

THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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IS SPRINKLING BAPTISM?

As long as a man preaches that baptism is administered by immersing the entire body under water, the whole world admits the action is right. So far as I know, there is not any religious body on earth which believes in baptism at all who will deny or challenge the Scripturalness of immersion. Until a very few years ago the Southern Presbyterian Church did indeed forbid immersion, but not because they thought it contrary to Bible teaching. They acknowledged that the Bible taught it, but declared that the practice of immersion seemed to give "too much emphasis" to a "form," hence forbade immersion. About twenty years ago, however, they revised their creed on that point; and now permit immersion.

Historians of the world are agreed that immersion was the invariable practice of the apostolic church. They do not deny, but rather confirm, that the very first case of an individual's being sprinkled which can be historically verified is to be dated from about the year 250 A.D. In this instance a famous heretic, Novation, thinking he was on his death-bed, and never having been bap-

tized, had water sprinkled (or rather copiously poured) upon him, his bed, and over the whole floor of the sick room. Upon recovering from his serious illness, he refused to be immersed, and continued to the end of his life with the "clinic" or sick-room baptism. Only in extremely rare and scattered cases, and then only in cases that were considered desperate emergencies, was this form of "baptism" administered. It was generally frowned upon even by the developing Romish church for over a thousand years. And it was not until the Council of Ravenna, in 1311 A.D., that this "clinic baptism" was finally adjudged by the Roman church to be an acceptable substitute for immersion. Even then it was not very widely practiced. The prevailing form of baptism continued to be an immersion until long after the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

There is not a single passage in the Bible, of course, which teaches that plain, clean water, unmixed with any other substance, is ever commanded to be sprinkled upon anybody for any pur-

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Editorial.....

Are You Sure?

Each of us should endeavor to make our "calling and election sure." (See 2 Pet. 1:10). In order to be sure that God is pleased with what we do, we must learn the truth as revealed in the New Testament. We are to walk by faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. (See Rom. 10:17). We must be willing to hear whatever God says, believe it and obey it. Many people do not know why they believe what they do. It is not because they learned it from God's inspired Book. They may not be sure as to where they learned it. In view of the coming judgment, we ought to be sure that our faith is a result of hearing God's word.

ARE YOU SURE THAT A PERSON CAN BE SAVED BY FAITH ONLY?

Many people believe and teach that one is justified by faith alone. The Methodist Discipline says: "Wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort." Friends, if you believe this doctrine, are you SURE that it is so? Upon what do you base your conviction? Although many

passages predicate salvation on faith, no passage suggest that salvation is by faith alone. In fact James 2:24 says: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." If you know of a passage that you think teaches salvation by faith only, please send it to me.

ARE YOU SURE AN ALIEN SINNER CAN BE SAVED BY PRAYING THROUGH? If you think this is so, why? Is there a New Testament passage that teaches such? If so, where? Jesus said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21) To enter the kingdom of heaven one must **obey the Father's will**. The Father's will does not teach an alien sinner to pray for salvation! It does teach him to believe and be baptized. (See Mark 16:15-16).

ARE YOU SURE THAT YOU ARE IN THE RIGHT CHURCH? The New Testament teaches that there is but one true church. (See Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:20; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). The one true church is NOT a denomination, nor a combination of denominations, nor any part of any denomination. It is a body of baptized believers who have been called out of the world by the gospel, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells and over which Christ reigns as supreme head. If you are in a denomination, you are lost and thus have no hope of eternal salvation. It is imperative that you get out without further delay.

ARE YOU SURE THAT YOU ARE WEARING THE RIGHT NAME? "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (See Acts 11:26). Paul persuaded men to be Christians. (See Acts 26:28) The apostle Peter tells us that we should be willing to suffer as a Christian,

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ARE YOU SURE?

and in so doing we glorify God. (See 1 Pet. 4:16). Are you **Sure** that one can glorify God in the name Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Mormon, Pentecostal, etc? If you are not absolutely sure, why don't you lay that name aside and simply wear the name Christian? It is not enough for you to say that "there is nothing in a name." Paul tells us in Phil. 2:9-10 that God hath highly exalted Jesus Christ and hath given him a name that is above every name. Peter informs us that salvation is in the name of Christ. (See Acts 4:12). Can you really glorify God in human names such as those already listed? Are you sure? How do you know? Why would you accept and wear a human name religiously when you have absolutely no divine authority whatever for so doing?

ARE YOU SURE THAT YOUR WORSHIP IS ACCEPTABLE? Is the God of heaven honored by such? You may say that "it doesn't matter how we worship just so long as we are sincere," but are you really sure? Jesus shows there are three essentials to true worship. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24). First, there must be the right object. This is God. Worship must be directed to God. Secondly, worship must be in the right manner or the proper attitude. It must be in spirit. Worship must be offered with reverence, respect, humility and sincerity. Thirdly, worship must be done in the right way, that is, in truth. It must be according to God's Word which is truth. Yes, it does matter. Are you careful to do only those things in worship that you can read that you should do? Why would you take a chance on doing otherwise?

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pose. Such teaching simply is not there. Those who advocate sprinkling often refer to Ezekiel 36:15, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean." But the man who advocated sprinkling can not use this passage without at the same time condemning his doctrine concerning the **necessity or purpose** of baptism. He can NOT make the statement of Ezekiel refer to baptism for the simple reason that he does not believe baptism has anything to do with "making clean" the person who receives it! Ezekiel plainly connected the "sprinkling" and the "making clean," and made the latter conditional on the former. But not so with the modern advocates of sprinkling. They hold to the very opposite view, and contend that baptism (sprinkling) does not make clean at all.

Actually this passage from Ezekiel has nothing to do with baptism at all. The water that is here referred to is "clean water" or "water of cleansing." It was to be sprinkled upon those who had become ceremonially unclean or defiled. Israel had been in Babylonian captivity, and had become defiled by their contact with idolators and other unclean things. God had ordained that in such cases the "water of cleansing" should be sprinkled on those who were to be made ceremonially clean. This "water of cleansing" is described in Numbers chapter 19, verses 17 through 19. It was to be prepared by taking the ashes of a red heifer, mixing them with running water, and having the mixture in a vessel from which it was sprinkled hyssop. This is the "sprinkling" about which Ezekiel prophesied. He was foretelling the return from the Babylonian captivity; God had promised to gather Israel up, bring her back from her bondage,

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and when this happened, He would "sprinkle" them with the "water of cleansing." This does not refer to unmixed water, but rather to the ceremonial water.

Paul contrasts the use of unmixed water in the New Testament with the sprinkling of the water of cleansing. He declares, "having our bodies washed with pure water, and having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience." (Heb. 10:22). It is the heart that is to be sprinkled, not the body; furthermore, the heart is to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ. "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto

God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13-14). Just as the sprinkled blood upon the doorpost of the Israelite home in ancient Egypt protected that family when the angel of death passed over the land, so the blood of Christ, sprinkled upon the heart, will protect the sinner from the consequences of his sin. The blood of Christ is sprinkled upon the heart, but the body is washed (not sprinkled) with pure water—that is, water which is NOT "mixed with the ashes of a heifer." Leave out the ashes of the red heifer, leave out the scarlet wool and the hyssop; take nothing but water, and let the body be WASHED in that water, and you have the New Testament act of baptism. Sprinkling is not baptism in either the Old Testament or the New. It comes by human authority, not divine; it is a substitute for what God commanded.

—Roy E. Cogdill in THE GOSPEL
GUARDIAN, May 12, 1955

SENTENCE SERMONS

Some "Christians" are like kittens—they are more contented when they are petted.

There is a difference between complimenting people for their good and flattering them for your gain.

Prejudice is the closing of the mind to further investigation on a given subject.

True beauty cannot be pictured by the pen of an artist.

Do not regret growing old; it is a privilege many do not have.

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