

CHAPTER VI.

Do Baptists agree with Methodists as to the essential doctrines of salvation?—What does Methodism teach sinners they must do to obtain the remission of sins and regeneration?—The teachings of Mr. Wesley, the founder and finisher of its faith.—Bishop Morris—The Discipline—The Hymn Book—The General Conference—The Church before Christ, and Water before Blood in every case!

Where are we to look for the doctrines of the Methodist “church”—those that every minister has professed to believe, and has obligated himself to teach, and every Methodist is pledged to uphold and defend? Bishop McTyeire tells us in his words, “Wesley’s Sermons and Works,” “The Discipline,” “The Methodist Hymn Book,” and the works issued by their Book Concerns. To these, then, let us go to ascertain the way of life and salvation as preached by Methodism. It is presumable that the father and founder of a system of faith understands that faith. Let us now hear what John Wesley taught and required his followers to believe and teach concerning the way of salvation.

THE EFFICACY OF BAPTISM.

In his “Treatise on Baptism” Works, vol. 6, pp. 15, 16, New York edition, 1832, issued by the “Book Concern” of that church, Mr. Wesley says:

“By baptism, we **who** are by nature the children of wrath, are made the **children of God**. And this **regeneration**, which **our church** in so many places ascribes to **baptism**, is more than barely being admitted into the church, though commonly connected therewith. Being grafted into the body of Christ’s Church we are made the children of God by adoption and grace—John iii: 5. By water, then, as a means,—the water of baptism, we are **regenerated and born again**, whence it is called by the apostle ‘the washing of regeneration.’ In all ages the **outward** baptism is a **means** of the **inward**. Herein we receive a title to, and an earnest of, a kingdom which can not be moved. In the ordinary way, there is no other way of entering into the Church or into heaven. If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism, seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved unless this be washed away in baptism.”

The very last book Wesley ever wrote was his “Notes on the New Testament.” In reference to the baptism of Paul on the words, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord,” he observes: “Baptism is both the **means** and the **seal** of pardon, and God did not ordinarily, in the primitive church, bestow this **grace upon any save through this means**.”

In his note on Col. ii: 12, speaking of “the faith of the operation of God,” Mr. Wesley says:

“**Which** he wrought in you when you were, as it were, buried with him in baptism.”

On John iii: 5:—

“Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit; except he experience that great inward change by the Spirit, and be baptized (wherever baptism can be had) as **the** outward sign and **means** of it;”
i.e., **the** means of the baptism of the Spirit, or regeneration.

There can be no doubt as to the doctrinal sentiments of Wesley, and these are adopted and indorsed by the General Conference today without modification, and they are bound never to reject them.

I will quote a paragraph here from the sermons of Bishop Morris:

“Baptism is one of **the means of grace**; and, therefore, suitable for penitents, who need all the help they can get. So Peter understood it, as it appears from the advice he gave those who were smitten under his preaching: ‘Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, 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.’ Here, Acts ii: 37, 38, we can but mark the different between the system of some Calvinistic teachers and that of the gospel. Their system is; 1. Conversion; 2. Repentance; 3. Pardon: and lastly, Baptism. But Peter’s arrangement is: 1. Repentance. 2. Baptism: 3. **Pardon**; and, 4. The witness of the Spirit.”—*Morris’s Sermons*, p. 243.

Methodism teaches practically to-day that baptism precedes pardon and regeneration, and is the divinely appointed means of securing them. Let us open the Discipline and examine the office for the baptism of adults, and see if we do not meet throughout with the self-same expressions as in the office for infants, and which Wesley says teaches there is no salvation without baptism. We must admit they mean the same thing in both offices. I, therefore, insert adult for infant, and reassert Wesley’s language.

It is certain that the whole office for the baptism of an **adult** proceeds upon the fact that every adult baptized by the Methodist Episcopal “church” is an unregenerated sinner, and comes to baptism to seek release from his sins, and to receive regeneration of heart in the act of baptism.

Let us notice the wording of each part of the Ritual—I. The exhortation the minister is required to make to the applicants: “I beseech you to call on God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous goodness he will grant, unto **these persons**, that which by nature they can not have!” [this **thing** is regeneration of the heart, unquestionably], “that they may be **baptized with water and the Holy Ghost.**” By this latter baptism every Methodist understand the spiritual baptism, or regeneration of heart. The language teaches that the applicants have never received what they here seek in baptism, and what the congregation is exhorted to pray they may have.

The first prayer—

“We call upon Thee for **these persons** now to be baptized. Receive them, O Lord, as thou hast promised, by thy well-beloved Son, saying, Ask and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” **So** give **now** unto us that ask; let us that seek find; open the gate unto us that knock; that these persons may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy **heavenly washing.**”

This washing prayed for is the washing of regeneration, and therefore implies that those who apply for baptism have never received it, but come to baptism for it. If there is the least doubt of it, the instructions of the minister following will remove it:

“Then the minister shall speak to the persons to be baptized on this wise: Well-beloved, who are come hither, desiring to receive holy baptism, ye have heard how the congregation hath prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive you, and bless you, TO RELEASE YOU OF YOUR SINS, to give YOU THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, and everlasting life. And our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his holy word to grant all those things that we prayed for, which promise he, for his part, will most surely keep and perform.”

Then the last prayer—

“O merciful God, grant that the old Adam **in these persons** may be so buried that the new man may be raised up.”

This supposes that the old man has never been put to death in them, for the new man raised up in them—and they depend upon their baptism to accomplish this in and for them:

“Grant that all carnal affections **may** die in them, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in them.”

This is a statement on the part of the minister, and an admission on the part of the applicants for baptism, that they have never died to sin, or risen in the new life in Christ, and that they come to baptism seeking this change from nature to grace, from death in sin to spiritual life:

“Regard, we beseech thee, the supplications of this congregation; and grant that the persons now to be baptized **may receive the fullness of thy grace.**”

This grace had never been received, or it would not be sought in baptism.

Every intelligent reader knows that this ritual was copied, almost *verbatim*, from the ritual of the Church of England, concerning which Bishop Melville, one of the most eloquent ministers of the Church of England, of this generation, speaks:

“We really think that no fair dealing can get rid of the conclusion that the Church holds what is called **baptismal regeneration**. You may dislike the doctrine; you may wish it expunged from the prayer-book, but so long as I officiate according to the forms of the prayer-book, I do not see how I can be commonly honest and yet deny **that every baptized person is, on that account, regenerated.**”

The office does not recognize or admit the idea that they are already Christians saved, pardoned, or regenerated, or **that they can be without baptism**. There is no ceremony, or prayer for the baptism of a believer, of a recognized regenerate person, in the Discipline! Therefore, the baptism of a **professed Christian**, is unknown in the Methodist Episcopal church. Every one baptized by Methodist ministers must be baptized as a **confessedly unregenerate sinner**, and baptized to receive the grace of remission, regeneration.

I now open the Hymn-books of two divisions of Methodism, and examine the hymns on baptism. In the Northern book, besides the invocation, there are nine hymns—eight are for infants, and one that may be used for infants or adults; but each teach the self-same doctrine—baptismal efficacy, spiritual regeneration effected by baptism, as a sacrament!—that is the seal

that imparts and ratifies the benefits of the covenant of grace. I will give one, found in both, No. 280:

“Father, in these reveal thy Son;
In these, for whom we seek thy face,
The **hidden mystery make known,**
The **inward, pure baptizing grace.**

“Jesus, with us thou always art:
Effectual make the sacred sign;
The **gift unspeakable impart,**
And bless the ordinance divine.

“Eternal Spirit, from on high,
Baptizer of our spirits, thou
The sacramental seal apply,
And witness with **the water now.**”

These hymns teach that in no one who comes to baptism has Christ been revealed; to no one had the hidden mystery of baptism been revealed, or the inward grace of the Spirit; and the prayer is that the sign may be made effectual in the act, and the unspeakable gift of pardon and salvation be imparted, and the seal of the Covenant of Grace, which is sacramental, be applied to the subject who comes, not professing to have been pardoned or regenerated, but as a seeker of them only, in and by the rite.

Finally and conclusively—

THE ACTION OF ITS GENERAL CONFERENCE

Establishes the fact that Methodism, like the Roman Catholic Church and the Campbellites, teach that baptism is essential to regeneration, because the appointed means of it. I refer to this because the leaders of the unreading people aver that, “however they might have viewed some things in Wesley’s day, the Methodists of this day do not believe or practice baptism as a means of regeneration.” I reply, Do they not still use the self-same **Discipline?** repeat the same **Ritual?** pray the **same prayers?** and for the same thing? Are not Methodist ministers bound by the same vows to hold, teach, and practice the same doctrine?

The last Methodist General Conference, that met in Memphis, indorsed an official report declaring that the present growing practice among Methodists—to baptize persons on the profession of regeneration before baptism—was an evil that should be discontinued! I copy a part of that report:

“Baptism, too, has been unnecessarily deferred, not only in case of children, but sometimes postponed to an indefinite period in case of adults. The practice of requiring a public **profession of regeneration before baptism** has resulted in **evil**; and that the design of the sacrament is perverted, and the people encouraged to expect the divine blessing without the use of means [baptism]! We call attention to these **evils** that we may seek diligently to remove them.”—Copied from the *Methodist Advocate*, official Conference paper.

This is conclusive that this denomination, as such, holds and teaches that there can be no remission or regeneration without baptism!

What Baptist will presume to say that it is an “Evangelical Church,” a “Christian denomination,” and in full agreement with Baptists touching the essential doctrines of salvation? Or can we say that any one, though immersed by Methodists, with the above design, and for the above purpose—as every one baptized by them is—has received scriptural baptism? Can we accredit such baptisms as scriptural and valid? Can we claim to be in our right minds if we say that such an organization—originated less than one hundred years ago, holding doctrines that are subversive of the whole plan of salvation, as they are of the ordinances of the Church of Christ—is, indeed, any church at all?

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