sup>12</sup>E.A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), p. 201.

<sup>13</sup>W. Heidt, "Translating New Testament Imperatives," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 13 (1951):253ff.

<sup>14</sup>W.F. Bakker, *The Greek Imperative* (Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert, 1966), 154pp.

<sup>15</sup>B.L. Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek* (New York: American Book Co., 1900) 1:164-67; B.G. Mandilaras, *The Verb in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri* (Athens: Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sciences, 1973), pp. 288-307. See also F.W. Mozley, "Notes on the Biblical Use of the Present and Aorist Imperative" *Journal of Theological Studies* 4 (1903):279-82; A. Moreschini Quattordio, "L'uso dell'infinitivo e dell'imperativo in Omero e nella tradizione epigrafica," *Studi Classici e Orientali* 19-20 (1970-71):347-58; C. Grassi, "Imperativo presente e aoristo nelle preghiere agli dei," *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 35 (1963):186-98; Amigues, "Les temps de l'imperatif dans les ordres de l'orateur au greffier," *Revue des Études Grecques* 90 (1977):223-38; and J.L. García-Ramón, "Zu den griechischen dialekten Imperativen -ντοσ -σθον," *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung* 92 (1978):135-42.

<sup>16</sup>R. Elliott, "Functions of the Third Person Imperative Verb Forms in the Greek N.T.," *Notes on Translation* 69 (1978): 30-31, to which must be added Matt. 5:31, 8:13; 1 Cor. 7:17; 1 Tim. 4:12; and 2 Peter 3:8.

<sup>17</sup>J. Glaze, "The Septuagintal Use of the Third Person Imperative" (unpublished MA thesis, Harding Graduate School of Religion, 1979).

ond person plural imperative "Remain each one of you in his house," and this is made emphatic with the following third person singular imperative, "no man is permitted to go out of his house on the seventh day!" In Joshua 6:10 a command is given in which the second person plural imperative, "Do not shout," is followed by a third person singular imperative which addresses the members of the group individually with added emphasis, "do not let the voice of anyone be heard!" In 2 Kings 10:19 Jehu commands, "Call (second person plural imperative) to me all the prophets of Baal; let not one of them be missing (third person singular imperative)!" In Zechariah 7:10 the command is given, "Do not oppress (second person plural imperative) the widow, fatherless, sojourner, or poor, and let no one of you devise evil (third person singular imperative) against his brother!" In such instances the subject of the second person plural imperative and of the third person singular imperative is the same. The intervening conjunction poses no problem.

This idiomatic usage of the the third person singular imperative in conjunction with a second person plural imperative to underscore emphatically the command to each and every one of those addressed is not peculiar to the Septuagint. One finds it in apocryphal literature, as at 1 Maccabees 10:63, "Go with him (second person plural imperative) into the midst of the city and proclaim (second person plural imperative) that no one is to bring charges against him about any matter and do not let anyone annoy him (third person singular imperative) for any reason!" Further, this usage occurs several times in the Apostolic Fathers, as at Didache 15:3, "Reprove one another (second person plural imperative) not in wrath, . . . and let none speak (third person singular imperative) with any who has done a wrong to his neighbor, nor let him hear (third person singular imperative) a word from you until he repents!" One particular sentence in Ignatius, *Magnesians* 6:2, has striking affinity with the sentence in Acts 2:38, "Be then all in conformity with God (imperative participle), respect one another (second person plural imperative), and let no man regard (third person singular imperative) his neighbor according to the flesh, but in everything love (second person plural imperative) one another in Jesus Christ!"

In view of the abundance of such examples, there is no syntactical basis for the assertion that the second person plural imperative and the third person singular imperative cannot refer in Greek to the same subject. In accord with customary idiomatic usage, the function of the third person imperative βαπτισθήτω in Acts 2:38 is to underscore emphatically in distributive fashion the necessity of each one of the hearers participating in baptism as part of conversion.

## THE ELUSIVE CAUSAL *EIS*

RALPH MARCUS

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

IN his second article on "causal" *εἰς*,<sup>1</sup> Professor J. R. Mantey has courteously admitted that there was merit in my criticisms<sup>2</sup> of at least some of the translations of supposed examples of this construction offered by him in his first article.<sup>3</sup> He maintains, however, that "plausible" examples of causal *εἰς* in non-biblical Greek can be found. Since I know that Prof. Mantey is just as anxious as I am to establish the existence or non-existence of this construction on a scientific basis, I am confident that he will welcome further scrutiny of his material. Let us therefore take his second batch of examples one by one.

The first example, from *Polybius* I.87.4, is not a new one but was cited in his first article and overlooked by me. The reason for my overlooking it was probably that it is exactly the same construction as three others earlier cited from *Polybius* and shown to have been wrongly construed by Prof. Mantey. His translation reads in part, "and to force them, *because of* the circumstances, *εἰς τὰ παρόντα*, to be reconciled." Unfortunately Prof. Mantey has neglected to cite all of the relevant phrase in Greek, which reads *βλέψαντας εἰς τὰ παρόντα*. Here the *εἰς* is dependent upon *βλέψαντας* (as in the three other examples from *Polybius* noted in my first article) and indicates (figurative) *place to which*. There is no shadow of a causal *εἰς* here.

The second example, from *Pap. Oxy.* iv.787, contains the phrase *εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν καταλογὴν*, which Prof. Mantey translates, "*on (= because of) my recommendation*." This translation is unexceptional but it hardly establishes *εἰς* as causal. The phrase meant originally "(set down) to one's account" and only secondarily came to mean "on one's recommendation." Suppose an English grammarian were to argue that since "on his initiative" means the same thing as "because of his initiative", the preposition "on" is causal. Would that be regarded as good linguistic description?

<sup>1</sup> *JBL* LXX (1951), 309-311.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, 129-130.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, 45-48.

<sup>4</sup> All the italicised words in the translations are in Prof. Mantey's italics.

MARCH 1952

The third and fourth examples are almost identical, one being taken from Lucian's *Dead Come to Life* 12, the other from *Essays in Portraiture Defended* 23. Both passages speak of a woman who is praised for her beauty, *ἐπαινουμένη εἰς κάλλος* and *ἐπαινεῖν . . . εἰς τὸ κάλλος*. In these cases, to be sure, the beauty is a cause for praise, but that does not make the *εἰς* a causal *εἰς*. Suppose, again, that an English grammarian were to argue that since such an expression as "commendable in spirit" or "laudable in attitude" is equivalent to "commendable because of spirit" or "laudable because of attitude," the English preposition "in" is causal. That would hardly be considered good linguistic description. Similarly it is not good linguistic description to say of *εἰς* after *ἐπαινεῖν* that it is causal when it is primarily an indication of *respect in which*.

The next example is from Dionysius Hal. II.72.3, reading in part *εἰς ἀνάγκην καταστάντες*, which Prof. Mantey renders, "being constrained by (=on account of) necessity." But the causality comes only from the free English translation. The Greek says clearly "being reduced to need". The *εἰς* therefore indicates (figurative) *place to which*.

Although my interest throughout this discussion has been chiefly in non-biblical Greek, it may be worthwhile to comment on one example cited by Prof. Mantey from the LXX, Gen 4 23, *ἄνδρα ἀπέκτεινα εἰς τραῦμα ἐμοὶ καὶ νεανίσκον εἰς μώλωπα ἐμοί*, and translated by him as "I killed a man *for* wounding me, and a young man *for* striking me." I'm afraid that Prof. Mantey's translation of the Greek is less accurate than the LXX translation of the Hebrew. The Greek says literally, "I killed a man to a wound for me, and a young man to a bruise for me". The LXX has simply given a mechanical rendering of the Hebrew preposition *le*, the meaning of which in this brief and obscure fragment of poetry is uncertain to us and was probably uncertain to the translator. Whether the LXX translator meant this *εἰς* to be taken as causal no one, I think, can say.

Whether *εἰς* is used causally in Acts 2 38, *βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν . . . εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν*, I have not sought to determine. But I think it is clear that Prof. Mantey has been so intent upon showing that his interpretation of *εἰς* in this and other NT passages is supported by examples of causal *εἰς* in non-biblical Greek that he has (unwittingly) misconstrued the non-biblical passages. He has also, I think, confused cause with purpose. It is quite possible that *εἰς* is used causally in these NT passages but the examples of causal *εἰς* cited from non-biblical Greek contribute absolutely nothing to making this possibility a probability. If, therefore, Prof. Mantey is right in his interpretation of various NT passages on baptism and repentance and the remission of sins, he is right for reasons that are non-linguistic.

J. W. McGarvey

[Nov. 13, 1897.]

## IN ONE SPIRIT.

I answer the following question:

I read, years ago, your article in *Lard's Quarterly* on "By one Spirit are we all baptized into the one body," etc. J. J. Haley claims for it Holy Spirit baptism. Have you changed your view, or do you believe now as you did then?—W. C. ROGERS.

I remember the article referred to, but I long ago gave away the copy of the *Quarterly* which contained it, and I can not now consult it. The article had rather a singular origin. Bro. Lard and I agreed as to the meaning of the passage; but he had some misgivings about it, so he made the proposal that I should write a defense of our interpretation; that he should make under an assumed name the strongest objections to it that he could, and that I should then make a short rejoinder. It has been so long since I read my article that I can not now recall all the course of my argument, and I am not sure that I did not say some things that I would not now repeat; but my understanding of the apostle's meaning has undergone no change, and I will try to set it forth in brief.

As given in the Revised Version, the language of the text is this: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). Two facts in the past experience of the disciples are here set forth; first, that in one Spirit they had all been baptized into one body; and, second, that they had all been made to drink of one Spirit. I think that it will not be denied that the word "drink," in the latter clause, is a metaphor for the enjoyment of the



Holy Spirit; and that the reference is to that gift of the Holy Spirit promised to all who repent and are baptized. This enjoyment of the Spirit, which begins of course with its reception, is represented by the apostle as being preceded by the other fact that all had been in one Spirit baptized into one body. In other words, being baptized into the one body had preceded being made to drink of the one Spirit. Can the baptism then mean the baptism in the Holy Spirit? I think not; for he who is thus baptized begins in the act to drink of the Spirit, and this drinking would not be spoken of as a subsequent and separate experience.

Again, in all passages where the word "baptize" is connected with that in or into which the act brings the subject, the verb is placed first. For example, "I baptize you in water;" "He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire;" "All who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." Even in our passage, "baptized into one body." Now, if the apostle had meant to say that this baptism into one body was the Holy Spirit baptism, he would have expressed himself, according to the universal usage, differently. He would have said, "We were all baptized in one Spirit into one body." This would have been unambiguous. But, connecting the expression "into one body" with the baptism, he places the expression in "one spirit," not between them, but before both. What, then, does he mean by this latter expression? This is the real issue.

It is well known that Paul, in a few instances, uses the expression, "in the Spirit," for the state of one in whom the Spirit dwells; but it is also used to indicate the controlling guidance of the Holy Spirit; and the latter usage is more frequent than the former. What is more to the point, the latter usage is the one which pre-

vails throughout the context of the passage under discussion. The introductory remark of the context is this: "Wherefore, I give you to understand that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith Jesus is anathema; and no man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (v. 2). Now, a man can say Jesus is Lord without being in the Holy Spirit in the sense of having the Holy Spirit dwelling in him; but he can not say it without the Holy Spirit as his guide to a knowledge of Jesus. The Spirit's guidance in the matter is exercised through the word of truth. Farther on the apostle adds: "For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; and to another the gift of healing, in the same Spirit" (vs. 8, 9); where the expressions "through the Spirit," "according to the same Spirit," and "in the same Spirit," are equivalents, and all specify the action of the Holy Spirit in the several instances, and not the state of being in the Holy Spirit. If there could be any doubt of this, it would be removed by verse 11, which is a summary of the preceding specifications of the Spirit's work: "But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will." In such a connection, when the apostle adds, "in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body," it appears incontrovertible that he is adding another specification of what the Holy Spirit does—that by its guidance, which was known to be exercised through the preached Word, the disciples had been baptized into the one body. The baptism could be understood by his readers only as the same by which they were baptized into Christ, and into his death; that is, the baptism in water.

I may add that, in the only two instances of baptism in the Holy Spirit expressly so styled in the Scriptures, this baptism did not introduce its subjects into the one body. The first was that of the apostles on the great Pentecost, and the second the family and friends of Cornelius. In the former instance the subjects of the baptism were already members of the body, and in the latter they became such afterward by being baptized, as Peter commanded, in the name of Jesus Christ.

"What reason did the early Christians give for the substitution of our four Gospels for those previously in use in the churches?"

None at all; and for the very good reason that no such substitution took place. The assumption that it did is a device of the unbelievers intended to break the force of the evidence given by Justin Martyr. They assume, without the slightest ground of evidence, that the books which he calls memoirs, though he says that they were also called Gospels, were books now lost, and that our four were substituted for them. The documents to which Luke refers in the beginning of his Gospel were furtive and unsatisfactory writings, whose want of reliability led him to write his book.

# ACTS 2:38—NOT SO TOUGH

Wayne Jackson, Stockton, California

(Reprinted by permission from www.christiancourier.com, copyright 1999)

The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry maintains a web site that operates out of southern California. It is under the oversight of author and web master, Matthew J. Slick, B.A., M.Div. Mr. Slick is also an associate "pastor" and "elder" with the Wellspring Christian Fellowship in Escondido, California. [Note: In the New Testament, the titles "pastor" and "elder" represent the same role (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-2, where the verb "feed" (vs. 2) is a cognate form of the noun "pastors," Ephesians 4:11).]

On his web site, Mr. Slick has articles dealing with a variety of topics. Some of them are commendable. Many of them, however, dreadfully distort New Testament truth.

Consider, for example, a piece titled, "Is Baptism Necessary for Salvation?" The author succinctly replies: "The answer is a simple, 'No.'" He then addresses what he describes as "some of those verses that are commonly used to support the idea that baptism is necessary to salvation."

We will not take the time at this point to review Mr. Slick's entire article. Our attention will be confined to his discussion of Acts 2:38. He begins by quoting the passage:

Peter replied, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Our friend then muses: "This verse is a tough one." It's not so "tough"—unless one already has his mind abused with the notion that baptism *cannot* be a condition in the plan of redemption.

The gentleman continues: "It seems to say that baptism is a part of salvation." It doesn't "seem" to say it; it *actually* says it. He opines that this cannot be the case, though, for such a conclusion would contradict other scriptures. Our friend then seeks to employ a rather time-worn evasion in defense of his position—although his version of it may suggest that he really does not understand the nature of the original argument.

Mr. Slick attempts to sever the connection between the verbs "repent" and "be baptized" (even though they are connected by the coordinate "and") on the ground that the former term is plural in number, while the latter is singular.

According to him the sense would seem to be: "Repent [plural] for the forgiveness of your [plural] sins, and [separate from the foregoing] each of you [singular] get baptized [as a now-saved person]."

The gentleman appears to think that simply because there is a change in grammatical number, this somehow has disassociated baptism from repentance, and therefore distanced it from the phrase, "for the forgiveness of sins."

This is a debate quibble hoary with age. It was ineffectively employed by Ben N. Bogard in his discussion with N.B. Hardeman more than sixty years ago. The eloquent Hardeman demolished the argument!

First of all, let us focus again on the *motive* behind this argument. Here is the difficulty for Mr. Slick and others of his theological persuasion.

The two commands, "repent" and "be baptized," are joined by the conjunction "and." It follows that if repentance is essential to salvation, so also is baptism. On the other hand, if baptism may be dismissed, repentance may be as well.

Since Protestants have already determined in their minds that baptism *cannot* be a requisite for salvation but that repentance is essential, this passage obviously "troubles" them.

Their challenge, therefore, is this: How may one divorce the obligation to "repent" from the command "be baptized" in this passage?

The above-stated grammatical contortion, based upon the differing verbal "numbers," is their solution.

However, the argument is futile. It is a fundamental form of grammatical construction that a group may be addressed with a general command; and then, as a matter of emphasis, a second injunction may be issued to each individual within the group—both commands being equally obligatory.

Here is an example of this construction we hear frequently: "All who are departing for San Francisco, approach Gate 3; each of you must have his ticket available for the agent."

Let me follow up on this in a couple of ways. Several years ago I wrote a letter to F.W. Gingrich, co-translator, along with William Arndt, of the highly-respected *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957). This is the most authoritative Greek lexicon extant in the English language. The letter, dated February 12, 1968, inquired as follows:

Dear Professor Gingrich: Is it grammatically possible that the phrase "for the remission of sins," in Acts 2:38, expresses the force of both verbs, "repent ye" and "be baptized each one of you," even though these verbs differ in both person and number?

From Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania (February 21, 1968), Gingrich replied:

Yes. The difference between *metanoesate* [repent] and *baptistheto* [be baptized] is simply that in the first instance, the people are viewed together in the plural, while in the second the emphasis is on each individual.

No credence can be given to the sort of argument made by Mr. Slick. But, as indicated above, some religionists—particularly our Baptist neighbors—have argued this position for years. In reality, though, they've been notoriously inconsistent.

I have before me at this moment a copy of the *Church Manual Designed For The Use Of Baptist Churches*, by J.M. Pendleton (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1955). In a segment which addresses the "subjects" who are appropriate candidates for baptism, Pendleton was attempting to explain why baptism *may not* be administered in the case of infants. In a consideration of Acts 2:38, he wrote:

The gospel was preached, the people were pierced to the heart, and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you." No man will say that the command "Repent," is applicable to infants, and it is certain the *same persons* [emp. added here] were called on to *repent and be baptized* (p. 84).

Pendleton's concession completely devastates the argument of his Baptist colleagues.

But consider this additional statement from Mr. Slick, the director of the Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry:

Repentance is a mark of salvation because it is granted by God (2 Timothy 2:25) and is given to believers only. In this context, only the regenerated, repentant person is to be baptized.

A couple of observations must be made regarding this statement:

1. Repentance is a "gift" from God only in the sense that the Lord grants man the *opportunity* to repent (cf. Acts 11:18). That the sinner has the obligation to personally *do* the repenting is evidenced by the fact that he is *commanded* to discharge the responsibility (Acts 2:38; 3:19).

2. There is no biblical evidence whatever that "regeneration" is effected at the point of repentance. That is Mr. Slick's unwarranted assertion. In the text under consideration, "forgiveness of sins" *follows both* repentance and immersion; it does not precede either of these commands. The gentleman is simply wrong about this matter.

Our friend's desire to defend the integrity of the Scriptures in various areas of apologetics is commendable. However, his egregious perversion of the divine plan of salvation undermines an otherwise noble effort. We can only hope he will restudy his position on the plan of redemption.

WOT

# Acts 2:38 -- Does It Teach That Baptism Is A Necessary Condition To The Remission Of Sins?

Thomas B. Warren  
SALENA PARK, TX

## INTRODUCTION

Protestants in general and Baptists in particular deny that one must be baptized in water in order to the remission of his alien sins. There are, however, many passages from the word of God which teach the necessity of baptism. Such passages Baptists must deny. One such passage is Acts 2:38, which reads, "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (A.S.V.)

This verse very obviously teaches that baptism is "unto the remission of sins." To avoid the force of it, Baptists concocted two plans: (1.) "unto" (A.S.V.) or "for" (K.J.V.) means "because of" or "on account of," i.e., be baptized because of remission of sins which has already taken place. (2.) "unto remission of sins" cannot modify both verbs, "repent" and "be baptized." If either of them is false, then the Baptist idea that baptism is not essential is false.

1. Does "unto" mean "because of"? The word "unto" means "indicating the direction of movement reaching its object or of approach, inclination, or tendency, in respect of an unreached object."
2. Does any recognized translation translate Acts 2:38 as "because of remission of sins"? Decidedly not!
3. Does any recognized Greek English Lexicon give the preposition (Gr. eis) the meaning "because of," "on account of"? On the contrary, all render it as prospective, looking to an end to be reached, purpose, or aim. Thayer, recognized as the best lexicographer, says of Acts 2:38: "to obtain the forgiveness of sins."
4. How do Greek scholars say eis should be rendered in Acts 2:38? What do they say it means?

1. Winer, outstanding Greek scholar: "The purpose and end in view ... Acts 2:38..." (Winer's New Testament Grammar, p. 396).
2. J. Millmarch, Baptist scholar: "...The truth will suffer nothing by giving to 'eis' its true signification. When the Campbellites translate 'in order to' in Acts 2:38, they translate correctly. Is a translation false because Campbellites endorse it? ...We conclude without hesitation, and in accordance with such authorities as Hackett, Winer, Meyer, etc., that the proper rendering of 'eis apnesin hamartion' in Acts 2:38, as in Matthew 26:28, is 'unto,' 'for,' i.e., 'in order to,' Remission of Sins."
3. Hackett, Baptist scholar in reference to Acts 22:16: "This clause states a result of the baptism in language derived from the nature of that ordinance. It answers to 'for the remission of sins,' in 2:38--i.e., submit to the rite in order to be forgiven."
4. E.A. Meyer, German scholar on Acts 2:38: "'eis' denotes the object of the baptism, which is the remission of the guilt contracted in the state before 'metanoia'."
5. D.A. Penick, Prof. of Classical Language, University of Texas: "Normally 'eis' looks forward and I know of no case in the New Testament where it looks back."
6. Charles B. Williams, Baptist (Translator of the New Testament): "So I feel from lexical authority you have been taught properly [that it is always prospective]." (Letter to Porter Wilhite, 1/14/42.) His translation of the New Testament: "that you may have your sins forgiven."

7. Johann P. Lange, prominent German Lutheran theologian: "This aphesis hamartion is unquestionably connected more intimately and directly than the gift of the Holy Ghost with the baptismal act; the former (aphesis) namely, is indicated by the word eis (for the remission, etc.) as the immediate purpose of Baptism, and as the promise unseparably connected with it..." (Commentary on Acts, p. 53. See also Commentary on Matt., p. 557.)
8. Olshausen, German Lutheran, Professor of Theology: "And baptism is accompanied with the remission of sins (eis aphasis hamartion as a result.)"
9. C.E. Morgan, Dean, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary: "...I do not know of any recognized Greek Lexicon which gives to eis the meaning of 'because of.'"
10. W.R. Harper, Pres. of Chicago University (at that time): "In answer to your letter I would say that the preposition eis is to be translated 'unto,' i.e. 'in order to secure.' The preposition indicates that remission of sins is the end to be aimed at in the action expressed by the predicates repent and be baptized. The phrase is telic." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 350.)
11. Seth J. Cartell, Baptist, Professor of Greek Language: "The preposition eis in Acts 2:38 may be rendered by several prepositions, or prepositional phrases, as for instance; unto, for, in order to, with a view to. The noun which it governs denotes the object or end toward which the action expressed by the predicate verbs was to be directed..." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 340.)
12. S.E. Butcher, Scotch Presbyterian, Professor of Greek: "... In each passage the preposition eis seems to express the 'end towards which the action tends,' the 'result' which it is designed to bring about." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 341.)
13. Ingraham Eywater, Regius Professor of Greek: "As far as I can see, the preposition 'eis' in Acts 2:38 expresses the end or purpose to be attained: compare Moulton's 'Winer,' ed. 3 p. 495 and Thayer's 'Grimm,' p. 185. The translation, I suppose, is 'with a view to the remission of your sins,' or 'to the end that your sins may be remitted.' The form of expression is closely parallel to that in Acts 3:19 'metanoesate... eis to exaleiphthenai humon tas hamartias. i.e. 'Repent, to the end that your sins may be blotted out.'" (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 341.)
14. Henry Clay Cameron, Professor of Greek: "The preposition eis in Acts 2:38 is evidently used in its final sense, and the phrase is clearly connected with 'metanoesate kai baptisthete' (repent and be baptized) as the end to which repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ led." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, pp. 341-342.)
15. Philip Doddridge, English Congregationalist: "They are not only called here to repent, a submission also to the ordinance of baptism is required of them, in order to the forgiveness of their sins." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 345.)
16. Martin Luther D'Ooge, Baptist, Professor of Greek Language: "In reply to your inquiry I would say that in my judgment the preposition 'eis' in the verse referred to expresses the relation of 'aim' or 'end' in view, answering the question 'eis ti (for what?),' and to be translated by 'unto,' 'in order to,' 'for.' This sense of 'eis' as you doubtless know, is recognized by Liddell and Scott for classical, by Winer for New Testament usage." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 345.)

17. Hempler Fullerton, Presbyterian, Professor of Hebrew and Greek Scriptures: "...In Acts 2:38 it is probably to be translated into or unto remission of sins, conveying there the idea of 'purpose'; i.e. the aim or end of baptism, is remission of sins." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 346)
18. G.S. Sale, Presbyterian, Professor of Greek: "The preposition eis in Acts 2:38 can only be used in one of two senses: (1) expressing the 'result' of the act of submitting to 'baptism'; (2) expressing the 'purpose' or 'object.' 'So as to obtain remission of sins' is the nearest translation I can suggest—and this translation will suit either of the above meanings." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 354.)
19. Charles Fremont Sitterly, Methodist, Professor of Greek and English Bible: "...In the clause 'eis aphasin hamartion' Peter states the reason or motive that should induce to repentance and baptism, referring not to one but to both verbs preceding. According to Winer 549.c. 'Eis here used tropically to denote the purpose or end in view.'" (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 355)
20. Joseph E. Thayer, Congregationalist, Professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation: "I accept the rendering of the revised version 'unto the remission of your sins'; the 'eis' expressing the end aimed at and secured by 'repentance and baptism' just previously enjoined." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 356.)

5. Can the phrase "unto remission of sins" modify both verbs ("repent" and "be baptized")? The context would surely indicate that it can since the words of Peter were given in answer to the question, "What shall we do?" Of course, the inquirers wanted to know what to do to be forgiven of sin. Peter told them "repent ye and be baptized unto remission of sins." Clearly they are here commanded to do two things in order to be forgiven. But this Baptist must deny since they say baptism is "because of" remission of sins. Thus they argue: The two verbs are different in number and person and so cannot be modified by the same prepositional phrase. But what do Greek scholars say about it? No real scholar will deny that "unto remission of sins" can modify both verbs.

1. H.B. Hackett, Baptist scholar: "We connect naturally with both preceding verbs."
2. J.W. Willmarth, Baptist scholar: "...For those who contend for the interpretation 'on account of remission,' will hardly be willing to admit that Peter said 'repent' as well as 'be baptized on account of remission of sins.' This is too great an inversion of natural sequence. Yet to escape it we must violently dis sever 'repent' and 'be baptized,' and deny that 'eis' expresses the relation of 'metanoesate' as well as of 'baptisthete' to 'aphesis hamartion.' But the natural construction connects the latter with both the preceding verbs. It 'enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other,' as Hackett says."
3. J.E. Thayer. "I accept the rendering of the revised version

- 'unto the remission of your sins' (the eis expressing the end aimed at and secured by 'repentance and baptism' just previously enjoined." Shepherd:Handbook On Baptism, p.356.)
4. J... Pendleton, Baptist scholar: "It is clear as the sun in heaven that the same persons are commanded to repent and be baptized." (Three Reasons For Being A Baptist, p. 20.)
  5. John Reuman, Lutheran, Theological Seminary: "In the passage cited, Acts 2:38, I can see no grammatical reason why one couldn't take the phrase 'eis aphesin hamartion,' for the forgiveness of sins (AV and RSV) with both verbs, metanoesate and baptistheo." (Letter to author 6/21/52.)
  6. M.H. Franzman, Concordia Seminary, Lutheran: "As regards the expression in Acts 2:38, it is grammatically possible to connect 'eis aphesin' with both verbs, and Zahn in his commentary seems to take repentance and baptism together as the necessary presupposition to forgiveness of sins."
  7. Henry C. Cameron, Professor of Greek, Presbyterian: "The preposition eis in Acts 2:38 is evidently used in its final sense, and the phrase is clearly connected with 'metanoesate kai baptisthete' (repent and be baptized) as the end to which repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ led." (Shepherd:Handbook On Baptism, p. 342.)
  8. Robert Halley, Principal of New College, Manchester, English Congregationalist: "...Not only does the preposition 'eis' refer to the future and prospective relation of the remission of sins, but it does so with the same dependence on baptism as on repentance. The signification of 'eis' must correspond in its relation to both words, 'repent' and 'be baptized.' In what sense does the apostle use the preposition, when he says, 'Repent' 'for the remission of sins'. The remission of sins is obviously represented, not as preceding repentance, but as subsequent to it. The preposition has its meaning clearly defined by its relation to the word 'repent.' Used only once, it cannot have two interpretations thrust upon it. It must connect the remission of sins with both words, 'repent' and 'be baptized,' by one and the same relation. If it be, 'repent for the remission of sins,' it must also be, 'be baptized for the remission of sins.' Let those who deny this, say by what canon of syntax they can construe the passage, so as to obtain the interpretation, Repent for the remission of sins, and be baptized after their remission." (Handbook On Baptism, p.348.)
  9. Albert Harkness, Professor of Greek, Baptist: "In my opinion 'eis' in Acts 2:38 denotes purpose and may be rendered 'in order to,' or 'for the purpose of receiving,' or as in our English version 'for: Eis aphesin hamartion' suggests the motive or object contemplated in the action of the two preceding verbs." (Shepherd:Handbook On Baptism, p.349.)
  10. W.R. Harper, Pres. of Chicago University, Baptist: "In answer to your letter I would say that the preposition 'eis' is to be translated 'unto' i.e. 'in order to secure.' The preposition indicates that remission of sins is the end to be aimed at in the actions expressed by the predicates 'repent' and 'be baptized.' The phrase is telic." (Shepherd:Handbook On Baptism, p. 350.)



11. Levi L. Faine, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Congregationalist: " 'Eis' in Acts 2:38 means 'in order to' or 'with a view to' the remission of sins, but it is to be connected with both the previous verbs, repent and be baptized." ( Handbook On Baptism, p. 352.)
12. J.C. Proctor, Professor of Greek: "It is my opinion that 'eis' is to be connected with both the predicates and that it denotes an object or end in view." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 353.)
13. Charles F. Sitterly, Professor of Greek, Methodist: "...In the clause 'eis aphesis hamartion' Peter states the reason or motive that should induce to repentance and baptism, referring not to one but to both verbs preceding." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 355.)
14. W.S. Tyler, Greek Professor: "...The preposition 'eis' seems to denote the object and end of the two verbs which precede in the imperative..." (Shepherd: Handbook On Baptism, p. 356.)
15. D.A. Penick, University of Texas: "Metanoesate—repent ye. The writer then wishes to be more emphatic, so he says 'hekastos baptistheto'—let each one of you be baptized. This distribution of a plural subject and predicate by the use of 'hekastos' and a third person singular is quite common in all Greek and is frequently used in the New Testament." (Letter to author.)
16. Henry J. Cadbury: "The grammar of the sentence in Acts 2:38 is perfectly regular and better Greek than if the author had kept the second person plural of baptize after using the singular each. I have no doubt that another author would have written, 'Do ye repent and be ye baptized, each of you,'—but this writer seems to have preferred the less loose construction...."

# BAPTISM AND REMISSION.

BY

J. W. WILLMARTH.

---

REPRINT FROM THE BAPTIST QUARTERLY,  
JULY 1877.

---

INTRODUCTION BY

J. W. SHEPHERD.

Harding Graduate School  
of Religion Library

NASHVILLE, TENN.  
McQUIDDY PRINTING COMPANY.  
1908.

## INTRODUCTION.

BY J. W. SHEPHERD.

James W. Willmarth, the author of the following pages, was born of American parents in Paris, France, on December 23, 1835. His early studies were greatly impeded by an affliction of the eyes, but his great thirst for knowledge could not be held in check by any difficulty not insurmountable. He gave time and toll to the ancient languages, and his heart to the acquisition of biblical knowledge, and at an early period in life was regarded as a scholarly preacher.

When preparing my "Handbook on Baptism," I wrote a letter to George D. Boardman, Philadelphia, Pa., asking: "Can you give me any information concerning J. W. Willmarth, who once lived in Pemberton, N. J.?" This letter was referred to Mr. Willmarth, who wrote me the following letter:

ROXBOROUGH, PHILADELPHIA, February 16, 1893.

DEAR SIR: Yours to Dr. Boardman was sent by him to Mr. Henry E. Lincoln, and by him referred to me. I have been the pastor of the following Baptist churches: Metamora, Woodford County, Ill.; Amenia, N. Y.; Wakefield, Mass.; Pemberton, N. J., eight and one-half years; Roxborough, Philadelphia, since April 1, 1878 (nearly fifteen years), where I still am. I was editor of the *Advanced Quarterly* and other publications on the International Sunday School Lessons of the American Baptist Publication Society in 1882-1883. . . . Have been moderator of the West New Jersey and of the Philadelphia Associations, of the Philadelphia and Trenton Conferences of Baptist Ministers, etc. I am a member of the Board of American Baptist Publication Society, chairman of its Committee of Publication, trustee of Crozier Theological Seminary, on the City Mission Board, and a member of the Nugent Home. In 1899 received the degree of D.D. from Carson College (Tennessee) and LL.D. from Southwestern Baptist University (Tennessee)."

These positions of distinction and honor show that he was held in high esteem by the Baptists, not only in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, but also in Tennessee.

As to Mr. Willmarth's standing among the Baptists, William Cathcart, in his voluminous Baptist Encyclopedia, published in Philadelphia in 1881, says:

"He is a writer of great power, and he uses a prolific pen. His articles on 'The Future Life' and 'Baptism and Remission,' in the *Baptist Quarterly*, showed much originality, and produced a profound impression upon cultured men of God.

"No one stands higher in the estimation of his friends, and all that know him may be reckoned among that number. His position on any subject is very decided; he knows nothing of half-heartedness; his thoughts are as transparent as a sunbeam. He shuns no responsibility in defending any truth; he avoids no sacrifice in assisting a friend. He is an able preacher, with a noble intellect, ardent piety, and a bright earthly future, if his slender frame will permit him to stay on earth a few years." (Page 1256.)

Since he has received such encomiums from his learned brethren who know him best, and is now old and decrepit and stands on the brink of the eternal world, it is exceedingly unkind—yea, cruel—for those moved by a partisan spirit to try to break the force of his logical and masterly presentation of the scriptural teaching on the relation of baptism to the remission of sins by trying to make it appear that he has never been esteemed by his own brethren.

The article as here given was set directly from the *Baptist Quarterly* of July, 1877, and is *verbatim* in every respect. Even the pages are numbered the same as they are in the quarterly. I own the original, which can be examined by any one who calls in question the accuracy of this reprint.

NASHVILLE, TENN., March 9, 1908.

## BAPTISM AND REMISSION.

**B**Y Baptism is meant the immersion in water of a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. By Remission is meant the forgiveness of sins, necessarily connected with the favor of God and the gift of Eternal Life.

There are several passages in the New Testament which assume or teach a connection or relation between Baptism and Remission. Perhaps the most important and striking example is to be found in Acts ii, 38: *Repent and be each one of you baptized upon* [not "in," but *ἐν*, "upon"]<sup>1</sup> *the name of Jesus Christ for* [*eis*] *remission of sins.* The relation, whatever it is, is here expressed by the preposition *eis*. A careful examination of the meaning of *eis* is therefore the first step to be taken.

### Meaning of *Eis*.

*Eis* belongs to a group of three related Greek prepositions, a comparative view of which will be advantageous.

*E N* signifies *in the space within*. General English equivalent, *In*.

*E K* or *E Z* signifies *out of the space within*. General English equivalent, *From*.

<sup>1</sup> See Winer N. T. Gr., pp. 407-409.  
(296)

*E I* ζ signifies *into the space within*. General English equivalent, *Into*.<sup>1</sup>

The conception common to them all is that of a space (literal or metaphorical) defined by limits. The state of being within it is expressed by *εν*. Motion from the within into the without by *εκ*; motion from the without into the within by *εις*. "The prepositions," remarks Crosby, "have primary reference to relations of *place*, and are used to express other relations by reason of some *analogy*, real or fancied—many similar extensions of use appearing in our own and other languages."<sup>2</sup> Every Greek preposition, then, has a definite signification, "primarily referring to relations of place," and thence, "by analogy," applied to all sorts of other relations; but always in a manner not only analogous to, but derived from, its ground-meaning as to relations of place, and therefore always in harmony with it. The old idea that Greek prepositions are used in the New Testament in an indiscriminate manner, meaning "anything you please," has long since been exploded.<sup>3</sup>

It does not, indeed, follow that we can always translate a Greek preposition by a uniform English equivalent. The reason is, not that the preposition has changed its radical signification, but that the thoughts and conceptions of men, in different ages and countries, run in different channels, are cast in different molds. Consequently arise peculiar forms of speech and use of words, which we call *idioms*. Sometimes patient thought is required to ascertain what exact form of conception is expressed by the use of a Greek preposition; but when ascertained, we find that the preposition is used in harmony, strictly so, with its distinctive meaning. We may be obliged to translate it by an English preposition of different meaning, or to alter essentially the form of expression, in order to bring out the meaning of the whole sentence in our idiom. But it remains true that the Greek preposition retains its radical signification; and that the Greek idiom, in which it is used in harmony with that signification, is capable of being reproduced in English by a paraphrase. These observations are made to settle, in the outset, the right mode of dealing with Greek prepositions. They are fixed, not variable

<sup>1</sup> This statement is compiled from Crosby's exposition of the meanings of the Greek prepositions. Liddell and Scott give substantially the same thing, though (as it seems to us) with less keenness of analysis. They define thus: "*E N* . . . Radlc. signf. *a being or remaining within*." "*E K* . . . Radlc. signf. *from, out of, away from a thing*." "*E I* ζ . . . Radlc. signf. *direction towards, motion to, on, or into*."

<sup>2</sup> Crosby's Revised Greek Grammar, § 689.

<sup>3</sup> Winer's New Testament Grammar. Preface to 6th ed., and general remarks on prepositions, pp. 358-363.

quantities. They are blocks of granite, not masses of soapstone which we may hew into any shape supposed to be required by exegetic or dogmatic necessity.<sup>1</sup>

The radical signification of *eis* is *into the space within*. It is used to express motion or movement from without, terminating and resting within; and also, naturally, to express simple tendency towards, but towards the within, although the motion may be arrested. It is used of place, primarily; then, by analogy, of time, number, purpose, result, etc.; but always with the idea of motion or tendency, literal or figurative, from without to within. *E. g.*, of reaching a number, or point of time; of entering into a relation or condition; of the direction of the mind or of discourse towards an object of thought. Its general English equivalent is, *Into*. But *unto*, *in order to*, *for*, *until*, and other English prepositions, translate it better in certain cases, owing to difference of idiom.<sup>2</sup>

*Eis* is often used to denote the *purpose of actions*. In this case the conception is that the act or acts move towards a certain result

<sup>1</sup> A Greek scholar will smile at these statements, as the repetition of elementary truths in Greek grammar. But such will pardon the writer, if he recites his grammar correctly; which is more than many of us always do. If there were none but great scholars, who would care to write or need to read discussions like these?

<sup>2</sup> See Winer's New Testament Grammar, pp. 396-398. The use of *eis* may be somewhat miscellaneous illustrated by noting all the examples in the sermon of Peter, of which Acts ii. 38 is a part.

Va. 20. *eis* *σκοτος* . . . *eis* *αιμα*. *Into darkness, into blood*; signifying "the condition into which something is brought" (Winer)—conceived of as the termination of the change.

Va. 22. *eis* *υμεις*, *unto you*—accredited by testimony directed unto the minds of those to whom it was given.

Va. 25. *eis* *αυτον*, *concerning him*; "aiming at (referring to) him," explains Winer. Speaking with him in view as the object to which his speech was directed.

Va. 27 and 31. *eis* *ηδου* [or, *ηδην*] *unto hades*. "Thou wilt not abandon my soul unto hades" (Hackett), *eis* marking the termination of the act of abandonment.

Va. 34. *eis* *τους ουρανους*, *into the heavens*. Expressing relation of place—primary meaning.

Va. 38. *eis* *αφεσιν* *αμαρτιων*. This Winer places under the head "the purpose and end in view."

Va. 39. *eis* *μακρον* . . . *unto afar off*, marking extent; the conception being clearly derived from that of motion.

Winer's New Testament Grammar furnishes a full statement of the various uses of *eis* in N. T., with copious examples. In every case, however obscure at first sight, the ground-signification can be traced as giving form to the conception in the mind of the one using *eis*. Thus in Matt. xii. 41, *eis* *to* *κηρυγμα* *Ιωνα*, *at the preaching of Jonah*, the idea is the direction of the mind of the hearer to the preaching. So in Matt. x. 41: *eis* *ὄνομα* *προφητου*, *in the name of a prophet*, i. e., as a prophet, *eis* marks the direction of the mind to the character of the one received. "In treating of prepositions," says Winer, "It is necessary, in the first place, to seize with clearness and precision the true primary meaning of each from which all its applications emanate as from a common centre, and to trace back to this all the various shades of meaning the preposition may have assumed—i. e., to show how the transition to every such application was effected in the mind of the writer or speaker." (N. T. Grammar, p. 359.)

in which they terminate or are intended to terminate. And as this "movement" is purposed and willed by the actor, whether the end in view is actually reached or not, *eis* expresses the purpose of actions, or the motive by which men are moved to act, or from which they are urged or exhorted by others to act.

*Eis* in Matthew xxvi. 28.

A remarkable example of the use of *eis* to denote the purpose of actions, and that, too, in connection with the Remission of sins, occurs in Matt. xxvi. 28. Instituting the Holy Communion, our Lord said, in giving the cup to his disciples, *Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for [ἐπὶ, in behalf of] many, for [eis, in order to] remission of sins.* *Eis* here expresses the purpose, not of the Jews in murdering our Saviour, but of Jesus himself, in "laying down his life." He "gave his life a ransom for many."<sup>1</sup> The Remission of sins was the end toward which his action was directed, so far as this statement is concerned. In that end the act terminated, the purpose was accomplished.<sup>2</sup>

In what sense Remission is procured by the shedding of the Blood is not determined by the word *eis*. That marks the motive or purpose in the mind of Christ and of God. Other Scriptural statements leave us in no doubt on this point. The Blood of Christ (or his Atonement, which is the same thing) furnishes the ground or reason on account of which God can and does forgive sinners in righteous-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 28; John x. 17, 18. cf. John xix. 11, Acts ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> The use of *eis* to denote aim, object in view, purpose, is very common and natural. It is directly derived from the physical idea of motion towards a given space in which it rests and terminates. The following passages afford examples: Luke v. 4, *eis ἄβυσσον*, *in order to a draught*, i. e., for the purpose of catching fish. Acts iv. 30, *eis ἰσχυρὸν*, *for healing*, showing the purpose of "stretching forth thy hand," i. e., exerting thy power. Rom. xv. 18, *eis ὑπακοὴν ἰθρῶν*, *unto the obedience of Gentiles*. Paul says he will only speak of those things which Christ wrought in him for this purpose. 1 Tim. i. 16, *eis ζωὴν αἰώνιον*, *unto life eternal*, aim and result of "believing"—exact parallel to use of *eis* in Acts ii. 38. So the phrases *eis τί, unto what?* what for? why? *eis τοῦτο, unto this*, for this purpose.

Where is the example of the use of *eis* to denote a relation between an act as a symbol and some past event or accomplished fact, which such symbol is intended to set forth as emblem or declaration or commemoration?

We may here note the meaning of the phrase *πιστεύειν εἰς* (literally *to believe unto*) used so many times by our Saviour in John, ch. iii. *Eis* here marks the direction of the believer's mind going out towards Christ and resting upon him as the object and end of faith. The act of believing terminates in or on him. Hence the phrase: "*πιστεύειν τῷ εἰς, τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν*," etc. (Acts xx. 21), is appropriately rendered "*faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*." This does not come under the specific heading of purpose, but of direction of mind, etc.; It is here noted, because this use of *eis* has been strangely cited to impugn the correct rendering in Acts ii. 38.



ness.<sup>1</sup> With one accord the Church of God confesses this truth. Apostles, prophets, bishops, martyrs, saints in every clime and in every century from the beginning, confess it. We reverently repeat the confession.

No difference of opinion as to the meaning of *eis* in this passage exists, so far as we know, among believing men.

Meaning of *Eis* in Acts ii. 38.

With this example in mind let us examine Acts ii. 38. Peter had just been charging home upon the consciences of his Jewish hearers the enormous guilt which they had incurred by rejecting and murdering the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit, in his converting power, accompanied the word. Very many, *pricked in their heart*, or more properly, *pierced to the heart*, cried out: *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Peter, answering these perishing and self-condemned sinners, replied: *Repent and be each one of you baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ for (eis) remission of sins.*

What is the force of *eis* here?

First. These words are Peter's answer to unsaved, but awakened sinners, forced by pungent conviction of guilt and danger to ask, *What shall we do?* i. e., of course, *do* in order to secure forgiveness of their great sin. It is natural to suppose that Peter told them what to do in order to secure that end. And he uses the very same phrase used in Matt. xxvi. 28: *eis ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, unto remission of sins*. Is it possible to doubt that *eis* here marks the relation of certain actions to the end sought and purposed, namely the Remission of sins?

Second. Note carefully Peter's directions in detail, embracing as they do, three things. In the order of his statement these are—(a) Repentance, (b) Immersion, (c) Faith in the Lord Jesus. For this last is necessarily implied in the phrase *upon (ἐπὶ) the name of Jesus Christ*. Here is expressed the ground or foundation upon which they were to act in being baptized, viz.: the name, i. e., the revealed character and work of Jesus Christ. In other words they were to be baptized in the exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus.<sup>2</sup> Hence it follows that they must believe before being baptized. Therefore, in the order of logic and of time,<sup>3</sup> these three things would stand thus: (a) Repentance, (b) Faith, (c) Immersion.

<sup>1</sup> Romans iii. 21-26.

<sup>2</sup> The Baptism here commanded was Believer's Baptism. This is a good text from which to preach Believer's Baptism.

<sup>3</sup> It was not expected by Peter that any considerable interval of time would separate repentance from "being baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ"; much less faith from baptism. In point of fact, three thousand repented, believed, and were baptized in one day.

Third. *Eis* here marks the relation of Baptism to the Remission of sins, but not of Baptism alone. The people cried out, *What shall we do?* Peter replies, in substance, *Repent, believe and be baptized—all three things—**εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν**—unto remission of sins—their sins, of course.*

Fourth. The meaning of *εἰς* in Matt. xxvi. 28, beyond all question is IN ORDER TO. Christ shed his blood in order to the remission of the sins of others—"the many." What but IN ORDER TO can it possibly mean here? *In order to* the remission of sins—their own sins? In answer to earnest inquiry Peter points out a course of action which will tend towards, and result in, the forgiveness which they desire; he directs them to take that course for that purpose. He assures them of other blessings besides *remission*, if they obey; *and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost* (vs. 38). He encourages them to obedience by precious promises (vs. 39), and solemnly warns them of the peril of disobedience (vs. 40). Three thousand gladly received his word, were baptized, were added to the church, and rejoiced in the assurance of forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. Everything unites to render a mistake as to the force of *εἰς* almost impossible. Everything compels us to assign to it its obvious, natural, distinctive meaning, as used to denote the purpose of actions. It here marks the purpose for which, the object in order to which, the inquirers of Pentecost were to repent, believe and be baptized.

In this view we are supported by Dr. Hackett, in his unrivaled Commentary on the Acts. He translates the phrase in question, *in order to the forgiveness of sins*. He refers to Matt. xxvi. 28 (*blood . . . shed for remission*) and also to Luke iii. 3 (*the baptism of repentance for [εἰς] remission*) as passages illustrating the meaning and construction here. He adds: "We connect naturally"—the words *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*—"with both the preceding verbs [*μετανοήσατε*, repent, and *βαπτισθήτω*, be baptized.] This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized. It enforces the entire exhortation, and not one part of it to the exclusion of the other." He mentions no other interpretation as possible.

Dr. Hackett's interpretation was nothing new among Baptists. Dr. Henry J. Ripley, a very cautious and conservative commentator, gives a similar explanation of the passage in his "Notes on the Acts." But his remarks are too extended and diffuse to be quoted here.<sup>1</sup>

But here, as in Matt. xxvi. 28, *εἰς* does not determine in what

<sup>1</sup> Alford translates "for the remission of sins," and Noyes "for forgiveness of sins." Of course "for" means, in such a connection, *in order to*. The Bible Union Version,

sense or upon what principle the action or actions named procure or secure Remission. It only shows that such action or actions were performed or commanded in order to, for the purpose of reaching, the desired result, namely, Remission.

That this is the obvious and natural meaning we think no scholar will question. That the best authorities concur in holding that it actually is the meaning, is also true as far as we have been able to consult them. But there is an explanation of *eis* in this passage, current in oral and newspaper polemics, which it is necessary to notice. Connected with the idea of symbolizing Remission or with the shadowy conception of an "immersion into a profession of remission,"<sup>1</sup> it makes *eis* here equivalent to *on account of*, and represents Peter as meaning: *Be baptized . . . [not in order to, but] on account of remission of sins.* That is, because your sins have been remitted. To this view there are insuperable objections.

First. It puts an unauthorized sense upon the preposition *eis*. "On account of" is not one of the recognized meanings of *eis*. No Greek would have employed the phrase here used to express the idea of *on account of an [accomplished] remission*. Another preposition would have been used, *διὰ*, or *ἐπὶ*, for example. If *eis* were followed by some word signifying *profession* or *declaration*, then we might translate: *in order to the profession or declaration of remission*. When Paul wished to convey an idea very similar he did not say *eis δαυοσίνην αὐτοῦ*; but he used words enough to express what he meant

---

representing the scholarship of Drs. Conant, Hackett, Kendrick, etc., renders "unto remission of sins," which can mean nothing else than *in order to*.

*De Wette*: Zur Vergebung der Sünden, unto or for forgiveness of sins.

*Lange*: Peter's demand, therefore, embraces a change of mind and faith in addition to the outward Baptism. . . . The Apostle promises to those who repent and receive baptism (1) the remission of sins, (2) the gift of the Holy Ghost.

*David Thomas*: He directs them to the course of conduct essential to the attainment of those blessings . . . hence he directs them to repent and be baptized.

*Meyer*: *Eis* indicates the object of the baptism, which is the remission of the guilt incurred by sin in the state preceding the *μετάνοια* [repentance]. Compare xxii. 16.

*Winzer* names Acts ii. 38 as illustrating the use of *eis* to denote "the purpose and end in view."

*Olshausen*: With this repentance Baptism is then connected, which necessarily presupposes Faith, because it requires an acknowledgment of Christ as Messiah; and Baptism is accompanied with the remission of sins, as a result.

<sup>1</sup> "Baptized into a profession of," etc., if it has any real meaning, must be equivalent to "baptized in order to profess," etc., which would here be equivalent to "baptized on account of a [past] remission." [See foot-note on page 317.] "Baptized into the fact of remission," an equally cloudy rendering, must mean "Baptized so that remission may become a fact"; i. e., in order to remission. So, "baptized into a state [or, sphere] of Remission" can mean nothing but "baptized so as to have the remission of sins." We are not baptized *into* any thing, literally, except water. There are but two interpretations of this phrase—*in order to*, etc., and *on account of*, etc., for which last there is no authority.

—*ἵνα ἑνδείξῃ τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ*, in order to the exhibition of his righteousness.<sup>1</sup> If Peter had meant in order to declare or profess remission, he would have said so. As he did not, what right have we to insert here a word or an idea of which there is not the slightest trace in his language? It is true that *εἰς* is sometimes equivalent to "with reference to"; but even then it would here mean the reference of purpose or aim. "In order to declare [or symbolize]" would be a monstrous translation of *εἰς*; and if it ever means "with reference to" in the sense of a retrospective and commemorative reference to a past event, we have failed to find an example.

Second. This interpretation compels us either to do violence to the construction, or to throw the argument or course of thought in the context into complete confusion. Indeed we can hardly escape the latter alternative, even if we choose the former.

(a) For those who contend for the interpretation "on account of remission," will hardly be willing to admit that Peter said "repent" as well as "be baptized on account of remission of sins." This is too great an inversion of natural sequence. Yet to escape it we must violently dis sever "repent" and "be baptized," and deny that *εἰς* expresses the relation of *μετανοήσατε* as well as of *βαπτισθήτω* to *ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*. But the natural construction connects the latter with both the preceding verbs. It "enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other," as Hackett says.

(b) If we shrink from this violence to the construction, what becomes of the context? Peter is directing inquiring sinners. They ask "What shall we do?" i. e., in order to be forgiven. He replies by telling them to repent and to be baptized [believing] upon the name of Jesus Christ, *not* in order to reach pardon, the desired result: but to do all these things, to exercise Repentance and Faith (inward acts of the mind) as well as to be baptized, in order to signify or declare that their sins were already forgiven! He directs unconverted men to repent, believe and be baptized, not in order to be forgiven, but to set forth by this whole process, mental and physical, and to profess by it, a remission which had not taken place! This only needs to be stated to show its naked absurdity.

(c) And if we recoil from this we shall yet not wholly escape it by preferring the alternative of doing violence to the construction. For (1) Peter did not tell his hearers to repent and believe in order to

<sup>1</sup> Rom. III. 25. In verse 26 he uses the same phrase again, except that he substitutes *εἰς* for *εἰς*. (See Winer, pp. 411, 412.) Whatever the full force of this expression may be, the Apostle's conception is not "in order to righteousness," but "in order to the exhibition (Noyes, "manifestation;" Liddell and Scott, "pointing out, indicating") of righteousness."

Remission, and then to signify or declare Remission in Baptism, but (on this hypothesis) he told them to repent without any statement whatever as to the purpose or result, and also directed them to "be baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ" in order to profess the remission they were seeking! And (2) Faith in Christ, the very central part of Gospel obedience, being here indissolubly linked with Baptism, Peter directed terrified sinners to declare, as an accomplished fact, the very Remission which they had not received, but were at that moment seeking; and to declare this, too, by Believing, as well as by Baptism!

Third. This interpretation was doubtless suggested, and is now defended, on purely dogmatic grounds. It is feared that if we give to *eis* its natural and obvious meaning, undue importance will be ascribed to Baptism, the Atonement will be undervalued, and the work of the Holy Spirit disparaged. Especially is it asserted that here is the vital issue between Baptists and Campbellites.<sup>1</sup> We are gravely told that if we render *eis* in Acts ii. 38 *in order to*, we give up the battle, and must forthwith become Campbellites; whereas if we translate it *on account of*, or *in token of*, it will yet be possible for us to remain Baptists.

Such methods of interpretation are unworthy of Christian scholars. It is our business, simply and honestly, to ascertain the exact meaning of the inspired originals, as the sacred penmen intended to convey it to the mind of the contemporary reader. Away with the question—"What *ought* Peter to have said in the interest of orthodoxy?" The real question is, "What *did* Peter say, and what did he *mean*, when he spoke on the Day of Pentecost, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?"

But having entered this *caveat*, as a lawyer might say, it may do no harm to show that dogmatic dangers here exist only in imagination. The natural and obvious interpretation cannot give undue importance to Baptism, for Baptism is here united with Repentance and Faith. It cannot undervalue the Atonement, for the Baptism is one resting upon, and deriving all its value from, *the name* of the Lamb of God; and this is distinctly understood by the person baptized, who submits to the rite as a believer in that *name*. It cannot disparage the work of the Spirit, since he alone effectually calls men to Repentance and Faith; and it is *by* (Greek *en*, in, within the influence of) *one Spirit* that *we were all baptized into one body*, i. e.,

<sup>1</sup> We use this term as a well known designation, like "Calvinists" and "Arminians," without intending any discourtesy.

the Spirit leads the penitent believer to Baptism and blesses the rite.<sup>1</sup> And as to Campbellism, that spectre which haunts many good men and terrifies them into a good deal of bad interpretation, shall we gain anything by maintaining a false translation and allowing the Campbellites to be champions of the true, with the world's scholarship on their side, as against us? Whoever carries the weight of our controversy with the Campbellites *upon the eis will break through*—there is no footing there for the evolutions of the theological skater. Shall we never learn that Truth has nothing to fear from a true interpretation of any part of God's word, and nothing to gain by a false one?

The truth will suffer nothing by giving to *eis* its true signification. When the Campbellites translate *in order to* in Acts ii. 38, they translate correctly. Is a translation false because Campbellites endorse it?

In reality, the chasm which yawns between us and them is something more than a *crevasse in the eis*, or even than a difference of theory as to the design of Baptism. It is indeed somewhat difficult to define their doctrinal position. They have no Creed. The writings of their great Master contain apparent inconsistencies, if not contradictions. Their current literature is kaleidoscopic in the variety of its hues; churchly and anarchical by turns; now breathing an evangelical fervor, and now benumbed by a semi-Arian atmosphere. Still, judging this chameleon-like literature as a whole, and noting the general contents and tone of Campbellite preaching, we are forced to conclude that their system is, to say the least, more extreme and bald Arminianism than Methodism itself. Repentance and Faith are self-determined acts of the human will. There is no eternal election nor even effectual calling. The personal agency of the Spirit on the mind does not begin till after Baptism. Man wins the battle for himself; then, perhaps, the Divine Helper comes to be his guest, but not to remain if the man "falls away," nor necessarily, to *prevent* his falling away. Thus spiritual religion is vitiated in its very sources. All Campbellites do not thus believe; there are excellent and evangelical men among them; but if it is possible to understand the system called Campbellism, we think we have not misrepresented it. Now is it not childish to assert that the difference between such a theology and ours is measured by the interpretation of *eis* in Acts ii. 38? When the Campbellites shall adopt Calvinistic sentiments, when they shall believe in and pray for the converting power of the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Holy Spirit, when they shall practice strict communion (as of all people in the world they are logically bound to do), and when they shall be willing to write down in plain words the faith which they hold, neither *eis* nor water will separate them and us. Meantime, let us go about the business of correctly interpreting Scripture and logically formulating the doctrinal teachings of the Bible, like men and scholars, unterrified by the bugbear of Campbellism. If that schism has led us to take any untenable positions, or has revealed any traditional errors of the Baptists, let us retire from the former and correct the latter. Beyond this, and a respectful attention to what Campbellite scholars advance, such as we give to all scholars, there is no reason why we may not go serenely on our way in the search for Biblical truth, just as if Campbellism had no existence.

Fourth. Finally, suppose we force *eis* in Acts ii. 38 to bear the unnatural and unauthorized meaning of "on account of." After all we have gained nothing. Other passages there are which cannot be explained away. Thus our Saviour said, just before he ascended the heavens: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*. We shall hardly dare to tamper with his royal word and make it run, *He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized*. And unless we do thus change his saying, we have, by the highest authority, an importance attributed to Baptism certainly not less than that given to it in Acts ii. 38, translated according to its obvious meaning. What then is the advantage of violently torturing *eis*, the construction and the context?

We conclude without hesitation, and in accordance with such authorities as Hackett, Winer, Meyer, etc., that the proper rendering of *eis* ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν in Acts ii. 38, as in Matthew xxvi. 28, is *unto, for, i. e., IN ORDER TO, Remission of Sins*.

Acts ii. 38 is a very important passage—the key-note of the New Testament teaching as to obedience to the Gospel. For the first time inquiring sinners throng the inspired Twelve with the question, *What shall we do?* on their lips; and the answer is invested with the great significance of the first formal direction given by the apostles to inquirers. The occasion was striking and wonderful; and here we may well believe was furnished a precedent which all the primitive preachers of the Gospel were sure substantially to follow. This much is clear from the passage before us: *that there is a relation between Baptism and Remission; and such a relation as warranted and required Peter to use the language which he did*. He meant what he said.

But in proceeding to examine the question—



*What is the Relation of Baptism and Remission?*

we ought not to confine our attention to a single text, however important, but make a full and fair induction from all the teachings of the New Testament which bear upon the subject, whether positive statements, clear implications, or practical precedents. This we shall now attempt as far as our limits will permit.

First of all, however, let us prepare ourselves to look at the matter from a purely New Testament point of view. For this something more is necessary than ability to read the record in English or in Greek; something more than honesty of purpose. We must be able to free ourselves from the domination of the present, and guard against unconsciously carrying back its opinions and customs into the past. Without this precaution we shall see everything in a false light, and misunderstand the plainest facts. The exegete must have the true historical spirit, perfect candor, and the ability to reproduce in imagination the circumstances and the thoughts of other times and other lands.

Those were early days. There were no elaborate creeds or theologies, no rival churches and disagreeing commentators, no denominational differences—the outgrowth of centuries. The Apostles taught by inspiration, being infallibly “guided into all the truth;” and miracles attested their authority to speak for God. If men accepted the new Gospel at all, there was no room for error or mistake as to what was required in order to discipleship. Thus no question existed, or could exist among Christians, as to Baptism—its form, subjects, design or divine authority. The catechumenical system was yet unknown. “Anxious seats,” “rising for prayers,” and all modern “revivalistic” methods, good and bad, were unheard of. The Gospel was preached as a practical thing—a divine message to be at once obeyed. Those who received it were made the subjects of no spiritual diagnosis; but their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus was accepted, and they were immediately baptized. By that act the convert crossed the great gulf which separated the Church from Jews and Pagans; and rendered himself liable to persecution, perhaps, to death. Everything was in solemn earnest; sensationalism and fanaticism were not yet introduced, and hypocrisy was rare.

This brief statement is made for one simple purpose. It is no part of our present task to inquire how far in later, or in present times, change of circumstances justifies change of methods, provided the Gospel be preserved intact; nor how far Christianity has been corrupted by departure from Apostolic ways. But it is essential that

we enter into the spirit of primitive times, in order that we may see the teaching and the example of the Apostles in a true light.

Scripture Testimony as to Baptism and Remission.

The first mention of Baptism is in connection with the mission of John, the forerunner of Christ. He came *preaching the baptism of repentance unto [eis] i. e., in order to, remission of sins.*<sup>1</sup> This his father, Zachariah, had predicted, explaining how he "should go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, in order to give knowledge of salvation to his people, in remission of their sins."<sup>2</sup> "Confessing their sins" and being baptized,<sup>3</sup> sincere penitents were sure of Remission.<sup>4</sup> That Baptism, as commanded and administered by John, was not an emblem of Remission previously granted, but (with Repentance) a condition of Remission promised, is clear, not only from the use of *eis*, but from John's own words to certain hypocrites, Pharisees and Sadducees: "Who hath warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"<sup>5</sup> and also from our Lord's words, "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God concerning themselves, not being baptized by him."<sup>6</sup> And in refusing Baptism they refused everything.

Christ himself, in his early Judæan ministry, "made and baptized

<sup>1</sup> Luke III. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Luke I. 76, 77.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. III. 6.

<sup>4</sup> John also said (Matt. III. 11), "I indeed baptize you in water unto (*eis*) repentance." This has been misunderstood. *Eis* does not here change its ground-meaning, is not equivalent to *on account of*. John's Baptism looked to the future, to the near approach of Messiah, whose people must be prepared for him. Those baptized by John were indeed required to repent, but also to stand pledged *unto repentance*, thenceforward to have a changed heart and life, so as to be in a state of readiness for Messiah's coming. So Olshausen says that John's Baptism "aimed at awakening repentance;" only his remark is too unqualified, present, as well as prospective repentance being required (Matt. III. 2, 7, 8). This explains the phrase *eis metάνοιαν*. In harmony with this also, was John's teaching of Faith. "John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Jesus." (Acts xix. 4.) After Christ's ascension we meet no more with the phrase *baptized unto repentance*, because Baptism now acknowledges the Messiah already come, and Faith and Repentance, as conditions of Remission, are conceived of as wholly in the present. But the phrase *baptized unto remission* remains—is used by Peter, Acts II. 38. Those who render *eis* in Matt. III. 11 *on account of*, furnish a notable instance of missing an important idea through failure to understand the force of the Greek preposition.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. III. 7. By professing Repentance and asking Baptism they appeared to be fleeing from coming wrath; but John knew them to be insincere; and demanded *proof* of Repentance, refusing to baptize them without it. The professions of all others seem to have been accepted by him.

<sup>6</sup> Luke vii. 30. *Eis* does not here mean *against* (Common Ver.); it marks the direction of the counsel (revealed plan) of God towards those concerned; in our idiom *concerning*.

disciples."<sup>1</sup> His preaching, at the outset, was of similar purport with that of John.<sup>2</sup> It is natural to suppose that his Baptism (in connection with Repentance and Faith) was, like John's, in order to Remission. We are confirmed in this by our Saviour's words to Nicodemus, who came to him during that early period to learn more fully, no doubt, of the kingdom which Christ and John were preaching. Christ said to him: *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, i. e.,* Baptism and Renewal by the Spirit are the conditions of true citizenship in the kingdom of God on earth. Unquestionably Remission was one of the blessings of that kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

In giving the "Great Commission" to his Apostles, the risen Lord commanded: *Go ye therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*<sup>4</sup> . . . *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*<sup>5</sup> Here Faith and Baptism are united as conditions, to the fulfillment of which is affixed his royal promise of salvation, including, of course, Remission. The circumstances invest this declaration with peculiar solemnity. It is a part of the Fundamental Law of Christianity, ordained by the great Founder himself, in his last hours on earth. It is a part of the Prime Article in the Charter of the Christian ministry. It is the last direction and promise to lost sinners, that fell from our Redeemer's lips ere he ascended to the right hand of God.

We learn from the Book of Acts how the Apostles and "apostolic men" understood and obeyed their Commission. The first Pentecost after the Ascension was most memorable not only for what it was in itself, but as model and precedent under the dispensation of the Spirit. What was then taught in regard to Baptism and Remission has already been elaborately examined. In accordance with the example there set Baptism was always closely associated with Repentance and Faith. The Samaritans,<sup>6</sup> the Eunuch,<sup>7</sup> the jailer at Philippi,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 22; iv. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. iv. 17; Mark i. 15.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 5. There is no force in the objection to this interpretation founded on vs. 10. *Of* Matt. xvi. 3; John vii. 17. Nor are our Saviour's words equivalent to the assertion that no unbaptized person can possibly be saved in the world to come. In vs. 12 he says: "If I have told you *the earthly things*;" which shows that he was here speaking of the kingdom of God on earth.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19. See foot-note, page 317.

<sup>5</sup> Mark xvi. 16. We are not unaware that the genuineness of Mark xvi. 9-20 is questioned. We do not share in the doubt. See article of Prof. J. A. Broadbent on this subject in BAPTIST QUARTERLY, July, 1869.

<sup>6</sup> Acts viii. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Acts viii. 36, 38, 39.

<sup>8</sup> Acts xvi. 14, 15, 30-33.

and others, must have been instructed as to its necessity in order to discipleship; for we find that being taught the "word of the Lord," i. e., the Gospel, they were forthwith baptized. In one case, and one only, God seemed to have anticipated the complete obedience by bestowing miraculous gifts before Baptism.<sup>1</sup> Yet even in this abnormal case the full requirement of the Gospel must be exactly carried out, by express command of Peter. And Ananias divinely sent to Saul of Tarsus, blind, penitent and prayerful, thus instructed him: *And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins,<sup>2</sup> calling upon the name of the Lord.* The *washing away* refers to Remission; the last clause requires the exercise of faith in Christ.

The Epistles, addressed to Christians, are more distinctively doctrinal than the historical narrative of the Acts, yet are intensely practical. They contain many references to Baptism. It is represented as a *burial with Christ* and a *being raised together with him* "to walk in newness of life,"<sup>3</sup> which necessitates Remission. We are said to be *baptized INTO* (eis) *Jesus Christ,*<sup>4</sup> i. e., so as to come to be *IN* Christ. Also to be *baptized unto Christ*, as the context seems to indicate direction of mind in the act, the result being stated, *ye have put on Christ,*<sup>5</sup> clothed yourselves with Christ (so to speak), involving the ideas of unity and conformity. And this is mentioned (as the "for" shows) to confirm the preceding statement, "Ye are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Here, then, Faith and Baptism are united (as elsewhere), and united in their relation to adoption, which results from union with Christ. All this, of course, implies Remission. We read, *according to his mercy he saved us, by [or through] the washing [bathing] of regeneration and*

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 44-48. In order to understand this case we must bear in mind that Cornelius and his friends were Gentiles, and that the Church needed to be taught God's readiness to receive all men as Christ's disciples, irrespective of nationality. (Verses 34, 35, and chap. xi. 1-18.) Peter had to be first prepared by threefold vision and express direction from the Holy Spirit. This needed lesson was taught by this striking departure from God's ordinary way of proceeding. Besides, these men were undoubtedly before that, worshippers of the true God, and pious. (Vss. 2, 4, 33, 35.) This "exception" only "proves the rule." At the utmost it only shows that God can directly certify to a man his pardon before Baptism; which, perhaps, no one ever doubted.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxii. 16. Hackett *in loco*: "This clause states a result of the Baptism in language derived from the nature of that ordinance. It answers to εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν in Acts ii: 38."

<sup>3</sup> Rom. vi. 2-4; Col. ii. 12, 13; III. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Romans vi. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. iii. 27. "Into" is a possible translation here in the same sense as in Rom. vi. 3. In these two passages εἰς signifies either purpose, direction of mind, "unto Christ," or the result of the action; viz., coming into a relation or condition, coming to be "in Christ." *Of* εἰς in Acts ii. 20. Which, we must judge from the context and course of thought in each case. "Immersed into Christ," in a literal sense, is absurd. To translate "into a profession of Christ" is gratuitous assumption. See foot-notes, pp. 303 and 317.

*renewing of the Holy Spirit.*<sup>1</sup> Also, of Christ *cleansing* (from sin) his Bride, the Church, *by the washing [bathing] of water in the word;*<sup>2</sup> i. e., within the sphere of the Gospel, in obedience to it; "cleansing," of course, in a spiritual sense. We read of *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism,*<sup>3</sup> this rite being mentioned among the precious Unities of Christianity. Also, of Jewish and Gentile Christians *as all baptized into one body by (Greek εν, in) one Spirit,*<sup>4</sup> a passage already noted.

One more example from the Epistles must not be passed by, written by the same inspired teacher who directed the inquirers on the Day of Pentecost. *Which [water] in an antitype, baptism, doth now save us also (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh [i. e., not a ceremonial lustration for ceremonial defilement] but the requirement of a good conscience toward God [here repentance is necessarily implied]) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*<sup>5</sup> This last can be only as we are "baptized upon the name" of the Risen One, and so faith also is assumed. In this remarkable passage it is positively asserted that, in some sense, *baptism saves us*; and in that same sense it must, of course, be related to the Remission of our sins.

Impression Produced by the Scripture Testimony.

Certainly, it would seem that Baptism must be very important, intimately connected with Remission and Salvation. How can an unprejudiced mind survey this testimony and then relegate Baptism to the realm of mere Emblem, Symbol and Profession? However they are to be explained, the facts from the record are these. Our Lord before his departure commanded that those who would be his disciples should be baptized; and united Baptism with Faith in the promise of Salvation. The apostles and their co-laborers directed inquirers to repent, believe and be immersed in order to Remission. Baptism is often alluded to in the Epistles in harmony with this view of it, and also as related to other important things in Christian life and hope. The Apostles seem never to have conceived of the possibility of a penitent believer refusing to be baptized; but if one professing this character had refused Baptism, is it possible to doubt,

<sup>1</sup> Titus iii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. v. 26. The idea of "cleansing" includes Remission.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. iv. 4-6.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Peter iii. 21, 22, which should be compared with Acts ii. 38, words of Peter also. Is it wise, in the face of this text, to assert, unqualifiedly, that "baptism is not a saving ordinance?"

with this record before us, that they would have warned him of the guilt and danger of "rejecting the counsel of God concerning" himself? If these are the facts, and that they are is obvious, the Scriptures do teach that Baptism is a part of what is meant by "obedience to the Gospel,"<sup>1</sup> which has the promise of Remission of sins and of Eternal Life.

Indeed, some of these passages look at first sight like Remission solely conditioned on the act of Baptism, or even like "Baptismal Regeneration." But a careful examination will show that however easy or plausible the perversion, it is a perversion. In every case where Baptism is represented as related to Remission or Salvation, it is always joined with Repentance and Faith in terms, or by necessary implication. This is clear in the seven strong passages—Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, and xxii. 16; John iii. 5; Eph. v. 26; Titus iii. 5, and 1 Peter iii. 21, 22. For Repentance and Faith are both present, in germ at least, where one of them is; and both are sure to result from the life-giving work of the Spirit. We may be certain, then, that the Apostles never thought of inviting a sinner to Baptism in order to regeneration—in any sense in which Baptists are accustomed to use the word; nor in order to Remission, save as the complement of Repentance and Faith. This is the practical view; before considering the theory of this relation we must look at—

Some Teachings of Scripture alleged to be Inconsistent with the Obvious Teaching  
as to Remission and Baptism.

First. The alleged undervaluing of Baptism by Paul in 1 Cor. i. 10-17.

But Paul's thankfulness that he baptized so few at Corinth is *not* an undervaluing of Baptism, though this is a favorite argument of anti-immersionists. He does not deny that he preached Baptism, but only says that he did not there (generally) administer the rite with his own hands. He does not deny that the "Lord sent him to preach" Baptism, but does deny that his great mission was to baptize. It is evident from the narratives of Acts xvi and xviii that he did preach Baptism, at Corinth and elsewhere, as a part of the Gospel, and that those who believed under his preaching were immediately baptized. But he preferred, when practicable, that some one else should officiate; just as now an "evangelist" [so-called] might, for the best of reasons, prefer that the pastors should do the baptizing, while himself strenuously insisting on Baptism in his preaching. The

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 5; x. 10; xv. 18; 2 Thess. i. 8; 1 Peter iv. 17; Hebrews v. 9.

bearing of this passage on the subject in hand is exactly opposite to the inference drawn from it. It is this: Baptism was such an important thing in the view of the early Christians, that Paul congratulated himself in having baptized so few at Corinth, lest some should say that he "baptized in his own name"—lest the faith and reverence due to Christ might be "divided"—and a part transferred to the distinguished administrator. How could this have been, if Baptism had been a mere symbol of no vital consequence?

Second. The frequent omission of Baptism in the teaching of Christ and his Apostles.

We at once admit that there was no set form of words always used; and that the terms of the Gospel Salvation were not always explicitly and fully stated. It is to be observed here, (1) that negative testimony cannot invalidate positive testimony. We know what the Commission was, and are bound to believe that the Apostles were faithful to it. (2) By this mode of reasoning it may be shown that Repentance is not a condition of Salvation and Remission;<sup>1</sup> that Faith is not;<sup>2</sup> that neither of them is!<sup>3</sup> (3) In many cases Baptism is not named because there is no occasion for it. Thus in Acts iii. 19 Paul is addressing the unbelieving rulers, and it is quite sufficient to exhort them to "repent and turn." Had they taken the position of inquirers, we know what directions he would have given. (4) In other cases a mere summary statement is made—a part for the whole. So in the case of the Philippian jailer. As soon as there was opportunity, full instruction was given, including Baptism, as is apparent from what followed.<sup>4</sup> (5) After the death of John the Baptist it seems very probable that Baptism ceased to be administered until the day of Pentecost; which will account for the Saviour's silence as to Baptism during his Galilean and later Judæan ministry.

Third. The doctrinal statements of Christ and his apostles concerning forgiveness and justification, where these blessings are said to be bestowed on the penitent and believing, no mention being made of Baptism; *e. g.*, John, ch. vi; Romans, chs. iii-v.

With regard to these we observe, (1) if these statements are inconsistent with what the same teachers tell us of Baptism, they are also inconsistent with themselves. Thus there would be a contradiction between Luke xviii. 14 and Romans v. 1. (2) Christ taught either unbelieving Jews (*see* third and fifth observations under the last

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 38 and xiii. 38, 39.

<sup>2</sup> Acts iii. 19 and xi. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xix. 21 and Heb. v. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xvi. 30-33; *Of*. Acts x. 43, 48.

head), or his own disciples, all of whom had been baptized,<sup>1</sup> and understood the import of Baptism; and the Epistles were addressed to Christians, every one of whom had been taught the Gospel, as Peter and Paul taught it, and had been baptized. Is it to be supposed that Christ and his Apostles intended to contradict their own instructions given at the first to inquirers? (3) Nor is there any necessary inconsistency here, even if we give to these doctrinal statements the most unrestricted latitude of meaning. If it be granted, that with God forgiveness instantly follows man's repentance, and justification man's faith, What then? Is it not obvious that the human heart needs and craves something tangible both as a seal of divine acceptance and as an expression of its own trust and love? Also that a test of obedience is necessary which shall reveal the genuineness of professed repentance and faith, or show their spuriousness? Is it not, furthermore, indispensable that Christ's disciples should be separated from the world? All this Baptism accomplishes, at the lowest possible estimate of its value. Why then should not the Lord conjoin Baptism with Repentance and Faith? Why should he not proclaim the assurance of pardon and salvation not merely to the penitent believer, but to the penitent believer baptized? Are professed repentance and faith, not sincere and earnest enough to abide the test, of any real value? Was it not well that they should be branded as insufficient to save the soul?<sup>2</sup> Would not genuine repentance and faith be perfected and strengthened by their outward expression? Does it nullify pardon and justification, or diminish any existing peace and joy in the believer's soul, to have all confirmed and assured to his mind by the ratification of an unchangeable covenant? Note also that in those early days Baptism swiftly followed that which it expressed, closely conjoined with Repentance and Faith in time as well as in teaching, so that little opportunity was given for the question, What is the *status* of an unbaptized believer? No one who accepted the Gospel in reality was ever known to refuse Baptism; and as to exceptional cases, such as the impossibility of receiving the ordinance,

<sup>1</sup> It is astonishing that this should ever have been doubted. Did Christ call his Apostles from those who had "rejected the counsel of God," or from the "people made ready for the Lord"? No doubt all his other followers were also of the "prepared people," or else had been "made disciples and baptized" by the Lord and his disciples (John iv. 1, 2.)

<sup>2</sup> If this is inconsistent with justification by faith, then are Matt. xix. 21; x. 22; x. 32, 33. But compare James ii. 14-26. This seems to have been the view of the late lamented Dr. Hackett. He sustains most positively the exegesis of Acts ii. 38 and xxii. 16 maintained in this article. On the latter passage he adds: "Baptism is represented as having this importance or efficacy, because it is the sign of the repentance and faith which are the conditions of salvation." Certainly this venerated man did not mean that the representations of Peter and Ananias were deceptive or mistaken. Hence we conclude that his view was according to the hypothesis here stated, although some exceptions may be taken to his terms.



be it remembered that God was then, is now, free to go before the letter of his Gospel promise, or to go beyond it, whenever, in his own sovereignty, he may see sufficient cause for so doing.

It is clear, then, that this objection is without weight. Even if we grant all that the objector claims, and take the lowest possible view of Baptism, there is no inconsistency or contradiction involved in making it one of the announced conditions which secure the Divine assurance of pardon and salvation.

Let us now proceed to formulate, in brief, the teachings of the New Testament as to the

#### Nature and Design of Baptism.

I. NATURE.—In itself considered, Baptism is a *symbol*; i. e., "a sign or representation of something moral or intellectual, by the images and properties of natural things." (Webster), Specifically, in this case, "a sign," etc., of spiritual realities. Hence (1) its symbolical character fits it to be used, in a personal transaction between God and the soul, as a means of expression, as a covenant-seal, as the vehicle of a blessing (if so God will). And (2) this symbolism is many-sided. Infinite wisdom has chosen in this simple act one capable of shadowing forth almost every prominent fact and truth of Christianity. Of these, no doubt, it was intended to be a witness. But this function is incidental, though important. It is not dwelt upon in the New Testament; but is apparent from allusions of the sacred writers,<sup>1</sup> as well as from the nature of the rite itself. Strangely has this been supposed by many to be the main design of Baptism.

Symbols analogous to Baptism are found in the "anointing of oil" in the old dispensation, and the "laying on of hands" in the new, though of far less depth and breadth of meaning.

II. DESIGN.—First. *Considered as the act of the believer.*

1. Baptism is an expression of faith in Christ. *Baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ.* We object to the common designation of Baptism as "a profession of faith." Scripturally, profession is made with the mouth.<sup>2</sup> But "actions speak louder than words." In them the sentiments of the heart find expression, and in expression, completeness. Faith in Christ is acted upon, acted out, and so consummated in Baptism.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 1-11 affords an example, especially the "burial."

<sup>2</sup> Romans x. 10. The "confession" of the Common Version should be *profession*. This profession preceded Baptism, and as it is said to be "unto salvation" probably, by synecdoche, includes it.

<sup>3</sup> See Pepper on "The Mutual Relations of Baptism and the Communion."—BAPTIST QUARTERLY, April, 1872, page 171. Re-printed in pamphlet form by Am. Bap. Pub. Society.

2. Baptism is a representative act of obedience. *The requirement of a good conscience.* From it, as those who have *died to sin*, we rise to *walk in newness of life*. We object to the idea that Baptism is no greater than any other act of obedience. It is a typical, comprehensive, prophetic act; one that embodies the purposes and pledges of Repentance (i. e., a change of mind), and so consummates them. It includes in germ and sample every subsequent act of obedience.

3. Baptism is an act of self-identification with Christ. He identified himself with us in his Baptism;<sup>1</sup> and as the Head of his people proceeded to work out for them a perfect salvation. In view of all this the penitent believer in Baptism voluntarily and solemnly identifies himself with the Lord of glory. He is *buried* as to his old life, *is raised together with Christ*, PUTS ON CHRIST. He declares his acceptance of the offered union with Christ.

4. Baptism is a vow of allegiance to the Holy Trinity, including acceptance of the covenant of grace. *In [or unto] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*<sup>2</sup> *The name, etc.,* is the gracious revelation made of the character and work of the Three Persons of the Trinity. With full faith in this, and with his mind directed UNTO the Triune God, the penitent believer declares his acceptance of the offers of Gospel grace, and surrenders himself, soul and body, for time and eternity, to the service of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Hence Baptism takes hold of the blessings of pardon, of adoption, redemption and sanctification, and is an oath of allegiance.

Second. *Design of Baptism, as to what God accomplishes by it.* In the Scriptures, as we have seen, Baptism as a condition of Remission, etc., never stands alone; but is always associated, in terms or by necessary implication, with Repentance and Faith. We are safe, therefore, in asserting that apart from these it has no possible spiritual efficacy; indeed, that it is a falsehood, a farce. In vain, then, should we administer to unconscious infant or to impenitent adult a spurious baptism, borrowed from the Pope of Rome; or even a real baptism, immersion; or if we would overdo the thing in spite of reason and

<sup>1</sup> "Thus it becometh us," he condescended to say. Matt. III. 15.

<sup>2</sup> This phrase has been strangely tortured. It has been the fashion to substitute *into* for "in," producing an expression in English not only un-idiomatic, but positively unmeaning. There seems to be confusion of ideas, occasioned by confounding the primary and secondary uses of *eis*. In the primary, it points out that *into* which the body is literally plunged (*into the Jordan*, Mark I. 9). In the secondary, it points out purpose of the act of Baptism, direction of mind or result; e. g., the phrase *unto*, or *into*, Christ. So here the act is performed (by the believer) with reference to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. (as revealed to us in connection with the plan of salvation,) and as a solemn vow *unto* the Triune God. So far as the administrator is concerned, the authority by which and purpose for which he baptizes are expressed or implied. If we alter the common translation at all, it should be to *unto* not *into*. In regard to the unauthorized paraphrase "into a profession of," see pages 303, 304, and foot-note, page 303.

common sense, a trine immersion. The empty rite would leave the subject where it found him, unregenerate, unsaved, unforgiven. Simon Magus, whose profession of faith was false, was pronounced by Peter himself to be "in the gall of bitterness" (unregenerate), and "in the bond of iniquity" (unforgiven), though he had been baptized. Equally clear is it, from the teachings of Scripture, that Baptism, when associated with Repentance and Faith, has a real value, and accomplishes something. If it be but a MERE symbol, or object-lesson, or a profession of accomplished facts, what meaning is there in language? or how shall we ever hope to understand the Gospel, as it fell from inspired lips, clothed in human words?

In speaking of what is accomplished in Baptism, we would tread with caution, not only to avoid error, but because the subject, considered with relation to the presence and operation of the Spirit, is confessedly mysterious, and in some of its aspects may baffle our poor powers of analysis and statement.

1. Without controversy, by Baptism God separates the believer from the world, and puts upon him the mark of Christ and the weight of solemn vows.

2. Baptism (with Repentance and Faith) secures the divine assurance of pardon and eternal life. The penitent believer baptized has for those blessings the word of a king who can never be "worse" (though he may be "better") than his word. So much objectively. Can we reasonably doubt that the Holy Spirit, in Baptism, "seals the grace" of forgiveness to the believer's soul?

3. Baptism consummates the union of the soul with Christ.<sup>1</sup> The Saviour accepts the believer's act of consecration, and self-identification with him; and the union of the soul with Christ becomes an established fact. So much is implied in the expressions, "*saves us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" "*Baptized into [so as to be IN] Jesus Christ.*" It is like the marriage ceremony which crowns and establishes the union of souls already loving. Nor can we doubt that when the believer comes in Baptism to ratify the covenant graciously tendered to him, and to identify himself with the risen Lord, he who promised his perpetual presence in the fulfillment of his own Great Commission, is a party to the transaction, and formally and fully receives him to be his own forever.

4. So Baptism incorporates the believer into the Church, the body of Christ. *Baptized into one body*, that is, so as to be a member of the one body. Even Baptism, on a mistaken profession of repentance

<sup>1</sup> Much that is suggestive on this point may be found in Dr. G. R. Bliss's article on "Ebrard's View of Baptism."—BAPTIST QUARTERLY, July, 1869.

and faith gives an outward and temporary membership in the Church, imperfect as it is, on earth. But the Baptism of the true believer makes him a living member of the body; and this membership will be eternal when the Church is perfected in the world to come.

5. Is there a special work of the Spirit on the believer's soul in Baptism? Must there not be if he seals the pardon? Can the believer's union with Christ be consummated, or he be ingrafted into the one body, without the operation of the Spirit of Life? At the beginning miraculous gifts followed Baptism. Did these exhaust the meaning of the promise, "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit": or did they rather mark the bestowment of a personal blessing "which God hath given to them that obey" Christ,<sup>1</sup> intended for all time? The Spirit has "called" to Repentance and Faith, he has led to Baptism: why may we not suppose that he now performs a further work, and takes up his permanent "abode" with the disciple for help and sanctification? Is it not significant that the believer is said in Baptism "*to be raised*," as if by a power outside of himself? Does not the close connection of the Spirit's work with Baptism in John iii. 5, and Titus iii. 5, indicate that a work is *wrought upon* the believer, as well as that he performs a work himself?<sup>2</sup> And may not this be the completion of the whole process of the "new birth" (not the impartation of life, that is antecedent—the beginning of the process), the completion of the *regeneration* of the man, in the Scriptural, as distinguished from the theological sense? These questions we propound without attempting to give a dogmatic answer. But if, in opposition to their drift, it should be objected that such a view is not fully corroborated by experience, it might be sufficient reply to ask: May not shallow conceptions of Baptism hinder the full blessing originally intended to be connected with it, or at least obscure the consciousness of its reception? Besides, are we, strictly speaking, conscious of the Holy Spirit's work? The place whereon we stand is holy ground. We would equally shrink from making more of Baptism than the New Testament does, and from making less of it than a fair exegesis warrants and demands.

Independent of the point last named, we have obtained light enough to enable us to affirm the following conclusions:

#### Definition of the Relation of Baptism and Remission.

I. *The Relation of Baptism to Remission is not that of an Emblem or a Profession of an assured fact regarded as already accomplished.*

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 32.

<sup>2</sup> See Ellcott on Titus iii. 5, and Ephesians v. 26. But with the views there expressed, how can he defend Infant Baptism?

II. *The Relation of Baptism to Remission is not that of a single specific and invariable Condition, on which Remission absolutely depends.*

III. *The Relation of Baptism to Remission is this: Baptism is the third of three Gospel Requirements or Conditions, to which, jointly, is annexed the Promise of Remission. The others are Repentance and Faith, which Baptism is designed to express, embody and consummate.*

Let us now, in order further to set this whole matter in a clear light, take a hasty glance at the

Place of Baptism in the Economy of Salvation.

continuing to look at the subject solely as it is presented to us in the New Testament, ignoring all the errors, corruptions and resulting complications, to which the centuries have given birth.

The Bible teaches us that salvation proceeds from the gracious purpose of God, which is two-fold: (1.) to render salvation possible to all our fallen race; (2.) to secure the salvation of the Elect. Hence the economy of salvation is two-fold, a plan within a plan.

1. The Gospel belongs to the outer, the man-ward side. It makes known Christ and his salvation, including the gift of the Holy Spirit, promising Remission and eternal life to all who obey its three requirements. Baptism seals the covenant between God and the soul, and introduces the believer to the life in Christ, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is indeed further required that the disciple shall "endure unto the end." If he should fall away, and repudiate the baptismal covenant, he would forfeit the promises of that covenant.<sup>1</sup> But he is now in a state of salvation, an heir of eternal life. Whether God will keep every true believer "through faith unto salvation," belongs to the other side of the subject. The Gospel warns and incites to faithfulness.

Now, if Baptism *alone* were connected with the promise of Remission, we should be shut up to the belief that sin is actually and only forgiven at the moment of Baptism. But it is associated with Repentance and Faith, which precede it by an appreciable, and in some cases, a considerable interval of time. The general drift of Scripture seems to indicate that the prodigal is actually forgiven as soon as he returns; instances are on record where divine assurance of pardon was given on the spot. It is not asserted that pardon is always delayed till Baptism, or that it is actually bestowed in the act, or that

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews vi. 4-6.

it is invariably refused to the unbaptized. *The Gospel simply guarantees pardon to the penitent believer baptized.* Baptism does not necessarily fix the exact moment of forgiveness; it assures of forgiveness. So that whoever neglects or refuses Baptism has not the certainty of being forgiven; and whoever properly receives it, has such certainty. Perhaps we may suppose that God, in his own mind, forgives the sinner when he repents, justifies him when he believes; but as a judicial act of his government, declares or pronounces his sins forgiven in Baptism, both by virtue of his written word, and by the sealing of his Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, the believer awaiting Baptism, whether for a few moments or many days, is likely to feel peace and joy; but Baptism increases and assures both. It remains through life a memorial of God's covenant with the obedient soul.

2. Human depravity prevents obedience to the Gospel, except as the result of sovereign grace. The Elect, for whom Christ specially died, are effectually called by the Holy Spirit, and their salvation is certain. There might be some incongruity between this truth, and the idea of Remission solely conditioned on Baptism; but between it and the Scripture doctrine of Baptism there is none. God predestines men to salvation, but not apart from the use of means; among these Baptism has a place. God effectually calls men, but he calls them to obey the Gospel. The salvation of the Elect is sure; but this is not inconsistent with conditions of salvation proclaimed to men; for if it is, we must repudiate the demand for Repentance and Faith as well as for Baptism. Every person quickened by the Spirit will infallibly desire to obey the whole Gospel. There is, therefore, no inconsistency here. In Baptism the soul "lays hold of that for which it was laid hold of by Christ Jesus,"<sup>2</sup> and fulfils a part of God's eternal decree by consecrating itself forever to him, and receiving whatever of promise and of blessing the Lord bestows in Baptism.<sup>3</sup>

And here let us note that the Scriptural doctrine of Baptism leaves

<sup>1</sup> Good old Du Vell, who found his way from Judaism, through Romanism and Anglicanism to the Baptist position, says in his Commentary on the Acts, London, 1685, (II. 38), "*in the remission of sins*, that is, to seal the remission of sins, received or to be received, by the full assurance of the conscience." He confounded the use of *in* with that of *on*, according to the imperfect grammar of those days; but he had not heard of "on account of," as a translation of *in*.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. III. 12.

<sup>3</sup> "Regeneration," in the ordinary Baptist acceptance of that term, must precede forgiveness. The order is (1.) "Regeneration," or as we prefer to say, "effectual calling." (2.) Obedience to the Gospel, as a result. (3.) Pardon. God cannot forgive an "unregenerate" soul; if he did he would forgive an impenitent and unbelieving soul. "The sacraments of the New Testament are made means of grace to the individual who rightly partakes of them. . . . they pre-suppose or imply the possession of grace; but they are also made the means of adding to that grace. They are seals of a covenant already made between the soul and Christ . . . . they become effectual means of imparting saving blessings in addition to those enjoyed before." (Bannerman's "The Church of Christ," Vol. II, pp. 12, 13.)

room for God to carry out his electing decree in those cases where, if Remission were conditioned on Baptism alone, it might seem that that decree would be baffled.<sup>1</sup> Suppose one of his chosen ones, moved to penitence, but dying before Christ is made known so fully that he can "believe on him"; or believing, but dying before it is possible to be immersed. Is he lost? God's covenant binds us in obedience and preaching. We have no right to vary the terms of the Gospel by so much as a hair's breath. But he is free, if he will, to ~~exceed~~ his promise. Would not Cornelius have been saved if he had died before he heard Peter? Was not the robber on the cross, repenting and believing, but absolutely debarred from Baptism, received into Paradise? Philosophically speaking, only Repentance is, in the nature of the case, *necessary* to salvation—a *sine qua non* in every conceivable case. God can renew, pardon and save a soul ignorant of Incarnation and Atonement, though of course, for the sake of Christ. Many ancient saints, if not all, must have been thus saved. We believe that some of God's elect have first known conscious union with Christ on meeting him in Paradise. Much less is Baptism a *necessary* condition of salvation. It is what it is by divine appointment.<sup>2</sup> God will find means to complete his work of grace in every elect soul. He will find opportunity here or hereafter, to bestow on every one "given" from eternity to Christ, those gifts normally and regularly connected with Baptism.<sup>3</sup> He will, also, keep those who truly obey the Gospel unto salvation,<sup>4</sup> since such obedience shows that they have been effectually "called" by the Spirit, and is the result of God's electing decree.<sup>5</sup> But we have no need to shrink from receiving his Gospel, or from announcing it, just as he has given it, through fear of conflict with the "Doctrines of Grace." Andrew Fuller made this clear as to Repentance and Faith; is it not equally clear as to Baptism?

In a word, the Spirit of God plants the germ of a new life in the soil of the human heart. Then, according to the law of a normal development, grows the dark root of Repentance, rises the firm stalk of Faith, blooms the "bright consummate flower" of Baptism, ripen the fruits of the Spirit unto Life Eternal.

JAMES W. WILLMARTH.

FIMBERTON, N. J.

<sup>1</sup> Hence those who hold to Remission solely conditioned on, or bestowed in Baptism, are uniformly Arminians.

<sup>2</sup> "The necessity of Baptism is not absolute, but relative." Dr. P. Schaff in Lange's John (III. 5).

<sup>3</sup> Ebrard (as interpreted by Dr. Bliss): "To every SUCH soul Christ will communicate himself, with or without Baptism; but regularly and in the intended economy of salvation, Baptism is the ceremony of Christ's incorporation with the soul." We should prefer to say, the ceremony of the soul's union with Christ. Baptism, "*We in Christ*." The communion, "*Christ in us*."

<sup>4</sup> Phil. I. 6; 1 Peter I. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Acts XIII. 48; Rom. VIII. 30.







