

**IS THE MODE OF
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM
PRESCRIBED IN
THE NEW TESTAMENT?**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649360222

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Cover @ 2017

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BY
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FROM THE BIBLICAL EXPOSITORY, VOL. III, NO. II.

NASHVILLE:
GRAVES AND MARKS.
NEW YORK:
SHELDON, LAMPORT & CO.
1855.

INTRODUCTORY REVIEW.

IF the question is asked—and it will be, many scores of times—“Why have the Baptists republished Mr. Stuart’s work on Baptism?” we answer:—

As a work of authority upon the subject of the primitive action of baptism, and the Scriptural warrant for infant baptism. Prof. Stuart was in his day the brightest luminary in the constellation of Presbyterian scholars. He was the bright particular star of Andover, and shed over that seminary a halo of intellectual light. The charm of his name, his reputation for profound and varied scholarship, on both sides of the water, attracted students from the remotest sections of our Union, and for nearly half a century, with his students, as with Presbyterians, appeals to his authority have been considered ultimate. It was not strange, then, that, during the whole period of his established scholarship, he should be frequently consulted with respect to the classical import and use of the terms “*bapto*” and “*baptizo*,” and the Scriptural warrant for infant baptism, about which the Christian world was so much divided and, in his day, so violently agitated.

To answer all these interrogatories at once and finally, to put upon record for an inquiring age, and to leave his testimony behind him for all time to come, influenced him to prepare the following treatise.

It originally appeared in the Biblical Repository, Vol. III. No. 11, and was, in the year 1833, published separately, by Flagg, Gould, and Newman, Andover. The edition was eagerly sought for, and speedily exhausted; and for many years there has been an earnest demand for the work by Christians of all denominations, and by none more than by Baptists. But only now and then a copy could be procured. It has been a subject of inquiry why his own "Church," or Pedobaptist Publication Societies, have not kept the work in print, to meet the numerous demands for it, and even taken measures to increase those demands. We leave the reader to draw his own conclusion.

Our reasons for recovering it from its present obscurity, and inviting all Christians, especially Baptists, to aid in its extensive circulation, are several.

It is unquestionably a scholarly production; and, being the decision of one of the first Pedobaptist scholars and theologians of England or America, it can be appealed to with confidence in discussions with Pedobaptists touching the primitive action and subjects of Baptism. It is regarded as a standard authority with Presbyterians, and an authority that must be, as it deserves to be, respected by all classes to whom the name of Mr. Stuart is familiar, or to whom his character and position are made known.

This work is not republished by Baptists primarily for the sake of Prof. Stuart's *reasonings*, but for the *authorities* and *facts* which he submits. It must be confessed that he reasons like a Pedobaptist—as one whose prejudices and feelings were all violently opposed to the *facts* which his candor and character as a scholar forced him to admit. His admissions, his facts and authorities, are most clearly and conclusively in favor of the Baptists; while his reasonings, or rather *inferences*, are in favor of Pedobaptists, and *characteristically Pedobaptistic*. The former we most cordially

receive; the latter, with all due deference, reject. And yet, the very *reasonings* or *inferences* of Prof. S. in this work, we conceive, must prove powerful arguments in favor of our positions as a denomination.

Will not all classes naturally look into this treatise for the *strongest* argument and the *fairest* and *most conclusive* reasonings that the Pedobaptists of either continent can furnish? If not from the mature scholarship and resplendent talents of Moses Stuart of Andover, from what source could they reasonably look for or expect it?

And will not the candid and impartial inquirer turn from these pages with astonishment, and, however strong his previous prepossessions in favor of Mr. Stuart's reasonings, with disappointment? Will he not irresistibly conclude, "If these are the arguments, and all the arguments,—if these are the most conclusive and satisfactory reasonings that can be produced in favor of affusion,—if these are the character of *inferences* upon which sprinkling and infant baptism indeed rest,—and, above all, if these are the *astounding facts* which *must be admitted*, and which so *potentially* militate against and rebuke both practices,—then should they be rejected from the Protestant creed, and energetically repudiated in Protestant practice.

We propose to make a brief summary of Prof. S.'s admissions and facts touching the meaning of the term *baptizo*, in the classics, the Septuagint, and the New Testament, and mark how he seeks to avoid the logical and inevitable conclusions his premises force upon him. The whole question of the import of the term *baptizo*, when applied to baptism, evidently rests upon these two propositions, and these alone, viz.:

What is the signification of *baptizo* in the Greek language of the age in which the New Testament was written?

What is the evident signification of *baptizo*, in the Bible, when baptism is not mentioned?

If its classical use is to dip, to immerse, and if it is universally, or even more often, so used in the Bible, when it is not used with reference to the rite, then the conclusion follows irresistibly that it signifies to dip or immerse, when used to designate the rite; for we cannot suppose that the Saviour used the term in an unnatural or unusual sense.

From an extensive examination of classical authorities and lexicons, Prof. S. frankly asserts as follows:

“‘BAPTO,’ and ‘BAPTIZO,’ mean *to dip*, plunge, or immerse into any liquid. All lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this.”

“The verb BAPTO means to plunge or thrust into any thing that is solid, but permeable: *to plunge in*, so as to cover or inclose the thing plunged.”

“The verb BAPTO only (and its derivatives in point of form) signifies *to tinge*, to dye, or color.”

“No doubt then can remain, that the word *bapto* means to tinge or color; and in this respect it seems plainly to differ from *baptizo*. I find no instance in which the latter is employed in this way.”

“The word *baptizo* means to overwhelm, *literally* and *figuratively*, in a variety of ways.”

Such are the conclusions to which a patient and extensive examination of the Greek classics forced our author. He finds not one solitary exception. The voice of antiquity is unbroken. *Baptizo*, both *literally* and *figuratively*, means *to immerse*, to overwhelm. He finds no variableness or shadow of deviation from this signification.

If the testimony of Prof. S. needed any support, that of Alexander Carson, the most profound critic of his day, in England, could be brought forward. He asserts that *bap-*

tizo means to dip or immerse, and *nothing else*—i. e., that it has but this one signification.

But with Pedobaptists, Dr. Charles Anthon, of Columbia College, New York, the first of American scholars, and author of a series of Greek and Latin classics for academies and colleges, is certainly high authority.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE, *March 27, 1843.*

DR. PALMLEY,

DEAR SIR:—There is no authority whatever for the singular remark made by the Rev. Dr. Spring, relative to the force of *baptizo*. The primary meaning of the word is, to dip or immerse, and its secondary meanings, *if it ever had any*, all refer, in some way or other, to the same leading idea; *sprinkling, &c., are entirely out of the question.*

CHARLES ANTHON.

We might strengthen this by an array of the most eminent scholarship of the past six centuries, but it needs no more.

Having established the first premise, Prof. S. proceeds to the second, which he thus states:

"*Bapto* and *baptizo*, in the Septuagint, Apocrypha, and New Testament, *when not applied to the rite of baptism*, mean to plunge, immerse, dip in, overwhelm."

From the Old Testament he produces every passage in which *bapto* occurs—eighteen in all. In thirteen instances he renders it *to dip in*, overwhelm. In three instances, Ex. 12: 22; Lev. 4: 17, and 14: 15, 16; very strangely translates *bapto*, "to moisten or smear over by *dipping in!*" But the reader can see here that he includes the *consequence* with the action, for the *moistening* or smearing is the consequence of the "*dipping in,*" and is no part of the signification of the verb *bapto*. He could as justly have claimed *to red-*

den as a part of the signification,—since the hyssop, or the finger of the priest is made red by dipping in blood, as it is moistened or smeared by the act. The signification of the verb cannot be set aside without an undoubted necessity for it, and there can be no necessity urged in this case. And what reason does Prof. S. give for departing from the version of the Seventy, and of King James' translators? He stumbles at the expression, "dipping" from the oil or blood, and thinks it involves a solecism—a manifest inconsistency—and therefore forbids the idea of dipping only. How "to moisten or smear over by dipping in" solves his difficulty, we are unable to perceive, and he fails to explain. Prof. S. forgets the scholar here, in his anxiety to attach the meaning of "to moisten," to the verb *bapto*, for a future use in summing up his argument. He strangely overlooks the fact that this very expression is found in the classics, where no one ever considered it solecistical.

Atheneus *Deipnos*, 3, 123, quotes an ancient dramatic poet, who makes one of his characters say, "Dipping a ladle *from* the midst of a cauldron of boiling water, I will pour it over you." This is exactly the same phraseology that is employed by the Seventy, in the passage in question." Suppose we substitute Prof. S.'s peculiar rendering: "Moistening or smearing over a ladle from the midst of a cauldron of boiling water, I will pour it (what? the ladle!) over you!"

The following occur in Hippocrates' *De Ratione Vic.*, p. 383: "Dipping warm cakes from black wine and oil."

Plutarch, in his life of Alexander, says,—

"The soldiers, *dipping from* large casks and urns, drank to each other,"*

Would Prof. S.'s rendering make the sense more per-

* Judd's Rev. of Stuart, p. 144.