

# The Real Truth

About

## Baptism in Jesus' Name

By John Paterson

“The Word of God is plain in itself; and if in any one place there is obscurity, the Holy Ghost, who never is contrary to Himself, explains the same more fully in other places.”

—John Knox

# **The Real Truth About Baptism in Jesus' Name**

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## The Real Truth About Baptism in Jesus' Name

Most of the controversy over the baptismal formula has arisen simply because the real truth is seldom stated. People persist in linking this subject with their views about the personality of the Godhead, and complicated arguments follow. Having encountered diverse views over a period of twenty-five years, I find that the majority of opinions about the Deity are so improperly stated and so hopelessly illogical that any element of truth which either side may possess is smothered, and the argument ends in exasperation. The discussion which begins in an effort to determine the scriptural and apostolic formula which should be used in baptism nearly always ends in a squabble over unscriptural or ridiculous notions about the Godhead, and the original question of the baptismal formula is pushed into the background. This is most unfortunate—for there is a very real and spiritual truth connected with the use of the name of Jesus in baptism, and it has no direct bearing on any view about the Godhead. I am acquainted with certain Russellites and Plymouth Brethren who practice baptism in Jesus' Name—yet the former believe that Christ is the archangel and nothing more, while the latter accept the trinitarian view. These men certainly do not base their baptismal formula upon their views about the Godhead—they have realized what others have failed to comprehend, that God never intended baptism to be used to indicate adherence to some theological dogma with which it has no logical connection. If this were acknowledged I believe that many brethren

who do not feel that they can abandon their conception of the Deity would nevertheless practice baptism into the name of Jesus. With this thought in mind, let us try to ascertain the real truth about this subject. First let us examine the record to see if there is any scriptural foundation for this form of baptism.

### **THE SCRIPTURAL RECORD**

Whereas a hasty glance at the Acts of the Apostles will show only three instances of the use of the name of Jesus in baptism, a careful examination will reveal nine such instances:

- (1) The Jews at Pentecost were commanded to “be baptized every one . . . in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38).
- (2) The Samaritans were “baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus” after Philip had preached “concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12, 16, R. V.).
- (3) The Gentiles at the household of Cornelius were “commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48). Who is “the Lord”? There should be no doubt—Christians acknowledge only “one Lord.” But the Revised Version, Weymouth’s, and also the Vulgate prevent any chance for quibbling—they read, “in the name of Jesus Christ.”
- (4) Paul was seeking “to bind all that call upon [the]

name [of Jesus],” (Acts 9:14) but to his astonishment Jesus Himself appeared to inform him that His name is the name of the Lord (Acts 9:5) and that he must bear that name (Acts 9:15). Accordingly, the apostle was “baptized, . . . calling on the name of the Lord”—Revised Version, “His Name” (Acts 22:16). Further evidence that Paul was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is found in Romans 6:3, (R.V.) where Paul said, “all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus,” including himself with the Roman believer.

- (5) Believers in the church at Rome “were baptized into Jesus Christ”—“baptized into his death”—“buried with him by baptism”—raised “like as Christ was raised up from the dead”—“planted together (R. V., “United with Him”) in the likeness of his death,” etc. (Romans 6:3-5). In all this elaborate explanation of the meaning of water baptism where is there the slightest suggestion that baptism was intended to be a public avowal of the doctrine of the trinity? The Father did not die—was not buried—was not raised from the dead! No one can read this passage thoughtfully without forming the same opinion as Dr. A. C. Gaebelein, a trinitarian and a noted Bible expositor, who writes, “I rather think inasmuch as baptism is into the death of Christ that the formula ‘in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ’ is the correct one.”
- (6) In I Corinthians 1:12, 13 (R.V.) we read: “Now

this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?”

Who was crucified for the Corinthians? JESUS CHRIST! Into whose name were they baptized? JESUS CHRIST! The context will permit no other answer—for unless they were baptized into the name of Jesus, Paul’s argument would be meaningless.

Again, Paul described certain sinners in I Corinthians 6:9-10, and added, “Such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (I Corinthians 6:11, R. V.). Plainly, the reference is to the combined baptism of water and Spirit, so common in the apostolic days. So the Corinthians were baptized in the name of Jesus.

- (7) The Galatians likewise were baptized in Jesus’ name. Read Galatians 3:27 (R. V.) “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.” Perhaps I should point out that there is no thought here that only some of them were thus baptized—rather, because they were troubled by legalism, Paul contrasted “as many as are of the works of the law” (Galatians 3:10) and “as many as . . . constrain you to be cir-

cumcised” (Galatians 6:12) with “as many . . . as have been baptized,” showing that there is no need for any baptized person to be “entangled” with carnal circumcision, since baptism into Christ’s name is the Christian rite corresponding to circumcision. (Colossians 2:11-12). To revert to circumcision would mean that their baptismal confession of Christ “profit[ed] [them] nothing” (Galatians 5:1-2).

- (8) Ephesian believers were baptized by Paul “into the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5, R. V.)
- (9) The Colossians were “buried with [Christ] in baptism” (Colossians 2:12). This same expression is used in Romans 6:3, 4 (see Section (5) above), where it is definitely stated that the believers were baptized “into Jesus Christ.”

### **SCRIPTURAL PROMINENCE**

We have noticed the nine recorded instances where the name of Jesus was used in baptism—but this is not by any means all the scriptural evidence in support of this practice. We shall see a lot more before we complete this study. We Pentecostal people believe that baptism should be practiced “by immersion”; that “speaking in tongues” is the initial sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; that the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper should be maintained—we do well to consider that there is more Scripture in support of the use of Jesus name in baptism than there is for any of the doctrines I have just mentioned! And we should not forget that there is not a single recorded

instance, in the Bible or in any other genuine first century book, where any other formula was ever used in the first 100 years of the Christian era. Jesus' words recorded in Matthew 28:19 are today called the "Triadic formula," but their repetition as a formula was not intended by our Lord and was never practiced by His apostles. This brings us to a study of

### **THE GREAT COMMISSION**

The Great Commission is recorded in all four Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles. It was the theme of forty days' discussion by our Lord (Acts 1:3) and was uttered on at least three separate occasions. The first is recorded in Mark 16:14-18 and in John 20:19-23, and occurred while the disciples sat at meat in Jerusalem on the evening of His resurrection. The second is recorded in Matthew 28:16-20, occurring in a mountain in Galilee (probably where the Sermon on the Mount had been delivered, some 70 miles from Jerusalem). The third is recorded in Luke 24:45-51 and in Acts 1:6-9, and took place just before His ascension from the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem.

The Bible declares that Jesus "breathed on" or inspired His apostles before He began this series of discourses (John 20:22); that these commandments were given to the apostles by our Lord "through the Holy Ghost" (Acts 1:2); that "opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45); that "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27, R. V.); and that He expected His apostles to be witnesses "unto [Him]" (Acts



1:8) and to be “witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48). What things? Why, the things which He, the living Word, had interpreted to them from the written Word (of which He was the Author)—the things concerning which He had opened their understanding—the things contained in the “commandments given through the Holy Ghost,” recorded as the great commission in all the Gospels and summed up in the final utterance in Luke 24:46-49, namely, (1) His death, (2) His burial, and (3) His resurrection, and the identification of the individual sinner with these three historical facts through (1) repentance, (2) water baptism, and (3) baptism in the Holy Ghost.

How did the apostles fulfil the expectation of Jesus? You have read the record concerning nine groups of people—all baptized in Jesus’ name. Now compare the message of the apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost and note the consistent Holy Ghost interpretation of the commission. Peter, supported by the other apostles, including Matthew (Acts 2:14, 37), said “(1) repent, (2) be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and (3) ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, etc.” (Acts 2:38, 39). Jesus said that they should preach (1) repentance, and (2) remission of sins in His name, and (3) “behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you” (Luke 24:47-49).

Will anyone dare to say that the earlier commandment given through the Holy Ghost in Matthew 28:19 is contradictory to the later one in Luke 24, also given through the Holy Ghost and so consistently interpreted by the disciples throughout the entire Acts of the Apostles? Will anyone dare to say that the apostles gave wrong instructions on the Day of Pentecost to 3000 convicted souls?

Consider what this would imply! It would imply that the inspiration imparted to the apostles when Jesus breathed on them was useless, that Christ's personal instruction for 40 days was wasted, that the plain statement that the Lord Himself "opened their understanding" is a lie, and that the anointing of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was a farce! It would charge Christ with showing less discernment in the choice of His apostles than the average businessman exhibits in hiring his employees! Yet this is what some preachers have dared to do. Ah! how near such men come to committing blasphemy against the Holy Spirit!

### **OBEYING JESUS' WORDS**

Before we proceed with a detailed examination of Matthew 28:19, I want to consider a statement commonly made by those who object to baptism in Jesus' name. They say, "I would rather obey Jesus' words than the words of the apostles." These people forget three things:

- (1) That Jesus left no written record. We depend entirely on the word of His apostles for the only record we have of His words.
- (2) That Jesus Himself declared that we should believe on Him through the word of the apostles (John 17:20).
- (3) That to obey Jesus' words should mean obeying ALL His words as recorded in ALL four Gospels—not merely practicing the letter of a single verse in Matthew while overlooking the spir-

it of it as indicated by the words of Jesus in many other passages. The Scriptures are purposely so written that unless men are careful to be rigidly honest with God they become snared by the letter of certain passages through neglecting to ascertain the spiritual complement of these passages as found elsewhere in the Bible—this principle is clearly established in Isaiah 28:13. Thus it has been with Matthew 28:19; there is the letter of the Word—the spiritual meaning is ascertained by combining it with the commission as recorded in Mark, Luke, and John, and this meaning is practiced in the Acts and preached in the Epistles. Turn up any encyclopedia, any church history you please: they all declare that as long as the apostles were alive no formula other than the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was ever used in baptism; and scholars, in no way connected with the Pentecostal movement, seeking an explanation of this fact, have found that in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures the apostles could not possibly interpret Jesus' words in any other way. The man who deliberately picks up a venomous snake may truthfully say he is fulfilling Christ's literal word—did not Jesus say, "They shall take up serpents" (Mark 16:18)?—but sane people realize that to fulfil Christ's literal word in this case might produce the most tangible evidence that "the letter killeth" (II Corinthians 3:6)! Therefore they look for the scriptural incident (Acts 28:3-6) to illustrate what Jesus really

meant. Now if we do this with one part of the commission, why don't we follow the same rule with the rest of it?

With this thought in mind, and remembering the overwhelming scriptural evidence already noted in support of the use of Jesus' name in baptism, let us now examine the great commission as recorded in Matthew.

### **THE GREAT COMMISSION AS RECORDED IN MATTHEW**

Wherein has the spirit of the passage been overlooked? Matthew 28:18-20 reads as follows: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power (R. V. 'authority') is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in (R. V. 'into') 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." Two things are evident:

- 1) From beginning to end the Book of Matthew lays special emphasis on the Kingship of Jesus. This is so noticeable when compared with the other gospels that it has been called "the Book of the great king." Christ's death, burial, and resurrection had an effect upon man's relation to God, and this aspect was emphasized in the commission as recorded in Luke—but it also altered Christ's

relation to man, “He humbled himself . . . wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (Philippians 2:8-10). “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:26). “All authority is given unto me—go ye therefore!” Nothing can be plainer than this—the commission in Matthew emphasizes an aspect of the gospel too often neglected, but about which Christ is very jealous. To fulfil the great commission in the manner Christ intended, we must “teach all nations” that “all authority has been given unto Him” (as per Matthew), and we must “preach repentance, and remission of sin in his name, and the promise of the Father” (as per Luke). The apostles fulfilled both Matthew and Luke on the Day of Pentecost; “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. . . . Repent, and be baptized 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” (Acts 2:36, 38).

The same message is found in every apostolic sermon recorded in the Acts and in the same order:

- 1st. The exalted position of the Man Christ Jesus as the result of His sacrifice.
- 2nd. The consequent benefits to man through

His Name. Read Acts 3:13, 16, 19; 4:10-12; 5:31, 32; 7:55, 56, 60; 10:42, 43; 13:33, 38; 17:3, 7, 30, 31; 26:13, 16, 18. Surely this array of Scripture should convince the most skeptical!

- (2) The second thing which is evident in the commission as recorded in Matthew is that all who accepted the “teaching” concerning Christ’s “authority” were to be baptized into a name—one name—and that name was to be the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Regardless of one’s beliefs concerning the personality of God, one must admit that the Father could “give all authority in heaven and in earth” to the Son and that such a gift would automatically transform the name of the Lord Jesus Christ into a name representing and carrying all the authority of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. A person would be very foolish who could not discern this—he would make Christ a liar, who would deny it!

It is clear, therefore, that Matthew—far from contradicting the other writers—recorded a great truth and an essential part of the gospel message and one which was translated into action by the apostles with decisive finality. But this is not all. I will shortly show that Scripture abundantly testifies that the name of God is in Christ—in fact, that Christ’s name is the name of the Father.

## IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S NAME

First, we should satisfy ourselves by scriptural reference that this is not a trifling matter—it is very important in God's sight. God places great value on his name.

- (1) He threatens those who profane it. "If thou wilt not . . . fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful" (Deuteronomy 28:58-59).
- (2) He forbode the mention of names of false gods in Exodus 23:13, but requires that we "make mention that his name is exalted" (Isaiah 12:4).
- (3) He threatened the prophets who told lying visions in order to cause the people to forget his Name (Jeremiah 23:25-27). Modern prophets, take notice! And David said: "If we have forgotten the name of our God, . . . shall not God search this out?" (Psalm 44:20-21).
- (4) In Psalm 91:14-16 God makes a sevenfold promise to the man who sets his love upon God and knows God's Name.
- (5) God gave a fearful warning against trifling with His name in the person of His Son when He said concerning the Angel of the covenant, "Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not,"—why?—"for my name is in him" (Exodus 23:21). Every Bible student knows that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Angel of the Covenant. (Malachi 3:1; I Corinthians 10:9). The same thought is underlying Psalm 2:12."Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish."

Since God requires us to "know" His name, to "mention"

it, not to “forget” it, but to “fear” it, and since He declares that it is “in” His Son, it surely behooves us to find out what that name is.

### **THE NAME OF GOD**

God has revealed Himself at sundry times under various names—El, Elohim, Elyon, Shaddai, El Olam, Adonai, Eloah, concerning which space forbids that we should speak particularly—but there is one name known in the Old Testament as the name. It occurs 6,823 times, more than twice as often as all other Divine names combined. It is Jehovah. This name was regarded by the Jews as the “unutterable” name, although they abbreviated it to the form JAH and incorporated it in their personal names, as Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.

This is the name we are commanded to “fear” in Deuteronomy 28:58 (rendered in A. V. as THE LORD); this is the name concerning which we are required to “make mention that it is exalted” (compare Isaiah 12:2, 4); this is the name used by God throughout the entire 23rd chapter of Jeremiah, the chapter where He threatened the lying prophets; and it was the name the “forgetful” people acknowledged when they ceased their wanderings after Baal (compare Jeremiah 23:27 and I Kings 18:39). In Exodus 6:3 this is the name by which God made covenant with Moses and the children of Israel and it was therefore the name in the covenant angel referred to in Exodus 23:21, concerning Whom we have seen that He was the Lord Jesus Christ. And, centuries later, when God wished to reveal Himself not merely to one race but to a perishing world—when He wished to proclaim through the medium of one supreme name both the exalt-



ed personal position of the Mediator of the “new and better covenant” and His condescension to man—He did it by the use of this same glorious name, “JESUS,” “Jehovah the Saviour.”

“Jesus” is the Graecized form of the Hebrew JAHOSHEA and means “Jehovah, the Savior,” whether preachers care to admit it or not. I have known them to say, “Jesus means Savior—not Jehovah the Savior.” When they say this they are either utterly ignorant or utterly dishonest, for indisputable evidence is found in Numbers 13:16 where Moses changed the name of Oshea the son of Nun. His name, another form of Hosea, meant “savior”—and such he was to Israel’s national life—but Moses, being a prophet, recognized him as a type of a greater Savior and added the covenant name, JAH—hence Jahoshea or Joshua. Then, because the name Joshua or Jesus was bestowed on Jewish children by fond parents, some preachers pretend to believe that the name of our Lord Jesus is “only a common name”! Full well they know that there is only one Jesus whose name was announced from heaven and Who was declared by the angel to be the “Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord” (Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:11). We do not “preach another Jesus” (II Corinthians 11:4).

### **THE NAME OF GOD IN CHRIST**

I said I would produce Scripture to show that the name of God is in Christ and that Christ’s name is the name of the Father. Here it is:

The prophet Zechariah, referring to Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, said, “Behold, thy King cometh” (Zechariah 9:9) and the multitude of the disciples cried,

“Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.” This thing was settled in heaven whether the religious leaders wanted it on earth or not! And when the Pharisees said, “Master, rebuke thy disciples,” He answered, “I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out” (Luke 19:37-40). An endorsement unparalleled in Sacred Writ!

The same prophet, referring to Christ’s second Coming, said, “His feet shall stand . . . upon the Mount of Olives, . . . and [Jehovah] my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And [Jehovah] shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one [Jehovah] and His name one.” (See Zechariah 14:4-5, 9.) From this it is quite evident that the name used by the disciples at the entry into Jerusalem and translated “Lord” in the English Bible was the name Jehovah. Not only did Jesus vindicate His disciples at His entry into Jerusalem, but two days later He associated this with the prophecy regarding His second coming when He said, “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23:39). These were the last words He ever uttered in His public ministry—what tremendous meaning is contained in them! The “peace in heaven” will become peace on earth in that day when this truth shall be everywhere acknowledged.

Isaiah foretold the personal return of Christ, His fury and indignation, saying, “Behold, the Name of [Jehovah] cometh from far, burning with his anger” (Isaiah 30:27).

Jesus applied the name Jehovah to Himself in John 8:58 (compare Exodus 3:14-15) and the Jews attempted to stone Him for it.

Christ is called “Jehovah our righteousness” in Jeremiah 23:5-6, the chapter which threatened the lying prophets. This is no mere coincidence. Jesus Himself declared, “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5:43). Antichrist “shall come in his own name”—one name. The number of it is 666 (Revelation 13:18), six being the number of the old creation—while 888 is the number of Christ’s Name, eight being the number of the new creation and definitely associated with baptism. Read I Peter 3:20-21. In baptism we rise to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). What name alone expresses this new creation? Only Jesus, which in Greek characters totals 888, IHSOYS = 10+8+200+70+400+200. The wicked will receive Antichrist’s name “in their foreheads” (Revelation 13:16) and those who “follow the Lamb” have “his Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Revelation 14:1, 4). “They shall see his face; and his name (singular) shall be in their foreheads” (Revelation 22:4). So we see that John 5:43 and Revelation 14:1 declare the same thing—that the name Jesus, symbolized by 888, is the name of the Father. And since Jesus promised in Revelation 3:8-11 to “keep from the hour of world-wide trial” only those “who have not denied His Name” it is evident that those who persistently refuse Christ’s name in baptism will reap an appropriate retribution.

Again, Jesus said, “I have manifested thy name” (John 17:6) and He elaborated upon this in verses 11 and 12 where He said, “Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me” and “I kept them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me” (John 17:11-12 R. V.). The revisers have given the true rendering. There is no

justification for the reading shown in the King James Version, as the pronoun “which” is in the singular neuter dative in agreement with the word “name,” and cannot possibly mean “whom” which would have to be in the plural masculine accusative. However, anyone in doubt may read Weymouth’s rendering, as follows: “Thy name—the name thou hast given me to bear.” When was He given the Father’s name to bear? When the commandment was given by the angel, first to Mary (Luke 1:31) and later to Joseph (Matthew 1:21), “Thou shalt call his name JESUS,” that is Jehovah the Savior.

David, speaking prophetically, said, “If we have forgotten the name of our . . . God, shall not God search this out?” and he went on to say, “For thy sake are we killed all the day long” (Psalm 44:20-22). For whose sake? For the sake of the God whose name they would not forget. Who were “they”? Paul applied these very verses to the apostles in Romans 8:36. For whose sake and for what name were the apostles killed? For the name of JESUS. Note these Scriptures:

“[They] hazarded their lives for the name” (Acts 15:26).

The rulers demanded, “By what power, or name have ye done this?” (Acts 4:7).

They were commanded to “speak henceforth to no man in this name” (Acts 4:17) and that they “should not teach in this name” (Acts 5:28), more evidence to show how the apostles fulfilled Jesus’ command in Matthew 28:20 about “teaching.”

Saul “destroyed them which called on this name” (Acts 9:21).

They were “reproached for [His] Name” (I Peter 4:14), and Peter added, “If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name” (I Peter 4:16 R. V.).

They were “counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” Revised Version says, “for the name” (Acts 5:41).

They were “hated of all men for [His] name’s sake” (Matthew 10:22)—note, it was not for their gifts, miracles, speaking in tongues, etc.; but “for His Name’s sake.” The devil hates the Name of Jesus!

And Gallio said to the Jews: “If it be a question of words and names, see ye to it” (Acts 18:15). Opposition to Christianity was then and still is a “question of a Name.”

All this goes to show that the Name of God which David, speaking prophetically, would not forget (Psalm 44:20-22) was the Name of Jesus!

Simeon told us that “God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name” (Acts 15:14). The reference is to the household of Cornelius, and we have already noted that they were baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ.” Also in Acts 15:17 we read about “the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called.” The speaker is Jehovah (see Amos 9:12), but when we refer to Matthew 12:21 we find that “in [the] name [of Jesus] shall the Gentiles trust.”

Someone may ask, “What about the name of the Holy Ghost?” Without discussing the personality of the Holy Spirit, which is quite apart from the subject in hand, I will merely point out that His coming and work are so closely

associated with the glorious ascension and exaltation of Christ and so related to it that Christ Himself made the following declarations:

- (1) Concerning the Holy Spirit's work—"He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you." As if to thwart the modern tendency to limit Christ, Jesus defined the scope of this verse as follows: "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you." (John 16:14-15 R. V.)
- (2) Concerning the Holy Spirit's coming to the individual—"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18), adding that "The Father will send [the Comforter] in my name" (John 14:26).
- (3) Concerning the Holy Spirit's presence in the assembly—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

Apostle Paul recognized this close association when he spoke of "Christ in you" (Colossians 1:27) declaring that "the Lord is that Spirit" (II Corinthians 3:17).

To say the least, these Scriptures apply the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Holy Spirit, and you will search the Bible in vain for any other name for Him. Since we have already seen that the name of the Father is

in Christ we should be surprised if this were otherwise.

This is well summed up in the words of Dr. John Munroe Gibson, M.A., D.D., Principal of the Presbyterian Theological College, McGill University, and subsequently Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in England. Concerning the text, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20), Dr. Gibson says, "I am in My Father"—there is the doctrine of the Father. 'Ye in Me'—there is the doctrine of the Son. 'I in you'—there is the doctrine of the Spirit. That there is a great region of mystery is evident, but we do not need to explore it, for if we think of the Father, there is Christ—"I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." If we think of the Son, union to Christ is the practical thought—"ye in Me." If we think of the Holy Spirit, the practical thought is Christ in us—"I in you" as He puts it here. It comes to this, that practically Christ is all in all. 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' It is 'I am' all the way through. The Divine Name is all in Christ." The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church will scarcely be accused of fanaticism.

### **INDISPUTABLE REASONS**

Besides these Scriptures and their implications there are other indisputable reasons why the name of God must be in Christ and why we should be baptized into the name of Jesus.

First of all, the Son of God "hath by inheritance . . . a more excellent name" (Hebrews 1:4). What name did He inherit? His Father's name, of course! Does not every son inherit his father's name (surname)?

The name of God was in the old Temple (I Kings 8:29).

It must therefore be in the new Temple of which Jesus said: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19).

Jehovah’s Name was in the ark of the covenant. Read II Samuel 6:2; I Chronicles 13:6. “The ark which is called by the name of Jehovah.” This was because His glory dwelt there. Who is the ark today, and where does the glory of God dwell? “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me” (John 14:11). “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). And “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God”—where?—“in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6). All the ark contained and all it represented is today found in Jesus.

We should be baptized in Jesus’ name because the church is the bride of Christ (II Corinthians 11:2) and every bride takes her husband’s name, which is also the name of her husband’s father.

While collectively we are the bride of Christ, individually we are His children. Jesus said, “Behold, I and the children which [Jehovah] hath given Me” (Isaiah 8:18; Hebrews 2:13). As Adam was father of the old creation, so Jesus is Father of the new. Adam, “the son of God” (Luke 3:38), was our natural father, giving us physical life. Jesus, “the Son of God, only begotten” (John 3:18), “the last Adam, a quickening spirit” (I Corinthians 15:45), is our spiritual Father, called in Isaiah 9:6, “The everlasting Father,” giving us everlasting life.

Jehovah is the name of the “I am,” the everlasting God (see Isaiah 40:28), and Christ, our everlasting Father, has this very same everlasting Name—Jesus, Jehovah the



Savior. Because we bear the image and have the blood of our earthly father, we bear his name. The life is in the blood and the name indicates whose blood is in our veins. The blood gives us the RIGHT to bear the name of our father. Now, “as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Corinthians 15:49). When we have been “made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13) should we not bear His name? But some Christians are like Esau—they sell their birthright for a mess of theological pottage!

We should be baptized in Jesus’ name because God hath exalted Him “far above . . . every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and . . . gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Ephesians 1:21-22). Just as the church in the wilderness was “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (I Corinthians 10:1-2) because Moses was their leader and mediator of the old covenant, so the New Testament church is baptized into Christ as their leader and mediator of the new covenant. This is further set forth in Revelation 15:3 where the redeemed “sing the song of Moses . . . and . . . of the Lamb.”

We should be baptized in Jesus’ name because the apostle commanded, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17). Surely baptism is both “in word” and “in deed.” Why do some preachers use Jesus’ name to cast out devils, to heal the sick, in prayer of all kinds and in giving, yet they persistently refuse to use it in baptism?

We must be baptized in Jesus’ name—for “neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be

saved” (Acts 4:12). “God hath given Him the name which is above every name: that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow.” (See Philippians 2:9, R. V.) “The name of [Jehovah] is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10).

### **OBJECTIONS ANSWERED**

Objections to the use of Jesus’ name in baptism can be divided into two classes—a small number which are offered by honest truthseekers, and a larger number which are ingeniously manufactured by unscrupulous persons and too often instilled by them into the hearts of the unwary. You know, some folks will not be immersed because Paul said, “Christ sent me not to baptize” (I Corinthians 1:17), and the same people will not have anything to do with tongues because the apostle said, “In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding . . . than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (I Corinthians 14:19). These people do not know and do not wish to know what Paul meant, and there is not much a person can do to help those who are determined not to be helped. However, I trust the following answers will assist honest hearts to see these objections in their true colors.

- (1) First, let us examine the objections of those who are not content to make the Bible their only rule of faith and conduct—they go to the “church fathers” and “church history” for needed stimulus. The following example will suffice:

An article appearing in a recent issue of a religious magazine endeavors to bolster the use of

the Triadic formula by quoting from epistles supposed to have been written by Ignatius in A.D. 107. The quotations merely repeat the text of Matthew 28:19 and do not state that the wording of the text was used as a formula. So, even if the epistles were the genuine work of Ignatius, they would prove merely what we have always believed: that Matthew 28:19 was a recognized verse of Scripture. But the epistles quoted (the Epistle to the Philippians and the longer recension of the Epistle to the Philadelphians) are rejected by every critic as spurious, and the editor of the volume in which these epistles are found states bluntly that they are spurious and shows why (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, Pages 47 and 105). Presumably, the contributor to the magazine did not read the editor's notes, but, apart from that, why should he expect evangelical people to be interested in epistles which are cluttered up with insistence on the observance of Lent and references to various heresies which were unknown until the third century A.D.? It is a pretty weak case that has to be bolstered by fiction.

The first genuine reference to the repetition of the literal wording of Matthew 28:19 as a formula is found in Justin's "First Apology," written A.D. 153, about 90 years after the death of Peter and Paul. A lot of backsliding can take place in 90 years. How long did it take some Pentecostal preachers to backslide from the truth of Jesus' name which they said God had revealed to them? They need not be

surprised that we prefer to stick to the Acts of the Apostles—the only authentic history of the apostolic church—written by an eyewitness who doesn't ask us to believe that “God changed His mind”!

- (2) Another peculiar objection is that “Baptism in Jesus' name was only for the Jews.” But if you will examine the nine cases we found in the Bible you will see that six of them were Gentiles.
- (3) Some others evade the issue by declaring themselves in favor of “either formula or even none at all—what does it matter if the heart is right?” According to this we should not protest against infant baptism, sprinkling, pouring, or trine immersion—in fact, why bother about baptism at all?—since the heart might be right!
- (4) Another evasion is the claim by some Pentecostal preachers that “Matthew 28:19 is equivalent to Acts 2:38, so it does not matter which we use as a formula.” But they thought it mattered, or they would not have changed as they did some years ago, banning what they themselves formerly practiced; they would not have left Acts 2:38 out of their writings, or altered it, as some have dared to do! And they still think it matters, or they would use Acts 2:38 at least as often as they use the other formula.
- (5) But the greatest clamor is raised against the principle and practice of rebaptism. They say, “It is all

right to baptize new converts in Jesus' name, provided they request it, but it is wrong to rebaptize anyone." We are going to analyze this objection as to (a) its motive, (b) its logic, and (c) its scriptural status.

- (a) Those who raise this objection are those who have been forced to admit that baptism in Jesus' name is a scriptural form of baptism. Our most obstinate opponents know that this is so—that is why no one has ever dared to accept my challenge, of many years' standing, to debate this question publicly. So they hope to nullify what they cannot refute. As long as they can prevent rebaptisms, the "infection" will not spread to their assemblies, for they will see to it that their "new converts" are "indoctrinated" before they are immersed. Well do they know that new converts are not qualified to "request" any particular formula, and much less after their minds have been prejudiced!
- (b) But this objection is as illogical as it is crafty. If it is right to baptize into the name those who have newly repented of their sins and therefore have only a little knowledge of God's Word, why should it be wrong to rebaptize those who, after mature reflection in the Holy Ghost, become convinced that they have not been baptized properly? Why should preachers honor "requests" of newcomers and refuse

similar requests from established saints? Do not these preachers practice rebaptism in the case of converts who have been immersed before their conversion because it is recognized that such persons did not understand what they were doing at the time of their original immersion?

- (c) When these objectors have failed to give a logical reason for opposing rebaptism, they invent a technical one—they say that “The Bible declares there is one baptism (Ephesians 4:5) and rebaptism makes two”! An appeal to the Bible is always fatal to the arguments of opponents of Jesus’ name, and this is no exception. The Bible does say there is one baptism and only one that is recognized by the Christian church, but it happens to be the one these Ephesians had—in Acts 19:5 they were rebaptized “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Their rebaptism did not make two Christian baptisms—rather, they discarded an authorized form of baptism because a further revelation from God had rendered John’s baptism inadequate and had replaced it. This is in harmony with the accepted view that “greater light brings greater responsibility.” If it is true that those who were immersed prior to conversion dishonored God by ignorantly going through a form of baptism and failing to

ascertain its true spiritual significance, what is to be said about those who profess to be filled with the Holy Spirit yet act just as ignorantly and often more stubbornly than the sinner in this matter? When they become convinced that their water baptism fell short of giving God the glory He is supposed to get from it, would they be justified in doing less than is expected of the repentant sinner, that is, to be rebaptized?

This principle of “justifying God” (Luke 7:29, 30) by successive baptisms is found all through the Scriptures—the Pharisees quarreled with John because his disciples “added” John’s baptism to the Jew’s washings; then they disputed with him because Christ’s disciples “added” Christ’s baptism to John’s (John 3:25-26; John 4:1); Cornelius was not allowed to dodge baptism even though he had received the gift from heaven; and the Ephesians who had been baptized, believing in the Christ that should come, were rebaptized because He had come and they must honor God in the matter. Please understand that I do not support the attitude of some who are baptized repeatedly in the same way and under the same conditions just because they like to go through the water. That cheapens the sacred rite. But when one has a conscientious conviction, based upon a reasonable study of the Scriptures, that his baptism was

inadequate, he can and must be rebaptized. What man can do, he is expected to do; what he can understand, he is not allowed to evade: the whole system of law and judgment rests on this. As Peter said, "Baptism saves us—not the putting away of the filth of the flesh" (there is no inherent value in the actual washing in itself)—"but the inquiry of a good conscience toward God" (I Peter 3:21 R. V.). It is this "inquiry," or, as more correctly rendered by Weymouth, "craving" of a good conscience that gives baptism its "saving" virtue; that, and the saving name! In this, as in every aspect of the Christian life, it is the conscientious attempt to do God's will that ensures spiritual attainment. I would also point out that, in the instances I have cited from the Bible, those who were rebaptized had submitted originally to forms of baptism which were authorized by God but which at a later date were rendered inadequate by dispensational change. If they were not allowed to evade rebaptism, how much more shall it be required of those who cannot produce any such authorization for their present formula?

- (6) Some brethren are in such desperate straits that they have resorted to toying with the Greek text in an effort to prove that the expression "in the name of Jesus Christ" means "upon the authority of Jesus Christ," while they say the expression "into the name of the Father, etc." indicates the formula



or means used. There are several approved English Versions and if these brethren were content to stick to them I would not have to bother the reader with this. However, I will make my observations as simple as possible.

First, if they knew a little more about the Greek text they would leave it alone, for it proves the very thing they are trying to disprove. In seven of the nine instances which we have studied the candidates were baptized “into (Greek, *eis*) the name of Jesus Christ.” In the other two cases they were commanded to be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ,” the preposition used in Acts 2 being *epi*, and in Acts 10, *en*. In Acts 2 the word *epi* is deliberately used to indicate that the use of the name is the means by which “remission of sins” should be obtained. This preposition is also used in the expression “calling on the name of the Lord” (see Acts 2:21; 22:16) and the reference in Acts 22:16 is certainly to the baptismal formula. Concerning the word *en* used by Peter in the sole remaining instance (Acts 10) what better interpreter can we find than Peter himself? He stated that when he used this expression—“in the name of Jesus Christ”—he used it as the direct means (compare Acts 3:6 with Acts 4:7, 9, 10). While the authority of Christ is implied, to the early church the use of His name meant much more than this. Any bailiff may use the king’s name in cold authority—only a prince is clothed with that name in loving relationship.

Secondly, even if this objection had not fallen to pieces, it would prove nothing—the objectors would still have to tell us what “the name of the Father” is!

- (7) Evasion of God’s Word has caused many a man to deceive himself as well as his fellows (James 1:22), and the reader should be warned to avoid a “compromise” formula recently devised. The formula, “I baptize you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” can mean almost anything. You may think that it represents baptism into the name of Jesus, but all it signifies to those who invented it is merely a statement that “upon the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ” you are baptized “into the name of the Father, etc.” In other words, this is objection number 6 put into practice, and, as I pointed out, they have not answered the question, “What is that name?”

The formula, “I baptize you into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” is quite sufficient, but if you wish to declare your reason in unmistakable terms you may use the following formula, “I baptize you into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

- (8) Finally, there are those who dismiss the subject with the remark, “This is much ado about nothing. It does not matter whether the name is used. If we

are sincere God accepts the repetition of the phrase (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) as signifying the name.” But is this so? Does God accept finite opinions, however sincere, when they clash with His declared will? Moreover, when people continue to use the wrong formula, after they realize the meaning of the use of the name of Jesus, should they be considered sincere? Are they sincere when they persist in claiming that they can approach God the Father distinctly and separately from Jesus Christ, the Son—despite Christ’s stinging rebuke of this attitude and despite the teaching of Scripture that God cannot be seen or approached but through His Son (John 14:6-11; Matthew 11:25-27)? If it has “pleased the Father that in [Christ] should all fulness dwell,” “that in all things he might have preeminence” (Colossians 1:18-19), where do preachers stand in God’s estimation, who persist in setting Christ aside and stripping Him of the authority, power, possessions, glory, honor, fulness, and uniqueness with which His Father has invested Him? I am reminded of the words of Martin Luther, who declared, “This I have often said, and now say it again, that when I am dead it may be thought of, and men may learn to avoid all teachers as sent and driven by the devil who set up to talk and preach about God simple and sundered from Jesus Christ. If thou wouldst go straight to God and surely apprehend Him, so as to find in Him mercy and strength, never let thyself be persuaded to seek Him elsewhere than in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him begin thy art and study, in

Him let it abide firm, and wherever else thine own reason and thinking or any other man's would lead thee, shut thine eyes and say, 'I must not, I will not know any other God than in my Lord Jesus Christ.'"

### CONCLUSION

The "Meaning of Water Baptism" is but vaguely understood by many Christians, and a study of that subject would yield much additional light upon our present discussion. Man is capable of understanding the reason for God's ordinances and should not be content to offer only blind or passive obedience.

Once again let me urge the reader not to confuse the issue by introducing questions regarding the personality of the Godhead, which is another subject. Furthermore, I have not said, nor do I infer from any of the Scriptures I have mentioned, that the Father is the Son, but simply that the Father is in the Son. No greater mistake can be made by any child of God than the attitude which is often adopted, namely, to refuse all light and even to ignore certain verses of Scripture because radicals have distorted them. There is truth into which the Spirit is trying to guide us (John 16:13) and acceptance of it need not identify us with fanatics. Once this question is faced squarely you will have to admit that baptism "into Jesus' name" is not merely a correct formula—it is the only correct formula. You will have to admit that the Triadic formula commonly used today is not equal to the one used in the Acts of the Apostles—it is wrong and is totally invalid.

I would ask you to remember that the words, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" are titles or terms of relationship;

they are not the sacred name! And I would point out to those who think that Matthew taught something different from Peter and Paul that it is generally admitted that the Book of Matthew was written not earlier than A.D. 62. What do they think happened to the half million converts who were baptized in Jesus' name between the Day of Pentecost and the writing of Matthew?

Let us declare this truth with ever-increasing fervor. We shall certainly suffer the persecution promised to those who contend for the name of the Lord in the last days (Isaiah 66:5; John 15:21); what matter, if we but return to the central principle and theme of the gospel—"the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Corinthians 4:6). We shall be among that company of whom it is written in Malachi 3:16-17, "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

Yours in Christ Jesus,  
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