

Conclusion

Romans 6 teaches that all who are baptised are united to Christ, and receive all the benefits of being in union with him. All who are baptised by the Spirit are united to Christ in his death and resurrection, and are everlastingly saved. Will sacramentalists say the same for water? Will they live with (and let people die with) the consequences? Are they prepared to face (on the judgement day) those whom they sacramentally baptised with their sacramental interpretation of Romans 6 ringing in their ears – and yet who were never converted?¹ The scriptural position is this: all who are baptised by the Spirit are everlastingly saved, and all who are not baptised by the Spirit are everlastingly damned.

May I return for a moment to the apostle's death-burial-resurrection theme of baptism in Romans 6? Note the question he asked his readers: 'Don't you know?' (Rom. 6:3). Clearly, the idea was self-evident to them. This question, by itself, shows that I have not been wasting my time – or yours, reader – tilting at windmills.² Every believer must be able to respond to the apostle: 'Yes, I do know. It is a treasure and a joy to me. I will never forget it'. Never forget what? 'That by God's grace, by the power of the Spirit, I have been regenerated, brought to trust Christ, united to him, so that all my sin is his, and all his righteousness is mine'. And how is that accomplished? By baptism? No! By faith: 'For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith' (Eph. 2:8). As Paul and Silas replied to the jailer when he asked how he could be saved: 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved' (Acts 16:31). For, as the apostle assured the Romans: 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' (Rom. 10:13). And so on. It is always the

¹ Speaking for myself, I am prepared to face any person I had responsibility for baptising (in a non-sacramental way). I hesitate – I realise it is a very serious claim. But whether or not I am prepared to face the consequences of my action, face them I will have to. What made me hesitate was my experience as a young believer (and a young man), when, as the one appointed to carry out the baptising, I was placed in an invidious position by those who should have known better.

² That is, fighting with imaginary error.

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same: believe and be saved. ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He who believes in him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God’ (John 3:16-18, NKJV). Unbelief is damning; faith is saving. Not a mention of baptism!

Reader, have you been regenerated, come through repentance and saving faith to trust the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation? Do you submit to Christ as Lord? If so, following your faith, have you been water baptised – plunged in water – in obedience to your Lord and Master? If not, you must! Jesus commands you – as a believer – to be baptised:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt. 28:18-20).

Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:15-16).

Of course, if you do not trust the Saviour, God commands you to repent (Acts 17:30), and he invites you – pleads with you, beseeches you – to trust his Son, now (2 Cor. 5:18 – 6:20, promising you that if you do call upon Christ, he will save you (Luke 18:13-14; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9-13). But, as Christ said – and said twice in virtually one breath: ‘Unless you repent, you... will... perish... Unless you repent, you... will... perish’ (Luke 13:3-5). What about baptism? We will talk about that only if – when – you come to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith, turning from your sin, and trusting him for your salvation.

So come to Christ, now.