THE LUTHERAN VISITOR.

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Communications.

Mode of Baptism.

The *mode of baptism* is a subject in which there has long been diversity of opinion amongst christians; nor is there a stronger tendency to agreement upon this vexed question at the present day than has marked the past division of the church on this subject. The contest has at times waxed warm, engendered alienation and wider separation between the advocates of the different modes. Then, again, has succeeded the calmer and gentler agitation of reason, by which each party has sought to fortify its position and make it strong.

It is not in the interest of controversy that we now enter upon an examination of the *mode of baptism*. With those who do not agree with us we have no controversy. But for our faith we stand ready to give an answer to those who oppose us, as well as a reason *for* the faith that is within us. And if any one prefers total submersion in water to baptism with water we will not dispute the validity of the act, nor debar such an one from our holy altars. The Lutheran Church has always recognized immersion as a valid mode of baptism; but she has always, with the great mass of the christian church, preferred baptizing by pouring, or sprinkling, or affusion, as being more nearly in harmony with the Holy Scriptures, and the example of the inspired apostles.

That the mode in which baptism is administered is *not essential*, we infer from the fact that no specific mode has been institated by our blessed Saviour or His inspired apostles. If it were a matter of such momentous importance we would not have been left in impenetrable darkness. But, inasmuch as no positive precept has been given us on this interesting question, and we are left free to draw our inferences from the general instructions of the Scriptures on this subject, and from the example of the apostles, we infer that the mode is not deserving of so much prominence as the *thing* itself. Baptism is frequently and earnestly insisted upon; but nowhere is it expressly said that it shall be performed by immersion, or pouring, or sprinkling. The *thing* itself is required—but the *how* is not mentioned. Hence we assert and maintain that,

The New Testament does not afford any proof that baptism was administered among the early christians by immersion.

If such proof is contained in the writings of the New Testament, it must be found either in the *literal* terms used in reference to baptism, or in the *circumstances attending baptism*, or in the *metaphorical language* applied to it.

1. But the proof can not be found in the *literal terms* used in reference to baptism.

Where is the inspired declaration that those who received baptism at the hands of the first teachers of christianity were plunged entirely under the water? It has never been discovered. The injunction to baptize is plain and positive; but respecting the mode of applying the water to the subject of baptism, not one word is specified.

The only terms from which has been attempted an argument in favor of immersion are the verb *baptizo* and its cognates, together with the prepositions *ev—en, eis, apo* and *ek*, or *ex*. But an impartial investigation of the signification of these terms affords no evidence in support of immersion; but if they reflect any light whatever it is in favor of affusion.

(a.) When we examine *bapio*, the root—which is a stronger term than its derivative, *baptizo*, we find that it does not uniformly imply submersion. We admit that this may be its most common and primitive sense; but it is just as true that it has passed over to other meanings, such as to *sprinkle* or stain, to *dip partially*, to *wet slightly*.

(a.) An example in illustration of this is found in *Rev.* xix: 13. "And he was clothed with a vesture *dipped, (bebammenon,)* in blood," —that is, *baptized* or *stained* in blood, and that not by being plunged in it, but aspersed or sprinkled with it. The allusion is to a conqueror having his garments stained in battle with the blood of his enemies. When a chieftain's apparel is thus stained it is not done by plunging it in the blood of his enemies, but by the sprinkling or pouring out of the blood of the slain. Or, the figure may refer to a vintager; by the occasional sprinkling or effusion of the juice whilst treading the wine-press his garment is *baptized, sprinkled*, or *stained*. He does not plunge himself into the wine vat, but the juice of the grape sometimes gushes out upon him. Thus, the apparel of our Saviour was not plunged in blood when wrestling with the powers of darkness in Gethsemane, but His blood may have oozed out in His terrible agony and stained His raiment. And this appears to be in perfect harmony with *Is.* lxiii: 1-3. "Who is this that cometh from Edom with *dyed garments* from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel *and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine-fat?* I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and *their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.*"

Here then we undoubtedly have a case in which the word in question can not, by any contortion, be made to imply submersion.

(b.) The word in question is again found in *Matt.* xxvi: 23. "He that dippeth (*embapsas — baptizeth*) his hand with me in the dish." But who will contend that Judas plunged his whole hand in the liquid food contained in the dish? "Nothing more can be meant," says a distinguished writer, "than that he took the bitter herbs which were eaten at the Passover, or other articles of food, and with his fingers dipped them in the sauce prepared." He simply took food from the platter with his fingers in Asiatic style, instead of using a fork or spoon after the manner of our country.

(c.) We will adduce only one more instance from the Scriptures to prove that *bapto* does not necessarily imply submersion. In Dan. iv: 33 it is said of Nebuchadnezzar that "his body was wet with the dew of heaven." The Septuagint has here: *Ebaphe*, was made wet; *Ebephe* is the second aorist of *bapto*. Here we we have the term *bapto* used, where it is utterly impossible to translate it *dip*, and the baptism here is by the descent of dew, and the English word *wet* fully expresses the idea to be conveyed. To urge that the dews in Babylon were so copious that Nebuchadnezzar was thoroughly drenched does not remove the difficulty, for this wetting was not plunging nor submersion.

Here, then, are three distinct examples adduced from the Scriptures in which *bapto* does not mean submersion or plunging, or anything akin to it. The case of the rich man praying Abraham to send Lazarus to *dip — bapsey* — (Luke xvi: 24) the tip of his finger in water to cool his parched tongue, might also be appropriately adduced. But these examples are sufficient to establish the fact that *bapto* does not always mean total submersion.

(d.) Were it necessary to our purpose, we could produce evidence of the same fact from profane writers. But we will let the testimony of Mr. Edwards and Dr. John Dick suffice on this point. "'I would say thus much,' remarks the former, 'of the term—[*bapto*]—that it is a term of such latitude that he who shall attempt to prove, from its use in various authors, an absolute and total immersion, will find that he has undertaken that which he can not finally perform;' and the latter adds, 'I do not intend to deny that [*bapto*] ever means *to dip*, but that this is its only sense; and hence we may fairly conclude, that although its derivative—*baptizo*—means to *immerse*, it does not follow that this is its only signification.'"

[*To be continued.*]

God has not waited for us to love Him; before all time, before we were endowed with life, he thought of us and thought of doing us good. What he meditated in eternity he has performed in time. His benedecent hand has bestowed every variety of blessings upon us; neither our unfaithfulness, not our ingratitude has dried up the fountain of His goodness to us, or arrested the stream of his bounty.

Selections.

"I am a Stranger in the Earth."

Devotion to the present, such a love of the world as renders it the supreme object of thought, affection and desire, is a uniform and inseparable attendant of unbelief. The acquisition of this world's riches, pleasures, and honors, is, in the estimation of the man who has no vital trust in spiritual and divine truths, the loftiest ambition and the true weal. Failure in their attainment is lamented as the direst ill. And even when, by sad experience, their vanity is known—when the sorceress is followed to her trellised home, and the falsity of her promise proven—when the mirage is chased for miles across the weary waste, and seen at last to dissolve in "unsubstantial air"—no nobler impulse is given to the spirit; it is still the present which it pines for; if its idol can yield no better, it would retrace its steps, and content itself to repeat the past. The sigh of the Macedonian monarch, on reaching the Indian waters, is in point: "Oh, for another *world* to conquer!" Nature is full of emblems of tenacity. The ivy clinging to stately edifice, and forsaking it not when a crumbling ruin; the tree rooted among the rocks, and still standing, though scathed by the lightning, and buffeted by the storm; these and other images depict an attachment resolute and unyielding. The strongest symbol, however, is hardly adequate to depict the tenacity with which the carnal mind clings to the empty and the perishable. Take a case where, perhaps, you least expect such attachment—the suicide; and what is it but the present which he dies for? Give him back the flush of his early manhood; deck his skies with the roseate colors of youthful hope; put into his hand the fabled horn of plenty; fill his ear with the song of flattery, the trill of the world's loud praise; and quickly will he recede from the dizzy brink, quickly will he fling afar the bared and lifted steel. The love of the world is as characteristic of the unrenewed heart as gravitation of the globe on which we stand. It is its nature, and nothing can reverse its inherent tendency but the power of divine grace. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be."

Detachment from the present springs only from the exercise of a living faith. Faith, securing the renovation of the soul, secures with it a change of sentiment and feeling. The world is now viewed as incommensurate to human need, and unworthy of being made the object of supreme affection. It is not, indeed, regarded with contempt. It is simply estimated at its real worth. It is studied not afar as formerly, and in the drapery of romance, but near, and in a mirror which neither exaggerates nor disparages—the mirror of God's faithful word. It is seen to be but secondary and subordinate. It is a noble means to a nobler end. It is scaffolding, on which to rise to the vision of unclouded day. It is seed-time for the sowing of the harvest of eternal peace. It is a school, wherein to learn the alphabet of heaven; an arena, for the exhibition and development of all manly grace and godlike excellencies. It is not to be denounced as essentially an evil. It is intended to subserve the interests of piety. Not in hermit's cave, or cloistered solitude, is seclusion to be sought. The world is to be "used," though not "abused." It will expand the mind, though it must not enslave the heart. It will assist in unfolding the fruits of holiness, though it must not be spent arraying one self in the pretentious leaves which the first blasts of autumn will scatter. Such is the estimate in which the world is held by the christian. Hence he does not so love it as to identify his happiness with its possession. He utilizes it, but he does not idolize it. His feeling is that of "a stranger" here. He dwells as in a foreign land. He has duties which detain him, and cares but little to remain any longer than is absolutely necessary. Earth is attractive only in relation to the future. His affections are "set on things above, not on things beneath." His thoughts rest not on the present and the fleeting, but reach forward to the boundless and unchanging. Fair may be the landscape which surrounds him; gay its flowers, gentle and soothing the murmur of its falling waters; but it is alike powerless to absorb his mind or to captivate his heart. Reader, is this your experience? It is if you possess a living faith. O, search your heart! Suspect the strength, the genuineness of the faith, which fails to detach you from the present. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God?"—*Southern Christian Advocate.*

No Salvation for the Unbeliever!

If the Scriptures teach anything clearly, it is certainly this, that the unbeliever shall have no part in the blessedness of heaven. They emphatically declare, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Nor is this the only statement on this important question; it is just unequivocally declared, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." Indeed, this doctrine runs through the whole scheme of redemption in such a way that the supposition that it is not true renders the whole plan of salvation inexplicable. Yet notwithstanding this fact, it has been thought by some that the teachings of the latter part of the twenty-fifth chapter of the gospel of Matthew militate against the absolute necessity of faith in Christ in order to salvation.

The words are these: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

To our mind it is plain that the doctrine here taught is that works are the evidence of faith in the heart. The Apostle James states one important truth when he says: "Faith without works is dead;" but it is just as true that works with Christ, as the impelling motive, are never found without faith. And here the works commended by the Saviour are not those of a mere humanitarian, done for the good of the race, but works done for Christ in the person of his people. Hence he could say, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat," etc. And just as we have no hesitation in pronouncing the man a christian who gives us evidence of true penitence without asking in reference to his faith, so when we find true obedience we ask no more evidence of discipleship. In both cases faith is necessarily found, and therefore our pronouncing such an one a christian would not militate against the doctrine that there is no salvation for the unbeliever. On this principle, the Saviour's acknowledgment here is in perfect consistency with the doctrine that faith in his name is absolutely necessary to salvation.

WORK.—We talk much of working, but working is better than talking about working; "to get really at it, and to do something for soul-winning, and spreading abroad the glory of God, is better than planning and holding committees." Away with wind-bags! Let us get to acts and deeds. None of us know what we can do till we try. The sportsman will tell you that there may be many birds in a field, but you know not how many till you walk through, and then you will see them on the wing. When the wheel turns you will be able to see the force of the current. You will see the speed of the horse when you put him to his best. Work! work! and the tool that is blunt will get an edge by being used. Shine, and the very light you have shall grow in the very act of shining. He who has done one thing will find himself capable of doing two; and doing two will be able to accomplish four; and having achieved the four will then go on to twelve, and from twelve to fifty; and so, as growing multiplies, he will enlarge his power to serve God by using the ability he has.—*Spurgeon.*

On Sermonizing.

Dr. Lyman Abbott gives these excellent suggestions:

"Ministers study too much the form of their discourses. By striving to present their thoughts in a formal and logical manner they deprive them of vivacity and naturalness. How many people in an ordinary congregation follow the logic of a sermon? It is generally safe to presume that the way in which the theme first suggested itself to the minister's mind is the way in which it will most readily find entrance into other minds. Second thoughts are not always the best thoughts. How often a clergyman is filled with enthusiasm for a theme as the Bible or his parochial experience has first suggested it to him; but his enthusiasm dies out as he writes the sermon. What he thought was a grand theme sinks into insignificance; what he thought was full of life and juice becomes, even to him, dry and dead in preaching. "I thought," he says to himself, "that this idea was going to make a fine sermon, but somehow it did not." He has spoiled it in preparation. He has cooked it too long. There are some sermons that are like French soups; they must simmer a long while over a slow fire to be good. There are others that are like a cup of tea; long cooking spoils them. They must be taken at the first effusion.

There is one rule that is worthy of universal adoption by all sermonizers. But it is so because, if sermons were uniformly conformed to it, there would be no uniformity in them. Indeed it is not a rule at all; it is a principle. It is better stated as a fact than as a law: *Good sermons are never made; they grow.*

The Prisoner's Exhortation.

Thank God for prisons! Many of God's choicest servants have been within a dungeon's walls to stop their work for Him. Nothing less has been their imprisonment, or rather how useful to the church! From beneath the sound of bolt and bar, lock and key, the swelling thoughts of imprisoned saints have gone forth to revolutionize the world. Hence we may thank God for these prisons. Who can read the word of Samuel Rutherford and not join in the thanksgiving? He called his prison in Aberdeen *Christ's Palace.* "My well-beloved," he says, "is kinder and warmer than ordinary, and cometh and visiteth my soul. My chains are overgilded with gold. No pen, no engine, can express to you the loveliness of my only Lord Jesus." So also like Paul and Silas at Philippi, the celebrated Madam Guyon, when imprisoned in France in 1695, for her religious views, could sing and write songs of praise. "It sometimes seemed to me," she said, "as if I was a little bird whom the Lord hath placed in a cage, and that I had nothing *to do but to sing.* * * * The stones of my prison looked in my eyes like rubies." Her songs, written in prison, have cheered many a pious soul longing for a more spiritual life. Need we mention Bunyan, whose long imprisonment in Bedford jail gave the world the Pilgrim's Progress, which next to the Bible has probably guided more travelers to the Celestial City than any book. Many of Paul's writings were penned in a dungeon. How thankful we are for the rest from the many labors of preaching which his imprisonment furnished, and for the words of inspiration which they gave the opportunity of writing! His sermons died with his generation; his prison utterances preach to all ages. To the christian, halting mid the cares or allurements of the world, one of those utterances give a powerful impulse forward. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech ye that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

Some one may ask, on reading this exhortation of the Lord's prisoner, *What is my vocation?* The mind runs upon some special work, some particular avocation to which he thinks he may be called. Is it to be a minister, a Sunday-school teacher, a visitor of the sick and poor that I am called? Dear reader, I doubt if Paul thought of such a thing when he wrote those words. He meant your calling to a life of piety in whatever vocation you may be pursuing. Not out of one business into another, unless the first be totally unadapted to christian walk. He meant the voice of the Holy Spirit summoning you to repent of sin and believe on Jesus as your complete Saviour. You have this vocation in common with all who have knowledge of the gospel. If you heed the call and exercise repentance and faith, then have you received an effectual call that introduces you into the family of the redeemed on earth. Hence to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called is to act inconsistently with the fact that you have once turned from sin, and experienced the joys of forgiveness.

Some one has remarked that "a christian when he makes a good profession, should be sure to make his profession good." No one can do this who loses sight of the duty to honor in his walk the author of his call. One's walk is not worthy of his vocation unless it vindicates the wisdom that selected him as a subject of pardon. A general plans a campaign, selects the officers to carry out his orders, supplies them with troops and munitions of war, so arranges that all things will work in harmony with each one's efforts, tending at the same time to the complete culmination of his plans. If all perform their several parts at the appointed times a great success results.

Worldliness Among Professors.

How much the present declension of public morals around us may be charged to the want of wakeful conscientiousness and faithful obedience on the part of christian citizens, we tremble to estimate.

Where is the professor of Jesus at this day who bears himself through the avenues of trade, the pleasures of social intercourse, and the purlieus of courts, legislatures, and conventions, as a living epistle "known and read of all men," to the honor of that adorable name into which his own has been "buried by baptism," and bound by many a sacramental attestation, for this life, as well as that which is to come? Search for those separation to his worship, or his own hallowed day, when the exchange is shut up, and the pursuit of business and journey of pleasure may still be considered indecent among us, and how few impress the world with a bright and consistent example! How many of them travel on the Lord's day, in the urgency of business, which their own greed or indiscretion has made a present necessity upon them! How many of them are not known to be God's people, until actually seen at his visible board, when the weather permits, and the superior attractions of worldly interest allow them to be at home! How many a zealous advocate for temperance annuls the power of his influence on the masses around him, by intemperance in things which they can not reach; by the parade of his luxury, in eating and drinking, and dressing, and almost every indulgence to the flesh, but the intoxicating beverage which he excepts, without the slightest denial of self! And when we look away from the places and the occasions, where the badge of christianity is conventionally worn —when we pass from the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the temperance meeting, and the neighborhood, where the professor is restrained by circumstances, and antecedents, and watch him at the political meeting, the court house, the capitol, the soiree, the watering places, for recreation in summer, the bartering places, for speculation in winter—who is distinguished, uniformly, as "the righteous," indeed, striving always and in all places, and capacities, to convince the world that the foundations of social order and public safety are especially conserved by the distinctive followers of the Lord Jesus Christ?

No wonder the influence of religion on the multitude declines, when it refuses to go forth among them, beyond its own particular occasions and convenient times, with a garb for every day, and a work for every place. No wonder the righteous can do nothing, as the foundations are breaking up, when they resign, in advance, the witnessing character, with which they are called to imbue every act and every word, in the engagements of human life. The only wonder is, that they are spared to work and witness at all; and let us be warned. "The night advances, wherein no man can work"—the night of death; the night of sickness and imbecile age; but this is not all—the night of desperate declension in the public morals, when even your faith, by the ordination of heaven, shall be nevertheless in its slumbers, and effete in its modesty. True, indeed, we have our refuge for the worst extremities; as the sequel of our text declares, "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men," &c. But while we adoringly confide, let us remember that to confide is mockery, unless we strive, with instant and intense devotion, to prevent the sad extremity, which makes our best exertion powerless for good.

Conversion of Count Gasparin.

Adolph Monod, one of the most gifted and faithful evangelical ministers of the present century, preached Christ crucified and His free grace to his church in Lyons. One Sabbath, preaching from the text, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," etc., he spoke of the person of Christ as the true God-man. He announced at the same time that the next Sabbath he should show how men could be saved through faith in this God-man. But the authorities of this church were of Catholic and other errors, and opposed to a doctrine so truly evangelical. Hence, they informed Monod that if he did not omit the sermon he had announced, they would have him arrested and brought before the prefect, and dismissed from his office. Monod, notwithstanding, preached his sermon, and the authorities made their complaint. The prefect was a Catholic count—Count de Gasparin. He came home at evening to his wife, and found the sermons. He never liked sermons, especially evangelical sermons. But he was a man who discharged faithfully the duties of his office. It was necessary that the sermons should be read. He came to his wife with the manuscripts in his hand, complaining that he would have to give up the whole evening to this irksome and protracted labor. She offered, as her husband's worthy help-mate, to read the sermons with him, so that [illegible] be less tedious. They began. They read the first. With every page they grew more interested. They forgot that it was evening and night. That which was at first an official duty became a service of the heart. They finished the first, and eagerly grasped the second. And what was the result? As a magistrate—as a prefect—Gasparin was forced to deprive Monod of his place, because all the authorities demanded it. But he and his wife became evangelical christians; yes, living, joyful and happy believers in Christ. Their son, Count Agenor de Gasparin, has long been the head and pillar of the evangelical party in France.

GOOD ADVICE TO CHRISTIANS.—1. See that your religion makes you a better son or daughter, a better clerk, a better student, a better friend, a better workman.

2. Do not set yourself up as a standard. Shun all censoriousness. Remember that each one "to his own Master standeth or falleth," and not to you.

3. Let nothing keep you from the Saviour. Never be tempted to stay away from him by unbelieving doubts, by past neglect, by present fear, by anything. Be more intimate with him than with any earthly friend.

4. Never rejoice in your own strength. A child looking to Christ is stronger than a strong man armed. Be resolute in looking to him alone for strength.

Finally. Do not be discouraged if you fail in everything. If you were perfect, what need would you have of a Saviour?

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.—He that stands beneath the cross, and understands the scene, dare not sin; not because there is a hell beneath him, or an angry God above him, but because holiness is felt to reign there. The ground on which he treads is sacred; the glory of the Lord encircles him, and, like Moses, he must remove his shoes from his feet. The cross is a venerable spot. I love to linger about it, not merely that I may read my title to everlasting life, but that I may study the greatness of God. I use the term advisedly. God never appears so truly great, so intensely holy, as when, from the pure energy of principle, he gives himself, in the person of the Son, to die, rather than his character shall be impugned. Who dares to prevaricate with moral distinctions, and talk of death as a greater evil than dishonor, when God, the mighty Maker, died rather than that truth and justice should be compromised? Who, at the foot of Calvary, can pronounce sin to be a slight evil? Here then lies the most impressive sanction of revelation.