

CHAPTER XIV.

BAPTISM.

“WE are buried with him by baptism into death.” Rom. 6 : 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. 2 : 12.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” Rom. 6 : 5.

The principal object of the ordinance of baptism is to show the faith of the recipient in the operation of God in raising Christ from the dead. After repenting of his transgressions of God’s law, one must have faith in the power of Christ to save. In other words, he must believe that although Christ died for sin, he was again made alive, to plead in the sinner’s behalf. Then the ordinance of baptism is received to show to others that the candidate really believes in what is claimed to be necessary — the burial and resurrection of Christ. The ordinance also shows one’s faith in the resurrection of all the dead, based on the resurrection of Christ.

HOW EARLY TEACHERS UNDERSTOOD THE SUBJECT.

Bishop Bossuet says : —

“We are able to make it appear, by the acts of councils, and by the ancient rituals, that for *thirteen hundred years* baptism was thus [by immersion] administered throughout the whole Church, as far as possible.”— *Stennett’s Answer to Russen*, p. 176.

Stackhouse says : —

“Several authors have shown and proved that this immersion continued, as much as possible, to be used for thirteen hundred years after Christ.”— *Hist. of the Bible*, p. 1234, sec. 8.

COMMENTS OF LATER SCHOLARS.

“That the baptism of John was by *plunging* the body (after the same manner as the washing of unclean persons was) seems to appear from those things which are related of him ; namely, that he baptized in the Jordan, that he baptized in Ænon, because there was much water there, etc.”— *A. Clarke’s comments following the book of Mark*.

“From these words [John 3 : 23] it may be inferred that baptism was administered by John and Christ by *plunging the whole body under water*.”— *Calvin’s Ped. Exam.*, vol. 1, p. 194.

“It is certain that in the words of our text [Rom. 6 : 3, 4] there is an allusion to the manner of baptism, which was by immersion, which is what our own church allows,” etc.— *Whitefield’s Eighteen Sermons*, p. 297.

John Wesley says : —

“Buried with him — alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.”— *Note on Rom. 6 : 4*.

“But as they received baptism as an emblem of death in voluntarily going under the water, so they receive it as an emblem of the resurrection unto eternal life, in coming up out of the water ; thus they are baptized for the dead, in perfect faith of the resurrection. The three following verses seem to confirm this sense.”— *Dr. Clarke, on 1 Cor. 15 : 29*.

“It is needless to add that baptism was (unless in exceptional cases) administered by immersion, the convert being plunged beneath the surface of the water to represent his death to the life of sin, and then raised from this momentary burial to represent his resurrection to the life of righteousness. It must be a subject of regret that the general discontinuance of this original form of baptism (though perhaps necessary in our northern climates) has rendered obscure to popular apprehension some very important passages of Scripture.”— *Conybeare and Howson’s Life of Paul*, pp. 401, 402, *people’s edition*.