

# "Christian Baptism."

Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.—Rom. vi, 3, 4.

Buried with Him in baptism wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead.—Col. ii, 12.

In addressing you to-night on the subject of "Christian Baptism" I desire to say at the outset that I am influenced by no other motive than a supreme desire to be loyal to that which we apprehend to be the changeless truth of God. As Baptists, we will be second to none in our desire for unity in the church of Christ and love one to another on the part of all who bear our Saviour's sacred name. None sorrow more than do we at beholding the church

"By schisms rent asunder,  
By heresies distrest."

But love can never blot out loyalty. God loved the world, but loyalty to the Word of His truth had to be satisfied at the cost of His own Son. We love in sincerity and as brethren all who have been washed from their sins in our Saviour's blood, who seek with us to tread the pilgrim path, and with whom we hope and expect to share the glories of our Father's Home. But whilst we love them we love Truth still more, and even at the cost of forfeiting their company, their immediate fellowship, and sometimes their good opinion we are constrained humbly and affectionately to put company with them in order to obey our convictions. Bunyan's Christian loved Christiana passionately, but obedience to the Book in which he read forbade that she should hinder him, and they trod separately the way to the Celestial City.

We do not attempt to conceal the fact that we differ from our Presbyterian and other friends, and we are in no sense ashamed of our differences. But God forbid that any one of us should by thought, word, or deed treat any child of God in any spirit but one of the most decided Christian charity. I ask you to accept in this spirit all that I shall say this evening in reference to our friends who differ from us

The sermon to which I am to reply is divided into two parts: (1) The mode of baptism; (2) The subjects of baptism. The division is a simple one, and, for the sake of convenience, I shall adopt in replying.

In introducing his subject Mr McKerrow makes a statement which is significant. He says "that the determination of the latter question (subjects) would carry with it the determination of the former (mode)," and alleges that they must be void of common sense who would think of immersing infants. If this be admitted it is by no means surprising that we find no cases of infant baptism in Scripture. But I would point out that the remark as to "common sense" is a terribly severe reflection upon the compilers of the Church of England prayer-book, who therein demand that "the priest shall dip the child in water." I am not disposed to argue on the point; I am only glad that it was Mr McKerrow's hand that dealt the blow!

Let me begin then with the mode, and afterwards deal with the subjects for baptism. I am pleased to observe that the sermon under review does not deny the validity and Scriptural character of immersion. It only claims for sprinkling a like validity. Now we contend that both cannot be Scriptural. Another Presbyterian minister has expressed his willingness to admit that baptism as taught by us is valid and

right if we will admit as much with regard to the ordinance passing under that name as practised by him. Our friends will see at once that this we cannot, dare not, do. If we see white to the Scriptural, how can we admit that black is just as good? It is not to us a question of water—more or less. The quantity of water employed does not enter into our minds. It is the very meaning and significance of this ordinance—the very sacrament—for which we are contending; not for a mere matter of water. Baptism is spoken of and admitted to have been administered to those who were newly converted to the Christian faith—from the power of Satan unto God. And the very significance of the ordinance is that in being immersed beneath the waters they are dead and buried to the world and to sin; and in stepping forth from the waters they go forth as having risen to newness of life. One has only to study the Acts of the Apostle—and, indeed, all the references to baptism in the New Testament—to see unmistakably that “these things are so.” The best of writers of all denominations agree here. Bishop Lightfoot, that Prince of Expositors, says: “Ye were buried with Christ to your old selves beneath the baptismal waters, and were raised with him from these same waters to a new and better life.” Among Church of England deans and archdeacons, bishops and archbishops, whom I might quote to the same effect, let me remind you of the words of Archbishop Tillotson, who was for ten years a Presbyterian minister and who afterwards became Archbishop of Canterbury. He says: “Anciently those who were baptised were immersed and buried in the water to represent their death to sin, and then did rise up out of the water to signify their entrance upon a new life.” So does John Wesley, in commenting upon our text in Romans, say “This alluded to the ancient manner of baptising by immersion.” It is because sprinkling and pouring (even in the case of believers) altogether fail to set forth this ‘burial’ to sin and ‘resurrection’ to righteousness, that, with all love to our brethren who practise them, we uncompromisingly reject them; and it is because immersion, despite its alleged crudeness, sets forth that death, burial, and resurrection with beauty and simplicity that we delight to accept, defend, teach, and practise it.

The first part of the sermon recently published is divided into four distinct arguments—viz: (1) The meaning of the word “baptise”; (2) the ceremonial baptising of the Pharisees; (3) the Ethiopian eunuch; and (4) the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Let me reply to them in that order. First, the argument concerning the meaning of the word baptise. On previous occasions I have gone at length into the usage of the word in the original. Let me to-night vary the procedure a little by laying before you certain facts, and leaving it for you, as thoughtful men and women, to draw your own conclusions. Now, what course do we naturally adopt when we are undecided as to the meaning of a word? We instinctively turn to the dictionary. Now, there are published between thirty and forty Greek-English dictionaries or lexicons, prepared, of course, by men specially proficient in the Greek tongue, and without exception they give the meaning as “immerse,” “soak,” or “dip.” They are not Baptists. Yet not one of them suggests “sprinkle.” Can they all be *wrong*? (2) Then consider the fact that the word is translated as signifying immersion in the Bibles of all the following nations, as well as in other less important languages: German, Syriac, Gothic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Arabic, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, and in the earliest of all Latin versions. The Dutch Bible speaks of the forerunner of our Lord as “John the Dipper.” Can *all* the translators and *all* the revisers in *all* of these languages have made a fatal mistake? The very supposition is the essence of absurdity. (3) I would remind you, too, that wherever the word “baptise” is used in Greek writings outside the New Testament it is invariably rendered “immerse,” or “dip,” or “soak,” and never “sprinkle.” You may not all have the facilities at hand for testing this. May I venture to refer you to one ancient Grecian writer, with the translation of whose fables you are familiar. I refer, of course, to Æsop. Let me give you three instances in which the word “baptise” occurs in his original. The first is the instance of the mule who, laden with panniers filled with salt, slipped into the river and, of course, dissolved his load. The fable tells us that whenever after that he was loaded with salt he purposely walked

into the river "and (Gr. baptised) *immersed* the panniers." The second is the fable of the "Shepherd and the Sea." "A violent storm came on, and the ship being in danger of being (Gr. baptised) *immersed* he threw out all the lading into the sea, and with difficulty escaped in the empty ship." (The Greeks always spoke of ships that had found a resting-place among the rocks and seaweed on the ocean-bed as "baptised.") The third instance in *Æsop's Fables* is the man who was (Gr. baptising) *immersing* tow in oil, tying it to the fox's tail, and setting fire to it. These are examples of the general and invariable rule governing the use of the word baptise in Greek literature. 4. And upon this I particularly insist—What people upon the face of the earth should we expect to be able to give us a decided and final answer as to the exact meaning of the Greek word "baptiso?" The Greeks, of course! And right down through the centuries the Greeks have never allowed that word to be translated in any other way than "to immerse." Nor is that all. But the Greek Church has never allowed baptism to be administered in any other way than by immersion. So strongly do the Greeks feel upon this point that they insist in all their churches to this day in immersing each candidate three times—into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost respectively! In the light of this our University professors and doctors may well declare emphatically that "baptise" can only mean immerse. It is even then almost presumption to tell the Greeks that we agree with them as to the meaning of their own mother-tongue. It is madness without method to contradict them.

Now I have made these four statements, and I am prepared to maintain them. Any reasonable man will confess that if they are true the case for immersion, and immersion only, is proved up to the very hilt. The only chance of escape, it will be admitted, is that they are *false*—and that I here and now publicly challenge Mr McKerrow to assert.

Need I add to these statements? Or need I trouble you with the conclusions of Presbyterians, English Churchmen, Congregationalists, Wesleyans, and others of the highest standing and scholarship? Suffice it to say that our Presbyterian friends will surely

give weight to the emphatic assertion of their own excellent and learned Dr. Chalmers when he sums up the whole matter by asserting emphatically: "The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion." He continues: "We doubt not that the prevalent style of the administration in the apostles' days was by the actual submerging of the whole body under water."

Now, secondly, consider the argument concerning the ceremonial baptising of the Pharisees (Mark vii, 4). Mr McKerrow adopts the marginal reading of the Revised Version. It is certainly the best, and we could not wish for a better illustration of the difference in the use of the words signifying washing (*nipsontai*, verse 3) and immersion (*baptisontai*, verse 4). The whole force of the passage turns upon the punctilious extent to which these Pharisees performed their ceremonial cleansing. The third verse tells us that before eating they at all times washed their hands; but, says verse 4, after they had been to the market place and mixed with the heathen and unclean they actually baptised themselves. This is fully borne out by the note made by the Revisers at the end of their version (see note on Mark vii, 4—"for wash read bathe"), and to put any other interpretation upon the passage is to destroy the force and meaning of the whole. Dr. Maclear, in his Cambridge Bible for Schools, says "'Wash' here implies complete immersion." If you put upon the passage Mr McKerrow's interpretation and make "baptiso" mean—what it never can mean, under any circumstances—"to sprinkle," I assert that the passage is perfectly ridiculous. You then make the Pharisees to have undergone actually less cleansing after returning from the contaminating market place than they underwent on ordinary occasions—"which is impossible." This brings us to the remainder of the verse, which deals with the baptising of "the cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." Mr McKerrow argues that it is ridiculous to suppose that these were immersed. It is a little singular that he began arguing on this passage from the margin of the Revised Version. He now abandons the Revised Version altogether and has gone back to the Authorised Version. If he will turn again to his first love

he will find that the Revisers have omitted "the tables" altogether, and the verse simply reads "cups, and pots, and brazen vessels." Now I appeal to the ladies present as to whether they would wash "cups and pots and brazen vessels" by sprinkling or by immersion. And would these Pharisees do less? Baptise means immerse. I have pointed out that the Revisers omit "and tables"—so Mr McKerrow goes back to the old version. I am pleased to meet him on that ground. Then he prefers to call the tables "couches." I am pleased to accept the revision. It is the same word in the original as that rendered "bed" in Matt. ix, 6 ("Take up thy bed and go.") And now Mr McKerrow considers it ridiculous to suppose that they plunged these couches into the water, and argues that they must have sprinkled them. It is unfortunate that before making the statement our friend did not consult the command on the subject (Lev. xi, 32)—"whether it be vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be wherein any work is done it must be put into water." He speaks of the couches as "cumbrous articles of furniture." Perhaps he was thinking of our modern couches. But if he will refer to his Encyclopedia he will find that the couches of the Jews were little more than mere mattresses after all! The most vivid imagination cannot depict the sick of the palsy walking off home with "a cumbrous article of furniture!" And we are told that it is absurd to suppose that these were immersed. Mr McKerrow need only consult a dictionary of Jewish custom or Jewish history, in order to find a description (as in the writings of Moses Maimonides) of the actual immersion of these very couches—even to such minute details as the exact quantity of water used, and an account of the way in which the couches sank in the pool and were lifted again out of the water! The whole passage proves that "baptiso" can only mean to immerse, and the two words "baptise" of the 4th verse are in marked contrast with the simple "wash" (nipsontai) of the 3rd. The Greeks had separate words for pour and sprinkle, and if they had meant either of these they would have said so. No wonder that an authoritative voice near home (I mean the Professor

of Greek at Melbourne University) writes: "I know of no honest Greek lexicon which gives 'sprinkle' as a meaning of 'baptiso.' I would have little respect for a lexicon which did. The word will never mean anything but to dip or soak!"

And now, Mr McKerrow occupies three-quarters of a column with his third argument—that referring to Philip and the eunuch. And on this point I find it difficult to believe that he is serious. He says that since we lay stress upon the fact that "they went down both of them into the water" (Acts viii, 38), and "came up out of the water" (verse 39), we must admit that if the words prove that the eunuch was immersed they also prove that Philip was immersed too! Now, no Baptist has ever contended that "the going down into the water," and "the coming up out of the water" constituted the baptism. It would be the height of folly! But it is written (please look to your Bibles!) that they went down into the water, that *then Philip baptised him*, and afterwards they came up out of the water. There would have been no necessity for them both to go down into the water in order that Philip might sprinkle the eunuch's face, and we contend strongly that the going down into the water *before* the baptism, and the coming up out of the water *after* the baptism prove that when Philip baptised the eunuch he immersed him. We are told concerning our position that "it seems to me little less than degrading the sacrament of baptism." We can only reply that to depict two sacred personages from the pages of Holy Writ struggling together beneath the surface of the water is a *little more* "than degrading the sacrament of baptism."

Now let us consider Mr McKerrow's last argument, that concerning the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The argument is briefly stated thus: It was promised that the disciples should be "baptised with the Holy Ghost." The baptism of the Holy Ghost is described in the Acts in such terms as "shed forth," "fell upon," and "poured out." And after the argument has been elaborated we are asked triumphantly: "What becomes of immersion when the baptism of the Holy Ghost is described by such expressions? Let us see. To the law and to the testimony!

be "baptised with the Holy Ghost." I can not stay now to show you that in every case where baptism with the Holy Ghost is mentioned the margin of the Revised Version renders it "baptised *in* the Holy Ghost." Were it not approaching irreverence I would ask: Supposing we allow "baptise" to mean "sprinkled," and the promise is to be understood literally and materially, what will you understand by the promise that the disciples shall be "sprinkled in the Holy Ghost?" But I cannot stay. Please look that up for yourselves. We object to this materialism in expiating as a fulfilment of such a promise a literal baptism in the Divine Person of the Holy Spirit. A little child would understand it to be figurative language. It was clearly fulfilled when the disciples were all filled with the Holy Ghost. How can this be understood as sprinkling? They came fully under the power of the Spirit. Their minds thought, their lips spoke, their hands wrote, and their very feet walked as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. So fully were they immersed in His power. We object to pandering to the demands of an irreverent materialism which expects to find the disciples literally plunged into (or, as they wish it, "sprinkled" into) the Holy Ghost. But one who has condescended to answer a materialist according to his materialism has replied thus: "The promise is, 'Ye shall be baptised in the Holy Ghost.'" The record of the fulfilment (Acts ii, 2) says that the Holy Ghost came as "a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Of course it was "poured out" upon them, for it filled all the house; of course it was "shed forth" upon them; of course it "fell upon" them, for it came down from Heaven and filled all the house, so that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (verse 4). That is baptism, and you can answer for yourselves—had it been water that came down and "filled all the house where they were sitting," would it have been sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?

Here end the arguments from the first part of the sermon. I hold that they each show clearly and unmistakably that immersion is the only Scriptural baptism. There are doctrines which I prize as more

teaching am I more certain than on this. All Scriptural instances of the word go to bear this out. There is not a single jarring note—not one inharmonious word. Look for a moment at one passage where most beautifully baptism is referred to figuratively: "And were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor, x, 2). There they were—the cold, glassy, watery walls of sea towering up on both sides of them, dry land beneath, and the cloud hanging thick over them—covered on every side, surrounded, overwhelmed, immersed—a fit illustration of one baptised in water. Moreover, they had all—both young and old—just been redeemed and delivered by the blood of the Passover lamb; and this striking figure of our baptism immediately follows that as striking figure of our redemption and deliverance—the Pass-over.

Let me now sum up this part of the subject. As to the meaning of the word "baptizo"—that is for you to decide on the evidence of the four statements that I just now made, and by "comparing Scripture with Scripture." I have quoted from Dr Chalmers, Bishop Lightfoot, Archbishop Tillotson and others—carefully excluding quotations from Baptists—on the subject, and would conclude these with the statement of Professor Porson (of the Church of England), Professor of Greek in Cambridge University. Asked as to the meaning of "baptizo," he replied—"The Baptists have the best of us; baptizo signifies a total immersion!" As to the practice of the Apostles and early church I think I need anticipate no contradiction when I say that all students of Church History are agreed upon this—that the universal administration of baptism was by immersion. The renowned Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 194) for example gives the following remarkable definition of a Christian: "A Christian is one who knows God, who believes in Christ, who possesses the grace of God, and who has been dipped in the sacred laver." I might go on quoting from writers of all ages, but I am persuaded that you will be prepared to honour the ripe scholarship of such men as Dean Alford, who says of this ordinance that "baptism was administered by the immersion of the whole person"—as Dean Stanley, who says, "There can be no question that the original form of

was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters, and that for at least four centuries any other form was either unknown or regarded as an exceptional—almost a monstrous—case”—and as Connybear and Howson (who in common with both of the above-named were dignitaries in the Church of England) who, after having asserted that baptism was, in the early church, administered by immersion, say: “It must be a subject of regret that the general discontinuance of this original form of baptism has rendered obscure to popular apprehension some very important passages of Scripture.”

To this we add our hearty “hear, hear,” and extend an affectionate appeal to all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity to forsake the inventions of men and return to the old paths. They have been sanctified by the feet that were pierced for our redemption, honoured by the footsteps of the apostles, and stained by the blood of the martyrs. They lead to life eternal. They are ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace. In them the joys of full obedience to the Saviour may be realised, and at the end He waits extending, in a hand that felt the nail, a fadeless crown of everlasting life.

Ladies and gentlemen, brethren and sisters, Christians of all opinions and all denominations! that is my case for immersion. ‘Where is sprinkling then? It is excluded! By what law? By the law of the eternal Jehovah which altereth not!’

Then as to the *subjects* of baptism. Baptists maintain that only those who have professed repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ are fit candidates for baptism. *We do not maintain ‘adult’ baptism.* We have no regard to the age of the believer. Innocent childhood and grey-headed age are alike welcome if we have satisfactory evidence that they are intelligent believers, and “have passed from death unto life.” For this reason both of our friend’s texts and much of the sermon are utterly irrelevant. “Suffer little children to come unto Me” says the Saviour in Mr McKerrow’s first text, and the Baptists will be second to none in their zeal in bringing the little ones to Him. But the second text is strangely unfortunate—“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones” (Matt. xviii, 10). Now anybody reading these passages will see that there is in

baptism, and our friends must surely feel when they come to the Scriptures for authority for their practice that ‘there is a mighty famine in that land’ when they are willing to fall back upon such texts for their foundations. But supposing that, for the sake of argument, we pretended that there was a reference to baptism in this text. “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.” Then we naturally ask what little ones does Jesus refer to as “these?” The text is in the 10th verse. If you glance back to the 6th verse you will see that He describes them as “these little ones which believe in Me,” and such little ones we delight to welcome and baptise. This being so, we need only deal with such arguments as may seem to show that infants have at their birth and by right of it a claim to baptism. We are glad that the attempt to prove that there was an infant in either of the baptised households is abandoned. If the jailor’s household included children they were old enough to believe and rejoice (Acts xvi, 34). If Lydia’s household included children—rather an embarrassment for a woman travelling from city to city selling purple!—they were old enough to be called ‘brethren’ by the apostles (Acts xvi, 40); and as to the household of Stephanus we are told absolutely nothing.

The first contention is that there is not a single instance in the New Testament of an adult receiving baptism who could possibly have been baptised in infancy. Even if we admit this our friends will surely not be illogical enough to contend that if they *could* have been they *should* have been. It is like arguing what the human race would have been like to-day if Adam and Eve had been different people altogether. We would reply by asserting emphatically that of all the infants that the apostles must have met with in their constant travels there is not a single instance in which they baptised one. To this our friends reply that there is not a single instance in which a woman is said in the New Testament to have observed the Lord’s Supper! “They do err, not knowing the Scriptures.” If they carefully read Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians they will see (1) that the apostle delivered the Lord’s Supper to the Corinthian Church, and (2) that there were women in that church. I

could also quote other passages. As to the silence of the Scriptures as to invitations to pastors, salaried officers, etc., if the Scriptures entered into all questions of church government and expediency "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." As to doctrine, teaching, preaching, and sacraments the New Testament is clear and emphatic; and I assert boldly that if it had been the Divine will that such a sacrament as "infant sprinkling" should be added to the two already taught and practised, the Scriptures would have uttered their voice on the subject with no uncertain sound. But, we are told, this was unnecessary, because the Old Testament authorised the practice! From Genesis to Malachi there sounds one dismal echo—"Where?" The quotations from the Old Testament in the sermon have not even a passing reference to the subject of baptism. Look, for example, at the principal passage quoted in support of infant sprinkling (Deut. xxix. 10): "Ye stand this day before the Lord, your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water, that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath which the Lord thy God madeth with thee this day." Is there here the slightest hint at baptism? None! But our friends think there is. Then we reply, if you find here authority to sprinkle 'your little ones' you must also sprinkle "the stranger that is within thy camp (who will probably make his stay a short one after being subjected to such treatment), the hewer of thy wood, and the drawer of thy water."

The sermon refers, too, to Peter's proclamation on the day of Pentecost. Will you please turn to it? (Acts ii, 38). Peter, speaking to those who have been convicted under the word, says: "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." He commanded those who were convicted to repent and be baptised, reminding them of

the glorious promise of a Saviour of which he had been speaking (see preceding verses). Of course that promise was to their children, and to all that are afar off—one grand "Whosoever will." But Peter did not baptise the unconverted children because these people believed, any more than he baptised "all that are afar off." Whom did he baptise? See verse 41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptised." Were there no children among the number? I hope and expect so. I like to think there were. But this I know—that all the young people and the old people baptised that day had first "gladly received the word."

In neither Old or New Testament is there the slightest warrant for the sprinkling or even immersion of infants. The sermon, as it nears its conclusion, contains an extraordinary statement, which, if it means anything at all, concedes the whole position for which we have contended. It is this: "That which circumcision was to the Jews baptism is to Christians; just as that which the Passover was to the Jews the Lord's Supper is to Christians." Now the only sense in which the Passover was typical of the Lord's Supper is this—that the literal and natural Israel of the Old Testament is typical of the true and spiritual Israel—the redeemed church—of the New Testament. And Mr McKerrow would only knowingly admit to the fellowship of the Lord's supper those who have realised the personal application of the truths shown forth in the ordinance—those who can truly say "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." Now we are told that in just the same way circumcision was typical of baptism. Then as circumcision was administered upon natural birth into the literal Israel, so baptism should be administered upon spiritual birth into the spiritual and true Israel, and those only should be permitted to its fellowship who have passed through the experience of regeneration set forth by it.

And now let me go back for a moment to deal with one statement which I have omitted. It is that in which Mr McKerrow gives an exposition of baptist logic in connection with the verse: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." He states this syllogism as ours, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; an infant

cannot believe; therefore an infant should not be baptised." Bearing in mind the divine order in the arrangement of the two words, and the dependence which the outward and visible ordinance ("is baptised") must necessarily exercise upon the inward and invisible faith ("believeth") we are prepared to accept the syllogism, and stand by the logic. To my mind it will bear favourable comparison with our friend's position which is, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; an infant cannot believe; therefore an infant shall be *sprinkled!*"

The second syllogism with which we are credited runs thus: "He that believeth not shall be damned; an infant cannot believe; therefore all infants shall be damned." This hideous thing is the conception of a hyper-logical imagination. *Baptists* have always held that only those who have heard the Gospel are responsible for the Gospel. The Revised Version renders this passage, 'He that disbelieveth shall be condemned.' The words clearly indicate a positive unbelief after having heard the message. So that I might state our position in syllogistic form thus: "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned"; an infant cannot disbelieve; therefore no infants shall be condemned. Only on Sunday last it was my sorrowful duty to commit to her little resting place one who only spent a few months here; and I left her sleeping quietly there with just as much assurance of a glorious resurrection, as I should have done had she been sprinkled. And if our friends think that the ceremony they perform makes the slightest possible difference in the matter of the little ones' salvation they immediately commit themselves to the abominable heresy of regeneration by sprinkling, commonly and erroneously called baptismal regeneration.

In summing up this part of our subject I confess that I am a total loss to find the slightest authority anywhere for this practice. To this decision I came deliberately when I was myself a member of the English Church, so that whatever natural prejudice may have been wanted was exerted against the decision to which I came. Since then I have studied the subject carefully and closely and have not yet found the slightest warrant for the baptism or sprinkling of infants.

In the New Testament there is not a single command or a single instance of infant sprinkling, whereas, on the other hand, the baptism of believers is explicitly commanded and enforced by thousands of examples. Nor can church history produce a single instance until, at any rate, the third century after Christ, although all historians are unanimous as to the universal custom in the churches to immerse believers.

And what is the significance of sprinkling—what does the form set forth? I understand the bread and the wine in the one ordinance; I understand the burial and the resurrection in the other. But to sprinkling I must say—"Baptism I know, and the Lords Supper I know; but who are you?"

And to what does this ceremony entitle the little ones? Mr McKerrow says to church membership. We ask—to the membership of what church? Certainly it cannot admit them into the membership of the redeemed church, which is the body of Jesus Christ, unless sprinkling regenerates, which our friend himself will deny. Does it admit to the membership of the Presbyterian Church? No, else would the parents in all consistency have to bring the little ones to the communion service following the sprinkling and place between those little lips the broken bread, and put the cup to lips which have never lisped the name of Jesus. If they call sprinkling 'baptism,' they cannot separate the sacraments. They were both ordained for the same people—believers—and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Until by faith in Jesus as their Saviour they become members of the church of Christ, how can they participate in either sacrament when they have experienced the truths set forth in neither? And if without that faith men presume to call them 'church members' they must at least be consistent enough to admit them to all the privileges.

In closing, Mr McKerrow complains of people who have been sprinkled in childhood being immersed on their profession of faith in Christ. I think I have said enough to show that the ceremony performed by our Presbyterian and other friends can in no sense be properly called baptism. It is not baptism since the very word means immerse; and even if they immersed the infants it would be just as invalid inasmuch as the

only baptism taught in Scripture is an ordinance which follows conversion, and is itself an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual change. I have personally been sprinkled once and baptised once. On the former occasion I was not consulted, nor were the Scriptures; so I made up for it on the latter occasion by consulting only the Scriptures, and I strongly urge everybody else to do the same.

Mr McKerrow's sermon is full of unconscious concessions and confessions. In his concluding sentences, for instance, he tells us that a person who was not "baptised" in infancy "not only may, but ought to be baptised on becoming a believer, however late in life he may yield his heart to Christ." Here he frankly admits that conversion is the proper time for baptism—or why does he suggest waiting till then. If a person was not sprinkled in infancy why should he wait till he is a believer, "however late in life?" Why does Mr McKerrow not advise him, directly he comes to years of discretion, and finds that the ceremony was omitted in infancy, to be sprinkled? Because he sees that the proper time for baptism is after conversion, and that to baptise or sprinkle unconverted persons of any age is invalid and meaningless.

And then the sermon concludes by going back to the twelfth century for a quotation which, singularly enough, tersely states our whole contention. "Faith is greater than water." Such are the words which Mr McKerrow quotes in support of his position from the famous schoolman of Lombardy, and with their truth we cordially agree. "Faith is greater than water"—immeasurably, infinitely greater! Therefore, in the name of all that is sensible, all that is reasonable, all that is Scriptural, aim at the faith. Let us bend all our energies to the work of bringing the little ones and our fellow-men to definite personal faith in a crucified Saviour, and not until we have good evidence of the faith—the greater thing, let us trouble ourselves or them about the water—the lesser. And by that time we shall have learned to baptise after the Scriptural fashion—by immersion. Peter Lombard's statement gives an emphatic denial to the practice of putting water before faith.

I have done when I have made an earnest and a brotherly appeal to all who hear these words to decide this subject for themselves in the clear light of Scripture. Bled of the Spirit of Truth, and He shall guide you into

all Truth. Seek, I pray you, His guidance. We are told that this is a small matter, He Whom we call Master and Lord has left us two sacraments as a precious legacy to His people "till He come." And is it a light matter if we consciously or unconsciously use or abuse either of them?

I confess that I feel strongly on this point. I firmly believe that vast numbers of true and sincere believers are losing untold happiness in their Christian lives through thoughtless disobedience. And I am equally convinced that they are also thoughtlessly and almost unconsciously grieving Him who said "If ye love Me keep my commandments." "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." To obey my Lord in this important respect I left the church of my fathers, and in order to give the weight of what influence I possessed in favour of a full obedience to Christ on the part of all his people I joined a body of believers who give baptism its proper place as a sacrament, and do not thrust it before faith on the one hand, or abuse it by practising a mere sprinkling on the other. In my own experience my baptism was the brightest, happiest, and most hallowed season that I have enjoyed since first I knew the Lord, it was the greatest help and stimulus my life as a Christian has ever received, and many whom I have had the joy of leading through the baptismal waters have since told me that this experience was also their own. Thus does the Holy Spirit set His seal upon this ordinance.

I appeal, then, to every child of God here to-night to carefully and prayerfully consider this matter before God. Search the Scriptures, and therein ascertain the mind of the Lord. I appeal to Baptists not to be Baptists merely because your fathers were, but read your Bibles constantly and carefully and mark well our bulwarks!

The time has come for Christians everywhere to return to the oracles of God. And when the eyes of His people are looking to Him for guidance, when their ears are open to receive His command, and when their hearts are willing and waiting to obey, then will His disciples throughout the wide, wide world understand His last command when He said—"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."