

Pastor Briggs Drowns Editor's Baptism Idea

Minister Quotes Outstanding Church Men With Reference to Absolute Necessity For Church Members to Be Immersed

J. Edwin Bufflap is about the biggest "jiner" I know of. One begins to wonder if he has not changed denominations every time he has changed boarding places—not because of a change of convictions, but merely for convenience sake. If he keeps on moving, what will he "jine" before he gets through anyway? According to his own story he has joined the Lutherans, the Reformed, the United Brethren, the Presbyterians, and now he comes in his own words telling us that he's "a gosh darned Methodist." Shame on you, Bufflap, talking like that! I wouldn't have called you that myself—though I never could be a Methodist. He even tells us he tried to join a Baptist Church but the preacher turned him down. I don't blame that preacher; he was made out of the right sort of stuff. Even if Mr. Bufflap had been willing to submit to baptism, a real Baptist preacher don't want to try to baptize a fellow whom he has good reason to know will float. You see, Mr. Bufflap has just been floating, floating, floating ever since he was sixteen years of age, it seems. Trouble with him seems to be that he just doesn't believe anything much. Real Baptists want their members to be Baptist for the simple reason that they couldn't be anything else; but Mr. Bufflap could be almost anything it seems, and he who can be one thing as easily as he can be another can be nothing just about as easily as he can be anything. Perhaps his trouble, however, is that he just got headed in the wrong direction, not having been properly instructed to begin with. Possibly when he has been more perfectly instructed in the ways of the Lord, he has the making of a good Baptist in him after all. I do hope that I may help him to see the light, for I am liking him better all the time—if he just don't go and spoil it all.

Here is a fair illustration, nevertheless, of what I have long held to be true with reference to discussions of the ordinance of baptism; there is no possible way of putting the subject before the people in its true light without stirring up resentment in those who oppose this sacred ordinance. The soft-peddling, molly-coddling, pussy-footing, compromising "divines" may talk all they want to about what they style "tact," but my own personal observations have long since led me to the conclusion that their style of tact itself fails when trying to instruct those who are just simply chronic foes to this teaching and ordinance of the all-wise God. For this reason I have invented a definition of tact of my own, to the effect that tact is after all just the best way of accomplishing a desired end—whether it be by the use of a sugar coated pill on the one hand, or by the use of the surgeon's knife on the other hand. And accordingly I usually "take it by the nose and hit it between the eyes" to begin with; for that is usually what has to be done before the battle is over, anyway.

In my baptismal story appearing in the December 5th Herald, however, I was perhaps unusually cautious, for I really didn't especially want to provoke a long newspaper discussion of the subject. So careful was I in selecting my words and the arrangement of my paragraphs that perhaps some of my more compromising brethren who know of my straight-forward, concrete method of dealing with the truth, took it that I had completely "flopped" and had become a "jelly-fish" and "fence-straddler" like themselves. My discussion was pronounced to be "irrefutable and in fine spirit," with "nothing in it at which anyone could take offense." But when the Editor had read my manuscript he began right away to "smell the fumes of the inferno," and so he began to talk about being "hell bound 24 hours of every day" because he had never been immersed. Now, what I had very tactfully established was that it is a command of God that all regenerated believers in Christ Jesus be then immersed, and I quoted the beloved and inspired disciple John, who said that, "He that saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4). That's Bible. The Editor ought not to take exceptions to the Bible, ought he? Well, if in such inspired scriptures as I quoted he "infers" his own condemnation, then why should I worry?

When I say that the scholarship of the world is on my side in this question, that is just exactly what I mean, irrespective of denominational affiliations. It is true that Baptists have very many mighty scholars. Apart from the indisputable light which the Bible itself throws on this subject—such as is found in the sixth chapter of Romans and other places—our

erton, for years head of the Greek department in the Southern Baptist Seminary, was recognized as one of, if not indeed the greatest New Testament Greek scholar of his day. Of course, he said that baptism is the immersion of regenerated believers in water, and that no other form can be scripturally substituted, but I am not concerning myself so much now with what Baptists have said, for what I mean to do is to prove to the Editor by his own kind—not one of them Baptists—that baptism is immersion. If he has never been immersed, he has never been baptized.

He says he used to be a Lutheran. Very well, then, we shall see what Lutheranism has to offer us on the subject. Why bless your life (while I think of it) are there not those in that communion who believe that there are infants in hell not more than a span long, because they died before they were baptized? And yet he has the inconsistency to chide Baptists with believing in "baptismal regeneration." But what of the act itself? Whatever Martin Luther, the founder of that sect, may have had to say about it in later years when he seems to have drifted greatly from his "salvation by grace" position, it is certain that during the earlier part of his reformatory career when his messages carried most the tone of evangelism, he fought tenaciously for immersion. In his celebrated sermon on baptism, dated 1518, here is in part what he had to say: "First baptism is called in Greek 'baptismos,' in Latin 'mersio,' that is, when we dip anything wholly in water, that it is completely covered over * * * That also the signification of baptism demands, for it signifies that the old man and sinful birth from the flesh and blood shall be completely drowned through the grace of God. Therefore a man should sufficiently perform the signification and a right perfect sign."

The Editor says he used to be a Presbyterian. Then let us ask Presbyterian scholars about it. I am almost certain that I have read that Dr. DeWitt Talmage, perhaps America's greatest Presbyterian preacher, was immersed in the Jordan River itself. However that may be, let us ask John Calvin, the founder of Presbyterianism, what he thought about baptism. Said he in his commentary on Acts 8:38: "Here we see how baptism was administered among the ancients, for they immersed the whole body in water."

Even Catholics, centuries after Christ, were found practicing immersion as baptism. I read that, "The Roman Catholic custom * * * is mentioned by the celebrated Jacopo Sadeleto, who was secretary to Leo X, and was afterward made a cardinal by Paul III. Writing in the year 1536, he says, 'Our trine immersion in water at baptism, and our trine emersion, denotes that we are buried with Christ in the faith of the true trinity, and that we rise again with Christ in the same belief.'"

Take the Anglican Church, or the denomination which we in the United States know as the Protestant Episcopal Church, which, largely as a political faction under Henry VIII, broke off from the Catholic Church, retaining most of the creed of the mother church nevertheless. Only gradually, and perhaps chiefly as a matter of "convenience," did this denomination give up immersion as baptism. It's an interesting study we haven't time to continue just here, but Lightfoot, almost the greatest of all commentators from that communion, in his "Commentary" on Col. 2:12, says: "Baptism is the grave of the old man, and the birth of the new. As he sinks beneath the baptismal waters, the believer buries there all his corrupt affections and past sins; he emerges thence, he rises regenerated, quickened to new hopes and a new life." Now, as you can clearly see, the Episcopalians along with many others, take the position that there is a regenerating effect in the act of baptism itself. But I am a Baptist because Baptists take this act as symbolical of a death to sin and a resurrection to a new life which has already taken place beforehand, and because it is commanded of all regenerated believers. Now if anybody wants to debate this question further, I can back up what I say, and that before I say it.

Well, the Editor also claims to be a (some sort of) Methodist. What do their real honest scholars say about baptism? John Wesley and his brother started the move that resulted in the founding of the Methodist denomination. What did Wesley say? If you investigate far enough you will likely find that he immersed Mary Welch, but positively refused Mrs. Parker's child because she would not submit to an immersion. In his notes on Romans 6:4 he says, "We are buried with him. Alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion."

Church of Sweden, but later converted to the Baptist position, quotes Neander, the great Jew and church historian, as saying: "It is certain that Christ did not ordain infant baptism. * * * We cannot prove that the Apostles ordained infant baptism. * * * Baptism was originally administered by immersion, and many of the comparisons of St. Paul allude to this form of its administration."

But here comes the Editor of the Chowan Herald, close enough to the Chowan River, the Edenton Bay, the Albemarle Sound and the Atlantic Ocean to fall overboard and drown—that close to such mighty floods of water, still fretting about folks going to hell for a lack of water in which to be immersed. Why, bless your life, Bufflap, this old ball on which you and I live has a plenty of water to immerse every convert in this old sinful world. The good Lord has well provided for that. He knocked your argument in the head before you ever offered it. When I studied geography they said that three-fourths of the earth's surface was made up of water. Since that time we have had several big rains that have gotten all the creeks up, and now they say there is more water in the world than my geography teacher had perhaps ever dreamed of. I've been in some mighty dry looking places out in Texas and over in Old Mexico, but I've never yet found a place so dry but that a convert couldn't find a place somewhere to be buried with Christ in baptism. I don't believe I recall reading of any convert in all history who couldn't reach baptismal waters except the thief on the cross. In his case God no doubt took his willingness for the deed. But you, Mr. Bufflap, have no such excuse.

"Buried with Christ in baptism"—whether in the Jordan itself, in the sea, the Chowan River, a creek, a pool, a baptistry, or even in a big bathtub—it makes no difference which, just so you have been genuinely converted to Christ and are buried with him in the waters of baptism. It's not a lack of evidence in favor of immersion, nor is it a lack of water. It's just simply a lack of the spirit of love and a willingness to obey the Master's holy will. Jesus said, "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:14). "If any man willet to do his will he shall know the teaching, whether it is of God." John 7:17. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

Respectfully submitted,
W. T. C. BRIGGS,
Pastor Chappell's Hill Baptist Church,
January 23, 1936.

YEOPIM

Mrs. W. E. Baker, of North Edenton, visited Mrs. Charles Ward Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Kirby and children of Bonner's Fork, visited Mrs. Kirby's mother, Mrs. J. E. Brabble, Sunday.

J. H. Mansfield and children, Ruth, Louise and James, from Bethel, visited Mr. Mansfield's daughter, Mrs. Charles Ward, and Mr. Ward Sunday. Mrs. Louise Mansfield and Miss Ida Brabble visited Misses Hilda and Katie Barber Sunday.

Miss Nancy Davenport and Lessie Lessiter visited Miss Margaret Beasley Saturday afternoon.

Mrs. Sidney Campen, of Edenton, spent Tuesday with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Webb.

Mrs. Henry Basnight and baby have returned home after visiting her sister, Mrs. Bruce Basnight, and Mr. Basnight, in Norfolk, Va.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Jordan and children visited Mr. and Mrs. M. Jethro Sunday.

Alvin Skinner and Jasper Goodwin visited Thomas and Willie Lee Brabble Sunday.

Hold Surprise Birthday Party For J. H. Morgan

Mrs. J. H. Morgan entertained at a surprise party last Wednesday night at her home in the Advance community in honor of the fiftieth birthday anniversary of her husband, J. H. Morgan. Sixty-two of Mr. Morgan's relatives and friends were present for the occasion.

The rooms were beautifully decorated with flowers and pink and white crepe paper, a color scheme of pink and white being carried out in the decorations and refreshments.

Special instrumental music and singing was rendered by the Chowan Coon Hunters, and this added greatly to the pleasure of the evening. At about 10 o'clock Mr. Morgan was presented with a lovely birthday cake, which was on a cake plate given Mr. and Mrs. Morgan as a wedding present 26 years ago. The high light of the evening was the appearance of Mr. Morgan's little nephew and niece, Linwood Melvin and Hilda Perry, who presented the honoree with a large basket filled with many beautiful and useful gifts. Ice cream, cake and home-made candies were served, following which the guests left wishing Mr. Morgan many more happy birthdays.

The Khyber pass, gateway to the plains of India from Afghanistan, is a narrow hole winding between high peaks of snow-capped mountains, now

SEWING CIRCLE ENTERTAINED

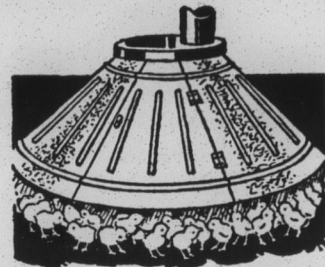
Mrs. E. N. Elliott was hostess to the Sewing Circle at her home near Cross Roads one evening last week. There were only six members present and to those the hostess served sandwiches and hot chocolate. The meeting this week will be with the teachers at the home of Mrs. R. H. Hollowell.



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