

The
Baptist System
UnScriptural
and
UnReformed
Part Two
THE ROMAN CONNECTION

Twenty centuries ago, when Apostolic Christianity exploded outwards from its Hebrew-Palestinian roots, it cascaded across a world deeply permeated with Satanism, this latter being manifest in those times in multi-various guises. The Roman empire of the 1st cent. AD was host to a plethora of pagan cults, and whilst by and large these heathen faiths demonstrated an outwardly "Europeanised" appearance within the bounds of the Imperium Romanorum, the pedigrees of virtually all such are traceable back to the sinister and mystic paganism of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and even as far afield as Persia and India.

It is needless here to go into extensive detailing of the above facts. Such detailing has been adequately presented in Alexander Hislop's most informative volume, *"The Two Babylons"*, in which he ably shows the complete series of connections between the ancient worship of the Satanic cults of Egypt and Babylonia with their equivalents found in Rome.¹⁹ He also shows the continuing series of connections by which these cults eventually merged into, then eclipsed the nascent Roman Catholic Church. For example, Hislop shows the development from Astarte, through Aphrodite of the Greeks, and Diana of the Ephesians, on to the worship of the Blessed Virgin in Romanism.²⁰ Back of it all is the pagan worship of the ancient Babylonian Satanic sex-goddess "Queen of Heaven", a religious motif which we see emerging in strength yet again in the rampant feminism and sexual perversions of our modern age.

¹⁹ Alexander Hislop: *"The Two Babylons"* (London: S.W. Partridge & Co. Fourth Edit. reprint of 1975).

²⁰ Hislop Op Cit. Chap. 2.

Scholars refer to various of these ancient Roman cults as "Mystery Religions". Fundamental to this nomenclature is the fact that all varieties of these cults operated in the Roman world like a kind of Free Masonry, masking their internal liturgies and operations with a veil of secrecy, and operating amongst the elite of society. Entrance into such cults was conditional on passing through certain rituals of initiation, which scholars call "mytho-poetic" ritual. In such a ritual, a process would be enacted which mimicked in material terms what was believed to be the actual spiritual process through which the neophyte was passing, resulting in a mystic regeneration of the neophyte as through the ritual he came to partake in the nature of the deity worshipped. In this ritual, the actual material elements involved were therefore Sacramental, and were deemed by the worshippers to be inhabited with the actual real presence of the deity, or the deity's power in some way.²¹ Thus the importance of idols in the temples of the pagans. By focussing the worshipper's consciousness on the physical form of the deity, through the inanimate stonework the spirit of the deity was able to manifest itself and infuse the worshippers such that they came into a mystic spiritual unity with itself.²² A deep psychological experience would often ensue, with concomitant emotions, and para-normal trances and visions, often with manifestations of glossolalia and prophesying on the part of the

²¹ Something similar to the "magic" of mytho-poetic ritual is that of sticking pins into a wax effigy of one's enemy. This enactment is supposed somehow to become sacramentally active and via the power of the deity work pain and disease in the actual body of one's enemy in places coincident with where the pins were stuck in on the wax effigy, though the victim may be thousands of miles away. Fundamentally however, in mytho-poetic ritual proper, a "myth" is enacted, or dramatized as a liturgy of worship or sacrament. The "myth" is not to be thought of in terms of "fable", but more in terms of an allegorical representation in material terms of certain truths believed to pertain to the spiritual realm.

²² There are several psychological levels of comprehension involved with respect to idolatry. Such levels are manifest in the Exodus narratives concerning the Golden Calf apostasy. The Scriptures indicate how the people knew full well that the calf Aaron was to make was merely a fabrication of gold smelted and shaped, from the very ornaments the people themselves donated. (Exod. 32 : 1ff) At this psychological level the idol is merely inanimate material. However, at the next psychological level the resultant fabrication is seen as a statue, or likeness of a real creature. The inanimate material is now seen to be more than material. From this stage, under the influence of the religious instinct, the "statue" is made the focal point representing a certain deity, and as such, in the worshipper's mind comes to partake of sacramental powers which bring the worshipper into the presence of the god thought to be represented therein. Hyped up with manifold liturgies of worship, at such psychological levels such "statues" became the talismans for all manner of demonic influences and manifestations. Thus it is that God's people are forbidden to make idols. They are not forbidden to make "statues", as indeed the very laws of Moses prescribe the casting of bronze oxen as pedestals to bear the "bronze sea" used as a reservoir by the priests. Again the same laws prescribe the fabrication of the "Cherubim" that were to cover the mercy-seat with their wings in the sanctuary. What is forbidden in Exodus 20: 4-6 is that one must not "bow down thyself and worship" such fabrications. To do so would be to drop down to the forbidden "third level" of idolatry. Axiomatically, all "statuesque" or "pictorial" representations purporting to be God in any of His Three Persons are herewith condemned, contra the opinions of Romanists and vast phalanxes of modern evangelicals, who abundantly decorate books and sanctuaries with "pictures of Jesus" etc. Such representations cannot "represent" the one true God, and therefore reduce His image to the level of idolatry. And such images function effectively as "false Christs", which under the appropriate spiritual conditions, act as talismans that propagate demonic manifestations as in paganism.

cult clergy. And wrapped up in all this was the underlying belief that some kind of "magic" was being worked by the deity.²³

In such mytho-poetic rituals, it was important to have every sacramental element of the ritual enactment just right. Failure in this respect would rupture the ability of the ritual to convey the "magic" which effected in the neophyte the requisite mystic experience of contact with or co-habitation with the deity. And where a ritual was intended to mytho-poetically enact the death of the neophyte, that ritual had to be so extenuating as to virtually almost kill him. Indeed, Hislop can tell us that from time to time neophytes actually did die on their dangerous course through the initiation rituals. It is interesting to consider here exactly what Hislop relates for us, taking Tertullian as his source of information:

"In certain sacred rites of the heathen," says Tertullian, especially referring to the worship of Isis and Mithra, "the mode of initiation is by baptism." The term "initiation" clearly shows that it was to the Mysteries of these divinities he referred. This baptism was by immersion, and seems to have been rather a rough and formidable process; for we find that he who passed through the purifying waters, and other necessary penances, "if he survived, was then admitted to the knowledge of the Mysteries." To face this ordeal required no little courage on the part of those who were initiated. There was this grand inducement, however, to submit, that they who were thus baptised were, as Tertullian assures us, promised, as the consequence, "REGENERATION, and the pardon of all their perjuries." ²⁴

Hislop is here focussing on "baptismal regeneration". He describes how in Paganism the actual physical practice of the sacrament conferred the desired "regeneration" on the neophyte. No baptism in water, no "regeneration". No conformity in the ritual to the proper mode of the baptism, and there was consequently no baptism, and no "regeneration." In this we see the underlying belief in a kind of "magic" which makes the ritual become the *actual instrument* which propagates the desired

²³ The evidence from the Bible, and from many ancient secular and pagan sources, indicates that "lying miracles" were indeed performed by various sinister arts., implying that Satanic spiritual powers were at work amongst the clergy of the ancient pagan cults. At the court of Pharaoh, for example, the magicians were able to turn rods into snakes, like Moses did. (Exod. 7: 11-12) And in Deuteronomy, Moses lays down laws for dealing with false prophets which include the phenomena of such prophets prophesying accurately! (Deut.13: 2). Again, it appears that the "witch of Endor" certainly called up Samuel's spirit! Again, the New Testament gospels relate how demons were manifestly active in certain people, giving physical evidence of their presence from time to time. And St. Paul was followed on one occasion by a slave girl, possessed of the spirit of Python, (Acts 16: 16-17) which the Apostle exorcised. Pagan records too indicate how pervasive and real were the manifestations of "magic" in their midst, it being the custom for rulers to have access to necromancers and soothsayers, and world-famous were the priestess "oracles" of Delphi in ancient Greece. All such manifestations departed the world with the onset of the Apostolic Gospel, from which times Satan has evidently been bound through this "millennium" period. (Rev. 20 :1-3).

²⁴ Cf. Hislop, Op. Cit. p.132, citing Tertullian "De Baptismo" Vol i p. 1204.

effect, i.e.; "regeneration". And this heathen "sacramentarianism", together with various other pagan accretions such as the anointing with oil, and marking with the sign of the cross, Hislop traces as it filters into early Catholicism. He documents how Romanist authorities themselves admit to these pagan origins of their sacramentarian rites, thus:

Some of the continental advocates of Rome have *admitted* that some of these at least have not been derived from *Scripture*. Thus Jodocus Tiletanus of Louvaine, defending the doctrine of "Unwritten Tradition," does not hesitate to say, "We are not satisfied with that which the apostles or the Gospel do declare, but we say that, as well before as after, there are divers matters of importance and weight accepted and received out of a doctrine which is nowhere set forth in writing. For we do blesse the water wherewith we baptize, and the oyle wherewith we annoynt; yea, and besides that, him that is christened. And (I pray you) out of what Scripture have we learned the same? Have we it not of a secret and unwritten ordinance? And further, what Scripture hath taught us to grease with oyle? Yea, I pray you, whence cometh it, that we do dype the childe three times in the water, Doth it not come out of this hidden and undisclosed doctrine, which our forefathers have received closely without any curiosity, and do observe it still." This learned divine of Louvaine, of course, maintains that "the hidden and undisclosed doctrine" of which he speaks, was the "unwritten word" handed down through the channel of infallibility, from the Apostles of Christ to his own time. But, after what we have already seen, the reader will probably entertain a different opinion of the source from which the hidden and undisclosed doctrine must have come. And, indeed, Father (Cardinal John Henry) Newman himself admits, in regard to "holy water" (that is, water impregnated with "salt," and consecrated), and many other things that were, as he says, "the very instruments and appendages of demon-worship"—that they were all of "Pagan" origin, and "sanctified by adoption into the church." What plea, then, what palliation can he offer, for so extraordinary an adoption? Why, this: that the Church had "confidence in the power of Christianity to resist the infection of evil," and to transmute them to "an evangelical use."²⁵

That final phrase: "transmute them to an evangelical use" is an eye-opener. It reveals the mode by which the Roman church has ever operated, i.e., assimilation of local paganisms into Christianity as a means of forming a quick and easy "bridge" for crossing from Paganism to Christianity. Such syncretism does nothing for the "converts", and merely introduces back-door paganism into the very precincts of the Church. And thus, as Hislop shows in his valuable tome, the Roman church after 17 centuries of this is awash with paganism on all sides.

One might take care to understand how such syncretisms began. As early as the first century AD we find the Apostles sounding out warnings in their epistles con-

²⁵ Ibid.p.138.

cerning the surrounding paganism, which in various guises was making inroads into different churches. The letters to the 7 Churches of Asia in the Apocalypse catalogue a plethora of sins which encompass "Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess" (Rev. 2: 18-23) and the doctrines of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitians, (Rev. 2: 14-15), and the "Synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2: 9: and 3: 9). Following through into the 2nd Cent. AD the pervasive influences of the mystery cults evolved into what scholars call "Gnosticism" at which point serious penetration into the churches became endemic.²⁶ It is understandable that saints began to be weary with the widespread persecutions to which they were subjected from time to time, and hence the temptation arose to accommodate Christianity to the world around them. Such a synthesis was all the more facilitated by reason of the "evil men creeping in unawares" into the churches, (Cf. Matt. 18: 7; 2 Pet. 2:1-2; Jude 4) whereby, under God's sovereign dispensation, "there must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor.11: 19).

Thus, inward subversion, and outward pressure of persecutions combined to prise open the ranks of the faithful, their defensive doctrinal dykes were sabotaged, and over the space of three centuries a rising tide of "baptised paganism" advanced through the body ecclesiastic. Careful examination of the writings of the Church "fathers" over this period evinces this gradual but persistent syncretisation, with the Egyptian churches being some of the foremost in this development.²⁷

The evidence of a line of development from Oriental cults to Mystery cults to Gnostic Mysticism and then on into "Christian Mysticism" is ably presented by Bernard McGinn, in his extensively detailed work: "The Foundations of Mysticism" (London: SCM Press 1992). McGinn, in this, his first of a four volume exhaustive treatment of the "History of Western Mysticism", critically traces out a distinct line of connection that runs from the ancient Roman mystery religions on through to Christian mysticism.

Noting that extensive study of the mystery religions has taken place over the last century, (a fact which the rise of the Baptist movements of the 18th and 19th centuries would not have anticipated), McGinn tells us that while great puzzles still remain concerning these pagan cults, it is evident that they were basically the products of Greek religious thought, or "Hellenized" interpretations of Oriental myths.

²⁶ "Gnosticism" is derived from the Greek word "gnosis", meaning "knowledge", but with respect to the mystery cults the word carried a specialized usage, referring to a spiritual and deep experiential encounter with the deity worshipped in any particular cult.

²⁷ In Egypt by the 2nd Century Clement of Alexandria had introduced Gnostic thinking into the exegesis of Scripture, a process that was continued in the 3rd Cent. by Origen. Gnosticism was one form of "mystery" religion, fundamentally based on a form of Platonic doctrine, and the syncretism in this respect was basically one that affected doctrine firstly, rather than sacrament and liturgy. For a detailed overview of this development see: **Bernard McGinn: "The Foundations of Mysticism"** (London, SCM press, 1992) pages 101 - 130.

McGinn goes on to name such cults, noting those of Eleusis, Dionysius, Orpheus, Isis, and Mithras. He critically tours through the evaluations of various scholarly authorities concerning such cults, noting that mysticism was at the heart of such.

This mysticism, according to scholarly research, was a means of facilitating a direct “divine-human” encounter (to put it in modern theological terms as used by Emil Brunner) whereby the worshipper attained some kind of union with the god via the “mystery rituals” which are isolated as being such practices as a sacred meal, sonship of the deity, regeneration, some form of sexual coitus, and the so-called “heavenly journey.” McGinn can show us that such “mysteries” actually percolated through into Christianity via the Greek neo-platonic philosophy which was entering Christian thought in the 2nd to 3rd centuries AD. It appears that the philosophic appropriation of the these “mystery religions” lies at the back of incoming changes in Christian piety, liturgy, and theology in that particular era. Fundamental in all this was the 2nd Cent. development of “Christian Gnosticism” which was itself a direct syncretisation with the old mystery cults.²⁸

Thus we see that there is a line of connection which exposes the Mystery religions as the primary motive force in the gradual paganisation of the Churches. And this line of connection has been demonstrated by scholars involved in the investigation of these phenomena.

The upshot of this syncretisation was that the Church from the 2nd Cent. AD. onwards had to fight for its life against inward forces of subversion, as well as against the persecution manifest from outside. The rising tide of Gnosticism persuaded many within the churches that a super-spiritual and elitist approach was attainable via supra-Scriptural experiences. Such experiences were lodged in the performance of liturgy and ritual a la the “mystery cults.”

In documenting this development, Hislop notes the issue of sacramentarianism especially. He notes how the Lord’s Supper became the Roman Mass, in which, via some mytho-poetic magic, the elements are mysteriously transmuted to become the actual material body and blood of Christ, (transubstantiation), the celebrants thereby actually, as they believed, eating the very flesh of Christ. Parallel to this he notes the mythopoetic sacramentarianism that invested the doctrine of baptism. In the Roman church, as in the pagan mysteries, the actual water was made holy, and the actual water and mode of proceeding with baptism was the very means of cleansing the neophyte and representing his death and his resurrection alongside the death and resurrection of the god worshipped.²⁹

It is precisely at this juncture, at the end of the 2nd Cent. and early 3rd Cent. AD that the Church “father” Tertullian wrote concerning his observations on the rite of baptism that he saw penetrating the churches. He noted that paganisation had entered alongside the cult of “trine” (three-fold) immersionism. This is the very first men-

²⁸ Cf. McGinn: Op Cit. pp. 41 -42.

²⁹ The idea of a "dying-deified-rising god" was prominent in such heathen religions as the Adonis cult. Hislop documents all the connections in detail. Cf. Hislop Op. cit. pp.55 ff.

tion in Christian literature of "dipping" in baptism. Prior to this time all references to baptism indicate a process that portrayed effusion or sprinkling. Since the rise of the modern burgeoning Baptist movement the documentary evidence of the so-called "Didaché", or "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" has come to light, and scholars date this document within a range from about mid 1st Cent to mid 2nd Cent. This document speaks of baptism thus:

".....baptise, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running water: but if thou hast no running water, baptise in other water, and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, pour water three times on the head, in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit..."³⁰

One notes from this that baptism by effusion was well established as early as 100 years before Tertullian. Turning our attention again now to that "father", we see that in his treatise "*De Corona Militis*" and chapters 3 and 4 Tertullian notes the introduction of "mystery cult" baptism, replete with trine immersion in the nude, anointing with oil, blessing of the water, and belief that the neophyte was actually "born again" via the action of the water immersion. Sacramentarianism in other words. Let Tertullian deliver his verdict on all this: he says such "are based on tradition", and are "destitute of scriptural authority."

The French scholar, André Bénéoit, in his monumental study: "*Christian Baptism in the Second Century*",³¹ has documented how, amongst the churches during the first two centuries AD, no trace is to be found of any idea of baptism being a dramatization, i.e., a mytho-poetic ritual, of the burial and resurrection of Christ.³² The idea that Romans 6: 4 and Col. 2: 12 specify a definite "baptism by immersion" in which the neophyte is mytho-poetically enacting in ritual form the death and resurrection of Christ is a late phenomena on the Christian theological scene. According

³⁰ *The Didaché* : Section VII paras. 1 - 3. in "The Apostolic Fathers" Vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press & William Heinemann 1975) translated from the Greek by Kirsopp Lake, and pages 319-321.

³¹ André Bénéoit: "*Le Baptême Chrétien au Second Siècle*", (Presses Universitaires de France, 1953) cited in Hughes Oliphant Old: "*The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the 16th Century*" (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans 1992) page 273 footnote 69. Old notes that the idea of exegetically connecting immersionism with Rom. 6:4 and Col. 2: 12 "seems to have first appeared as an interpretation....." by Christians acquainted "with the mystery religions." Old rates Bénéoit's study as being of "enormous" importance.

³² Hughes Oliphant Old cites Bénéoit with ref. to the "dramatization" element that entered the sacrament of baptism. It is most notable (and eye-opening) that without realizing it, some modern Baptist apologists for immersionism use the same term, and justify immersion on the grounds of it being a dramatization of a spiritual process. See for inst. how the Arminian Baptist, Oscar Brooks can speak explicitly of baptism in terms of it being "to dramatise their faith response". This is to use the very same pagan approach to the sacrament as found in the Mystery cults of Rome. And of course modern Baptist churches are inclined to do just this, make of the sacrament something of a spectacle, demonstration, or show. Cf. accompanying article by Angus Stewart in this issue of the BRJ, footnote 137.

to Hughes Oliphant Old it seems to have first appeared in the fourth century, that very century wherein, after the Constantinian Edict of Milan (313 AD), the Roman authorities finally effected during the time of the Emperor Theodosius the "establishment" of Christianity with all the pagan syncretisms traced out by Hislop. Pertinently, Old points out that it was in this 4th cent. era that baptisms were more and more celebrated at the old pagan festival time at Easter. As such a dramatization of the death and burial of Christ began to figure in theological and liturgical thinking. Linking the pagan immersionism with Rom.6:4/Col.2: 12 appears on the exegetical scene *for the first time* in precisely that era!³³

The prevalence of nude immersionism from thereon indicates the pagan origins of the rite. The nudity was required mytho-poetically, in order to allow uninhibited access of the "regenerative" water to the neophyte's body. This in itself is a "give-away" indicating the pagan origins of immersionism. Significantly, modern baptists pass this one by. Their neophytes have to be well-robed for immersion!

Baptistic exegesis of Rom.6:4/Col.2:12 actually follows Roman Catholic hermeneutical principles. It is doubtless reinforced by the modern European mode of burial, which entails letting a coffin-encased body down into a six-foot hole in a parish churchyard or municipal cemetery. However, such imagery would not have been present to the minds of the Apostolic Christians. Their modes of burial were entirely different, as a perusal of the historical sources soon indicates. More especially the texts Rom. 6:4 and Col. 2: 12 speak of the neophyte being "buried with Christ", and Christ's burial was of course, nothing like a modern European burial. This point must be borne in mind, that if baptism should be a dramatization of "burial with Christ" as the Scripture says, then such a burial cannot portray so much as a whisker of "going down into" or "dipping" or "immersion". The Lord was indeed buried by being carried in, laterally, to a niche in a cave hollowed out of the side of a hill. Literally, the root verb "thapto" used for the term "buried with" $\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\tau\alpha\phi\eta\mu\epsilon\nu$ (sunetaphémen) in Rom.6: 4/Col. 2: 12 means to "entomb". The derivative noun "taphos" means "tomb", and such tombs were often even above ground level. Indeed, examination of many English parish churches and Cathedrals would show that large numbers of English gentry were "buried" in ornate tombs that are above ground level within the precincts of the church building itself.³⁴

This biblical usage of the verb "thapto" and its derivatives is noticeable in the Septuagint, where in the narrative of Gen. ch. 23 Abraham "buries" Sarah in the Cave of Machpelah which he bought from Ephron the son of Zohar. "Taphos" is the

³³ Old: Op cit. p. 272.

³⁴ In Biblical times, the dead were "interred" in tombs cut in hillsides, or in caves, or in ornate tombs built like monuments. Even the poor generally just heaped up stones over the body. In the pagan world, the dead were burned, and their ashes put in an urn which was later buried. One might note, too, the modern compounded Greek noun $\kappa\epsilon\nu\omicron\tau\alpha\phi\omicron\varsigma$ = Engl. "cenotaph" means "an empty tomb". Cenotaphs are all found above ground level, as memorials to the first world war. For details re. ancient disposal of the dead see Schaff-Herzog and the *New Bible Dictionary* in loc.

word used in Gen. 23:20, where it tells us that Abraham purchased the field and the cave to make a "tomb" for Sarah. Now the sheer "topography" of this cave precludes any motion like "going down into" or "dipping". Abraham would have had to have Sarah's body carried in laterally, and laid laterally in the innermost part of the cave on a niche.³⁵

We may summarise our findings so far thus:

1) Early Roman Catholicism, and Eastern Orthodoxy, under the pressures of persecution without, and sabotage within, gradually syncretised the Christian faith with the socially prestigious dogmas and practices of the Roman mystery cults.

2) Consequently, Christian dogma, liturgy, and sacraments, underwent gradual modification in order to accommodate the developing syncretism.

3) By the Fourth century AD, Christianity was promoted to the status of being the "establishment religion" of the Roman Empire. It was able by then to step into this role relatively easily due to the syncretisms already taken on board as per paragraphs 1) and 2) above.

4) At this time the simple and spartan New Testament sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's supper underwent serious modification under the impact of the burgeoning influence of the pagan input coming into the church. The Lord's supper evolved into the pagan "Mass", in which Christ was mytho-poetically put to death again, and baptism was, for the first time in the records, identified as to its mode with Rom. 6:4 and Col. 2: 12, similarly becoming a mytho-poetic ritual in which the actual water was the conveyor of regeneration. Like with the mass, the simple sacrament of baptism became elaborated into a virtual "clone" of similar sacramental immersions practiced in the Roman mystery cults with which the Church was now syncretised. Such influences demanded that the sacrament be performed in as dra-

³⁵Now a Muslim holy place, this cave at Hebron is guarded with fierce jealousy by the adepts of Islam. No "infidels" are allowed to penetrate its gloomy depths. However, back in the 1960's a team of archaeological researchers linked to the American National Geographic Magazine somehow managed to obtain permission to enter the cave. The result was a long and informative article in one of the "National Geographics" for that era, in which a superb artistic rendering depicted how Sarah's body was carried, laterally, into and along the cave. Suffice it to say that the US team was not allowed to enter the jealously guarded tombs at the innermost end of the cave. Thus God in His providence has used Islam to protect the mortal remains of his Saints of old from inquisitive modern archaeologists!

It ought to be pointed out here that the English word "bury" does not require a "dipping", "plunging", or "going down into" the earth. Baptist exegesis seems hooked up inexorably on the Western mode of funereal interment in a parish churchyard. But plenty of people have been buried without any "going down into" or plunging. Consider the alpine climbers who have been buried under avalanches, for instance. Such cases indicate total burial, but not a whisker of "plunging" or "going down into". Such burials are effected via "affusion", i.e., cascading of the snow OVER the victim.

matic a way as possible, in order that the mytho-poeic element could have the necessarily full freedom to function. Linked with this is the insistence on the neophytes presenting themselves totally naked for the baptismal rite. This feature in itself, as we have noted, is a salient "give-away" that the whole immersionistic set-up had been thoroughly infused with the pagan ethos of the mystery cults from where such rituals had been culled. That Christians, enjoined most thoroughly and persistently in the Apostolic records to mortify the flesh, and to exercise modesty of dress and deportment, should now be presenting themselves for baptism totally nude indicates the degree to which the paganisation of the churches went ahead apace in the centuries immediately before and after the Roman establishment.

At this juncture, in the 4th cent. AD, a new architectural feature became manifest in church buildings.....the construction of "baptisteries" deep enough to facilitate immersion. It is notable that archaeologists have uncovered the trail of this architectural development. The testimony of this science indicates that prior to the 4th cent., baptisteries were universally too shallow to facilitate dipping, and that such early baptisteries were evidently intended merely to act as convenient receptacles to receive and drain away the outpoured or sprinkled water cascading off the neophyte. Parallel with this feature isolated by the archaeologists comes something else which linguistic scholars have discovered, and that is, a serious metamorphosis in the language used to describe baptism, this latter feature testifying to the impact of immersionistic dogma. God willing we will explore these two issues, archaeology and language, in a future issue.

For now, we feel warranted therefore, in drawing from the evidence thus far uncovered, the conclusion that until the 4th Cent. AD, Christian baptism was a simple, spartan sacrament that was regarded as symbolic of the inner cleansing by the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit was "poured out" on the Day of Pentecost, so the baptismal waters were poured out, or sprinkled, over the neophyte, and this, as summarised in Mr. Angus Stewart's articles on Baptism running concurrently with this, fully satisfied the Biblical usage of the verbs Bapto and Baptizo. Alongside this some immersion might well have been practiced, as that method too, is a mode of "cleansing", but until the 4th cent. AD baptism was never connected as to mode with Rom. 6:4 and Col. 2: 12. Even then, as the evolving Medaeval Roman Church "paganised" the baptismal ritual, *exclusive* immersionism was never the rule.

We find therefore that the medaeval Roman Catholic church held in its bosom the old Apostolic tradition of pouring or sprinkling, alongside the newer, and paganised mytho-poeicism of immersionism. It is the immersionism which, according to historical, linguistic, and archaeological research, is the later accretion, not the pouring or sprinkling, and this contrary to what the Baptists would have us believe.

To be continued(DV)