

The Baptist System UnScriptural and UnReformed

1. THE BAPTIST SYSTEM EXPOSED

Without doubt, one of the obvious ecclesiastical and theological developments extant over the last 200 years has been the rise and rise and rise of **Immersionism** as a sacramental dogma. It is not only observable amongst those churches that style themselves “Baptist”, but also equally, if not more prevalently, amongst churches that style themselves as “Evangelical”,¹ or by some other title such as “Assemblies of God”, or “Plymouth Brethren.” Indeed, in the British Isles one even finds the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster also practising immersionism, as have many from time to time in the Church of England.²

Notably, this 200-year burgeoning of the Baptist or Immersionistic system is paralleled by a few other features in the body ecclesiastic of the Protestant world, each of them just as obvious and just as indisputable, and, let it be said, each of them

¹ Originally, back in the pre-war days of E.J. Poole-Connor, the formation of the “Free” evangelical churches in Britain was intended to be tolerant of a wide variety of views over the spectrum of theological topics, only dogmatising on what issues were essential to evangelical belief. Whilst overall the resultant churches have maintained a general tolerance on issues such as Calvinism or Arminianism, etc, yet there is notable among them a distinct insistence on immersionism. So much has this developed to be the case, that non-immersed Christians leaving apostate main-line denominations in Britain have been refused membership in “Free Evangelical Churches” except they first submit to adult immersion. Strangely, many of the mainline Baptist Union churches have a much more tolerant attitude and practice on this matter.

² The Anglican church order allows for immersionism if individuals so require it. The Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* has a rubric for the Baptism of Infants that runs thus: “And then naming it after them (if they verily certify him that the child may well endure it) he shall DIP it in the water discreetly and warily,....” Similar provision is made in the Prayer Book for the Baptism of “such as are of Riper Years...” where the rubric states: “Then shall the Priest DIP him in the water, or pour water upon him.....” (Emph. Ed.)

Some Anglican clergy have been quite strict advocates of Immersionism, witness for example the case of the Evangelical Rev. Canon M.H.Garner, who as a missionary in Uganda practised immersionism in the African rivers, and contracted the deadly disease schistosomiasis as a result. (Cf. “*The Churchman’s Magazine*” Vol. 137 Nos. 1643 - 1644 May-June 1983. and page 41).

just as indisputably interwoven in complex ways with the Immersionistic cause.

To begin, we find the last 200 years has witnessed the rise and rise and rise of burgeoning heretical sects. Hyper-Calvinist baptists, Amyraldian Baptists, General or Arminian Baptists, Modernistic Baptists, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Christadelphians, Jehovah's Witnesses, and more. Add to these the various sects of Plymouth Brethren and the explosion of Pentecostalist and Charismatic denominations world-wide, and you have an enormous and rapidly growing phalanx of churches and cults, virtually **ALL of which insist on the fanatical dogma of exclusivistic Immersionism for the sacrament of baptism.**

Again, we find that the last 200 years marks the rise and rise and rise of Romanticism imported into religion, with all its deleterious subjectivistic effects amongst Evangelicals in particular.³ It marks too, the rise and rise and rise of Biblical Higher Criticism, which has effectively rubbished the Holy Bible in the sight of the massed congregations, and relegated the Lord Christ to the ignominy of mythology.⁴ And there are Immersionist theologians too, as we shall see, who have done their whack aplenty in this wicked work.

Further, the last 200 years has been a period marking the rise and rise and rise of Democracy and Universal enfranchisement, with all its social and philosophical emphasis on the individual. Individual experience, individual rights, individual status, no matter of what country, race or creed, have developed until today the "Voice of the People" has taken the place of the "Voice of God". And so we witness that over this last 200 years we can trace the rise and rise and rise of Feminism and Homosexuality not only as a feature of godless society, but alarmingly, as an ever-expanding element within not only apostate "modernist" churches, but even among "Evangelicals", to the point that in 1999 even a top "Calvinist" leader apparently turns out to join the ranks of the "gays". Significantly, he too, was an "immersionist" baptist pastor.⁵

Finally, we may note that over the last 200 years the rise and rise and rise of

³ For a succinct and eye-opening revelation of the effects of "Romanticism" on the rise of modern Evangelicalism and Modernism, see especially **David Bebbington's** learned work: "*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain.....1730's to the 1980's.*" (Unwin Hyman, London 1989). The effects of Romanticism are evident in the works of the Wesley's and of Whitefield, the religion of whom was largely shaped by the new prevailing "winds of fashion" blowing in from Continental Europe in those times, i.e. Romanticism.

⁴ **Bebbington, op cit** footnote 3 above outlines how Evangelicals were deeply affected by the rise of Modernistic theology and the rise of Biblical Higher Criticism, such that Evangelicals became divided into 2 camps, those who were "progressive" and embraced Modernistic Criticism, and those who stood firm against it. The ability of certain evangelicals to argue critically against the veracity of the Bible and yet claim to still have a living faith was based on the whole Romanticistic notions of "experientialism" as paramount in religion, and as promoted in the great so-called "revivals" of the 18th and 19th centuries. Today, modernism still claims "religious regenerative experience" to be the heart of religion, and can even lay claim in Germany for instance, to the title "Evangelical".

⁵ Cf. **BRF News Alert No. 28** page 3 based on information publicised in the *London Times* of Sept. 30th 1999. Rev. Dr. Roy Clements was pastor of Eden Baptist Church, Cambridge, England, and resigned the post, leaving his wife and family to "pursue a relationship with someone of the same sex" and to "set up home with another man."

human science and technology, with the burgeoning spread of that technology and varying but manifold degrees of its benefits to most corners of our planet. Very important, is this development, never before known on the Earth.....important for the advance of the Baptist cause, as we shall see.....as we shall see.

But parallel to all these rises and rises and rises, the last 200 years chart the shocking falls and falls and falls of other, more important facets of life in the body ecclesiastic. If the chart of the last 200 years is going to tell us anything, it will be the opposite of what prima facie one might expect, given the Baptist insistence on the “pure churches” which they theorised would develop consequent to the practice of the ever-expanding exclusivistic adult immersionism.

First one notes the fall and fall and fall of faith. The chill night of apostasy has gripped Protestantism like the clasp of a maniac hell-bent on choking his victim. After 200 years of the above “rises and rises and rises”, the Protestant churches have effectively abandoned the Reformation. They have abandoned the Lord Jesus Christ. And having abandoned the greater, it has been of course easy to abandon the lesser..... they have forgotten the blood of millions of martyrs who died for Christ’s glory, till today even some salient *Calvinist* leaders are ready to trade in Luther’s grand old Biblical doctrine of Justification for a modern Romanist stitch-up.

Then there is the fall and fall and fall of the “antithesis”. Instead of separating themselves from the world, and from worldliness, vast multitudes of Protestants today have so smudged the line between godliness and worldliness as to virtually eradicate it completely. Something to do with “common grace” I believe, which I see propounded enthusiastically by certain Baptist theologians, too.⁶

Then there is the fall and fall and fall of Doctrinal teaching and unity in the truth. In the chill blackness of this spiritual night theologians blunder about, “ever searching, but never able, to come to the knowledge of the truth”. So prevalent is this feature that it has led to an anti-doctrinal sweep of sentiments amongst evangelicals on the one hand, and a parallel fissiparity on the other hand evident amongst those minorities who delight to study doctrine. Again, the Reformation practice of Catechising is all but fallen into the limbo of forgettery, even amongst huge tracts of those who claim to be Reformed.

Crucially there is the fall and fall and fall of the family. Whatever position one takes vis a vis Divorce and Remarriage, one can only stand aghast at the rate at which families are withering before the onslaught of modern sexual mores like leaves in a forest fire. In Britain, government statisticians recently have appraised us that within the next ten years, the number of single people will outnumber the married people, for the first time probably in all history! More astonishingly, in the USA, figures indicate a higher divorce rate amongst evangelical believers than

⁶ The English Baptist Erroll Hulse, for instance, published a widely disseminated book on “Common Grace” some 20 years ago. This is not to say that Mr. Hulse advocated therein an abandonment of the antithesis, but rather to say that contra. his intentions, the whole thesis of “common grace” effectively militates against the maintenance of the antithesis.

amongst the unchurched ungodly! And of course, the modern cult of “individualism” promoted by the democratic pipe-dreams of the godless receives within modern evangelical circles the added impetus of the flighty individualism of Baptist immersionism, which destroys the organic unity of the family, denying the infant children of believers a place in the covenant community, and emphasises the individuality of faith. ⁷ It is indeed a debatable point as to whether the Baptist system has expanded rapidly over the last 200 years because of the rise of democratic individualism making for an environment in which the Immersionist hybrid can thrive sans pareil, or whether the rise of democratic individualism over the last 200 years owes its success, if not also its origins, to the impetus of the Baptist philosophy functioning not only among Baptists, but also extending outside their circles as well. Stand before the majestic form of the “Reformation Monument” in Geneva, and scan from left to right across the 100 metres of carved stonework, passing effigies of the Reformation giants like Calvin and Knox, and suddenly your eyes will stop at a figure which will make you baulk, and ask..... “how did *he* get on here?” Roger Williams, the American baptist of the early 17th century.....there stands his image.....how *did* he get on there? Well, to be sure, it was his so-say contribution to democracy via his philosophy of individualism and pluralism that got him on there, *that* made him a hero to the early 20th century promoters of that great monument.....mistakenly we believe, but understandably, seeing as how the 20th century social, theological, philosophical and political thought had become so suffused with individualism. Roger Williams developed those dogmas logically and naturally from his Baptist theology.....the theology of individualism. ⁸

Thus then, the face of Protestantism after the last 200 years. Wallowing under a rolling swell of Immersionism, higher criticism, modernism, massed cults (all immersionistic in practice), family break-down, antinomianism, betrayal of the Reformation, downright immorality, and outright apostasy.

Not a pretty sight.

⁷ Some important observations concerning the Baptist attitude to families was made in the moderating tome *“The Water that Divides”* by **Donald Bridge and David Phypers**. (Leicester IVP 1977) where they say (p.57) “Indeed many baptists are dubious about the whole idea of family solidarity in Scripture....” emphasising instead how “Jesus warned of the possibly divisive effect that the Christian faith would have on families, rather than promising a cohesive effect.....” Ref. is then made to Matthew 10: 34 - 36. Such baptistic assertions are of course the logical conclusions that arise inexorably from baptistic premises, and they are effective denials of a vast phalanx of Biblical evidence that teaches the contrary. Cf. for inst. : 1 Cor. 7: 10; 11: 13; Eph. 5: 22-24; Col. 3: 18 etc.

⁸ “There goes...” said Cotton Matther, discerningly, concerning the Baptist Roger Williams, “there goes a young man with a windmill in his head.” On the enormously idiosyncratic course of Roger Williams and its deleterious effects right across the developing America, see especially **Henry Martyn Dexter’s** scholarly work: *“As to Roger Williams, and his banishment.....etc.”* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society 1876). A selection out of Dexter’s work can also be found reprinted in *“Christianity and Civilization.”* (Spring 1982 Geneva Divinity School Texas) Vol 1 pages 233 - 243. Another useful exposure of Roger Williams is to be found in **Stephen Perk’s** volume, *“A Defence of the Christian State”* (Taunton, England, the Kuyper Foundation 1998) pp. 40ff.

Strange. If Baptist theology is correct, the churches of today, by virtue of being more and more Immersionistic should be purer churches than ever before, in that their system "excludes the church membership of unregenerate children." Only such that can profess credibly an adult understanding and subjective experience of conversion can be candidates for immersionistic baptism, and only such can therefore gain access to church membership. And by comparison the Paedo-baptist churches must de facto be filled with hosts of unregenerate, and are therefore falling far short of the Scriptural demands imposed for the administration and formation of churches. Thus runs the Immersionistic propaganda.⁹

This is the whole foundation and premise of the Baptist movement. Right from their inception amongst the general ferment of change sparked by the Reformation in Europe, the early "Anabaptists"¹⁰ insisted that the Reformation churches were unscriptural on their doctrine of baptism, which led, they alleged, to churches full of apostates! Infant baptism, they said, which was a Romish hangover that Luther and Calvin et al had failed to purge out, was the fundamental cause of all these impure churches. Infant baptism filled them with people who were unregenerate! And the Baptist creed was formulated on the basis that it, and it alone, truly represented the Biblical doctrine of the New Covenant as propounded by the prophet Jeremiah. Insist on adult baptism, they said, and you will purify the churches, because only those who have registered a valid and conscious experience of conversion will be able to enter membership.¹¹

Now it is true that in the immediate turmoil of the initial Reformation period great numbers of unregenerate mixed in amongst the ranks of the Lord's people, and caused serious trouble and damage amongst them. But was infant baptism the cause underlying this? One only needs to find one baptised infant that grows up to

⁹ "Baptism for Baptists is a matter of churchmanship.....because they have a high and holy conception of (Church) membership, they feel that baptism should only be administered to those who understand its true significance and personally accept its solemn responsibilities." **Henry Cook**: "*What Baptists stand for*" (Carey Kingsgate Press 1947) page 89 cited in **Bridge and Phypers** op cit and page 67. Bridge and Phypers go on to say that the Baptist "sees baptism as the door of the church, one that opens to receive believers and closes to exclude unbelievers. He suspects that once a Christian community begins to welcome the unbeliever, the half-believer and the infant incapable of belief within its actual membership, before three generations have passed that community will have lost its spiritual zeal and its evangelical experience as its distinctive Christian features fade." (ibid p.67).

¹⁰ "Anabaptist" is a theological term which is used to delineate a multi-variety of radical sects and cults that flared up as the Reformation broke the hold of Romanism on the general masses. The name "anabaptist" means "one who rebaptises", i.e., the Anabaptists did not consider the universal infant baptism of Rome or of the Reformation churches to be valid, and insisted on professing believers being baptized as adults, that is, effectively re-baptized in terms of Reformation theology, though not in terms of Anabaptist theology. Generally, whilst Anabaptist groups could have radical differences between them on many points of theology and practice, the differences often involving dangerous heresies, one common feature was their radical view of the Church, and the ordinance of baptism.

¹¹ The Anabaptists, says **Hughes Oliphant Old**, "held that the Key to the whole Reformation of the Church was their program of baptismal reform.....At issue in this question of believer's baptism was an attempt to found a new church for the spiritually elite". "*The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century*" (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans 1992) p. 77.

become godly to invalidate the Baptist argument here. And the annals of the Reformation can reveal myriads of such cases. Were not such godly leaders as Calvin and Luther baptised as infants? Were not the stalwarts in their churches mainly if not almost exclusively people who had been baptised as infants? Such is argument enough to prove that infant baptism was not a cause of corruption in Protestant congregations, and that one must look elsewhere for the causes of such corruptions.

Again, one only needs to find one case of corruption in a “pure” Baptist church to falsify the Immersionist argument yet again on this point. And it is evident that none would have to search far to find a plethora of such corruption in Baptist churches. And this holds not only for contemporary baptistic circles, but likewise for such circles in past history.¹²

No, the apostles themselves had failed to produce “pure” churches. A superficial glance at the New Testament is all that is necessary to establish that fact.¹³ By what exalted farrago of piety the initial Anabaptists thought they could out-apostle the apostles is beyond this writer’s imagination. But the testimony of Reformation history is indubitable. The Anabaptists began on this very premise.....that their churches would be pure....and would be pure because only adult baptism on the basis of profession of faith and testimony of a conversion experience would be valid, thereby excluding all unregenerate. Only on such a foundation, they claimed, could proper ecclesiastical discipline be maintained and practised.

The multi-variant spectrum of Anabaptistic activities in the Reformation period extended from the sublime through the ridiculous to the dangerous, and on to the tragic. Many good and sincere people could be found in various Anabaptist quarters, but contra their “pure gathered church” and “strictly disciplined church” ideas, they found themselves mixed up in a widespread and deleterious cocktail of heretical extremists and wild revolutionaries such that the “bad” old paedobaptistic churches actually did not experience, whatever other faults they manifested. But the annals of Anabaptist history are well enough documented without us having to trawl

¹² Contemporaneously the modern immersionistic churches world-wide are no examples of “pure” churches at all. One need only refer to footnote 5 above. To this can be added the gross capitulation to modernistic theology evident in many Baptist circles world-wide, and involvement of Baptists in Ecumenical movements. Historically one finds the premier historian of the Baptist movement, Robinson of the 18th century to have been an Arian. (Robinson : History of Baptism : London 1790) And one could go on, noting the Baptist leader **Dr. John Clifford** who so stood against Spurgeon, or Baptist involvement in the 1960’s “God is Dead” theology, and of course, **Karl Barth**, who came to deny Paedobaptism. Then there is the evangelical “Calvinist”, the late **Paul King Jewett**, of Fuller Seminary, who lambasted the rise of Creationism in Science, advocated women in the ministry, and yet was a Baptist in his sacramental theology, and wrote the article “*Baptism, (Baptist View)*” in the Encyclopaedia of Christianity Vol 1 (Delaware: NFCE 1964). Where is New Testament purity in all this, we ask?

¹³ Much of the New Testament epistolary material contains rebukes, exhortations, instructions, corrections, criticisms, all levelled by apostolic authors at churches they themselves founded.

through all that data here.¹⁴ What is apposite for our purposes at this juncture is to note that the early anabaptists of the 16th century did not baptise exclusively by immersion. They also utilized the mode of affusion, or aspersion.¹⁵ What principally distinguished them from the Reformers was not the mode, but the application of baptism. The anabaptists excluded infants, baptizing only adults or those old enough to make a credible profession of faith. (However old that is.....)

Exclusive, dogmatic, Immersionism was a later development, emerging to a systematic manifestation and attestation in the early 17th century. What was it that propelled this theological and ecclesiastical development? Baptists would argue that it was greater consecration to Scripture and a more thorough purging out of the leaven of apostate Romanist traditions. A closer examination of Baptist claims at this point will however, yield the shocking conclusion that the Immersionist system is in total not a true Scriptural system, but rather that it is a Roman Catholic error, Romanist in its first origins, Romanist in its theology, Romanist in its practice, Romanist in its dogmatic foundations, and lexicographically erroneous and Romanist¹⁶ in its understanding of the definitive Biblical terms used to denominate and delineate the Sacrament of Baptism.

In short, contrary to the oft-stated and passionate assertions of the Baptist movement, it is the Reformers, with their practice of aspersion who are the true heirs of the Ancient Apostolic churches, and the Baptists who are the heirs of a distinctly and indubitably Romanist aberration. Now, without a doubt this assertion will raise eyebrows and drop jaws, or provoke dismissive guffaws of contempt from hardened Baptists. But to those who are concerned to look in a Christian manner at the truth, and to examine the evidence impartially, the conclusion will be

¹⁴ Cf. **G.H. Williams**: *"The Radical Reformation"* (London 1962) for a good overview that is if anything, regarded as the "standard work". But see also **Willem Balke**: *"Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1981) and **Benjamin Wirt Farley's** translation of Calvin's *"Treatises against the Anabaptists and Against the Libertines"* (Grand Rapids: Baker 1982). In his first article therein, Calvin tackles the Anabaptist Article 1 of their *"Schleitheim Confession"* which deals with baptism.

¹⁵ The anabaptist **Hubmaier** for instance, taught immersionism as he was taught it by the "Bohemian brethren". His insistence on "immersionism" is cited by **Bridge and Phypers** (op. cit. p. 104) as being unusual for those times. Generally both in and out of the Roman church tolerance as to the mode of baptism was the usual case in the 16th Cent.

¹⁶ Early lexicography of the Reformation period was defective in that it depended too much on Classical Greek usage of the Greek words used in the New Testament for theological terms. The Greek verbs used in the Greek New Testament to delineate baptism were interpreted as meaning "to dip" or "to immerse by dipping". Such were the definitions which Calvin and Luther and all other Reformers would have apprehended, as they studied the meaning of baptism using in all probability the then current renowned lexicon, that being the Byzantine 10th century work of **Suidas**. That the Reformers utilised this much-prized lexicon of their day is evident in that it was reprinted at Basel in 1544, and in Geneva in 1619. It defined baptism as immersion. Cf. **Hughes Oliphant Old**: Op. cit. footnote 11 above in footnote page 273. Of course, eventually the Anabaptists doubtless got hold of this as well, and eventually immersionism spread to become *de rigeur* amongst the circles of sectarians which evolved through the late 16th and early 17th centuries to become the Baptists as we know them.

inescapable, Immersionism is a Romanist error. Worse, if the Roman Church held to immersionism through its long period of ascendancy, yet it allowed for and tolerated affusion and aspersion. Such toleration was evacuated out of Baptist theology, and the Baptists have paradoxically made themselves more Romanist than the Romanists on this particular issue.¹⁷

The fact is however, that Baptist authorities themselves are quick to point out that Immersionism as a dogma, if not as an exclusivist practice, did not originate with them. They point to statements made in medieval and late patriarchal theological sources to vindicate the antiquity of their position. They point to the Eastern Orthodox tradition, in which immersionism is practiced even on infants. They even claim, on tenuous grounds, that John Wycliffe was a "Baptist" and that so also were the ancient Waldensians and Albigensians.¹⁸

But this is all to admit that "baptistic" doctrine was alive and well within the aegis and practice of the Pre-reformation churches. And that it was deemed orthodox by the ecclesiastical authorities of Rome and of Constantinople. Instead, how-

¹⁷ Several researchers in scholarly circles have recently noted this Romanist origin of Immersionism. Cf. for instance: **Hughes Oliphant Old** of the Center of Theological Enquiry at Princeton, USA, in his seminal tome: *"The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1992). Also the work of **Prof. Francis Nigel Lee** on baptism, posted on the Internet and not as yet in print. Before them, the Romanist connection had been isolated by **Rev. W.A. Mackay** in his book: *"Immersionism and Immersionists"* first published in 1880 or thereabouts by Briggs of Toronto. The original title of Mackay's book was *"Immersion proved to be Not a Scriptural Mode of Baptism, but a Romish Invention."* Further scholarly and apposite material pertaining to the archaeology of baptism which has an important bearing on these matters can be found in **B.B. Warfield's** : *"Studies in Theology"* (Edinburgh B.O.T. reprint 1988) ch. 12, and in **Charles Thomas's** *"Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500"* (London: Batsford Academic 1981). Even further proofs of the Romish origins of Immersionism come from Romanists themselves. For instance, the Baptist **G. R. Beasley-Murray** translated the German Catholic work *"Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul"* by **Rudolf Schnackenburg** way back in the 1960's, and therein Schnackenburg shows how amenable to Baptist theology the Romanist dogma is at this point, when he indicates the rise of immersionism in Romanism in the immediate post-Constantinian settlement period, in the time of the rising papacy. The scholarly **G.W.H. Lampe** gives also the same scenario in his *"The Seal of the Spirit"* (London SPCK 1967) But of all this, more anon. (DV).

¹⁸ Cf. sources cited in footnote 17 above. With respect to John Wycliffe, the Immersionist claim for him is made by **David Fountain** in his book on Wycliffe published some time about 1982. But whatever his views re. the mode of baptism, Wycliffe would have baptised infants, and to claim him as a "baptist before his time" so to speak is something of a crass misnomer. It is at least possible, if not likely that Wycliffe, being a Roman Catholic actually did baptize by immersion, if so, he was merely following the Romanist dogma of his day. Wild notions are entertained by Baptists concerning the old Waldensians and Albigensians. **Robinson** and **Jones**, Baptist historians, lay claim to these two branches of the church as being "immersionists". If such were indeed immersionists, they were of course then only reflecting established Romanist practice. But the baptist has to prove that these people were exclusive immersionists, which of course is highly unlikely, seeing that (i) the prevailing dogma of the day allowed for pouring or sprinkling as well as immersion, and (ii) on the Baptist view it is inexplicable that the "baptist" Waldensians, having held out for their principles against Rome through the bloodiest persecutions extending over a thousand years, nevertheless "capitulated" without a whimper to the Reformers and their practice of sprinkling and paedobaptism. Strange.....

ever, of drawing the logical conclusion demanded by such evidence, i.e., that if anything, "immersionism" must be at least as "Roman" as sprinkling or pouring, the Baptists emphasise the Romanist immersion dogma as being the vestige of the original pristine apostolic dogma, and insist that the introduction of aspersion and effusion belongs to the age of Romanist apostasy. Such a deduction is not warranted by the evidence *prima facie*, let alone when researched in depth. For *prima facie* the question the Baptists should have asked is whether immersionism truly represents apostolic doctrine, or whether non-immersionism represents it. One or the other is an error, the Baptist has assumed the error to lie with non-immersionism, and he has assumed so under the force of his dogmatic presuppositions.

Scholarly research, independent of immersionist or non-immersionist presuppositions, has unearthed a mass of data concerning the development and history of baptismal practice and dogma. And it is to the findings of this research we have next to turn, as it furnishes us with an un-biased view of how the modal practice of baptism diversified in the post-apostolic age. It also supplies us with the facts concerning the when, the where, and the why baptismal modal practices underwent metamorphosis in the Church of Rome. And it is this evidence which proves exclusivistic immersionism to have its origins, not in the Bible or in the Apostolic traditions, but in the Roman mystery religions, which, under the absorption programme of the early Post-Constantinian Papal Church, began to infuse Christianity with the mystic cultus that evolved into the "Whore of Babylon." (Rev. ch. 17). And whilst exclusivistic immersionism never totally took over the "whore church", strangely, it took over the Baptists completely. And plenty more besides.....

To be continued (DV).....

"Immersion involves essential error. Pressed by the exigency of their theory, immersionists have really subverted the ordinance of baptism. From its scriptural significance as a symbol of the Spirit's work in purifying the soul by applying "the blood of sprinkling", they, by seizing upon a mere figurative expression of the Apostle Paul, have made it a symbol of the "death, burial and resurrection" of Christ. They have therefore, *two ordinances* setting forth the *work of Christ*, and none to set forth distinctively *the work of the Spirit*. This leads to a belittling and disparaging of the Spirit's work."

W. A. Mackay: IMMERSION AND IMMERSIONISTS, pages 4-5.