

# CONFESSION OF FAITH.

## CHAPTER 28.-Of Baptism.

VII. The sacrament of Baptism is but once to be administred unto any person<sup>1</sup>.

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Question 1.—*Is the sacrament of baptism but once administered to any person?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Gal. 3:27; Tit. 3:5. Thus do the Marcionites err maintaining that men after grosser failings ought to be re-baptized. Likewise, the Hemerobaptists err maintaining that men according to their faults every day, ought every day to be baptized. So, too, the Anabaptists err maintaining that children baptized ought to be re-baptized when they come to age. They are confuted because: 1.) Baptism is a sacrament of admission into the visible church, and of regeneration, (which is one only, 1 John 3:9), 1 Cor. 12:13; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 5:26. 2.) There is a command for repeating, and frequent using the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. 11:25,26; but no precept or command for repeating baptism. 3.) Circumcision (to which succeeded baptism) was never repeated, as the passover was. 4.) Baptism is a seal of adoption, Gal. 3:26,27. But whom God loves, and has adopted, those he never casts off afterwards, Rom. 2:29. 5.) The apostle says, there is but one baptism, Eph. 4:5, namely, not only in number, but also in the administration upon us all, Rom. 6:3,4. 6.) We have no examples of it by the apostles, and they speak of baptism without reference to repetitions.

Question 2.—*What ought to be made of that objection taken from Acts 19, wherein it is alleged that Paul re-baptized those previously baptized by John?*

*Answer.*—Acts 19:1-5. We grant that John's was a true baptism, and one and the same with the baptism of Christ. But we deny that they were re-baptized. What then is meant by the words, "They were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus"? We would interpret it, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, in other words, the visible gifts of the Holy Spirit, were given by the laying on of hands. These are sometimes designated under the name of baptism. Thus, on the day of Pentecost, the apostles are said to have remembered the words of the Lord concerning the baptism of the Spirit and of fire, Acts 1:5; 2:16. And Peter relates that the same words occurred to him when he saw these gifts poured out on Cornelius and his family and kindred, Acts 10:37,44,45. There is nothing repugnant to this interpretation in its being afterwards added, "When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them," Acts 19:6. Luke does not narrate two different things, but follows the form of narrative common to the Hebrews, who first give the substance, and then explain more fully. This any one may perceive from the mere context. For he says, "When they heard this they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them." In this last sentence is described what the nature of the baptism was. But if ignorance vitiates a former, and requires to be corrected by a second baptism, the apostles should first of all have been re-baptized, since for more than three full years after their baptism they had scarcely received any slender portion of purer doctrine, *cf.* Luke 3:23. Then so numerous

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<sup>1</sup>Tit. 3:5.

being the acts of ignorance which by the mercy of God are daily corrected in us, what rivers would suffice for so many repeated baptisms?

Question 3.—*Wherein does it appear that the baptism of John and of Christ are essentially the same?*

*Answer.*—Their identity is proved: 1.) Because both baptisms agree in essentials and in all their causes; the efficient, God who instituted that baptism, John 1:33; Luke 3:2,3; Matt. 21:25; the matter, both external—the element of water, Matt. 3:11; John 1:33; and internal—the promise of grace concerning the remission of sins and regeneration, Matt. 3:7,8; Luke 3:3; Acts 19:5; the form, which is both a testifying and sealing of the promise by water and the rite of ablution and a joining of the promise itself with this element and its rite, Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; the end, which is the confirmation of those who are baptized concerning the grace of God and their separation from unbelievers and reception into the assembly of the Church, Acts 2:38. 2.) Identity of effect argues an identity of cause. Now the effects of John's baptism were the same as those of Christ's—repentance, Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38; remission of sins, Luke 3:3; Acts 22:16; faith in Christ, Acts 19:4; Mark 16:15,16; the Holy Spirit as to his ordinary gifts, Acts 18:25; 2:38,39; separation from unbelievers, Matt. 3:6,7; Luke 3:7; Acts 2:38,39. 3.) The baptism of Christ ought not to differ from the baptism of believers, because he is the head and believers are the members; and because he ought to sanctify the use and sacrament of our baptism in his own; and because baptism is a symbol of the unity of believers in one mystical body, Eph. 4:5, not only with each other, but also with Christ, the head, 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; and because his circumcision was the same as that of the Jewish people. 4.) The word preached by John was the spiritual grace about to be conferred by Christ and the beginning of the Gospel, Mark 1:1; Matt. 3:2; Luke 1:77. Therefore also his baptism. 5.) John's baptism is the baptism of the Gospel; for the beginning of the Gospel is expressly placed in the ministry of John, Mark 1:1 and John's baptism testified of Christ as already manifested, Acts 19:4,5. 6.) John's baptism taught the doctrine of the Trinity, Matt. 3:9,11; John 1:32-34. In these places we see the Father sending to baptize—the Son expressly named—the Spirit descending on him, and bestowed by the Son; *cf.* John 3:34,35.