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The Critical Study of the Doctrine of Baptism in the Catechism of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM
IN THE CATECHISM OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
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Bachelor of Divinity

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the area of education, there is never a point where perfection can be reached. No teacher can claim that he has reached the goal of being a perfect teacher. Every teacher who is of any merit continually works toward improving his method. In the area of religion, the same is true. There is no point where perfection can be reached.

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During the year of research, the writer experienced difficulty in using it with the children's confirmation class. At that time, the parent of one child kept his from investigating it any further. During the past few months, the writer availed himself of the opportunity to make a thorough study of a part of the literature. He chose the presentation of the doctrine of baptism through the study of the various sources of authority with this section.

The purpose of this study included an experimental study of the validity of the Scripture passages cited as

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the area of education, there is never a point where perfection can be reached. No teacher can claim that he has reached the goal of being a perfect teacher. Every teacher who is of any merit constantly works toward improving his method. In the same way, no textbook can ever attain such a high level of quality that it is beyond criticism. Every textbook can afford to go through constant revision. This principle applies also to the Synodical Catechism, the official catechism of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Fine as it may be, there is always a need for study and improvement.

It is with this approach that the writer began a critical study of this one phase of the Synodical Catechism. During his year of vicarage, the writer experienced difficulties in using it with the children's confirmation class. At that time, the press of other work kept him from investigating it any further. During the past few months, the writer availed himself of the opportunity to make a thorough study of a part of the catechism. He chose the presentation of the doctrine of baptism because he experienced the greatest degree of difficulty with this section.

The purpose of this study included an exegetical examination of the validity of the Scripture passages cited as

proofs for the answers, a systematic examination of the questions and answers as to their doctrinal accuracy, and, to a lesser degree, a pedagogical study of the presentation as to its effectiveness.

The exegetical work was limited to that part of the passage which is especially cited by the catechism. The study went beyond these limitations only if it shed real light upon the way the passage was being employed. A study of the context was employed in every passage. It was cited in this study only when it definitely aided in understanding the point which the passage was trying to prove.

The systematic and pedagogical work was also limited. No attempt was made toward evaluating Luther's expositions or the passages he employed. The study was confined to the questions, answers, and proof passages which serve to elaborate on Luther's expositions. An effort was made not to upset the general structure of the present presentation.

Various catechism versions, catechism commentaries, systematic studies of the doctrine of baptism, lexicons, and general Bible commentaries were employed as sources. The Greek New Testament cited in this study is the twentieth edition of the Nestle text.

The study dealt with the four parts of baptism as they are presented in the Synodical Catechism. Each chapter was examined in the same manner. The problems which were studied were: (a) Is the answer to the question a valid answer?; (b)

Does the Scripture passage actually prove the validity of the answer?; (c) Does the Scripture passage answer the question?; (d) Are there better passages to replace the present ones?; (e) Are there passages which should be added to strengthen the presentation?; (f) Should additional questions, answers, and proof passages be added to this presentation?

The final chapter of this study presents a comparison of the Synodical Catechism with the suggested revisions. These provide a rapid review of the portions which were especially criticized in this study. They are offered not as a sure solution to the problems of the catechism, but as a summary and conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF BAPTISM

The Synodical Catechism begins with one of the most controversial issues in Protestant theology. What is the proper method of applying water in baptism? Is the method of immersion the only correct method or are other methods equally proper? The answer to these questions depends greatly upon the meaning of the word, "baptize." The catechism begins with this issue.

244. What is the meaning of the word "baptize"?

"Baptize" means to apply water by washing, pouring, sprinkling, or immersing.¹

The catechism's answer is logical and gives a direct answer to the question.

The passages are quoted to show the various meanings of the word "baptize." The purpose of the first passage (Mark 7:4) is to show that the word "baptize" means more than its basic meaning, to immerse.

When they [the Pharisees] come from the market, except they wash [baptize], they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing [baptizing] of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables (Mark 7:4).

The use of this passage is perfectly proper, provided it is

¹A Short Explanation Of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1843), p. 170. All subsequent references to this volume will be cited only by the page number.

properly interpreted. However, such has not always been the case. Among the articles "baptized" in this passage are cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables. Therefore, some people conclude, that while cups, pots, and brazen vessels could have been immersed, it is hardly likely that tables were immersed. They must have either been washed or ceremonially sprinkled. Hence, "baptizing" can also be paralleled with washing or sprinkling. The picture is logical. Pedagogically, it presents a picture easy to remember. The only difficulty is that the word for tables ($\kappa\lambda\iota\nu\omega\nu$) is attested only by certain manuscripts and is not included in the body of the Nestle text. The basis for such an argument is thus rather weak.

The catechism quotes an earlier part of the passage as follows, "When they [the Pharisees] come from the market, except they wash [baptize], they eat not." The word for "baptize" here is also a variant. Nestle does not incorporate the word $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\omega\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ in his text, but rather the word $\delta\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\omega\nu\tau\alpha\iota$. He feels that $\delta\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\omega\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ has a stronger manuscript attestation. The word $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ is placed in the critical apparatus. Thus the catechism is not using a sure basis when it parallels "wash" with "baptize" in this particular part of the verse.

The use of this passage (Mark 7:4) is valid, however. The context definitely shows that this word, $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\upsilon\varsigma$, as it occurs in the latter part of the text is used in a

setting which allows for it to mean more than "immerse." Wuest points out that "the word 'unwashed' of verse 2 and 'wash' of verse 3 are the translation of nipto 'to wash' and that the 'washing' of these verses refers to the same act of washing as verse 4."² The verse immediately preceding (Mark 7:3) shows that this type of washing was a ceremonial washing. It relates that the Jews did not eat without first washing and that by this they were holding the tradition of the elders. With regard to the "washing" of verse four, Wessel says, "In the market, possibly they might have come in contact with an unclean thing--a dead animal or the corpse of a person--or they might in some other manner have rendered themselves ceremonially unclean."³ Thus a ceremonial type of cleansing was necessary.

Another indication of the type of washing which was involved in the passage can be seen in the word πυγμαῖ in verse three. The word is not translated in the King James version because it is a variant reading which the King James translators did not use. Nestle places it in the body of the text. He places the word which the King James translators used (πύκναι, which means "often") in the critical apparatus. The word πυγμαῖ means literally, "with the fist."

²Kenneth S. Wuest, Mark In The Greek New Testament For The English Reader (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1950), p. 143.

³Louis Wessel, The Proof Texts Of The Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 73.

Lenski asserts that it is hard to come to a definite conclusion as to the full significance of the term. He says that it would signify "the fist turned and twisted in the palm of the opposite hand, performing the washing of the hands in this way."⁴ The Expositor's Greek Testament says, "Most recent interpreters interpret $\pi\upsilon\gamma\mu\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta$ as meaning that they rubbed the palms of one hand with the other closed, so as to make sure that the part which touched the food should be clean."⁵ Thus, while this cannot be cited as absolute proof, it serves as an indication that not the full bath or immersion was meant, but rather a ceremonial type of washing which may have employed the washing, pouring, or sprinkling mode.

Not all commentators agree to this interpretation. Gould says that the washing of verse three and that of verse four are of two entirely different natures. He says that the defilement in the marketplace would be different from others, since it was a place of public resort. This type of defilement, he says, would require a complete bath and not just a ceremonial sprinkling or washing.⁶ The whole context, however, hardly allows for any more than a ceremonial washing.

⁴R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation Of St. Mark's Gospel (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, c.1934), p. 175.

⁵The Expositor's Greek Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), I, 387.

⁶Esra P. Gould, The Gospel According To St. Mark, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1896), p. 126.

In the following verse, the Pharisees ask why the disciples are not conforming but rather are eating with unwashed hands. Jesus answers by scolding the Pharisees for being so concerned about external ceremonies.

Koehler points out a significant fact with regard to the word $\nu\lambda\psi\omega\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ of verse three, which seemingly speaks of the same type of washing as verse four. "This word was commonly used when only a part of the body was washed, while 'louein' was used when washing or bathing the whole body."⁷ Vincent points up another interesting feature about the type of washing which must have been employed. "The washing of pots and vessels for ceremonial purification could not have been by plunging them in water, which would have rendered impure the whole body of purifying water."⁸

The use of this passage (Mark 7:4) clearly illustrates that "baptizing" can also signify a washing action. By the fact that the passage seems to speak of ceremonial washings, it can be implied that $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ also signifies a sprinkling or pouring action.

Despite the validity of this passage (Mark 7:4), the use of another one in this instance would be much better.

⁷Edward W. Koehler, A Short Explanation Of Luther's Catechism (Revised edition; River Forest, Illinois: Koehler Publishing Co., c.1946), p. 258.

⁸Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies In The New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1900), I, 199.

Luke 11:38 reads, "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed [ἔβαπτίσθη] before dinner."

This passage also has variant readings but they cause no difficulty. As a variant for the words ἰδὼν ἐθαύμασεν ("seeing it, he marvelled"), the critical apparatus offers, ἤρξατο διακρινόμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ λέγειν ("he began to dispute with him, saying"). There is also a change in verb form. The word ἐβάπτισθη in the Nestle text is varied in the critical apparatus to ἐβαπτίσατο. This change from the active to the middle voice has no significance as far as the purpose of this text is concerned.

The context also makes it quite clear that some type of ceremonial washing was involved. In the words preceding, Luke records the sermon which Jesus preached on a proper inward spirit. Jesus used the picture that a man must be "right" from the inside as well as the outside. When the Pharisee marveled that Jesus had not washed before eating, Jesus responded by telling him, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is full of reaving and wickedness" (Luke 11:39). It is rather apparent that the type of washing implied in this passage was a ceremonial washing.

This passage (Luke 11:38) is shorter and simpler for memory work than the passage now employed (Mark 7:4). It is also easy to be graphic in discussing this passage. A person can tell the children that this Pharisee had hardly ex-

pected Jesus to take a bath before eating. Rather, the Pharisee was surprised that Jesus had not first washed his hands before He ate. So even though the present passage (Mark 7:4) is valid, the recommended passage (Luke 11:38) serves as a good substitute.

The second passage (Acts 22:16) is designed to show that *βάπτισμα* and *ἀπολούσαι* are New Testament synonyms. "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." These latter two verbs express the same action which a person performs by means of water. Dau says that if a true *ἀπολούειν*, "washing away" can be performed without immersion, and it certainly can; it simply follows that *βαπτίσειν* does not necessarily imply immersion.⁹ Wessel goes on to explain that there are not two things to be done, to be baptized and to wash away. "The and is epexegetical, i.e., explanatory: Be baptized and thus wash away your sins. Baptism is the cause, washing away of sins is the effect. . . ."¹⁰ In addition, there are no variant readings to weaken the authority of this passage. Thus, on the basis of this passage, one can validly deduce that the usage of *βαπτίσειν* does not confine a person to its basic meaning, that of dipping.

The last of the three passages (Matt. 3:11) helps to illustrate the pouring or sprinkling significance of *βαπτίσειν*.

⁹W. H. T. Dau, "Notes For Lectures On Catechism" (Himnecographed, n.d.), p. 142.

¹⁰Wessel, op. cit., p. 76.

Here again, there are no variant readings. John the Baptist said that he himself baptized with "water unto repentance." But then he said of Jesus, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." John made a distinction between his baptism which was with water and that of Jesus which would be with fire. It was an unmistakable reference to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost which would take place on Pentecost.

The catechism supplies a reference to another passage (Acts 2:16-17) which shows the fulfilment of this prophecy.

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel,
 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God,
 I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your
 sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young
 men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream
 dreams (Acts 2:16-17).

This passage is to be combined with the previous passage in order to illustrate that "baptize" means "pour out." This baptism "with the Holy Ghost and with fire" took place on Pentecost as the Holy Ghost came upon their heads in the form of cloven tongues of fire. The word used for "pour" is ἐκχέω, not βαπτίζω as in the prophecy. But the fact that it is a fulfilment of this prophecy makes the words of the same general significance. The disciples were not immersed into the Holy Ghost, but rather, the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them. This passage, taken together with its prophecy (Matt. 3:11), clearly illustrate that βαπτίζω can also mean "pour."

Do the passages prove the validity of the catechism's

answer? Do the passages answer the question? The answer to both questions is in the affirmative. The first and second passages (Mark 7:4; Acts 22:16) paralleled baptizing with washing. The first also implied a sprinkling action. The third passage and its parallel (Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:16-17) demonstrated baptism as pouring. There is no clear-cut passage to show that βαπτίζω also includes the mode of sprinkling. From passages in Scripture, it can only be implied.

Another approach to this problem is simply to understand sprinkling as a form of pouring. People speak of the rain as pouring. Yet the water comes down upon them in the form of separate drops as with sprinkling. The sprinkling mode was known in Old Testament times through the various proclamations (Ezek. 36:25-27; Is. 44:3). Another Old Testament passage (Num. 19:14-18) speaks of the sprinkling mode. After a person died, the people were told to sprinkle their tents, their vessels, and the persons who had come into contact with the dead person. Rohmert further says that pictures on the old tombstones testify that baptism by sprinkling or pouring was used on the sick and weak. He also adds that lands with cold climates would commend the sprinkling mode.¹¹ Lenski says that while the word βαπτίζω is limited to the meaning of immersion by its etymology, nevertheless,

¹¹W. Rohmert; Die Dogmatik Der Ev. Luth. Kirche (Braunschweig und Leipzig: Verlag von H. Wollermann, 1902), p. 412.

the word must be understood in the sense in which it was used at the time Jesus spoke. Therefore it signifies all manner of application of water.¹²

The presentation of this first section in the catechism proves to be generally accurate. One passage could be substituted. No other passages need to be supplied to strengthen those already presented.¹³

The catechism now attempts to show that baptism is more than just the application of water.

245. Why is Baptism not simple water only?

Baptism is not simple water only--

A. Because in Baptism water is used by a special command of God;

B. Because the water is applied in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and is thus connected with God's Word.¹⁴

The first reason is taken from Luther's statement, "comprehended in God's command." The catechism answer actually says

¹²Lenski, Matthew, p. 1174.

¹³At this point, it is well to mention that there is a point of criticism with regard to a recent catechetical series published by the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. (Wm. A. Kramer, editor. Growing In Grace. Book I. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1955.) On page ninety-nine, in one of its exercises, the following instructions are cited, "The original word for 'baptize' is used in the Bible passages below. . . ." It cites, among others, two passages (Acts 8:16-18; Titus 3:5) which do not use the original Greek word for "baptize."

¹⁴p. 171.

more than either Luther or Scripture. There is no special command of God to use water. It is true that all baptismal accounts in Scripture refer to the use of water. The closest resemblance to a direct command is the statement of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water. . ." (John 3:5). But that can hardly be quoted as a special command to use water. It can be taken for granted that water is by God's command because the Bible mentions no other fluid. It certainly is comprehended in God's command, but there is no special command of God to use it. Therefore it is well to eliminate the word "special" and simply state, "Because in baptism water is used by God's command."

The second reason appears to be beyond criticism. It simply shows that baptism is more than water because it is applied in the name of the Triune God.

The next question asks about the originator of baptism.

246. Who instituted Holy Baptism?

God Himself instituted Baptism; for Christ, who is God, commanded His Church to baptize all nations.¹⁵

The answer provides much more information than the question asks and proves to be a bit confusing. It tries to include a statement testifying to Christ's deity and authority when the question merely asks, "Who instituted Holy Baptism?" Some of this could either be omitted or included in a later question. A revised answer would read, "Jesus Christ Himself

¹⁵Ibid.

instituted baptism."

The passage cited is the command of Jesus.

All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. (Matt. 28: 18-20).

The following words from the text should be included as the opening words, "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying," Thus it would be clear that it was Jesus who spoke these words. Many children in confirmation classes today are not that well acquainted with Bible stories to recognize the speaker of these words. Because of the revised answer, the twentieth verse would not be necessary here.

The writer suggests that another question, answer, and proof passage be inserted here to show the authority of Christ. The question might read, "Why can Jesus institute baptism?" The answer would be, "Jesus has all power." Then follows a reference to the passage (Matt. 28:18).

As an introduction to the next question, number 247, another question and answer could be inserted. The question is, "To whom did Jesus give the command to baptize?" The answer, "He gave it to all His followers, the Church, throughout all time." The passage cited (Matt. 28:18-20) helps to stress the fact that Jesus said He would be with them to the end of the world. So the command must extend beyond those disciples of that day (who are now dead) to all His disciples, for all time.

The following question concerns itself with the manner in which the command to baptize is carried out.

247. Through whom does the Church administer Baptism?

The Church administers Baptism through the called ministers of Christ; but in cases of emergency and in the absence of the pastor, any Christian should baptize.¹⁶

In order to tie up the sequence, the answer would be revised as follows, "The command extends to the entire Church, but baptism is generally administered through its called ministers. However, in cases of emergency and in the absence of the Christian pastor, any Christian should baptize."

A study of the passage quoted (1 Cor. 4:1) to show that Christ's followers administer baptism through their pastors provides some interesting insights. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Lenski explains ministers ($\delta\pi\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\tau\eta\varsigma$) as follows, "While etymologically, $\delta\pi\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\tau\eta\varsigma$ = Rudersknecht, underrower in a galley, this specific meaning had become lost and . . . meant only an attendant or helper who assists a higher master."¹⁷ For the pastor, Christ is that higher Master. Dau says that these men are $\sigma\acute{\iota}\kappa\upsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\varsigma$, householders, stewards of the Church. Dau says that the entire Gospel is labeled by that name. He argues that Paul also baptised (1 Cor. 1:14, 16) and thus considered baptism a part of "mystery."¹⁸

¹⁶p. 172.

¹⁷Lenski, First Corinthians, p. 161.

¹⁸Dau, op. cit., p. 142.

The Expositor's Greek Testament says that "the phrase implies not secrets of the master kept from other servants, but secrets revealed to them through God's dispensers, to whose judgment and fidelity the disclosure is committed."¹⁹

This passage (1 Cor. 4:1) does not serve as direct proof. However, its setting in the entire line of Scripture thought makes it adequate for this purpose.

The following question and answer set forth an exegetical rather than a systematic problem. What is the general implication of being baptized in the name of the Triune God?

Q48. What do the words "baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" imply?

They imply that by Baptism I have been received into communion with the Triune God.²⁰

The commentaries have varied opinions with regard to the significance of the key word εἰς. Vincent allows for two possible definitions. "Unto, denoting object or purpose, as εἰς μετὰ τοῦ κυρίου . . ." or "into, denoting union or communion with, as Rom. vi. 3, 'baptized into Christ Jesus' . . ." ²¹ Meyer defines it; "baptize with reference to."²² The Expositor's Greek Testament says, "Into the name, i.e.,

¹⁹Op. cit., II, 797.

²⁰p. 172.

²¹Vincent, op. cit., I, 149.

²²Heinrich Meyer, editor, The Gospels Of Mark And Luke (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, Publishers, 1884), p. 258.

as confessing the name which embodies the essence of the Christian creed.²³ Luther interprets it in this way,

For to be baptized in the name of God is to be baptized not by men, but by God Himself. Therefore, although it is performed by human hands, it is nevertheless truly God's own work. From this fact everyone may himself readily infer that it is a higher work than any work performed by a man or a saint.²⁴

Lenski's opinion is that " means, 'in the name,' not 'into'. . . . It does not mean, 'on the authority of.'" Lenski continues, "The sense is, 'In connection with the revelation of the Father. . . .'"²⁵ Francis Pieper defends the exegesis of the catechism in the following way,

The usual explanation of the difference between the prepositions is: εἰς expresses the relation into which the baptized are placed; ἐν and ἐν designate the foundation on which Baptism takes place (Cremer). Or into, unto communion, unto ownership; ἐν, ἐν, on the basis of (Ebeling). But it is self-evident that such general expressions as "in relation to," "on the basis of," and above all, the popular "in the sphere of," etc., derive their specific meaning only from the context. When Baptism on the basis of the name of Jesus Christ is modified by the phrase, "for the remission of sins," εἰς expresses the purpose or effect; Baptism is a means of transmitting remission. Ebeling very correctly says that εἰς also in 1 Cor. 12:13 designates the effect. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"; because Baptism is a means of remitting sin, it also implants into the spiritual body of the Church.²⁶

²³Op. cit., I, 340.

²⁴Triglott Concordia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 735.

²⁵Lenski, Matthew, p. 1175.

²⁶Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, translated by Walter Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1953), III, 259.

Thayer allows for this as one of the definitions. He defines it in the following way, among others,

Used metaphorically, I. retains the force of entering into anything, i. where one thing is said to be changed into another, or to be separated into parts, or where several things are said to be combined or collected into one, etc.²⁷

The problem is thus strictly exegetical. It is difficult to set up a definite rule one way or the other. It is perfectly true that Christians are received into communion with God. This passage, in its mere contextual setting, would not be an adequate proof. But the fact that Christians are children of God through the forgiveness of sins in baptism, places them into communion with their heavenly Father. If the exegesis of the catechism is to be used, it would fit far better in a later section of the catechism, possibly the section which deals with the power of baptism.

The next question asks about the subjects of baptism.

249. Who is to be baptized?

All nations, that is, all human beings, young and old, are to be baptized.²⁸

The answer appears to be above criticism.

This question and answer are introductory to the problem of infant baptism. Therefore the writer feels that the following two questions should be reversed. Thus, the ques-

²⁷Joseph Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon (Corrected edition; New York: American Book Company, c.1889), p. 184.

tion, "How do you prove that infants, too, are to be baptized?" would precede the question, "What distinction is to be made in baptizing?" In this way, after showing the need for infant baptism, the distinction between adult and infant baptisms could be shown. This study will deal with these questions in that order.

The first question in the revised order attempts to defend the validity of infant baptism.

251. How do you prove that infants, too, are to be baptized?

Infants, too, are to be baptized--

- A. Because they are included in the words "all nations";
- B. Because Holy Baptism is the only means whereby infants, who, too, must be born again, can ordinarily be regenerated and brought to faith;
- C. Because infants, too, can believe.²⁹

The baptismal command and another passage are quoted to prove the validity of the first part of the answer.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19).

Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children (Acts 2:38-39).

Both of these passages give an answer to the question, but they do not prove the validity of the answer. It would be far better to supply a statement such as this, "The Bible

²⁹pp. 173-74.

says that everyone should be baptized." The two passages (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38-39) could testify to a statement such as this. They would not, however, prove that children are included in all nations.

A closer study of the baptismal command is very useful in showing the universality of the baptismal command. The phrase, "all nations," has been and still is considered a valid proof. It would be very difficult for anyone to claim that $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\epsilon\sigma\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\ \epsilon\theta\nu\eta$ refers only to the Gentiles in contrast to Israel or that it refers only to the heathen. The phrase is comprehensive, embracing all races, ages, and sexes of men. Certainly one cannot exclude children any more than one could exclude adult women or men from this command. The census takers do not exclude children in their tabulations of the population of the nation.

The second passage (Acts 2:38-39) helps to show the all-inclusiveness of the baptismal command. The two phrases, "everyone of you" and "to your children," serve as an indication. The Greek word used for "children" is $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$. It is interesting to note how generally the word $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is used. The term can apply to an older child (Mark 9:24), or it can refer to an infant just born (John 16:21). The point is that Peter does not draw any age limitations. The promise applies to all. Peter possibly meant more than just "children" with this term. He possibly had descendants in mind also. But the fact remains that he uses a term which does not set forth

an age limit. In the words immediately following (not quoted by the catechism), Peter shows that the promise extends also "to all afar off." This also helps to illustrate that everyone is to be baptized.

Whitelaw points out that children were considered to be within the pale of the Old Testament church. Certainly, in the New Testament church, he says, the promise of forgiveness extends not to men and women by themselves, but also to their offspring.³⁰ Cullmann says, "There is both adult and infant circumcision and both infant and adult proselyte baptism. It is significant that in this regard Judaism experiences no difficulty."³¹

The second reason given under question 251 can be criticized pedagogically. It tries to say too much in one long sentence. It resembles a legal document. It attempts to make four theological statements: (a) Baptism is the only means for infants; (b) Infants must be born again; (c) Baptism is the means through which infants ordinarily are regenerated; (d) Baptism is the means through which infants are ordinarily brought to faith. It would be difficult for children to grasp all this from the statement of the catechism.

Theologically, there is also a point of criticism in the

³⁰ Thomas Whitelaw, A Homiletical Commentary (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1896), p. 71.

³¹ Oscar Cullmann, Baptism In The New Testament, translated by J. K. S. Reid (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1950), p. 56.

use of the expression, "only means whereby infants. . . can ordinarily be regenerated." It is hard to prove that baptism is the only means for infants. God is not bound by means. He worked faith in John the Baptist as He caused him to be filled with the Holy Ghost and to leap in his mother's womb. This was done without the means of baptism. It is true, the term is qualified to some extent by the adverb, "ordinarily"; but using the expression "only means" is still misleading to the reader. The expression, "only means," has its origin, possibly, in the baptism ritual of The Lutheran Agenda, "We should, indeed, value this Sacrament highly, particularly since it is the only means of grace God has given us for little children."³²

The second reason can simply be modified to read, "Infants, too, must be born again and brought to faith." Since the first passage (Mark 10:13-15) does not prove the revised statement, it shall be held in reserve. The second passage (John 3:5-6) serves as a clear proof. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; that which is born of the flesh is flesh." There are variant readings in the passage, but not of such a nature as to render the passage invalid. It should be noted that the words, "except a man," are not as narrow as the English translation implies. Dau explains, "The phrase 'ean wã tis' is of

³²The Lutheran Agenda (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. 8. This contains Lutheran rituals.

universal force, and the statement at the end: 'to gegenämnen-on ek tñs sarkos sarx estin,' likewise.⁵³ There is a universal need for regeneration. To illustrate further, Lenski says, "The Greek has the neuter τὸ γεννημῖνον, which states the thought abstractly, by this form emphasizing the fact that a principle is being established and one without a single exception.⁵⁴ The universal need is also illustrated by the words, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." All men are born of the flesh and therefore are in need of regeneration. All men are born in sin and need the grace of God.

This second birth naturally refers to the spiritual re-birth. Jesus describes this as taking place by being born of water and of the spirit. Water therefore is the instrument, and the Spirit is the agent of the new birth. Baptism thus answers the universal need for spiritual re-birth.

The third reason which would prove infant baptiss could be stated, "God's promises extend to infants also." For this, the traditional passage could well be cited.

They brought young children to Him that He should touch them; and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein (Mark 10:13-15).

This passage does not speak of baptism specifically, but it

⁵³Dau, op. cit., p. 145.

⁵⁴Lenski, John, p. 239.

does help to illustrate that children should hardly be excluded from being brought to Jesus through the means of baptism.

Exegetes have made some interesting studies of this passage. Dau notes that both in this passage and in its parallel (Matt. 19:13) the touching incident of the blessing of children is told immediately after the Lord's discourse about the marriage bonds. Just as Jesus wants the married state to be consecrated to God, so He desires the living fruits of the marriage union to be dedicated to Him. Dau further points out that προσέρχονται is the simple imperfect, and denotes either that through its continuous action this was something which people were in the habit of doing, or that in this particular occasion there were many parents in the act of coming. Some had already arrived and some were still seen coming in the distance.³⁵

Wuest says that "the word προσέρχονται is commonly used of sacrifices and suggests here the idea of dedication."³⁶ It should also be noted that after ἔρχεσθε, Mark has the accusative with the infinitive. Let "them be coming to me," present tense, always be coming. Mark uses the more general term for children, παιδία. Luke, however, is more specific and uses βρέφη, "sucklings," to indicate the type of

³⁵Dau, op. cit., p. 144.

³⁶Wuest, op. cit., p. 199.

children which were brought to Jesus. Haas quotes Luther in these words, "If Christ will not save anyone, except he become a child, how much more does he save those who are children before."³⁷ Another passage serves as a direct proof and could be listed in this setting. "The promise is unto you and to your children" (Acts 2:39).

The final reason is identical with that of the Synodical Catechism. "Because infants, too, can believe." The passage is the traditional one:

Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea (Matt. 18:6).

Commentators have disputed over this passage. Meyer says that it is an illustration and should not be used to prove the faith of little children.³⁸ Broadus says the phrase refers certainly not to unconscious infants, but to child-like believers. It could refer to comparatively young children, he says, but never to infants.³⁹

Scholars of this type make these dogmatical assertions because they reject the possibility that infants can believe. Since Christians believe that the Holy Ghost works faith in man's heart, it is a marvel, actually, that even adults are

³⁷John Haas, The Gospel According To Mark, The Lutheran Commentary (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1895), p. 174.

³⁸Meyer, op. cit., p. 325.

³⁹John Broadus, Commentary On The Gospel Of Matthew, (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Pub. Soc., c.1886), p. 383.

able to believe. John the Baptist apparently believed when he heard the greeting of Mary. We're told that John the Baptist, "being filled with the Holy Ghost," leaped for joy in his mother's womb.

For "little ones," Matthew uses the words, *τοῖς μικροῖς*, which is a very general term. It would be difficult for anyone to say who is to be included or excluded from this term. A few words from Luther on this point would be in place.

We say that we are not so much concerned to know whether the person baptized believes or not; for on that account Baptism does not become invalid; but everything depends upon the Word and command of God. . . . For my faith does not make Baptism, but receives it. Now, Baptism does not become invalid even though it be wrongly received or employed; since it is not bound (as stated) to our faith, but to the Word. For even though a Jew should today come dishonestly and with evil purpose, and we should baptize him in all good faith, we must say that his baptism is nevertheless genuine.⁴⁰

Cullmann fits baptism into its proper Christian framework when he makes this general observation.

It is he, Jesus, who will not only baptize individual men with water like John the Baptist but will complete the general Baptism, for all men, and once for all, at the moment of his atoning death. It belongs to the essence of this general Baptism affected by Jesus, that it is offered in entire independence of the decision of faith and understanding of those who benefit from it.⁴¹

The next question tries to explain why adults are first instructed and then baptized, and why, for children, the process is reversed.

⁴⁰Triglott *Concordia*, *op. cit.*, p. 746.

⁴¹Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

250. What distinction is to be made in baptizing?

A. Those who can receive instruction are to be baptized after they have been instructed in the principal doctrines of the Christian religion.

B. Little children should be baptized when they are brought to Baptism by those who have authority over them.⁴²

The first part correctly explains that for adults, some degree of instruction must precede baptism. The proof passage gives adequate support. "They that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41). The Bible narratives give additional support. They refer to the jailer at Philippi and the eunuch (Acts 16:33-34; Acts 8:26-39). Both were adults who first were instructed in the fundamentals of the Christian faith before they were baptized.

The difficulty lies with the second part of the answer. There it is declared that "little children should be baptized when they are brought to Baptism by those who have authority over them." The passage cited to prove this is, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This passage expresses the responsibility of parents to their children but actually says nothing about baptism as a part of that responsibility.

The writer suggests the following solution. The question is, "What distinction is to be made in baptizing?" In its revised form, the first part of the answer says, "In the

⁴²pp. 172-73.

command to baptize and teach, Jesus does not make a distinction." The baptismal command (Matt. 28:19-20) might be cited as proof. In this command, the Greek shows clearly that the command lists baptizing before teaching (*μαθητεύσατε . . . βαπτίζοντες . . . διδύσκοντες*). This cannot serve as a direct proof that baptism must precede instruction. It certainly does reveal the liberty which Christians can exercise in the matter. Lenski asserts that Jesus sees beyond the first missionary stage of the Gospel work when adults had to be instructed before they were baptized. Jesus, he says, sees His Church being established among the nations, and children thus entering it in infancy, and this by means of baptism.⁴³

It is interesting to note that certain manuscripts render the reading *βαπτίζοντες* the aorist participle. That would definitely place baptism before instruction; "having baptized. . . teach them." Unfortunately, this is supported by less recognized codices. It does give an indication of the belief of the early church. Actually, the passage shows that the matter cannot be legislated in one way or the other.

The second part of the answer treats of adult baptism. The answer and Scripture passages in the catechism are adequate for this purpose.

The third part of the answer is revised to read, "From

⁴³Lenski, Matthew, p. 1173.

the baptisms of entire households recorded in the New Testament, it may be concluded that children of believing parents should be baptized immediately." The Biblical basis is found in the narratives of Lydia (Acts 16:14-15) and the jailer (Acts 16:25-33). In support of the baptism of infants in the "household baptisms," Rohmert says,

Where the parents turned to the Gospel in faith and allowed themselves to be baptized, the disciples felt no hesitation in baptizing the whole family. . . . In any case, we're not told that there the children were excluded from Baptism. . . . If the child is not supposed to be baptized before it comes to faith, we shall have to say with Luther, "How and when are they to know on every occasion? Have they turned into gods, that they can look into the hearts of people to see whether they believe or not?"⁴⁴

Gullmann adds this insight:

Those who dispute the Biblical character of infant Baptism have therefore to reckon with the fact that adult Baptism for sons and daughters born of Christian parents, which they recommend, is even worse attested by the New Testament than infant Baptism (for which certain possible traces are discoverable) and indeed lacks any kind of proof.⁴⁵

The writer feels that the use of these Bible narratives is perfectly proper. They cannot serve as a direct proof, but the inference seems to warrant their use.

The final question of this chapter deals with the custom of sponsors.

252. For what purpose has the Church introduced sponsors?

Sponsors are--

⁴⁴Rohmert, op. cit., pp. 420-21.

⁴⁵Gullmann, op. cit., p. 26.

A. To testify that the children have been properly baptized;

B. To assist in caring for the Christian education and training of their godchildren; especially if these should lose their parents;

C. To pray for them.⁴⁶

It is recognized that this custom does not have Biblical basis and is an adiaphoron. The use of sponsors adds nothing to the validity of baptism. In this light there is nothing to criticize in the answers as such.

The Scripture passage cited for the first reason does not speak of baptism. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matt. 18:16). This passage speaks of church discipline. Two or three witnesses are to be brought in so that "every word may be established." The situation is entirely different in this case and should not be made to apply to baptism. Omitting this passage would help make it clear that the use of sponsors at baptism is recognized as an adiaphoron.

The final two reasons simply present the obligations any Christian should feel toward Christian children. The role of a sponsor simply localizes the responsibility of an adult to a child.

⁴⁶p. 174.

CHAPTER III

THE BLESSINGS OF BAPTISM

After an explanation of the nature of baptism, the Synodical Catechism points up the value of baptism. It attempts to explain Luther's exposition of the blessings of baptism. With this, the first question and answer are presented.

253. What great things, then, does Baptism give or work?

- A. It works forgiveness of sins;
- B. It delivers from death and the devil;
- C. It gives eternal salvation.¹

The statements are logical and direct answers to the question.

The first blessing is the forgiveness of sins. For this, three Bible passages are cited. In the first passage (Acts 2:38), Peter issued the call, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." The εἰς with an accusative denotes purpose. ἀφεσις βαπτισμῶν is the act by which God removes sins and declares a man righteous. It is for the purpose of forgiveness that baptism is offered. The passage adequately shows that baptism gives the blessing of the forgiveness of sins.

In the second passage (Acts 22:16), Ananias told Paul, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." Dau points out that the second "and" is not only a connective, but also

¹p. 175.

epexegetical. He goes on to say that the meaning is not to have two separate things done, baptizing and washing. In other words, Ananias told Paul to be baptized, and, as a result, wash away his sins.² This passage is a clear proof of the answer.

The third passage (Gal. 3:26-27) presents the "putting on" of Christ as a result of being baptized. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Wessel speaks of two types of "putting on."

According to Scriptural diction, there is a twofold putting on of Christ: 1. Putting on Christ according to the Law. Rom. 13, 14: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Text and context say this means: Follow in Christ's footsteps, follow Him as an example in your daily life. In Gal. 3, 26-27, a putting on of Christ according to the Gospel is spoken of. By faith we are clothed in Christ's righteousness, so that God does not look upon our sin, but sees nothing but Christ's spotless robe of righteousness.³

Dau compares this "putting on" to that of our first parents. He says that Adam and Eve after the fall sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. This attempt, however, failed and led to their being clothed by garments which God provided. Just so, says Dau, the believer is robed in the righteousness of Christ.⁴

²W. H. T. Dau, "Notes For Lectures On Catechism" (Mimographed, n.d.), p. 143.

³Louis Wessel, The Proof Texts Of The Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), pp. 83-84.

⁴Dau, op. cit., p. 146.

On the basis of the evidence offered, the passage appears to prove the point.

The second blessing is that of delivering from death and the devil. The passage cited (Rom. 6:3) unfortunately does not prove the point. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" The context shows that "being baptized into His death" means being dead to sin, not being delivered from death. Paul was attacking the argument which some were possibly raising. They probably argued that if God's grace was so free, why not sin all the more so that more grace might abound? Paul, in return, asked how it was possible for those who were dead to sin to live any longer under sin.

Possibly, in an indirect way, "being baptized into His death" might include the connotation of being delivered from death, but that would not warrant its use here.

The writer was not able to discover any substitute passages to serve as a direct proof. The statement, "delivers from death and the devil," is true in the entire setting of Scripture. This deliverance from death and the devil comes as a result of the forgiveness of sins. So the statement can stand by itself. Luther explains his position as follows,

But here in Baptism there is brought free to everyone's door such a treasure and medicine as utterly destroys death and preserves all men alive.⁵

⁵Triglott Concordia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 743.

The third blessing of baptism which the catechism lists is that of eternal salvation. The first passage cited (Mark 16:16) is one which proves the point clearly. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Lenski says that the verb βαπτίζεσθαι and its cognate terms "form one of the greatest, most distinctive and wonderful concepts of the Scriptures." He also points out that in its passive, it connotes the Savior as the one performing the action. Lenski regards the future as punctiliar, expressing one decisive act.⁶

This passage, unfortunately, has poor manuscript evidence and is believed by many not to be a part of the Gospel of Mark. Lutherans, generally, seem to accept this passage, so it can be retained. For such who doubt its authenticity, Titus 3:5 should be added: "According to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The second passage (1 Pet. 3:21) definitely states that baptism saves. "Baptism doth also now save us." Peter, in this passage, drew an analogy between the story of the flood and baptism. Wessel cites these parallels.

A few parallel thoughts: The water of the Deluge carried eight souls into a new world; so baptismal water carries us into the kingdom of God. The water of the flood is a type of the water of baptism. The water of

⁶R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, c.1934), p. 473.

the flood and that in baptism correspond in one point: both are saving waters. Baptismal water is saving water.⁷

Dau says that from the fact that a present tense is used, signifying a continuous action, it can be inferred that the force of baptism extends throughout the life of a person. It will exert its saving power "until it shall save us with the final salvation."⁸

In the words which follow the words of the proof passage, Peter ties in baptism with the message of the Gospel when he says that baptism saves by the resurrection. The resurrection, all Christians know, shows God's approval of the death of Christ as the means by which forgiveness was earned. The context thus strengthens the validity of this passage as a proof that baptism saves.

The Synodical Catechism next challenges a question which may come to the believer's mind.

254. But has not Christ earned all these blessings for us?

By His suffering and death Christ has indeed earned these blessings for us; Baptism, however, is a means by which the Holy Ghost makes these blessings our own. (Baptism is a means of grace.)⁹

The answer appears to be clear and above criticism.

The first passage cited has been treated above. "Ye

⁷Wessel, op. cit., p. 68.

⁸Dau, op. cit., p. 150.

⁹pp. 175-76.

are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). In baptism, man puts on Christ, that is, he puts on the robe of Christ's righteousness as a cover for his sins. By putting on this robe, he makes these blessings his own. The passage is suitable. The writer is of the opinion that another passage (Titus 3:5) would be clearer and more inclusive. "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior." The words state the issue clearly. They specifically point up baptism as a work of the Holy Ghost. They serve as a valuable supplementary passage.

The second passage (1 Cor. 6:11) brings out the fact that it is the Holy Ghost who works this in baptism. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." The first of the three verbs is middle (ἀπελούσασθε) and the other two are passive (ἡγιασθήτε and ἐδικαιώθητε). Ordinarily, in the middle voice, the subject is represented as acting upon himself. That would present difficulties in interpreting this verse. However, Munn also allows for the causative sense which denotes that the subject gets something done to himself.¹⁰ This latter sense could be the only one

¹⁰H. Munn, A Short Syntax Of New Testament Greek (Fifth edition; Cambridge: University Press, 1949), pp. 63-64.

in this passage because the work is attributed to the "Spirit of our God." So the "washing" of baptism can definitely be attributed to the Holy Spirit. It should also be noted that in these words Paul was not trying to set forth a definite order by which a man becomes a Christian. The rest of Scripture would disagree with that order. He was reminding them only of these various Christian blessings which the Holy Ghost had worked in them.

The next question and answer reveal who the recipients of these blessings of baptism are.

255. To whom does Baptism give all these blessings?

Baptism gives these blessings to all who believe, as the words and promises of God declare: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."¹¹

The writer has not been able to determine just why the structure is changed by including the proof passage (Mark 16: 16) within the body of the answer. It would be more consistent to place it underneath the answer in a separate form as the pattern for the rest of the catechism has been.

For Christians, baptism is a wonderful gift in that it offers salvation by working forgiveness of sins. But what about those who believe in Christ and for some reason are not baptized? The Synodical Catechism seeks to find the answer.

256. Can anyone be saved without Baptism?

It is unbelief only that damns; and though saving faith cannot exist in the heart of one who refuses to be baptized, it can exist when for some reason Baptism cannot be obtained.¹²

This answer nowhere provides a direct reply to the question. The writer therefore suggests the following solution as an answer to the question.

A. Yes, a person with saving faith can be saved without baptism if for some reason, he cannot obtain it (Mark 16:16).

B. A person will not be saved without baptism if he refuses baptism (Luke 7:30).

C. It should be remembered that unbelief alone damns. However, refusing to be baptized is equal to unbelief, because it rejects the promises of Christ.

The proof passage (Mark 16:16) suggested for the first part of the answer cannot be used without some explanation.

Francis Pieper quotes Luther on this point.

It may, however, happen that one has faith without having been baptized; and, again, some may receive Baptism who do not truly believe. Hence this text must be understood so as to enjoin and confirm Baptism as a thing not to be despised, but to be used, as we have stated; and yet it must not be explained so narrowly that a person not able to obtain Baptism stand condemned by it. . . . The consensus of opinion has always been that if a person dies a believer but lacks Baptism, he would not be condemned; for it might happen that a person is a believer and, though desiring Baptism, is overtaken by sudden death.¹³

The writer recognizes that this passage is not most logical,

¹²Ibid.

¹³Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, translated by Walter Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1955), III, 280-81.

nor does it have the soundest manuscript attestation, but it was the best passage he could find for this purpose. The statement still is true in the light of all Scripture. If one considers the many Old Testament saints to whom baptism was not available, he cannot help but come to this conclusion.

The proof passage for the second part of the answer relates how "the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:30). This incident is also cited by the Synodical Catechism.

In the verses preceding, Jesus gives a high recommendation of John. The people who heard him justified God, "being baptized with the baptism of John." The Pharisees, in contrast, rejected the message. They had not accepted baptism. Luke says that they rejected it against themselves ($\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\varsigma \xi\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$). Lenski calls it the "equivalent of a dative of disadvantage: 'for themselves,' as far as they were concerned"¹⁴ Geldenhuys cites another Bible scholar to show that

$\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\varsigma \xi\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ should be taken together with $\eta\ \beta\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\tau\eta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ and not with $\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\eta$, "and therefore does not mean God's counsel for them or for their benefit, but as directed against themselves, i.e. [they nullified it] to their own disadvantage or destruction" (Greydanus, in. loc.).¹⁵

The final part of the recommended answer serves to explain the first two parts.

¹⁴Lenski, Luke, p. 739.

¹⁵Horval Geldenhuys, Commentary On The Gospel of Luke (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), p. 331.

CHAPTER IV

THE POWER OF BAPTISM

Christians recognize baptism as a wonderful gift of God. It is a powerful gift which saves souls by offering forgiveness, deliverance, life, and salvation. The Synodical Catechism now concerns itself with determining the source of the power of baptism.

257. How are forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and eternal salvation obtained by Baptism?

The word of God places these great blessings into Baptism; and through faith, which trusts this word of promise, we accept the forgiveness, life, and salvation offered in Baptism and make these blessings our own.¹

The point of criticism with regard to this presentation is that the answer tries to say too much in one sentence.

The following division simplifies the material.

How can baptism give us the blessings which save us?

The word of God places these great blessings into baptism.

How do we accept these blessings?

By faith we accept the forgiveness, life, and salvation offered in baptism.

The passage to prove the first answer is the one cited in the Synodical Catechism (Eph. 5:25-26). "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Wessel's

quotation of another Lutheran theologian serves as an adequate explanation of this passage in the light of baptism.

Let us hear Dr. Graebner's explanation of this phrase. He writes, Theological Quarterly, Vol. 5, pp. 9-10: "But the sacred act which constitutes sacramental Baptism comprises more than a mere application of water. St. Paul describes Baptism as to loutron tou hudatos en renati, 'the washing of the water with the word.' That he speaks of a particular washing is indicated by the article before loutron in the text, and the only washing to which his description answers is Baptism. By tou hudatos, it is described as a washing of water, water not used as a drink, but applied externally. But this water is en renati, together with or accompanied by the word. The preposition en, is here as elsewhere employed to indicate concomitance, introducing that with which the water is bound up or intimately connected."²

As a proof passage for the second answer, Jesus' words (Mark 16:16) would serve as proof. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The significance of this passage has been discussed in the previous chapter.

The next question and answer of the catechism seek to explain the terms, "washing of regeneration" and "renewing of the Holy Ghost."

258. Why do the Scriptures call Baptism the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost?

In Baptism the Holy Ghost works faith and thus creates in us new spiritual life.³

It is rather apparent that the answer fails to clarify. A child of confirmation age would still have difficulty in

²Louis Wessel, The Proof Texts Of The Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 94.

³p. 178.

explaining the meaning of these terms if he were to rely only on the above answer. The following revision is suggested.

Why do the Scriptures call baptism the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost?

A. "Washing of regeneration" means that in baptism our sins are washed away and we are born again (regenerated) into a new spiritual life.

B. "Renewal of the Holy Ghost" means that the Holy Ghost renews us to this new spiritual life.

The word "renewing" (Rom. 8:13) is used to describe the destruction of the "old man" in the manner in which, "that we might put on the better conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." The use of this language is hardly necessary here. The answer only defines a term of baptism, not of the Bible and therefore does not need biblical backing. Besides, the passage describes the "old man," not the "old man." It is true, rather than the "old man," but that is not known to the student.

The passage shows only one of

The passage shows only one of

CHAPTER V

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTIZING WITH WATER

The Synodical Catechism devotes its final chapter to explaining terms which Luther used in his Small Catechism. The terms are "old Adam" and "new man." The catechism seeks to define these terms and their significance in the life of a Christian.

259. What is the Old Adam?

The Old Adam is the sinful nature, which has come upon us by the fall of Adam and is ours by birth.¹

The answer proves to be a direct and logical answer to the question.

The passage (Eph. 4:22) is cited to show that the description of the "Old Adam" in the answer is correct. "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." The use of this passage is hardly necessary here. The answer only defines a term of Luther, not of the Bible and therefore does not need Scriptural backing. Besides, the passage describes the "old man," not the "Old Adam." It is true, Luther used the terms interchangeably,² but that is not known to the catechumen as he reads the catechism. The passage shows only one of

¹p. 178.

²Triglott Concordia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 749.

the three characteristics of the "Old Adam," the sinful nature. It says nothing about its origin in Adam or about the fact that it is in man at his birth. The passage can be eliminated.

The next question and answer speak of the relation of the old Adam to the Christian life.

269. How is this Old Adam to be drowned in us?

The Old Adam is to be drowned in us by daily contrition (sorrow for sins) and repentance (faith), by which we also resist the evil desires and suppress them.³

The answer is a logical reply to the question.

There are several objections to the answer as such. In the first place, repentance is equaled to faith. Koehler tries to explain it this way.

"Repentance" in the wider sense means contrition and faith (Luke 15:10); in the narrower sense it may mean either one of the two. Here it means faith, because contrition was already mentioned.⁴

The writer was not able to find where Koehler found the basis for repentance meaning "either one of the two." The Lutheran dogmaticians define it in its narrow sense as meaning only contrition. In its wider sense, it includes both. But they never say that repentance means only faith.⁵ Richardson's

³p. 179.

⁴H. W. A. Koehler, A Short Explanation Of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism (Revised edition; River Forest, Illinois: Koehler Publishing Co., c.1946), p. 271.

⁵Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, translated from the German by Walter Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1953), III, 502-03.

word study never speaks of repentance as meaning faith alone. Contrition is always tied up with it.⁶ The two terms simply are not equal. To parallel one with the other is an oversimplification. Luther, in the Large Catechism, seems to use the term to describe both contrition and faith. More especially, he relates repentance to the struggle in the Christian life.

For what else is repentance but an earnest attack upon the old man (that his lusts be restrained) and entering upon a new life. Therefore, if you live in repentance, you walk in Baptism, which not only signifies such a new life, but also produces, begins, and exercises it. For therein are given grace, the Spirit, and power to suppress the old man, so that the new man may come forth and be strong.⁷

Luther continues the discussion.

Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and approach to Baptism, that we repeat and practice what we began before, but abandoned.⁸

So the definition of repentance in the catechism should be changed to "repentance and faith."

Another objection to this answer is that it is a bit difficult to understand. Children of confirmation age are not used to long sentences with dangling clauses. The sentence can be divided as will be shown below.

Yet another difficulty with this answer lies in finding

⁶Alan Richardson, editor. A Theological Wordbook Of The Bible (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1950), pp. 131-32.

⁷Triglott, op. cit., p. 751.

⁸Ibid.

direct Scriptural backing for Luther's statement that the "Old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die." What Luther seems to be trying to show is that repentance is paralleled to baptism, in that the elements of contrition and faith are in both.

And here you see that Baptism, both in its power and signification, comprehends also the third Sacrament, which has been called repentance, as it is really nothing else than Baptism.⁹

As a man goes back to his baptism by the act of contrition and faith, he taps the source of strength which will empower him in his battle against the flesh.

Perhaps by subdividing the question and answer as follows, the issue could become clearer.

How is this old Adam to be drowned in us?

This old Adam is to be drowned in us by daily contrition and repentance (sorrow for sin and faith in Christ).

What does contrition and repentance move us to do?

It moves us to resist and hold down our evil desires.

The passage which the catechism cites (Gal. 5:24) is sufficient for showing the struggle which the Christian engages in against the flesh. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." The verb, "have crucified" (ἐσταύρωσαν), is in the aorist tense. It can best be taken as an ingressive or inceptive aorist,

⁹Ibid.

which, according to Munn, denotes the beginning of a state.¹⁰ Christians have crucified the flesh in baptism. They are Christ's own. They began that state of crucifying at baptism and they are still in that state. Dau adds this insight.

The verb, denoting simply affixing to the cross and not putting to death by crucifixion, intimates the lingering character of the death which the flesh was to undergo. It was, indeed, put away once, by a final decisive act of the will, but it would still for a while continue to live.¹¹

Wessel picturesquely describes the Christian battle.

This crucifixion hurts, smarts. To nail "the old man" on the cross daily is hard work. The "old man" will not have it so; he fights and struggles to come down from the cross. Speaking without figure, the flesh gives sad evidences of life, as was the case with the Galatians. And since the flesh remains with us till death, this warfare must go on till death. What an incentive to maintain the spiritual warfare.¹²

This passage (Gal. 5:24) is not taken from an immediate setting of baptism. It fits well, however, into the whole Christian framework of which baptism is also a part.

The section could be bolstered by the addition of a passage which is taken from the setting of baptism (Rom. 6:12).

"Let not sin therefore reign in you mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Paul has, of course,

¹⁰H. V. P. Munn, A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1948), p. 69.

¹¹W. H. T. Dau, "Notes For Lectures On Catechism" (Mimeographed; n.d.), p. 155.

¹²Louis Wessel, The Proof Texts of The Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 97.

just spoken of baptism. This passage shows what baptism should cause in a Christian. Both verbs are in the present tense (βασιλευέτω and ἑπακούειν), signifying a present repeated action. Thus the daily, continuous struggle is pictured. The verse has a variant reading. This, however, is minor and does not change its significance here.

After speaking in negative terms, the catechism changes to a positive tone by discussing the "new man."

261. What is the new man?

The new man is the new spiritual life, created in us by the washing of regeneration.¹⁸

The answer is a direct reply to the question.

A point of criticism is in the use of the term, "washing of regeneration," which sounds rather abstract. Perhaps the answer could be revised to read, "The new man is the new spiritual life. This new life was created in us by baptism, when our sins were washed away."

The passage cited (2 Cor. 5:17) is not really necessary here. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Here again, the question and answer merely try to explain a term which Luther uses in his explanation. It is true, this term, "new man," is also used in Scripture, but not in the exact baptismal setting in which Luther uses it.

The following question and answer speak of the workings of this new man.

262. How does this new man come forth and arise?

This new man comes forth and arises as we daily overcome sin and live in true godliness.¹⁴

The answer appears to be above criticism.

The passage cited by the catechism (Eph. 4:24) shows the characteristics of this "new man." "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." In this passage, Paul is speaking to converted baptized Christians. The context shows this clearly in expressions as, "Ye have not so learned Christ" (Eph. 4:20) and "Put off concerning the former conversation" (Eph. 4:22). The baptized Christian of today is in the same setting as the Ephesian Christian. He is to put on this new man and thus show that he really has been baptized. This new man is a copy of the perfect Adam before the fall. The baptismal vow is to remind Christians of that perfect conformity with God which their first parents possessed.

Here again, the passage is not taken from an immediate setting which discusses baptism. It fits, however, into the structure of the whole Christian theology and serves as a commentary on St. Paul's reference to the newness of life (Rom. 6:3). To put the passage of the catechism and the above answer into its proper setting, the latter words of this passage (Rom. 6:3) should be cited as a second passage. "Even so we also should walk in newness of life."

¹⁴Ibid.

The following question and answer serve as a summary of the preceding material.

263. How does baptizing with water signify the daily drowning of the old man and the coming forth of the new man?

By Baptism we are made partakers of Christ. Now we who are baptized should daily repent of all sins, shun everything that is evil, and walk in newness of life.¹⁵

Although both question and answer are a bit long, they are logically related to one another and provide a clear statement.

The answer is a summary of what has just been discussed. This is probably the reason why no Scripture passages are listed here. The thought of the answer has its basis in the "baptism chapter" of the Bible (Rom. 6). The four parts of the answer are: (a) We are made partakers of Christ. Paul says, "We are buried with Christ." "We have been planted together in the likeness of his death." (b) We who are baptized should daily repent of all our sins. In other words, we should return to the repentance and faith of our baptism. (c) We are to shun everything that is evil. Paul says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies." (d) We are to walk in newness of life. Paul uses that very expression in the third verse.

The following two questions can be dealt with together.

264. Whom do we therefore renounce at our baptism?

¹⁵ibid.

At our baptism we renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways.

265. What promise, or vow, do we make at our baptism?

At our baptism we promise, or vow, to serve the Triune God, and Him only.¹⁶

These two questions discuss the natural outgrowth of repentance and faith in baptism. The first question deals with the opening question of the "baptismal vow" of The Lutheran Agenda.¹⁷ The second question speaks of the positive side of renouncing the devil, namely, that of serving the true God only.

The final question repeats a detail covered by a previous question.

266. When should we renew our baptismal vow?

We should renew our baptismal vow daily.¹⁸

Christians should indeed think often of their baptism and all it means for them. The question is a good concluding question for studying the doctrine of baptism.

Of all the four chapters studied, the writer feels that this chapter, especially, should be enriched. In many ways, it is the most important chapter. Unfortunately, it is often the most neglected chapter. Christians usually know the most

¹⁶p. 180.

¹⁷The Lutheran Agenda (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1948), pp. 6, 19. This contains Lutheran rituals.

¹⁸p. 180.

about the proper mode of baptizing or the pro and con of infant baptism. What Christians know least is the meaning baptism should have for them.

Why did Luther write this fourth chapter on the significance of baptizing with water? He seemingly wrote it with the purpose of counteracting a false teaching. The Roman church had concerned itself with the question of sins committed after baptism. They considered baptism as something which could not be used for sins committed after baptism. They had substituted the sacrament of penance as something which Christians could use after baptism. Luther points to St. Jerome as one of the chief exponents of this error.

St. Jerome wrote that repentance is the second plank by which we must swim forth and cross over after the ship is broken, on which we step and are carried across when we come into the Christian church.¹⁹

This statement Luther refutes.

Therefore the statement is not correct, or at any rate not rightly understood. For the ship never breaks, because (as we have said) it is the ordinance of God and not a work of ours; but it happens indeed, that we slip and fall out of the ship. Yet if anyone fall out, let him see to it that he swim up and cling to it till he come again into it and live in it, as he had formerly begun.²⁰

Luther thus showed that baptism is not something to be forgotten in the Christian life, but rather, that it was something to be returned to.

¹⁹Triglott, op. cit., p. 751.

²⁰Ibid.

Lutherans today are no longer concerned with the doctrine of penance in the Roman church, at least, not to the extent that Luther was. Many of them grow up completely ignorant of it. But there still is the concern about the life to be lived after baptism. What sort of attitude must the Christian assume? What is the significance of baptism in the life of a Christian?

For the answer to this question, the writer feels that the approach to use is the one that St. Paul used (Rom. 6). Paul strikes against a careless attitude toward sin by reminding the Romans of baptism. The following three sets of questions, answers, and proof passages are suggested as introductory to the presentation of the catechism.

Since baptism assures us forgiveness, may we sin all we please?

By no means. When we accept the assurance of forgiveness, we are dead to sin. That means we don't want to live in sin anymore.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1-2)

What should the forgiveness assured to us in baptism move us to do?

The forgiveness which baptism promises us should move us to live new lives.

"Even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3).

How can we live the new life?

We can live the new life--

A. By drowning our old Adam.

B. By putting on our new man.

The presentation of the catechism follows these introductory questions.

Original Catechism

Proposed Revisions
(Indicated by asterisks.)

The Nature of Baptism

Q1. What is the meaning of the word "baptism"?

What is the meaning of the word "baptism"?

A1. It means to wash, or to dip, or to immerse, or to sprinkle, or to pour.

"Baptism" means to wash, or to dip, or to immerse, or to sprinkle, or to pour.

Q2. What was the practice when Christ was baptized, except that He was baptized in water, and that He was baptized by John?

And what was the practice when He was baptized? He was baptized in water, and He was baptized by John. Luke 3:21.

Q3. What does the word "baptism" mean when we say "I am baptized"?

It means that I am washed and that I am clean. Acts 22:16.

Q4. How shall I receive you when you are baptized? Shall I baptize you with water, or with the Holy Spirit, or with both?

He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with water. Matt. 28:19.

Q5. What does the word "baptism" mean when we say "I am baptized"?

It means that I am washed and that I am clean. Acts 22:16.

Q6. Is baptism not simple water?

It is baptism and simple water only?

Baptism is not simple water.

Baptism is not simple water only--

CHAPTER VI

PROPOSED REVISIONS IN COMPARISON

The Synodical Catechism

Proposed Revisions (Indicated by asterisks.)

The Nature Of Baptism

244. What is the meaning of the word "baptize"?

"Baptize" means to apply water by washing, pouring, sprinkling, or immersing.

616 When they the Pharisees come from the market, except they wash baptize, they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing baptizing of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. Mark 7:4.

617 Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. Acts 22:16.

618 He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Matt. 3:11

NOTE.--Compare Acts 2:16, 17. Note that "baptize" means also "pour out."

245. Why is Baptism not simple water only?

Baptism is not simple water only--

What is the meaning of the word "baptize"?

"Baptize" means to apply water by washing, pouring, sprinkling, or immersing.

*And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first washed baptized before dinner. Luke 11:38.

Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. Acts 22:16.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Matt. 3:11.

NOTE.--Compare Acts 2:16, 17. Note that "baptize" means also "pour out."

Why is baptism not simple water only?

Baptism is not simple water only--

A. Because in Baptism water is used by a special command of God.

B. Because the water is applied in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and is thus connected with God's Word.

246. Who instituted Holy Baptism?

God Himself instituted Baptism; for Christ, who is God, commanded His Church to baptize all nations.

619 All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matt. 28:18-20.

*A. Because in baptism water is used by God's command.

Because the water is applied in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and is thus connected with God's Word.

Who instituted holy baptism?

*Jesus Christ Himself instituted baptism.

*Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28:18-19.

*Why can Jesus institute Baptism?

*Jesus has all power (Matt. 28:18).

*To whom did Jesus give the command to baptize?

*He gave it to all His followers, the Church, throughout all time.

*. . . baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matt. 28:18-20.

247. Through whom does the Church administer Baptism?

The Church administers Baptism through the called ministers of Christ; but in cases of emergency and in the absence of the pastor, any Christian should baptize.

NOTE.-- For a short form of baptism in cases of necessity see page 212.

220 Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 1 Cor. 4:1.

NOTE.-- See The Office of the Keys, Part V, page 181.

248. What do the words "baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" imply?

They imply that by Baptism I have been received into communion with the Triune God.

249. Who is to be baptized?

All nations, that is, all human beings, young and old, are to be baptized.

250. What distinction is to be made in baptizing?

A. Those who can receive instruction are to be baptized after they have been instructed in the principal

Through whom does the Church administer baptism?

*The command extends to the entire church, but baptism is generally administered through its called ministers; however, in cases of emergency and in the absence of the Christian pastor, any Christian should baptize.

NOTE.-- For a short form of baptism in cases of necessity, see page 212.

Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 1 Cor. 4:1.

NOTE.-- See The Office of the Keys, Part V, page 181.

Who is to be baptized?

All nations, that is, all human beings, young and old, are to be baptized.

What distinction is to be made in baptizing?

*A. In the command to baptize and teach, Jesus does not make a distinction.

doctrines of the Christian religion.

681 They that gladly received his word were baptized. Acts 2:41

Bible Narratives: The Ethiopian was instructed before he was baptized. Acts 8:26-39.--The jailer was instructed before he was baptized. Acts 16:25-33.

B. Little children should be baptized when they are brought to Baptism by those who have authority over them.

682. Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Eph. 6:4.

681. How do you prove that infants, too, are to be baptized?

A. Because they are included in the words "all nations."

683 Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them

*Go ye therefore and teach make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. (Matt. 28:18-19).

*B. According to the New Testament pattern; those who can receive instruction are to be baptized after they have been instructed in the principal doctrines of the Christian religion.

They that gladly received his word were baptized. Acts 2:41.

Bible Narratives: The Ethiopian was instructed before he was baptized. Acts 8:26-39.--The jailer was instructed before he was baptized. Acts 16:25-33.

*C. From the baptisms of entire households recorded in the New Testament, it may be concluded that children of believing parents should be baptized immediately.

*Bible Narratives: Lydia and her household were baptized. Acts 16:14-15.--The jailer and his household were baptized. Acts 16:25-33.

How do you prove that infants, too, are to be baptized?

*A. Because the Bible says that everyone should be baptized.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in

in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28:19.

624 Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children. Acts 2:38-39.

B. Because Holy Baptism is the only means whereby infants, who, too, must be born again, can ordinarily be regenerated and brought to faith.

625 They brought young children to Him that He should touch them; and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. Mark 10:13-15.

626 Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; that which is born of the flesh is flesh. John 3:5-6.

C. Because infants, too, can believe.

627 Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which

the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28:19.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children. Acts 2:38-39.

*B. Because infants too, must be born again and brought to faith.

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; that which is born of the flesh is flesh. John 3:5-6.

*C. Because God's promises extend to infants also.

They brought young children to Him that He should touch them; and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. Mark 10:13-15.

*For the promise is unto you and to your children. Acts 2:39.

Because infants, too, can believe.

Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which

believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone be hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Matt. 18:6.

believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone be hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Matt. 18:6.

252. For what purpose has the Church introduced sponsors?

For what purpose has the church introduced sponsors?

Sponsors are--

Sponsors are--

A. To testify that the children have been properly baptized;

A. To testify that the children have been properly baptized;

628 In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. Matt. 18:16.

B. To assist in caring for the Christian education and training of their godchildren, especially if these should lose their parents;

B. To assist in caring for the Christian education and training of their godchildren, especially if these should lose their parents;

C. To pray for them.

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The Blessings Of Baptism

253. What great things, then, does Baptism give or work?

What great things, then, does baptize give or work?

A. It works forgiveness of sins;

A. It works forgiveness of sins;

629 Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38.

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38.

630 Arise and be baptized wash away thy sins. Acts 22:16.

Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. Acts 22:16.

631 Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as

Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as

have been baptized into Christ
have put on Christ. Gal. 3:
26-27.

B. It delivers from death and
the devil;

632 Know ye not that so many
of us as were baptized into
Christ Jesus were baptized
into His death? Rom. 6:3.

C. It gives eternal salvation.

633 He that believeth and is
baptized shall be saved.
Mark 16:16.

634 Baptism doth also now
save us. 1 Pet. 3:21.

634. But has not Christ earned
all these blessings for us?

By His suffering and death
Christ has indeed earned these
blessings for us; Baptism,
however, is a means by which
the Holy Ghost makes these
blessings our own. (Baptism
is a means of grace.)

635 Ye are all the children
of God by faith in Christ Je-
sus. For as many of you as
have been baptized into Christ
have put on Christ. Gal. 3:
26-27.

636 But ye are washed, but ye
are sanctified, but ye are
justified in the name of the

have been baptized into Christ
have put on Christ. Gal. 3:
26-27.

B. It delivers from death and
the devil;

*

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He that believeth and is
baptized shall be saved.
Mark 16:16.

Baptism doth also now save
us. 1 Pet. 3:21.

*He saved us by the washing of
regeneration and renewing of
the Holy Ghost. Titus 3:5.

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But ye are washed, but ye
are sanctified, but ye are
justified in the name of the

Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6:11.

Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6:11/

255. To whom does Baptism give all these blessings?

To whom does baptism give all these blessings?

Baptism gives all these blessings to all who believe, as the words and promises of God declare: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

*Baptism gives all these blessings to all who believe.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark 16:16.

256. Can anyone be saved without Baptism?

Can anyone be saved without baptism?

It is unbelief only that damns; and though saving faith cannot exist in the heart of one who refuses to be baptized, it can exist when for some reason Baptism cannot be obtained.

*A. Yes, a person with saving faith can be saved without baptism if for some reason he cannot obtain it.

Bible Narrative: The Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves when they refused to be baptized by John. Luke 7:30.

*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark 16:16.

*B. A person will not be saved without baptism if he refuses baptism.

Bible Narrative: The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves when they refused to be baptized by John. Luke 7:30.

*C. It should be remembered that unbelief alone damns. However, refusing to be baptized is equal to unbelief, because it rejects the promises of Christ.

The Power Of Baptism

257. How are forgiveness of

*How can baptism give us the

sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and eternal salvation obtained by Baptism?

The Word of God places these great blessings into baptism; and through faith, which trusts this word of promise, we accept the forgiveness, life, and salvation offered in Baptism and make these blessings our own.

337 Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Eph. 5:25-26.

338. Why do the Scriptures call Baptism the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost?

In Baptism the Holy Ghost works faith and thus creates in us new spiritual life.

blessings which save us?

*The Word of God places these great blessings into baptism.

Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Eph. 5:25-26.

*How do we accept these blessings?

*By faith we accept the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation offered in baptism.

*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Mark 16:16.

Why do the Scriptures call baptism the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost?

*A. "Washing of regeneration" means that in baptism our sins are washed away and we are born again (regenerated) into a new spiritual life.

*B. "Renewal of the Holy Ghost" means that the Holy Ghost renews us to this new spiritual life.

The Significance Of Baptizing With Water

*Since baptism assures us forgiveness, may we sin all we please?

*By no means. When we are assured of forgiveness, we are dead to sin. This means that we don't live in sin anymore.

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Rom. 6:1-2.

*What should the forgiveness assured to us in baptism move us to do?

*The forgiveness which baptism promises us should move us to live new lives.

*Even so we also should walk in newness of life. Rom. 6:3.

*How can we live in "newness of life"?

*We can live in newness of life--

A. By drowning our old Adam.

B. By putting on our new man.

259. What is the Old Adam?

The Old Adam is the sinful nature, which has come upon us by the fall of Adam and is ours by birth.

638 Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceifful lusts. Eph. 4:22.

260. How is this Old Adam to be drowned in us?

The Old Adam is to be drowned in us by daily contrition (sorrow for sins) and repentance (faith), by which we also resist the evil desires and suppress them.

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*

How is this old Adam to be drowned in us?

*This old Adam is to be drowned in us by daily contrition and repentance (sorrow for sin and faith in Christ).

639 They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Gal. 5:24.

*What does this contrition and repentance move us to do?

*It moves us to resist and hold down our evil desires.

They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Gal. 5:24.

*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Rom. 6:12.

261. What is the new man?

What is the new man?

The new man is the new spiritual life, created in us by the washing of regeneration.

*The new man is the new spiritual life. This new life was created in us by baptism when our sins were washed away.

640 If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. 2 Cor. 5:17.

262. How does this new man come forth and arise?

How does this new man come forth and arise?

The new man comes forth and arises as we daily overcome sin and live in true godliness.

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641 Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4:24.

Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4:24.

*Even so we also should walk in newness of life. Rom. 6:3.

263. How does baptizing with water signify the daily drowning of the old man and the coming forth of the new man?

How does baptizing with water signify the daily drowning of the old man and the coming forth of the new man?

By Baptism we are made partakers of Christ. Now we who are baptized should daily repent of all sins, shun everything that is evil, and walk in newness of life.

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264. Whom do we therefore renounce at our baptism?

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At our baptism we renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways.

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265. What promise, or vow, do we make at our baptism?

What promise, or vow, do we make at our baptism?

At our baptism we promise, or vow, to serve the Triune God, and Him only.

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266. When should we renew our baptismal vow?

When should we renew our baptismal vow?

We should renew our baptismal vow daily.

We should renew our baptismal vow daily.

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