

BAPTISM

A Doctrinal Essay

Presented

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- A. The Purpose of Baptism
- B. The Mode of Baptism
- C. The Subjects for Baptism

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

“Baptism is not simple (ordinary, common) water only, but it is the water comprehended in God’s command and connected with God’s Word.” (Luther’s Small Catechism).

Baptism is not a human, but a Divine institution. It will remain in force until the Last Day.

The Lord’s command reads: “Baptising them (all nations) in (into) the Name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Note: A Baptism performed without water or without the words of institution (“in the Name of the Father”, etc.) is no baptism in the sense of Scripture. The same applies to Baptisms performed by denominations who deny the Trinity. Even though they may use water and the words of institution, they, by virtue of the fact that they deny the Triune God, use the words of institution in an altogether different sense.

A. The Purpose of Baptism

The purpose of baptism is to impart to the sinful, lost and condemned, but penitent sinner, the full and free pardon which Christ won for him on Calvary.

Acts 2:38: “Repent, and be baptised everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”

Acts 22:16: “Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins.”

Gal. 3:27: “As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ.” (N.E.B.)
“Put on Christ as a Garment.”

1 Peter 3:21: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer (eperotema) of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Note: “Eperotema” is a difficult word. Luther translated it by “establishment”.

Phillips has rendered the whole verse thus:

“And I cannot help pointing out what a perfect illustration this is of the way you have been admitted to the safety of the Christian “ark” by baptism, which means, of course, far more than the mere washing of a dirty body: it means the ability to face God with a clear conscience. For there is in every true baptism the virtue of Christ’s rising from the dead.”

Titus 3:5-7: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope, of eternal life.”

From these texts it is clear that Baptism is not a mere empty ceremony, sometimes submitted in order to have a certain social standing in the community; nor is it merely the sign or symbol of admission into a visible community, such as a congregation or a denomination; but it is a Sacrament, instituted and commanded by God Himself, in which He offers, conveys and seals to the person baptised the full and free remission of sins, purchased and won by Christ on Calvary.

It is complete in itself, and nothing can invalidate it. Only refusal to accept it as such (unbelief on the part of the recipient, or refusal to be baptised at all) can prevent the blessings it offers and conveys from being received by the person concerned. Luther in his Small Catechism (published in 1529) puts it thus: "It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare." The words and promises of God he then refers to are (Mark 16:16): "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: he that believeth not, shall be damned."

In this connection please note that it is not faith which is required to make the Sacrament valid and efficacious; it is that by itself and of itself. Faith merely accepts and receives what is offered and conveyed in Baptism. This Sacrament is God's work to man, NOT man's work to God.

For the baptised believer the Sacrament has also a deep and wonderful meaning. St. Paul in the grand sixth chapter of his letter to the Romans explains to them that as Christians they know these great facts about Baptism, how it already by its connection with Christ's death, entombment, and resurrection, effected their death to sin, their entombment as dead to sin, their resurrection to a new life and the walk in its newness. How impossible, yea how monstrous, then, even for a moment to entertain such a thought as for some reason or other to remain in sin! Luther briefly but very pointedly summarises it thus: "Baptism signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and again, a new man should daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever." (Small Catechism). What a wonderful incentive then our baptism should be for us to lead a truly Christian, God-pleasing life, out of gratitude to Him who gave His all for us and made us His heirs through this Sacrament.

B. The Mode of Baptism

The word "Baptism" comes from the Greek word "baptizo", which originally meant "to immerse", "to submerge", "to dip under water." I do not deny this or even attempt to do so. But the point is - and this is decisive - is this word always used in this exclusive sense in the New Testament Greek? The answer is: Definitely "No". So for example, in Heb. 9:10 the term "diaphoroi baptismois" (various baptisms) is used to cover the various cleansing rites of the Old Testament. And how these rites were performed you will find in Exod. 30:19 (washing hands and feet); Lev. 9:9 (dipping and pouring); v.12 (sprinkling); Lev. 14:6 (dipping); v.7 (sprinkling); v.8 (washing); v.51 (dipping, sprinkling); Lev. 16:15 (sprinkling); v.19 (sprinkling); v.24 (washing); Num. 19:18 (dipping and sprinkling); v.19 (sprinkling, washing, bathing); v.21 (sprinkling).

In 1 Cor. 10:12 St. Paul speaks figuratively of the baptism of the Israelites unto Moses in the cloud and the sea. It was no immersion, for the cloud was above the Tabernacle or before the people and never surrounded them; nor were they immersed in the sea, the waters being on both sides of them as walls. Probably only their feet were moistened by the somewhat wet bottom of the sea.

Moreover, that the word "baptizo" (or "bapto", from which the former is a frequentative derivative) was already used to cover various modes of application, is also apparent from a study of the Septuagint (LXX), which was the Bible of most early Christians, and which is usually quoted in the Greek New Testament. The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, and came into existence about two hundred years before Christ.

In this Greek Bible, Ecclesiasticus 34:30 we read: "He who baptises himself from the dead (baptizomenos apo nekrou), and touches it again, what benefit does he have from his washings?" The reference is to Num. 19:18-19, where cleansing after touching a dead corpse was done by sprinkling and not by immersion.

Again in Lev. 14:6 it says: "As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip (bapsei) them and the living bird in the blood of the bird...."

There was obviously not enough blood to immerse these objects in. The word "bapsei" must here have a meaning equivalent to the secondary meaning of the English "dip": "To put or sink slightly or partially into a liquid."

In Dan. 4:33 the Septuagint states: "And he (Nebuchadnezzar) was driven from men and his body was wet (ebaphe, from baptein) with the dew of heaven. The meaning of "baptein" is here about the same as in the previous passage, and certainly not "immerse".

So it is evident that already long before Christ the Greek words "baptizo" and "bapto" had various shades of meaning. The idea of a liquid was always connected with them, but the mode of application differed. As a matter of fact, none of the actual baptisms recorded in the New Testament are described in such a manner as to definitely exclude any other mode of application than immersion. Now this is a challenge!

How did they baptise in the ancient church? It is held by historians that immersion wholly by water was the prevailing mode in the first century. On the other hand there is nothing extant, dated in the first century, which compels us to the conclusion that immersion was the only method used. In 1883 Bryennios found in Constantinople (today Istanbul) a small work called the "Didache" or "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles." It was written, as far as can be ascertained, around 120 A.D. In this book appears a highly interesting comment on the mode of baptising. The writer says: "Baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in running water (evidently a river or a brook); but if thou hast no running water, baptise in other water, and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither pour water three times on the head in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

From the third century dates the well-known picture in the catacombs which represents John the Baptist baptising Jesus by pouring water on His head. It is quite clear therefore that pouring was used in the Ancient Church besides immersion. Moreover, there is no record of any dispute in the early church with regard to the mode of baptism. If any other mode than immersion would invalidate the Sacrament, it is unthinkable that the ancient church would not have taken a stand against it. They were very touchy in other matters, and did not hesitate to declare as heresy doctrines and practices that conflicted with their established teachings. On the contrary, many prominent teachers of the early church were quite outspoken as to the proposition that mode is not essential. Cyprian (Bishop of Carthage, born circa 200 A.D.), says in his Epistle (69:12) concerning the baptism of the sick: "Baptism by sprinkling is pure, - is of the Lord's faithfulness made sufficient." Again, he says of the baptism of invalids: "I do, however, according to my mean capacity, judge thus: that the divine favours can in no wise be mutilated or abridged by sprinkling, so that anything less than the whole of them is conveyed." Again: "The water of aspersion is purification. From this it appears that sprinkling is sufficient."

Wilfridius Straho says that Laurentius, the martyr, A.D. 250, baptised with a pitcher of water one of the executioners who became converted.

Mention is often made of submerging the head without any mention of the whole body. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) said: "After you have professed your belief, three times did we submerge your heads in the sacred fountain." And Jerome (331-420): "He, Gennadius, in the

fifth century, speaks of baptism as being administered in the French churches either by immersion or sprinkling.

Baptism was performed by immersion or sprinkling throughout the Middle Ages, but it appears that sprinkling was the most prevalent mode.

Bonaventura (1221-1274) says: "The way of affusion in baptism was probably used by the Apostles."

According to the records of history the first group within the Christian Church to introduce baptistic (immersion) principles were the Petrobrusians about the year 1104, who abandoned infant baptism and insisted on immersion of all believers in Christ.

The reason why the Christian Church in general has never regarded immersion as essential is because baptism is not a cleansing of the body, but a cleansing of the soul. This principle is laid down by St. Peter, in his first Epistle, chapter 3 verse 21: "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Moreover, since it is not the water which performs this miracle, but the Word of God which is in and with the water, and which gives this Divine power to the water of Baptism, it makes no difference whether much or little water is used.

Luther at first favoured the idea of immersion, as it signified that the old Adam and the sinful birth of flesh and blood are to be wholly drowned by the grace of God, and the new man come forth and to arise to walk before God in righteousness and purity forever. But he never regarded the mode of baptism as essential to the validity of the Sacrament. To him it was a matter of Christian liberty. However when the Anabaptists arose in 1520 and insisted on immersion, and declared all other modes wrong, he at once took his stand on the principle laid down by St. Paul in Gal. 2:5: "To them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the Gospel might continue to be preserved for you in its purity." (Amp. N.T.).

The same stand is taken today by the Confessional Lutheran Church. We recognise as valid every baptism performed with water connected with the words of institution, which is the essential part of baptism, and are indifferent to the manner of its application, whether by immersion, pouring or sprinkling. Just as a patient suffering from a deadly malady will not mind how the medicine with power to cure his disease is served to him, whether directly out of the bottle, or in a spoon, cup, or glass.

C. The Subjects for Baptism

Who should be baptised? Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew (28:19-20): "Going therefore disciple all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." (Literal translation of the Greek text).

This command is all-inclusive: all the nations; all the nations. Not one nation is excluded, nor any individual of any nation. If Christ did not regard any nation or any individual member of any nation, as prospective subjects for Baptism, He would have stated so. Had he wanted to exclude infants from His baptism, it would have been necessary for Him to stress that, in view of the widely-spread and accepted rite of Proselyte Baptism in contemporary Judaism.

Proselyte baptism was already fully established before the advent of Christ. In fact, some authorities believe it took its rise already during the Babylonian Captivity. However that may be, it was definitely in practice at the time of Hillel and Shammai, who lived before the birth of Jesus, because the schools of these rabbis engaged in a disputation concerning circumcision with this baptism.

Now what was the idea of Proselyte Baptism? From time to time adult Gentiles were converted to the Jewish Faith. They were thereupon received into the Covenant People by means of Proselyte Baptism. The Jews believed that they were thereby washed from the uncleanness of paganism, born again, and made new men, children of the Covenant, members of God's people, servants of the only true God. Male converts were also circumcised. But if these adult Proselytes had children and wanted to take them with them into the covenant of Jehovah, which of course they usually did, these children too were baptised. The Jews reasoned: Abraham was circumcised as an old man, Ishmael at the age of thirteen, and infants at the age of eight days. The baptism of Proselytes was to follow the same pattern.

Gentiles abandoned the infants they did not want, and the Jews often took the foundlings into their care and baptised them. The boys were naturally also circumcised.

There was a tradition of the elders that a female Proselyte was equal to a native Jewish woman in regard to marriage, if she had been baptised before she was three years and a day old. The rabbis explained "If the profitableness of a thing is doubtful, it should not be done to a person who is not conscious of it. But it is permissible to do what is beneficial to a person who does not understand its value; and without his knowledge a person should not be harmed." Since baptism and acceptance into the covenant of God was beneficial, and leaving a child without it harmful, the Rabbis declared that infants had to be baptised.

In one respect Proselyte baptism differed from circumcision: the proselyte's children who were born after the parent's baptism were not baptised because they were considered born "in holiness."

Due to the strenuous missionary efforts of the Jews, there were large numbers of Proselytes both in Palestine and in the areas where the Jews lived in dispersion. Baptising of families, parents with their children, infants and older, was therefore a common thing at the time of the public ministry of Christ.

Incidentally, when John the Baptist called the Jews also to repent and be baptised, it must have seemed to them they were placed on the same level with the Gentiles, and it was this that aroused the inquiry and criticism of the Sanhedrin, which sent messengers to John to ask him why he baptised (John 1:25). It also explains why the Pharisees and lawyers refused to be baptised by John (Luke 7:30). Furthermore, it also throws new light on the interview of Nicodemus with Christ (John 3:1-21).

The whole subject of Proselyte Baptism and its influence upon Christian Baptism is extensively treated in the book Scriptural Baptism by Uuras Saanivaara, Ph.D., Th.D, and published by Vantage press, Inc., New York. Most of the above with regard to Proselyte Baptism is taken from this book.

With this historical background for a proper understanding of the situation in which Christian baptism was instituted, it becomes quite plain why the Lord would have found it necessary to explain to His disciples that they were not to baptise infants, if He wished to exclude them from His baptism. He would have had to tell them something like this: "I indeed want you to baptise all nations, but please take note of the fact that My baptism is different from the baptism that our people are accustomed to; I do not want you to baptise the infants of your converts. However, this He did NOT say. And if He did not make the exception, why then should men dare to do so?"

We of course know the answer. Reference is made to Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." The stress is laid on the word believe. Infants cannot believe, it is said. I have not yet found a text in Scripture which says that this is so. On the contrary, Christ says: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me" (Matt. 18:6). And if someone argues that these children were not infants, I would refer him to Matt. 21:16, where the Lord says: "Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast

perfected praise?" And since "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6) the logical deduction is that even infants are capable of and in fact do possess faith. The whole question now leads us into the subject of Christian faith.

Is the true Christian faith the work of man, or the work of God? Or is it partly of man and partly of God? The Scripture is pretty decisive on this point. 1 Cor. 12:3: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost"; Eph. 1:19: "Who believe according to the working of His mighty power"; Eph. 2:8: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"; Col. 2:12: "Wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God"; John 6:29: "This is the work of God that Ye believe on Him whom He sent."

From all these texts it is abundantly clear that the true Christian faith is entirely the work of God. Man in his unconverted state does not, and cannot, even co-operate in creating that faith. As a matter of fact, he is quite incapable of any co-operation; he even, with his carnal mind, is hostile to God. Texts: 1 Cor. 2:14: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned"; Eph. 4:18: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated (estranged) from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart"; Rom. 8:7: "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." From all this it then is quite clear that man by nature, that is, in his natural state, is outside the kingdom of God, and doomed to eternal perdition. He is a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3), in spiritual darkness and in the power of Satan (Acts 26:18), dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). And there is nothing he can do, by his own efforts, to set himself right with God. This conversion (or regeneration, which essentially is the same thing) is entirely the work of God Himself (Jer. 31:18): "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned."

Now how about infants, the offspring of natural man? Job poses this question, and also provides the answer: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (Job 14:4). Again: "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" (Job 15:14). But what about the children of believing parents? Are they born into the Kingdom of God? Do they come into this world in the image of God, that is, in righteousness and true holiness? Eph. 4:24. Adam's children were born no longer in the image of God, but in their father's image (Gen. 5:3); David confesses: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Scripture teaches that the guilt of Adam was imputed to all his descendants: "By the offense of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. 5:18). And that his children and children's children have inherited from their ancestor his corrupt nature: "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21) and by virtue of this terrible fact are by their very nature under the wrath of God. "We.... were by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), and thus subject to death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. You desire tangible proof? Scripture says: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Babies of both unbelievers as well as of believers are subject to death, the wages of sin.

So no infant is born into the Kingdom of God. Christ explained to Nicodemus "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6), and insisted: "Except a man (Tis, anyone) be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3); and when Nicodemus expressed astonishment, and asked whatever this could mean, the Lord told him: "Except anyone be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). The Lord here was specifically referring to John's Baptism, which was essentially the same as Christian baptism, being the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4) the only difference being that John baptised into the kingdom of the Messiah who was to come, whereas Christian baptism is into the kingdom of the Messiah who has come.

Why now, is it necessary to baptise infants? By nature they are outside the kingdom of God; they cannot enter it by way of the Word, either written or spoken, as their understanding of it has not yet developed; so there is left for them only as far as we know the way of "the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). That is also the reason why the Lord commanded: "Baptise all

nations”, and that is why He did not exclude infants. Baptism is their God-appointed way of entering into the kingdom of Heaven.

The Anabaptists, who began to press vigorously for the abolition of Infant Baptism in 1520 never claimed to have received their teaching from Scripture. “They claimed to be Prophets of the Lord and to have had intimate conversations with the Almighty. They had no need of the Bible but relied on the Spirit. If the Bible were important, God would have dropped it directly from heaven.” (Here I Stand, by R.H. Bainton, p.161). Their Leader, Thomas Muntzer, declared: “Scripture as a mere book is but paper and ink. Bible, babble, bubble!” he cried. (Here I Stand, p.202). So much for the origin of the opposition to infant baptism. That is why Luther called them “heavenly prophets”.

But it is Satan himself who here enters into the picture. He has no doubt whatsoever as to what baptism does to infants born into his kingdom. And in order to retain them there, is it any wonder that he will go to any lengths, even to the use of Christian preachers, to prevent the little children from being taken out of his kingdom and transplanted into the kingdom of God?

Whenever a baptised infant dies, I can with full assurance, and with Scripture behind me, comfort the parents that their child is in glory, for “as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).

The Testimony of History

The opponents of Infant Baptism often assert that the baptism of infants is an invention of the Roman Catholic Church. Well, let us see.

We have already previously seen that the Lord commanded His church to baptise “all nations”. No amount of twisting the word “nations” will exclude the infants, as these form a considerable part of a nation. And since the baptising of infants in Proselyte families was the accepted rule among the Jews, it would have been absolutely necessary for Christ to mention the exclusion of infants from His baptism, had He not wanted them to be baptised. On the contrary, He used the word “nations”, which does not exclude them, but rather includes them.

In view of this fact we also note that the Apostles baptised whole families, e.g. the prison keeper of Philippi and all the members of his household (Acts 16:33); the household of Stephanas in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:16). It now rests with the opponents of Infant Baptism to prove that there were no infants in these families, which of course they cannot do.

And then there are allusions to and records of infant baptisms in the history of the Ancient Church, that is, in the church of the immediate post-apostolic age.

Justin Martyr, born around 100 A.D. writes in his Apology that many men and women who lived in his time “had been disciples already as children”; Irenaeus, born 120 A.D., the most eminent teacher of the Church in the second half of the second century, writes in his book Adversus Haereses: “Christ came to save all people through Himself, I say all who through Him are born again to God, nursing babes, small children, children, young people, and older people; therefore He passed through all the different ages, becoming a nursing infant for the sake of nursing infants....”

In the same book he also states that baptism is “a baptism of the new birth to God”. That explains what he means by “born again to God, nursing babes.” He is, of course, referring to infant baptism.

Now look again at the dates when these men lived. The Roman Catholic Church came into existence hundreds of years later.

Origen, another noted teacher of the Ancient Church, was born in 185 A.D., and baptised in infancy. This is a record of history. In his Eighth Homily on Lev. 3 he writes: "Baptism is, according to the usages of the Church, given also to the infants." And in his Commentary on Romans he makes the following very definite statement: "The Church has received from the Apostles the tradition to give baptism even to infants. For those who were entrusted with the divine mysteries (the Apostles) knew that all men have the natural pollution of sin, which must be washed away through water and the Spirit. No man is free from the defilement of sin, even if he is only one day old. Since the inborn uncleanness is washed away through baptism, little children come to be baptised. For unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

Surely this is a very striking testimony.

Cyprian, the famous bishop of Carthage, who lived at the same time as Origen, in his Epistle 58 declared that they were mistaken who held that infants should not be baptised before the eighth day after their birth. Some believed that since in the Old Testament circumcision took place on the eighth day after birth, baptism in the New Testament should be administered on the same day, namely eight days after birth. Cyprian pointed out to them that it is never too early to baptise an infant.

So away with the nonsense that Infant Baptism was an invention of the Roman Catholic Church at a much later age.

The only voice of note in the early church that was raised against Infant Baptism was that of Tertullian, who was born around 150 A.D. But he did not oppose it because he held it to be wrong, but for reasons of expediency, which however cannot be regarded as valid and acceptable. His statement in his book De Baptismo reads as follows: "According to the circumstances and disposition, and even age, of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable, principally, however, in the case of little children. For why is it necessary that sponsors should be thrust into danger who both themselves, by reason of mortality, may fail to fulfil their promises, and may be disappointed by the development of an evil disposition in those for whom they stood. Why should little babes, the innocent ones, haste to the forgiveness of sins? Unmarried people also have as much reason to postpone baptism because they are apt to be tempted, virgins because of their maturity, and widows because of their loneliness, until they have either married or have become so strong that they are able to practice continence. If one really understands the value of baptism, he is more afraid of receiving it than of postponing it."

Tertullian held the erroneous view that though in baptism all sins were forgiven and washed away, yet sins after baptism were almost unforgivable. Hence postpone your baptism!

Throughout the history of the New Testament Church there never was any real controversy concerning the validity of Infant Baptism, nor concerning the mode of baptism (immersion, pouring, sprinkling) until 1520, when the Anabaptists made their appearance. This sect, besides demanding immersion, raved also particularly against Infant Baptism, declaring it not only to be invalid, but even wicked.

But all those who know their Scriptures, and particularly also the Bible doctrine of original (inherited) sin and its condemnation (see Eph. 2:3), as well as the meaning and vital importance of Holy Baptism (John 3:5; Gal. 3:27; Titus 3:5), will at once recognise as to who is really behind it all, namely, the devil himself.

When we remember that during the dark Middle Ages Satan, by means of the Papacy, had almost succeeded in silencing the Gospel of the crucified and risen Redeemer in the Church, substituting in its stead the godless doctrine of salvation by works; and when, with the advent of Luther and the Reformation, the saving Gospel was once more placed in its proper place, so that through it thousands upon thousands were drawn out of his domain into the Kingdom of

God, and the devil's kingdom began to suffer severe loss, then we can readily understand that Satan became greatly concerned, and did not stand by idly. Since before it had not greatly mattered to him whether infants were baptised or not and transplanted into God's kingdom - as soon as they became teachable, he would have them back in his kingdom anyway through the doctrine of salvation by works, which was drummed into them - things now changed radically. The instruction now given kept them in the Kingdom of God. So what better plan could he devise than to prevent them entering the Lord's Kingdom at all, with the fond hope that at least a number of them might die before being able to receive any instruction which might possibly place them beyond his power? Hence the raging against Infant Baptism.

When we take this fact into consideration, we can readily understand why to this very day he opposes Infant Baptism. And the tragedy is that there are sections of the Visible Church on earth who, perhaps unconsciously assist Satan in his nefarious work of destruction.

On the other hand, let us be truly thankful that the Lord has graciously granted to us through His Holy Word the true and correct understanding of the blessed doctrine of Holy Baptism. May we then use it for the glorious purpose for which this Sacrament was instituted, and also draw from it the blessed comfort which it imparts, always remembering the words of Scripture:

“As many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ.”

F.G. Kleinig.

