

SERMON V
A BRIEF REVIEW OF ALL THE FACTS
PRESENTED IN SERMONS 1-4 FOR
CONSIDERATION, ALONG WITH TWELVE
PRACTICAL AND SCRIPTURAL
APPLICATIONS OF THESE FACTS
PLUS
SEVEN IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FOR
PEDOBAPTISTS TO ANSWER

MATTHEW 28:19-20.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

MERRILL'S CONFIDENCE THAT THE CONGREGATION WILL PROPERLY RESPOND
TO THE TRUTH

I have confidence in you, brethren, that ye will keep the ordinances, as I shall deliver them to you, and prove them to be from the word of the Lord.

One thing I would still know of you, my brethren, whether you, like the more noble Bereans, will receive the word with readiness, searching the scriptures daily, that you may know the truth of what you hear.

SAINTS MUST ANSWER TO CHRIST REGARDING THIS RESPONSE

You will bear in mind, that whosoever loveth father or mother, house or lands, wife or children, more than Christ, is not worthy of him. If, through affection for any of these, you should refuse to obey Christ, it will be too evident that you love them more than you do him, and so are not worthy of him.

Should you love any erroneous belief and practice more than you do the truths of Christ, you will, so far as you manifest it, prove that you are not worthy of him.

Should you despise me for delivering and vindicating the truths of Christ to you, you will at the same time despise him. You will therefore give good heed to what you say, and to what you do in this matter; for if it be of God, it will stand, and none can overthrow it. It is hoped none of you will be found fighting against God.

A.

A REVIEW OF THE SERMONS PRESENTED THUS FAR
SERMON NUMBER ONE

1. A REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES FAVORING IMMERSION

This discourse may contain a review of what we have passed over, together with some application. In my first discourse to you on the subject, which we have still before us, the following are the principal things to which we attended. I professed a number of plain truths, considered to be as first principles, for your attention.

a. Baptism is a positive institution, about which we can know nothing, as to its being a Christian ordinance, but from what Christ, and those inspired by his Spirit, have taught us.

b. All which we are required to believe and practice, with respect to the Christian ordinance of baptism, is declared to us by Jesus Christ, and by his forerunner and apostles.

c. When Jesus Christ first instituted the ordinance of baptism, he no doubt delivered his mind so clearly and fully upon the subject, that his disciples and immediate followers understood and practiced as he would have them.

d. Every thing which hath, by the precepts and commandments of men, been added since, is aside from the ordinance, and makes no part of it.

e. No man, nor body of men, hath any more authority to add to or diminish from this ordinance, than they have to institute a new one and call it Christ's.

f. Whenever, and wherever, the ordinance of baptism is so changed as to lose the intent of the institution, then and there the ordinance is lost, and becomes no Christian ordinance at all.

2. REVIEW OF THE WORDS USED FAVORING IMMERSION

I defined for your information a number of words which appertain to the ordinance of baptism. We found all these to be just as we might expect to have found them, provided immersion be baptism, or the mode in which it is administered.

Baptisterion, a place in which to wash the body. *Baptism*, immersion, or dipping one all over in water. *Baptizo* signifies to dip, or wash, the body all over in water. *Louo* (a word several times used in reference to, or signifying the same, as baptism) is, to wash, to rinse, to bathe, &c. Then,

3. REVIEW OF THE TEXTS RELATING TO BAPTISM BY JOHN AND CHRIST, PLUS REVIEW OF THE PASSAGES WHERE WASHING AND DIPPING ARE MENTIONED

I set before you all the texts in the New Testament which relate either to the baptism of John, or to that of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the next place, I proposed for your meditation the passages of Scripture where washing is mentioned, and the Greek words which are used.

I then called your attention to those passages in which sprinkling is mentioned, and to the Greek words which are made use of. *Lastly*, I read to you those scriptures where to dip is mentioned, and also the Greek words which are rendered to dip.

In not one of the places, where the ordinance of baptism is brought to view do we find one word about sprinkling, or any thing which looks like it. In every place where to dip is mentioned, we find a near relation to baptism; every word which is used, coming from the same *root* or theme, from which *baptizo* comes.

As to the word *wash*, we find no relation between the words which signify to wash, and those which signify to baptize, save in those few instances where the meaning is to wash the body, or put into water, or wash a thing all over.

When we come to the Greek words which signify to sprinkle, we find no similarity, or likeness, between them and the word to baptize.

CONCLUSION

NOT ONE WORD INTIMATES OR SIGNIFIES SPRINKLING

In all the places where baptizing is mentioned, not a word is used which looks like sprinkling; where sprinkling is mentioned, there is not a word used which appears like baptism.

SERMON NUMBER TWO

REVIEW OF DEFINITIONS, FACTS, WORDS AND TESTIMONIES

In my next discourse, I produced my evidence, that my definitions of baptism and to baptize were accurate and just. I dwelt largely upon this evidence for the merit of the whole subject depends greatly, if not entirely, upon the determinate meaning of the words, which our Lord used in the institution of the ordinance, and when speaking of it.

When we know the determinate signification of his words, we know what he says, and what we ought to understand by the words which he uses. The evidence which I produced, was, in short, the following:

1. REVIEW OF DEFINITIONS OF WORDS IN CONCORDANCES AND DICTIONARIES

The Greek Lexicon, Butterworth's Concordance, Bailey's and Entick's Dictionaries, bear their united testimony, that the plain, literal, and common, if not universal, signification of the words *baptism* and *to baptize*, is immersion and to immerse, bury in water, to dip, or to plunge a person all over in water.

Here are four learned and positive witnesses to the same thing. Indeed, they give no other signification, save it be to wash, which we have seen intends a ceremonial washing, which is to put into water, or to bathe.

2. REVIEW OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL FACTS CONCERNING BAPTISM THAT FAVOR IMMERSION

I repeated some of the attendant or circumstantial facts, which have relation to the ordinance of baptism. John baptized IN the river Jordan. He was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was *much water* there. The word *baptistery* signifies a place in which to wash the body all over. *Baptism* signifies to dip, to plunge, immerse, or to wash the body all over in water.

Baptizer signifies one which dips, plunges, or washes the body all over in water. *To baptize* signifies to immerse, plunge under water, or under any other liquid thing, or to dip, or to put into water. To be *baptized* is to be plunged, immersed, or washed all over in water.

These things being true, is it not easy to determine what the ordinance of baptism signifies?

3. REVIEW OF USE OF TWO WORDS THAT ALSO FAVOR IMMERSION

The words *baptismos* and *baptizo* have two, and only two, translations in the New Testament. These two are *baptism* and *washing*. Where their meaning is washing, or where they are thus translated, it is a ceremonial washing, which is to put into water, or bathe the flesh in water, as you may see, *Lev. 11:32. Num. 19:19.*

When they are translated *baptism*, or *to baptize*, the thing intended is the baptism of water, of fire, of sufferings, or of the Holy Ghost.

4. REVIEW OF TESTIMONIES OF WORD USE BY NOTED PREACHERS AND THEOLOGIANS

I brought forward several noted witnesses, to bear their united testimony, that I had given just definition of the word *baptizo*: these were, John Calvin, Zanchius, and Dr. Owen.

5. REVIEW OF THE USES OF "LUO" AND "BAPTIZO" SHOWING THEY ARE INTERCHANGEABLY USED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL AND MEAN VIRTUALLY THE SAME THING

In the next place I mentioned to you that Paul repeatedly uses the word *louo*, where he means the same things as where he uses the word *baptizo*; that he uses these words as signifying the same thing. Whereas, *louo* signifies to wash and to bathe the body in water, and consequently *baptizo* means the same.

6. REVIEW OF PAUL'S USE OF THE WORD "BAPTISM," AND THAT IT MEANS A BURIAL OR IMMERSION

Lastly. I brought forward Paul's exposition of the word *baptism*, and showed you, that he expounds it, as being buried with Christ in baptism, or immersion.

SERMON NUMBER THREE

A REVIEW OF THE APOSTOLIC AND POST APOSTOLIC EVIDENCE THAT FAVORS IMMERSION

1. THE APOSTOLIC PRACTICE AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE USE OF THE WORD "LUO"

In my discourse, which I next preached to you, I produced evidence, that the apostles and primitive Christians, not only understood the matter as I have described it, but practiced accordingly.

In support of the apostle's practice, I observed, that the word *luo*, of determinate signification, which they used to signify their practice, or what was done by them in baptism, determines or fixes their practice to be immersion. I farther observed, that they were commanded to practice baptism, or to baptize, as I have described it; and that the scriptures testify, that they thus did; and also that the apostles say, the mode of baptizing in their day was, by burying the subjects in baptism.

2. POST-APOSTOLIC EVIDENCE BY LEADING AUTHORITIES THAT CONFIRMS THE APOSTOLIC PRACTICE OF IMMERSION

For witnesses that the primitive church practiced immersion, we have Mosheim, Bailey, Calvin, Baxter, and many others, all agreeing in this one point, that the mode of baptizing, or baptism itself, among the ancients, was immersion. We have also evidence that the church thus practiced for thirteen hundred years, some extreme cases excepted.

Moreover we have evidence that all the church, in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa, save that part of it, which is now, or hath been, under the bewildering power of the popes, do now, and ever have, practiced immersion.

Besides all this, the very reasons which the Pedobaptists assign, why they have laid aside immersion, show that sprinkling is not commanded by the Lord, but is taught by the precepts of men.

A MAGNITUDE OF EVIDENCE THAT REFUTES THE PEDOBAPTIST POSITION

You see we have an ocean of witnesses and evidence against us; and all, or nighly so, from our own denomination of Christians. What a world of evidence might we reasonably expect that the Baptists would be able to bring for themselves, and against us and our practice, would we hear them, when our own side brings so much against their own practice and for the Baptists!

Besides, this evidence appears to stand in its full force against us, there being no opposite evidence to weaken its force. Indeed we are, in this matter, much like criminals, who plead, at least the leaders of them, guilty to the whole indictment. However, some have made a full plea of, not guilty but in part. At the same time, numbers of them, in their plea, have convicted themselves of being guilty throughout.

SERMON NUMBER FOUR

A REVIEW OF THE DESIGN AND PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

In the last discourse, after holding to your view the purport, end and design of baptism, I examined one of their pleas of, not guilty. But what evidence did the good man give of his innocence? Can the largest stretch of charity allow more than this, *he knew not what he did?* Was truth ever brought to such straits as to require to be supported by such arguments?

B. IMPORTANT APPLICATIONS FROM THE SERMONS PRESENTED THUS FAR

From a review of the whole subject, the following appear to flow as necessary consequences.

1. THE SCRIPTURES DEFINITELY DECLARE IMMERSION TO BE THE SOLE METHOD OF BAPTISM.

Whether we allow immersion to be the scripture mode of baptism, and the only one which it requires, or not; one thing is clear, that we have as much evidence of its being so, as we could have, on supposition that it were. The scriptures declare, in various ways, that this is the mode, and mention no other. The scriptures expound themselves to mean immersion, or burying.

We find not a single trace, in all the scriptures, where the ordinance is spoken of, of any thing short of immersion being mentioned. Good men, who are skilful in the true import of words, have agreed, that the plain, literal and accurate meaning of the word to baptize, is to immerse or bury in water, &c. Nor have any been able to show that in any part of God's word it hath any opposite meaning or application.

The church of Jesus Christ have, in all ages, understood the matter of baptism as I have explained it. We must, however, except for the last three or five hundred years, many of those branches of the church, which have been, or are now, under the jurisdiction of the church of Rome.

WITHOUT QUESTION, THE DESIGN AND PURPOSE OF BAPTISM SOLELY SIGNIFIES IMMERSION

The purport, end and design of baptism also intimate to us, that this is the manner of baptizing. Indeed, if there be any words in the Greek language by which the Lord of the Baptismal Institution could have told us what he intended, the words used do this. For there are no two words in the language, or, at least, none which have come to our knowledge, which so literally, so uniformly, and so expressly, signify to immerse, or wash, or bathe the body in water, as do the words *baptizo* and *louo*. Hence, if immersion be baptism, the Lord, if I may so say, could not have told us of it in the New Testament, of the words, chosen by the Holy Ghost, do not afford this information.

If baptism be immersion, then the two most suitable words have been chosen to express it; but if sprinkling be baptism, two words which were farther from the point, could not have been found. We find no instance, in the Bible, where they are thus used. In short, no two words, which mention the application of water in any way, are farther from the idea of sprinkling, than are those two which are used when baptism is intended.

It therefore appears, that whilst we have used sprinkling for baptism, we have departed from the plain and primitive import of the words used, as far as we could without a complete omission of water. None can be at a farther remove from the instituted, scripture baptism, than we have been, without denying it in whole.

2. BAPTISMAL REGENERATION WAS AN EARLY ERROR THAT DEVELOPED IN THE POST APOSTOLIC AGE. SPRINKLING WAS THEN INSTITUTED AS A REPLACEMENT FOR IMMERSION WHEN UNFAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES SUPPOSEDLY NECESSITATED SPRINKLING.

Error is very insinuating and deceiving. Surely it hath proved thus in the subject of sprinkling.

Cyprian, who wrote within about a hundred and fifty years of the apostles, speaking of sprinkling, says, as quoted by Dr. Lathrop, "In the sacrament of *salvation*, (i.e. baptism) when *necessity compels*, the shortest ways of transacting divine matters, do, by God's grace, confer the whole benefit." Here we see the origin of sprinkling for baptism.

It was an early error in the church, that baptism was necessary to salvation. Hence, when it was judged, that life would be endangered by immersion, the person must either lose his life by baptism, or lose his soul for want of being baptized, or some other mode must be invented.

Or, if the sick person was nighly dying [near death], he must be baptized without immersion, or probably lose his soul, before he could be conveyed where the ordinance might be administered. Under these circumstances, man's fruitful invention devised sprinkling as a substitute for baptism. Here is the origin of sprinkling, as the ancients have told us.

In process of time, sound ladies and gentlewomen wished to have sprinkling substituted for baptism in their behalf; afterwards others, till at last, it became a general custom in many of the European nations.

In the mean time, the Baptists, and many others, objected against the practice, as being contrary from the command of Christ. Hence arose the necessity of defending it, or else having it considered as a departure from the faith. Matters being thus, the invention of many was in full exercise to defend sprinkling, as being of divine origin. A number of ceremonial rites of the Levitical law were pressed into this service; several passages of the New Testament were wrested from their natural meaning to a forced interpretation; and out of the motley mixture were formed what were styled *arguments*; but such arguments can stand no longer than while prejudice lives to support them.

However, the most disagreeable part it, a good number of very pious and learned men have been carried away in this whirlpool of deception. Their being deceived has deceived others; and we are, or have been, among the deceived.

3. SPRINKLING IS BASED ON NUMEROUS INTELLECTUAL INCONSISTENCIES.

Sprinkling is not from heaven, but of men. This too, of I mistake not, by the fully and fairly implied concession of those, who have written in its defense.

a. If from heaven, why, in the first place, use it only when necessity compelled! as was supposed to save souls from hell?

b. If from heaven, why, afterwards, use it only in cases of less urgent necessity?

c. If from heaven, why bring in the coldness of the country as an excuse for using it?

d. If from heaven, why not mentioned in the institution of the ordinance, or in some passage where mention is made of baptism, or in some other place in all the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles?

e. If from heaven, why not intimated as being so, by those who first introduced it?

f. If sprinkling be from heaven, who so many *inconclusive* arguments in its support?

Is the word of God deficient in this particular, and hath it revealed what cannot be supported by it?

g. If from heaven, why not commanded, enjoined, required, or so much as once hinted, as being a mode of a gospel ordinance, in any part of that revelation which we have received from heaven?

4. IMMERSION IS NECESSARY FOR THE PROPER ADMINISTRATION OF THE ORDINANCES.

Another consequence is, that the scripture mode of baptism is immersion, and for aught we know, the only mode, and necessary to the administration of the ordinance.

This is the plain, literal, scripture sense of baptism; therefore this is the plain, literal, scripture mode. The scriptures mention no other mode; therefore this may be, and is, for aught appears, the only scripture mode.

5. SPRINKLING HAS NO VISIBLE CONNECTION WITH BAPTISM. CHRIST NEVER COMMANDED HIS DISCIPLES IN THE GREAT COMMISSION TO "RANTIZE" [SPRINKLE] CONVERTS.

From what we have gone over, one thing appears certain: That Christ never commanded any of his followers to administer any gospel ordinance by sprinkling, and, at the same time, to say, *I baptize*. For to do thus, would be to command them to do *one thing*, and to say that they did *another*.

To *sprinkle* is to *rantize*, which hath no visible connection with baptism. To say, Christ commanded his disciples to rantize, and, at the same time, to say, We baptize, is what no Christian would, knowingly, be willing to say. This would, if I mistake not, be making Christ the minister of sin. But what I have long, implicitly, though ignorantly, done, others may still do.

6. CUSTOM AND TRADITION ARE THE ONLY REAL REASONS FOR SPRINKLING.

Another consequence is, custom hath great influence upon the human mind. It surely hath upon us. For, even after we have full evidence that sprinkling, for baptism, is not from heaven, but was the offspring of error, and fostered by the dark ages of Papistical [Papal based] usurpation, we are hardly persuaded to renounce it. But, my brethren, my expectation is, that after you have searched your Bibles through and through, and find nothing of it there, you will give it up.

Should the Lord inquire of us, why we substitute sprinkling for baptizing, and say unto us, Whence is this substitution, from heaven, or of men? Would there not be great reasonings among us what answer to return? Should we say, From heaven; he might reply, How do you prove it? Should we say, Of men, then might he ask, Why do you practice it?

7. THERE IS MORE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT IMMERSION AND THUS PRACTICE IT THAN ANY OTHER N. T. PRECEPT.

Another consequence is, we have the same kind of evidence, and perhaps more of it, that baptism is to be administered by immersion, or dipping, or putting into water, than we have to support any other gospel precept, or practice. The evidence which we have, in either case, is the signification of the words which are used to point out the thing to be believed, or practiced.

Were it not for the influence of habit, or custom, you would as readily and naturally conclude, from the very words used, that immersion, or dipping, or washing the body in water, was the meaning of baptism, as that a religious eating of bread, and drinking of wine, in commemoration of our dying Lord, was the way to observe the Lord's supper.

8. PEDOBAPTISTS HAVE A CLEAR CHOICE TO MAKE: ACCEPT THE UNSCRIPTURAL TRADITIONS OR REJECT AND RENOUNCE SPRINKLING.

We appear to be brought to this dilemma: We must either embrace the tradition of the elders, for the rule of one part of our practice; or we must no more sprinkle and call it baptism.

9. THERE IS NO SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY TO INTRODUCE SPRINKLING AND USE IT AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR BAPTIZING.

Another consequence is, Those, who first introduced sprinkling for baptizing, had no more right so to do, than they had to institute a new right, or ordinance, and call it Christ's. What authority have we to follow their erroneous and hurtful practice?

10. SPRINKLING DOES NOT PORTRAY THE DISTINCT SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD THAT BAPTISM REQUIRES.

We have another consequence worthy of consideration, and it is this: The Christian ordinance of baptism is a most solemn and significant ordinance, and of very high importance.

I speak not of the visible, or actual administration of it, in particular; for I never saw it administered, as Christ hath delivered it to his people: But I refer to the purport, end and design of

it. It is, among many other things, the great dividing line, which Heaven hath appointed to be drawn between the visible kingdom of Immanuel, and the men of this world.

Doubtless there are a large number who belong to Christ's invisible kingdom, who are not, strictly speaking, or regularly, in his kingdom visibly, having not submitted to this ordinance, which is the great and important line of distinction.

11. PEDOBAPTISTS ARE CAUGHT IN A WEB OF HABITUAL INCONSISTENCY.

It appears that we are, truly, in a trying state. We must depart, in one instance, from a long habit, or continue to do as we have done, and yet not be able to vindicate, by the scriptures of truth, our own conduct.

12. THE ORIGIN OF BAPTISM DOES NOT COME FROM THE REFORMATION PERIOD, BUT FROM THE N. T.

Lastly. We come, at length, to the answer of this old and difficult and perplexing question: Where, and when, did the religious sect called Baptists, arise? The answer is, plainly, this: They arose in Judea, at the time when John came, preaching in the wilderness the baptism of repentance.

I mention this consequence with considerable assurance, because the New Testament favors it, and no man is able to contradict me. Should any attempt it, he will fail for want of evidence.

I should, not long since, have been gratified could I have found their origin any where in the dark ages of Popery, or at the commencement of the reformation, among the famous enthusiasts of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, or Westphalia. But, after having long pursued the perplexing research, I found their *origin*, where I least of all expected it, in Enon and Jordan.

C.

SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS THAT PEDOBAPTISTS [SPRINKLERS] MUST ANSWER

A few questions are now to close the present subject.

1. IS NOT IMMERSION THE SCRIPTURE BAPTISM?

2. IS SPRINKLING A MODE OF BAPTISM WARRANTED BY SCRIPTURE? IF SO, WHERE?

3. ARE OLD TESTAMENT RITES TO EXPLAIN N. T. ORDINANCES? IS MOSES LEFT TO COMPLETE WHAT CHRIST HATH LEFT INCOMPLETE? IS IT SO?

4. WILL CHRIST APPROVE OF THAT PRACTICE OF MEN, WHICH SO CHANGES HIS POSITIVE INSTITUTION, AS TO LOSE THE PURPORT [PURPOSE], END AND DESIGN OF IT?

5. WAS IT EVER RIGHT, AND IS IT NOW, FOR MEN TO CHANGE WHAT CHRIST HATH COMMANDED TO BE IN PERPETUAL OBSERVATION? DID THE SUPPOSED EXTREME CASES JUSTIFY THIS CHANGE AT FIRST, AND WILL TRIFLING INCONVENIENCES JUSTIFY US NOW?

6. WILL IT BE WISE AND SAFE FOR US CONTINUALLY TO FORSAKE THE COMMANDMENT OF CHRIST FOR THE PRECEPTS OF MEN?

7. DO YOU, MY BRETHREN, OR CAN YOU, BLAME ME FOR WISHING YOU TO KEEP THE ORDINANCES OF CHRIST AS HE HATH DELIVERED THEM UNTO THE SAINTS?

8. SHOULD I HAVE MANIFESTED MYSELF YOUR FRIEND, OR CHRIST'S, IF, AFTER HAVING FOUND SUCH A PRECIOUS, NEW AND OLD *TREASURE* IN HIS WORD, AS IS THE CHRISTIAN ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM, I HAD NOT VENTURED MY LIFE, OR IN OTHER WORDS, MY REPUTATION, MY CASE, MY PROPERTY, AND MY EVERY WORLDLY CONSIDERATION, TO BRING IT FORTH TO YOUR VIEW AND ACCEPTANCE, THAT YOU MIGHT MORE FULLY WALK IN ALL THE STATUTES AND ORDINANCES OF THE LORD BLAMELESS?

AN ADMONITION THAT SHOULD BE HEEDED

One request, my brethren, I pray you to grant me, and it is this: **Search the scriptures devoutly, and follow me so far as I follow Jesus Christ, your Lord and mine.**