

**WATER BAPTISM AND THE  
OUTWARD SUPPER. NO  
INSTITUTIONS OF CHRIST:  
A REVIEW OF TWO ESSAYS**

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Water Baptism and the Outward Supper. No Institutions of Christ: A Review of Two Essays by  
William Blackley & Thomas Kimber

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**WILLIAM BLACKLEY & THOMAS KIMBER**

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WATER BAPTISM  
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A REVIEW OF TWO ESSAYS

BY

WILLIAM BLACKLEY, A.M.,  
LATE VICAR OF STANTON, ENGLAND, AND CHAPLAIN TO LORD HILL.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

BY

THOMAS KIMBER.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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THE accompanying Review of William Blackley's Essays, on the so-called Ordinances of Water Baptism and the outward Supper, appeared in the columns of *Friends' Review* about four years ago; and a small edition was also published at that time for special circulation.

Their presentation of the whole subject seems to have been generally satisfactory, confirming the convictions of many earnest inquirers after the "truth as it is in Jesus"; and proving useful, under the Divine blessing, in dispelling the doubts of others in regard to these interesting and important questions.

It is with no thought of controversy with any of our fellow-professors of the Christian name, who may entertain different views of that truth from those here presented, that it has been thought best to republish these essays at this time.

On every hand there seems to be a wide inquiry for the *Scriptural* arguments in favor of those spiritual doctrines of

our Lord and Saviour's Baptism, and of His holy communion with His redeemed followers, which have always been accepted and proclaimed by that branch of His church to which we belong.

More especially amongst those who of latter time have been awakened through the instrumentality or under the influence of Friends, there are many who are longing for more definite information upon these distinguishing points of faith.

It is not enough to tell such earnest inquirers that these are the "settled principles" of our Religious Organization, and that our Fathers lived and died in their full belief and enjoyment.

Nor would it satisfy the honest-hearted seeker after truth to recommend him to rest his faith upon the convictions of our early Friends as a sufficient authority, or upon the belief of many thousands since their day, save so far as we can prove to him that their judgment was founded upon the supreme authority of the revealed word and truth of the Lord, as contained in His Holy Scriptures.

To them therefore is the appeal made in these essays, and *their authority alone* is referred to and relied upon, as decisive of the questions under consideration.

"Thus saith the Lord" is the only *ipse dixit* of any avail, in the consideration of Divine truth.

If indeed we believed that our Saviour commissioned His disciples to baptize with water those who accepted His gospel and trusted in His name for salvation, or that He had established an outward ordinance to be perpetually observed in His church, in lieu of the Jewish Passover feast (fulfilled and abolished by His death), on which occasion bread was to be broken and wine drunk, in continued memorial of Him, then these are the very things we would long to do; and to do them not only with unquestioning submission but in loving and joyful obedience to His commands.

But if, after an earnest and prayerful study of His own



declarations as to the spirituality of His kingdom, comparing Scripture with Scripture as He did, construing the text "*it is written*" by the context "*it is written again*," and after carefully examining those portions of the Sacred Record which are accepted as authority for such ritualistic practices, we were led to an entirely different interpretation of His meaning, then our duty would be simply to follow, in the light of His Holy Spirit, the truth which He had so clearly unfolded and to rejoice in the liberty wherewith that truth had made us free.

It is because we have thus arrived at the assured conviction that, in this bright noonday of Christ's gospel, these outward types and ceremonies are no longer enjoined upon His people, and that it is His will that they should forever give place to the glorious realities which they were intended to foreshadow, that we have gladly accepted the spiritual blessings that have followed their fulfilment and dismissal, and have willingly seen all these shadows flee away in the everlasting light of the Lord.

Such was the "new revelation of the good old gospel," as they called it, which our forefathers rejoiced in more than two centuries ago. Others had proclaimed those truths long before them, and have done so since their day. Many of the Confessors of the early Church, and of the Martyrs and Reformers of its later history, have with greater or less clearness, looked far over these ritualistic ceremonies and hailed the arising of a bright truth beyond them all.

John Bradford, for example, of Waltham College, Oxford, who suffered martyrdom about the middle of the sixteenth century, during the persecutions under the reign of Queen Mary, for his faithfulness to the "truth as it is in Jesus," boldly denied that *Water Baptism* formed any part of that truth.

In a sermon entitled "*One Baptism*," he makes use of these words:

"That God did send John to 'baptize with water,' is admitted; but I deny that Christ ever did send any one to baptize with water. This is coming to the point; here I stand, and challenge any man to show me when and where Christ ever commanded any one to baptize with water."

William Dell, Master of Caius College, Cambridge, declared a century later that :

"The Baptism of Christ is with the Spirit; and is the only baptism of the New Testament. Its outward instrument is not material water, but the Word, as Christ shows when He says, 'Teach, baptizing'; showing that the teaching of the Word is the outward means of baptizing with the Spirit."

Then again, a glance at the history of the Christian Church will show that the endless controversies about these so-called "Sacraments," have been productive of continual divisions in the Body of Christ, and even of grievous wars and persecutions among His professed followers in all ages; and that they are bearing the bitter fruit of separation and estrangement among brethren, even in our own day.

Christians, who seem able to unite on all the cardinal truths of the gospel and in most earnest efforts to spread the kingdom of their one Lord and Master over the earth, seem to become alienated from one another whenever these vexed questions are introduced.

The Baptists, for example, deny the validity of the form of *sprinkling*, practised by the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Baptism; and, for the most part, they exclude from their communion supper all who have not submitted to the rite of *immersion in water*.

The Episcopal Church rejects, as uncanonical and irregular, the ritualistic ceremonies of each and all of these bodies, because not performed by an authorized priesthood; while the Roman Catholics, far out-numbering them all, equally

condemn the Baptism and the Communion Supper of all the Protestant sects, as alike heretical and offensive; and point to the "holy water," and to the "mass," as the only means of salvation.

Surely if His own test of all divine authority and commission be true of these ritualistic ceremonies, "*By their fruits ye shall know them,*" then they could hardly have been ordained by our loving Lord and Saviour, for the purpose of drawing together and building up His church, which they seem, in all ages, to have divided and confused; evidently through some perpetual and universal misunderstanding of His teachings concerning them.

Turning now to the argument in favor of these\* Jewish rites, drawn from the observance of them by our Lord Himself, it will be found that there is nothing in His example, in these respects, intended to encourage His followers in their adoption; far less to impress upon them the obligation of such ceremonials, as Christian ordinances.

He came, as He declared, "not to destroy the law or the

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\* Abbe Fleury, in reciting the customs of the Jews, as affirmed by their celebrated historian, Maimonides, adds these interesting thoughts. "It will, I doubt not, be a pleasure to the reader to trace out the *origin of Christian Baptism*; and of the ancient ceremonies which the church observed in it. *For they are all borrowed from the Jews*; Jesus Christ and His apostles not having thought fit to abolish them, or to substitute new ones in their room."

He then describes the Jewish reception of converts. "The second ceremony was Baptism; which must be performed in the presence of three Jews of distinction." "At the time of the performance of it the Proselyte declares his abhorrence of his past life; and that it was neither ambition nor avarice, but a sincere love of the law of Moses, which prevailed on him to be baptized. He promised at the same time to lead a holy life; to worship the true God, and to keep His commandments." "And hence," continues the Abbe, "*the Christian Church borrowed those ceremonies that she makes use of, for it is manifest that the institution of baptism and the discipline of the Primitive Church in regard to it, have relation to those of the Jews.*" "*Manners of Ancient Israelites.*"—Fleury.