

HOW AND WHEN
WE BECOME
DEAD UNTO SIN.

MODE OF BAPTISM.

Copies will be sent free on application to
T. J. LEONARD,
4, Outram Street, Stockton-on-Tees.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES:
HRAVINSIDES & SON, PRINTERS FINKLE STREET.

How and When We become Dead unto Sin.

THE seeming abruptness with which our death to sin is introduced in Rom. vi. 2 disappears when we see that it follows, and is derived from the foundation truth that "Christ died for us" (v. 2).

So evident is it to the apostle's mind that our death to sin is a consequence of Christ's death for us, that when he answers the question, "Shall we continue in sin?" he speaks of it as a truth already known and understood, and deems it only necessary to say "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein"? But not so when he turns to the relation to Christ and to His death of those who have been baptised unto Him (vi. 3). These, he implies, ought to know that the relation entered into by their profession in baptism is directly opposed to continuing in sin.

As those for whom Christ died, and who are in Christ, have *died to sin*, "how" shall they continue to *live in* (the practice of) sin? And as those who have been baptised unto Christ, have been baptised unto His death, and therefore buried unto death "in order that" (Gr. *ina*) even as He was raised from the dead in new relations, they also "should walk in *newness* of life," how shall they consistently "continue in sin"?

All who have ever been baptised unto Christ, have, by profession, and irrespective of their spiritual condition, been baptised unto Christ's death, and therefore buried with Him, *equally with Him*—yet not in *His grave* (!), nor at the same time—unto death. For baptism unto His death becomes burial with Him in His death relation. He was in this death relation *before* His burial. Thus *He* was not buried unto death. But burial *with Him* is *after* His burial, and therefore "unto death" in the grave, whatever it signifies.

Yet burial forms no part of the scriptural doctrine of our death to sin; and burial with Christ expresses in figure only a baptismal fact, and outward relation of the baptised. Hence when the apostle resumes the discussion of our death to sin, and refers to the recognized truth that death clears Him that dies from sin (ver. 7), it would be an utter perversion, and a virtual denial of his statement to affirm that "he that hath died, *and is buried*, is justified from sin."

It is sometimes stated that baptism is a burial. This is one of those *defective* statements by which multitudes are led into error. The inspired apostle says, "all we who were baptised unto Christ Jesus, were baptised unto His death. We were buried *therefore* (Gr. *oun*) with Him through baptism unto death" (vers. 3, 4). These words do not assert nor imply that baptism in itself is a burial.

Christian baptism is primarily a washing for purification, and subsequently a burial. If it were a burial primarily, it would not in any sense be a washing for purification, seeing that purification is not effected by burial. It becomes burial through being unto Christ's death. It is something in itself, whatever its mode. It is a burial because it identifies the baptised with Christ in a death relation like His death relation. It is not a burial provided for those who are to be baptised, but derives its character of burial solely from what it effects in identifying the baptised with Christ in the likeness of His death. "Buried through baptism" Paul wrote. "Baptised through burial" contradicts his word.

Nor is baptism an imaginary setting forth of what may be true of the baptised, as that they are dead to sin, etc. All such suppositions are excluded by the one conclusive word "therefore" used in verse 7. The reason, and the only reason why baptism is accounted a burial is found in its relation to *Christ's* death.

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to apprehending clearly the meaning of the phrase "buried unto death" lies in inability to believe that baptism in all its phases is only a figure, or symbol, of profession. If we believed this there would be no difficulty in seeing that through baptism Saul of Tarsus was not more surely identified with Christ in outward relations than Simon the sorcerer.

Through Christ's death no outward identification of His disciples with Him, which all men can see and understand, is possible which is not also an outward identification with His death; and no such identification with His death is possible which is not an implied burial with Him.

All these relations of the baptised to Christ can be easily conceived, and may subsist in fact, apart from any spiritual or vital relation to Him. Yet while he addresses them according to their avowal of discipleship to Christ—it is inconceivable that they professed a false discipleship to

Him—the acute mind of Paul sees in their baptismal relations the strongest argument *against* their continuing in sin, and also *for* walking in newness of life.

Our death to sin is not expressed in, nor has it the least relation to baptism. We must not confound the truth that relates to our death to sin with that which belongs to baptism. On the other hand we must distinguish sharply, if we would understand these scriptures, between the vital truth of our death to sin, and what is true only of us in an outward relation as baptised. For as having *died* “with” Christ, *i.e.*, died as He died, died to sin, we *cannot* live in our former relation to sin, which continuing in the practice of sin would imply. But as having outwardly, through baptism, part with Christ in His death and risen relations, we *ought* to walk in newness of life.

Again, the death relation of those who have died to sin is through Christ's death for sin, and this negative relation is for eternity. But the death relation of the baptised is through an outward identification with Christ's death, and *this* negative relation belongs only to time, and to the life lived here and now in this world.

In the life that Christ lived here in this world He had to do with sin. That life (the life lived) was brought to an end in His death. With Him who thus died His disciples are identified by their baptism unto Him. By profession, and in an outward sense they have part with Him in this death relation that is now His—they “are become identified with Him in the likeness of His death” (relation), and if, in the baptismal sense, they are identified with Him in His death, in the same sense they are also identified with Him in His life as risen in order that they might walk in newness of life.

In the Gospel Christ is proclaimed as the One who by His life and atoning death solved the question of sin. It is but a short way from this Gospel truth to that which declares also that His atoning death settled for ever that question. To Him therefore Who by His death ended the sin question—Who died to have no more to do with sin, are His disciples baptised. Thus they are baptised to His death as surely as they are baptised to Him. The Christ that settled by His death fully, finally, and for ever the whole question of sin is now their Lord and Master. They are “with Him” in a relation that pertains to His death,

and as surely in it as He. But *He*, is in it by His all-atoning death—*they*, in figure, in an external sense, and by their discipleship to Him in baptism. Sure and clear it is then that in their identification with Christ in this death relation they are “buried with Him.” “We were buried therefore with Him,” says the apostle, “through baptism unto death.” How shall they who were thus *buried*, and buried with *Him* unto *death* consistently continue in the practice of sin? The apostle’s argument has cumulative force.

In His death “as an offering for sin” (viii. 3), Christ died to sin. But His death *for* sin was “for us.” Thus *we* are brought into the same negative relation to sin, we are “dead unto sin” (vi. 11). For if in Christ’s efficacious death *for* sin *He* became dead *to* sin, can we believe His death was “for us,” and doubt that *we* are dead to sin?

Christ’s death to sin and ours are negative relations consequent on the termination of positive relations. His death for sin determines the measure and extent to which these positive relations are terminated. On their negative side, therefore, they are equally measured by His death for sin. If then through His death for sin *He* is dead to sin, and through His death for sin *we* are brought into the *same* negative relation, our relation to sin also is a death relation. Therefore *in a relational sense* we say that “*we* died with Christ” (ver. 8).

The crucifixion of Christ, and His death on the cross was for God’s glory, and the salvation of men. The crucifixion with Christ of “our old man” was “in order that” (Gr. *ina*) the body of sin might be done away, and that we should be no longer in bondage to sin (ver. 6). But if our old man was crucified with Him on the cross when He was crucified, in the same mystic sense the body of sin would be done away, and we should be no longer in the bondage of sin while actually in bondage to sin as unbelievers! How evident it is then that the expression “crucified with Him” refers to the fact, and not to the time.

Scripture teaches emphatically that God “condemned sin in the flesh” (viii. 3). When this truth was applied to our souls, then, and not until then, could it be said that our old man was crucified with Christ. That this cruci-

fixion was neither collective nor representative, but individual, is conclusively shewn in what follows, "For *he* that *hath* died (R.V.) we read, "is justified from sin" (ver. 7). Now "he that hath died" in the Christian sense is "in Christ Jesus," and *in the new state "dead unto sin" (ver. 11). Thus the phrase "our old man" is used to indicate our *old* state in which we were crucified. In our *new* state we are dead to sin. Christ's representative work—His crucifixion and death on the cross is a foundation truth of the Christian faith. But the foolish and irreverent notion of a representative "old man" on the cross crucified with Christ entered not into the mind of Paul.

Death in the absolute sense is death to everything to which we were alive. Death to sin in a relational sense is restricted to the sin to which we died. Though *in* Christ's death for sin in the absolute sense *He* died to sin, *our* death to sin is not *in*, but *through* His death for sin.

Since death to sin is a negative relation, and Christ's death to sin no less than ours is death in a relative sense, it is no more possible to speak of *our* death to sin as a figure of speech than of *His* death to sin. Though He died to sin in His actual death for sin His death to sin consists in a negative relation as surely as ours. As a result of His death for sin He "dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him" (ver. 9). In this *fact* is expressed *His* death to sin. And as a result of His death for sin we are "no longer in bondage to sin" (ver. 6). In this *fact* is expressed *our* death to sin. The doctrine of an imputed "death, burial, and rising again" with Christ adds nothing (except fog) to these grand superstructural truths of Christianity.

Christ died to sin when He became an offering for sin. We died to sin when we ceased to be the servants of sin. The death that He died *for* sin was relatively a death *to* sin in virtue of being *for* sin. In His death *for* sin we were not, could not be, in any sense "with" Him. With His death *to* sin we became identified when we died "with" Him. In virtue of His death *for* sin *He* died *to* sin, and in virtue of His death *for* sin *we* died *to* sin. In His death for sin He died to sin, and in His death to sin He entered

* As "*in* Christ Jesus" we are exhorted to "reckon" ourselves "dead unto sin, but alive unto God" doctrinally.

into a negative relation to sin. His death for sin was death in the absolute sense in which He was alone. His death to sin was death in the relative sense in which we died "with" Him. His death for sin would be denied by restricting it to death to sin.

Not by our death for sin in any sense, nor by the imputation to us of Christ's death for, or to, sin, but by the efficacy of His death for sin applied to our souls have we become dead to sin. Imputation of death is nowhere taught, nor even implied, in the Scriptures. It is a fancied, false, and impossible deduction that Christ's death, in any sense, is our death. To reckon His death our death instead of reckoning ourselves dead is evasion. We "reckon" (Gr. *logizesthe*), reason, infer, conclude, that as Christ through His death for sin is dead to sin, so we also through His death for sin are in the same relation, we are dead to sin. We are not brought into it, nor maintained in it by reckoning, but by the death of Christ.

It has been taught that we become dead to sin by our death with Christ. But this is defective, if not also misleading, seeing that our death with Christ is our death to sin, and we could not have died with Christ *for* sin. Our death with Christ is not a *cause* of our death to sin, but a *consequence* of His death for sin.

There was a moment in time when Christ died for sin. In that same moment He died to sin. In our spiritual history there was a moment when we *ceased to live* in our former bondage to sin (ver. 2). In that same moment, and not before, *we* died to sin. From the moment that Christ died for sin there was an abiding efficacy in His death to free us from our state of bondage. When in virtue of Christ's death for sin God quickened and raised us up out of our fallen condition as sinners, and made us a new creation "in Christ Jesus"—in Him the Head of the new creation as sharers in His state and relations, then, and not until then, could it be said of us that we had died to sin. As He the Head is dead to sin, so are we. We could not be in Him, in His state one moment without being dead to sin. Therefore "died in Him" is an expression of error. We became dead to sin, not before, nor after, but *when* we entered into our new state. In our old man state we were crucified, and we died to sin in our transition from Adam to Christ.

Mode of Baptism.

CONCERNING modes, or a mode of baptism scripture is silent. Nor would it avail for any true purpose to know how the apostles performed a baptism unless we were assured that the mode had a moral significance important to be understood.

The absence in the N.T. of all reference to the manner or mode of baptism accords with the belief that the ordinance is a washing for purification. For as it is evident to all that to wash is to purify, it is equally evident that the mode of the washing is but an incident of the purification.

In its actual and literal sense baptism consists in the putting of water upon the person, or putting the person into water, or a combination of both. The form, or manner, in which it is done is of no moment. For a scenic display there is no scripture warrant, nor even encouragement. The symbol is seen in what is effected by putting the water upon the person, or putting the person into the water, and not in the manner or mode of doing these things.

To unbiased minds the "questioning on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purifying" (John iii. 25, R.V.) dispels every shadow of doubt that John's baptism was a washing for purification. When the Lord baptised in Judæa John also, we are told, "was baptising in Ænon" (ver. 23). The circumstance that awakened concern on the part of John's disciples was that Jesus baptised. The narrative admits of no other thought. "There arose *therefore*" (Gr. *oun*), it is said, a "questioning . . . about purifying." Why this word "therefore"—*oun* in the N.T. is never used as an adverb of time—if the reference is not to baptism? If then the baptism of John was a "purifying" can it be justly doubted that the Christian ordinance, though differing widely from it in its purpose (its "unto"), has also this character?

The intensiveness inherent in the Greek verb *baptizo* may sometimes be unfolded by such words as, immerse, submerge, overwhelm, etc. But in the figurative washing of the baptised this intensiveness is as fully expressed by putting the water upon the person as by putting the person into the water. For baptism exhibits the intensiveness of

a washing, and not of a mode of washing. The figure is not in the mode, but in the washing. In *figure*, by *profession*, and *outwardly* we see in the Christian ordinance a *washing*, a *purification*, and a *separation*. As these are from the world, and unto Christ they admit of but one degree.

From Matt. ii. 12 (R.V.) we learn of a baptism with the Spirit, and with fire that "will thoroughly cleanse." The intensiveness of this baptism is seen, not in any form, but in the thoroughness of the cleansing.

This emphasis or intensiveness in baptism was expressed in the traditional washing of the hands without the least regard to form (Mark vii. 3, R.V.) Hence, "wash themselves" is rendered from "*baptisontai*" (ver. 4); and "washed" from "*ebaptisthee*" in the inspired original (Luke xi. 38). In these washings, or baptisms, performed "diligently" (Gr. with the fist) the intensity of the washing was expressed in the use of the closed, or partially closed hand. For the washing that is not intensive is a common washing, and not a baptism.

In the Lord's supper as in baptism there is no active display of form. In the loaf, and in the cup on the table, as well as in partaking of them separately, we "shew" His death. In the loaf we discern His body. In the cup we discern His blood. The blood in symbol is in the cup, and not in the body. It is thus a perfect expression of His death. For not the *pouring* out of blood, but the "*poured*" out blood is this expression of death (Luke xxii. 20). In eating of the loaf, and drinking of the cup we do not eat of the Lord's body in figure, nor drink of His blood. Nor do we eat of the loaf, and drink of the cup to appropriate, or make our own His body and His blood, but for a remembrance of Himself in death. The "communion of the body of Christ" in eating of the *same* loaf, and the "communion of the blood of Christ" in drinking of the *same* cup is an expression of our common interest, or communion one with another in these holy things. As partakers of "one," *i.e.*, the same "loaf" we express our unity, or oneness, as a company of saints. Much there is in the supper that is profoundly spiritual, yet there is nothing mystic, or imaginative.

T. J. L.