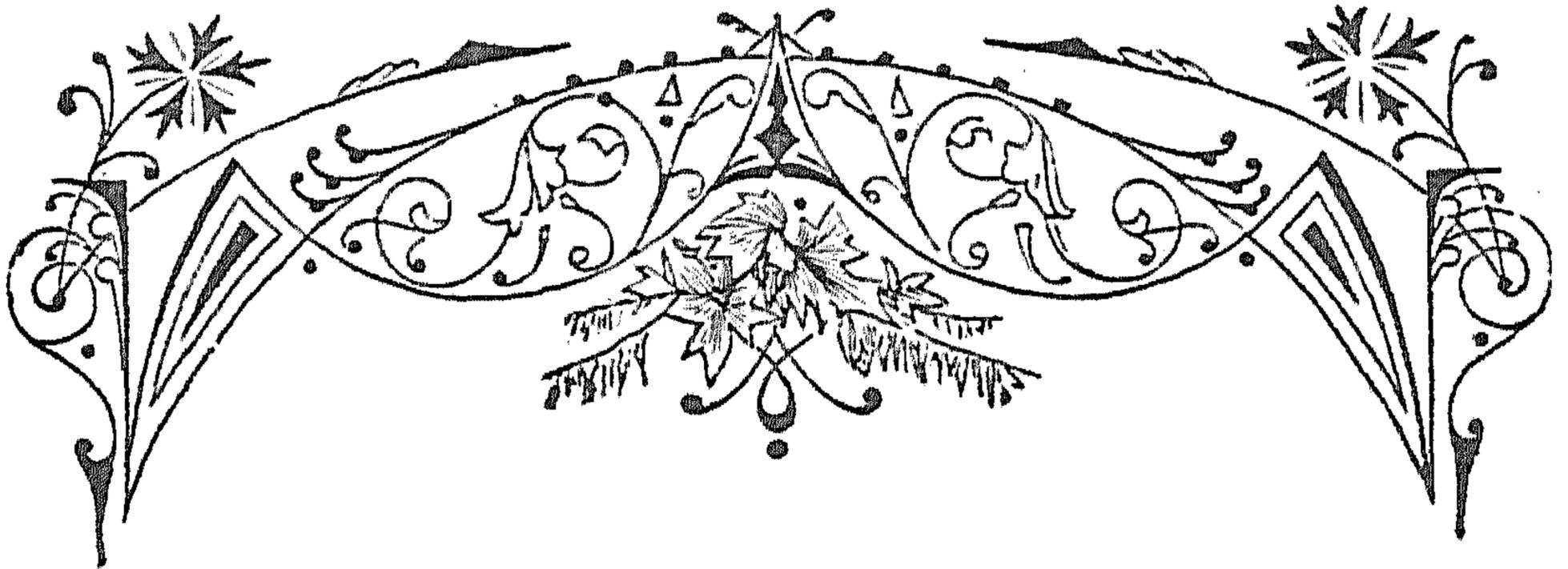


a community called ...

The Copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy of reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.

© Asbury Theological Seminary 2011



“ WAS NOT CHRIST IMMERSED IN
JORDAN ? ”

THAT Christ was immersed in Jordan has become a settled fact with many, because they have heard it affirmed so often. Thoughtful persons desire evidence to sustain affirmation. Critical accuracy in the use of words is essential to just critical results in determining the meaning of words. To answer intelligently the question, “ Was not Christ immersed in Jordan ? ” we must first know in what sense “ immersed ” and “ Jordan ” are used.

IMMERSED.

Baptist writers very frequently use "immersed" as of the same meaning with *dipped*. Is it so used here? If so it is an error, whether regarded in relation to the Greek *baptizo*, the Latin *immergo*, or the English *immerse*. The Greek, the Latin, and the English word has this idea in common, namely, a covered *condition* effected by *any* act, *without limit of duration*. The idea in "dipped" is *not condition*, but an *act*, *definite* in character and *limited to momentariness* in duration. In their nature and duration, and consequently in their power, these words are opposites. In a critical inquiry they cannot be interchanged. Proof of this will be found in a few cases of English usage :

"*Immersed* deep in the flood, found the *death* he had deserved."

"The river rolling back *ingulf's* their whole militia, *ck immersed*."

Whelm'd under our dark gulfs those arms shall lie,
Immersed remain the terror of the world;
These his cold rites, and this his *watery tomb*."

*In the warm and genial earth he plunges deep the seed,
Till in the soft medium they stand *immersed*."

"After *sixty years' immersion* the gold looks as fresh as
if taken out of the bank."

Now contrast with this usage of "immerse" that of *dip*: "Send Lazarus that he may *dip* the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue." Is it possible to interchange such diverse words? To use "immerse" as justly expressive of the condition of ships sunk to the bottom of the sea for ages, or of men drowned at the bottom of the river for centuries, and then to use it to express the definite and momentary act of *dipping*, without intimating any difference of usage, and denying that there was any difference of meaning, is a flagrant deception and a moral wrong. To use "dip" to express the baptism of sunken

ships and drowned men is absurdly erroneous. To use "immerse" as the equivalent of baptize—to express the definite act *dip* as practiced by Baptists in their ritual baptism—is an error too gross and too deceptive to admit of any ordinary apology. A dipping cannot be a baptism. A baptism in water neither is nor can be commanded by God. To say, "All baptisms do not extend through ages," is to make no apology for converting a baptism into a dipping. Any baptism, simply as a baptism, may last for ages. No baptism is a momentary putting in and taking out. No dipping can last for ages. Every dipping must be a momentary putting in and taking out. A great gulf separates these words. The Lord Jesus Christ was not "immersed"—baptized in water. To say Christ's baptism was a dipping into water, is pure error. It subverts its nature. It gives a stone for bread; a serpent for a fish.

JORDAN.

In what sense is “Jordan” used in this question—“Was not Christ immersed in *Jordan*?”

Jordan is a complex term. It embraces *banks, channel, and running water*. It expresses locality. The general term may be used when one only of its elements is referred to; for example, “He walked upon the Jordan”=*bank* of the Jordan; “The boat floated upon the Jordan”=*water* of the Jordan; “They stood upon dry ground in the midst of Jordan”=*channel* of the Jordan. In speaking of baptism in *Jordan*, whatever meaning may be assigned to “Jordan” it must be assigned by proof and not by assumption. Against the assumption that Jordan, in connection with baptism, represents simply water, may be urged, 1. The proved point that baptism in water drowns; 2. The proof that Jordan, in this relation.

denotes locality; for example, John i, 28: "These things were done in Bethabara, *beyond Jordan*, where John was baptizing." John iii, 26: "He that was with thee *beyond Jordan*, baptizeth." Matt. iii, 13: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to John *upon Jordan*, to be baptized." Mark i, 9: "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John *at the Jordan*." Nothing but locality is possible in any of these cases but the last, and that is determined as locality, (1.) By coming from Nazareth and the necessity for Jordan as the place of arrival. (2.) By the parallel passage in Matt. iii, 13, where nothing but locality is possible. (3.) If Jordan stands for water the natural force of baptizing into water is destructive of life. (4.) Because the same preposition which is here used is used elsewhere to express the place of arrival. Josh. iii, 8: "When ye are come *to Jordan* stand still in Jordan." 1 Kings ii, 8: "He came down

to meet me *at Jordan*.” 2 Kings ii, 6:
‘The Lord hath sent me *to Jordan*.’
(5.) It is so translated by Professor Hackett
of the Baptist Theological Seminary, Roch-
ester, in his Commentary on Acts, “He
was found *at Azotus*.” (6.) It is admitted by
Professor Ripley, Newton Baptist Theolog-
ical Seminary, (Reply to Professor Stuart,)
to be insufficient to prove the meaning
“into water.” That “Jordan” means
“water,” and not *locality*, is assumption.

WAS ANY ONE IMMERSED IN JORDAN ?

There is not a particle of real evidence to
show that *any one* was immersed in Jordan.

1. “Jordan” cannot prove it, because it
denotes locality. 2. “In Jordan” cannot
prove it, because this phrase denotes within
the banks, including one eighth of a mile
of dry ground between the outer bank and
the water. 3. “Baptize” cannot prove it,
because that word takes no one out of the

water; and to put under the water and to leave men and women there would not answer. To change BAPTIZO into BAPTO, to secure their being taken out, would falsify the word of God as much as the counterfeiting a bank-note. 4. Not one fact can be adduced to prove it. When water was to be applied largely to the body of Aaron by Moses, it is expressly stated that his upper garments were laid aside. When water was to be applied generally to the body of Judith, by herself, in her own house, it is expressly stated that her garments were changed. But while a change of dress would have been essential if John had dipped his disciples into water, there is not the slightest intimation of any such fact.

OTHER BAPTISMS OF CHRIST AND NO IMMERSION.

Why should Christ be "immersed" in Jordan, when baptized by John, while in

three other baptisms, to which Christ stands personally related, there is no immersion?

1. Immediately after his baptism by John, Christ was baptized by the Holy Ghost descending and resting upon him, as it had been a dove. There was no immersion in this baptism. 2. "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" A "cup," full of the penalty of the law, is held to his lips by his Father's hand. He drinks of it through life. He drinks of it largely in Gethsemane. He empties it on Calvary. He drinks and is baptized into death. *The drinking from a cup, whose contents were of most potent influence, is one of the most common modes for effecting a baptism* spoken of by Greek writers. The nature of the baptism was determined by the nature of the contents of the cup. The cup which our blessed Lord drank being filled with the penalty of a broken law, the baptism which

resulted from that woeful draught was an atoning baptism for his people. There was no immersion in this baptism. 3. "The Pharisee marveled that he had not first *baptized* before dinner." The Saviour passed immediately from the highway to the dinner-table. It was impossible for him to have been "immersed." It is impossible that the Pharisee could have wondered that he was not *immersed*. He did wonder that he was not *baptized*. "Water-pots, after the manner of purifying by the Jews," were doubtless placed at the entrance of the house. The Saviour might have used the water in them for baptism, but he would not. And when the Pharisee saw him pass the water-pots *without washing his hands*, "he wondered." In these three baptisms there is no immersion. Why attempt to force it, without evidence or against evidence, into that baptism by John? There is yet another baptism in which the Saviour bears a

part, without an immersion. I refer to the baptism of the apostles at Pentecost. Of this baptism the Saviour was the administrator. Carson, Ripley, and Hackett all admit that there was no immersion in this baptism.

For these reasons our answer to the question, "Was not Christ immersed in Jordan?" is, most emphatically, NO!

WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S BAPTISM?

The nature of Christ's baptism was a public covenant engagement to "fulfill all righteousness." The sign and seal of this covenant-baptism was pure water. "It is finished," proclaimed this covenant fulfilled on Calvary by redeeming blood. The baptism of Christ on Calvary is an atonement for sin. The baptism of his people, with water, is the symbol-remission of sin; the reality being the baptism of the soul by the Holy

Ghost. To talk of "following Christ," in his distinctive baptism, is a folly and a sin which requires his gracious intercession—
"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

All Christians would be shocked at being called upon to follow Christ in his atoning-baptism on Calvary. It is no less shocking and absurd to be called upon to "follow Christ" in his covenant-baptism at Jordan. Christ's baptism at Jordan and at Calvary stands alone. God manifest in the flesh only could assume and fulfill it. "I have trodden the wine-press ALONE; and of the people there was NONE with me." The Fulfiller of all righteousness is baptized into penal death that he may save the guilty from eternal death. Do not exchange this wondrous baptism *for a dipping into water.*

HUNT & EATON, 805 Broadway, New York.

CRANSTON & STOWE, Cincinnati.