

Some Criticisms by MR. GEORGE GOODMAN

OF MY PAMPHLET ENTITLED

# “Baptism.

WHAT IT WAS ;

WHAT IT IS ;

WHAT IT WILL BE,”

TESTED BY THE WORD OF GOD,

BY JOHN FORT.

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# Mr. George Goodman's Criticism of my book on

## Baptism\* tested by the Word of God.

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HEARING that MR. GEORGE GOODMAN was inveighing very strongly against my pamphlet on Baptism, I wrote to him on the subject, and in his reply he declared that he believed that my statement that Matthew xxviii, 19, had a future application only, was "a dangerous heresy most dishonouring to the Lord, and robbing us of the most glorious of our Lord's teaching." Thereupon I wrote, asking for specific answers from Scripture to the following questions :

Did Peter and Philip in the Acts act in ignorance or self-will when they baptized at Jerusalem, at Pentecost, and at Samaria and Cæsarea subsequently, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ? And were the three thousand at Pentecost, and the numbers at Rome and throughout Galatia, wrongly baptized unto Christ, instead of in the Name of the Trinity? At the same time I told Mr. Goodman that the subject of Baptism being a matter of public interest, I should treat any answer he made to my questions accordingly, and hoped he would do the same by my letters to him. For obvious reasons he did not give me the specific answers

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I asked for, but he sent me instead a paper with ten headings which are set out below, and which I propose to answer from the Word of God.

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Mr. George Goodman writes, heading his paper "Baptism in the Triune Name,"—

"1. The fact that no formula is given in the Acts does not prove anything. It is never said that 'Christ died for our sins,' yet both Peter and John held that faith dearer than life."

I am delighted to have Mr. Goodman's tardy admission that Baptism in the Name of the Trinity does not appear in the Acts. Can he not extend this admission to the whole Word of God? As he has not done so, I hereby challenge him to produce *one* case in the whole Word of God where the Matthew formula was used, and *outside the Word I refuse to go*. Mr. Goodman may wander, if he likes, in the paths of tradition. I refuse to follow him there. For my part I stand on God's Word, and am assured that He will stand by me for doing so.

Now in my tract I shewed that Baptism in the Name of the Trinity was never practised by the Apostles. That on the *negative* side of the matter. When we turn to the *positive* side we are on firm ground—the Word of God given us by His Spirit. And so that a wayfaring man, though a fool, should not err therein, God Himself gives us through His Apostles His formula *six times over*, viz., "In the Name of Jesus Christ": "In the Name of the Lord Jesus" "In the Name of the Lord": "Baptized unto Jesus Christ": "Baptized unto Christ." As I said in my tract, a six-fold cord—and that cord God's—cannot easily be broken. Woe to the man who attempts this impossible task! For my part I bow to God's Word in His formula, even if, in doing so, I had to stand absolutely alone.

"2. Baptism in the Triune Name is baptism into Christ. The latter is a shortened expression for the former. Surely one who has been baptized into the Triune Name has been baptized into Christ."

I would reply that Baptism into the Triune Name, to use Mr. Goodman's phrase, is *not* baptism into Christ. If it is, why did not Mr. Goodman baptize unto Christ at Quarry Road the other day? Had he done so he would have been on scriptural ground. But no, he must follow tradition, not scripture. Four times over God gives Mr. Goodman *His* formula in the Acts: but Mr. Goodman, wiser than God, adopts his own. Besides no one, as Mr. Goodman alleges, is baptized *into* Christ. That is the erroneous doctrine of the middle ages, perpetuated by the A.V. and R.V., and in large measure by the Established Church. Scripture teaches that we are baptized "unto Christ." See "unto Moses" in I Cor. x, 3. Here, too, Mr. Goodman is in conflict with Scripture, and on the side of the traditionalists.

"3. I have no doubt whatever that the Apostles obeyed their Lord and baptized into the Triune Name."

Mr. Goodman has no doubt whatever. Then let him substantiate his persuasion from the Word of God. Unfortunately for him this is impossible, for God has put on record six times over how His apostles "obeyed their Lord" and baptized. We are not concerned with what Mr. Goodman, or Mr. Fort, does not doubt, but *with what God expressly says*.

"4. The idea that the *express command* of the Lord has no application to Christians now is untenable. It is 'kingdom truth' (so called) 'run mad.'"

Mr. Goodman says that the idea that the *express command* of the Lord (in Matt. xxviii, 19) has no application to Christians now is untenable. Would he be surprised to hear that quite a number of Christians have held it, among them such reputable Christians (I suppose Mr. Goodman will admit them to be such), as Peter, James and John? What is untenable to Mr. Goodman *was firmly held by them*. Let us turn from Mr. Goodman's vagaries to the Word of God. Matt. xxviii, 19, runs thus: "Go ye therefore

and teach *all the nations* (i.e., the Gentiles) baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now this statement is plain beyond cavil. The Eleven who were *Jews*, were to go and make disciples of *the Gentiles*, and the formula they were to employ in baptizing them is expressly given to us, it was to be in *the Name of the Trinity*. But did the Eleven ever go and disciple the Gentiles, and baptize them in the Name of the Trinity?

### THEY NEVER DID.

Peter, it is true, in accordance with Matthew xvi, 19, opened the door of the Kingdom to the Jews in Acts ii, and to the Gentiles in Acts x; having once opened the door to the latter, he left the work of evangelising the Gentiles to Paul, their appointed Apostle. For Peter, James and John, to have evangelised the Gentiles would have been an excursion on their part outside of, and in contravention of, the "express command" of the Lord, and this they did not do as themselves are witnesses. Thus if Mr. Goodman will turn to Gal. ii, 7, he will read, "But contrariwise when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me (Paul), as *the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter*; (For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the *Apostleship of the circumcision*, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles); And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that *we should go to the Gentiles*." Now here we read that the Gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter. Who committed it? I suppose that Mr. Goodman will admit that it was God. Then, that being the case, how could Peter go outside the divinely given sphere of his ministry to make disciples of the Gentiles as in Matt. xxviii, 19, and baptize them in the Name of the Trinity? *He did not attempt to do so*, nor did James or John: instead of leaving their appointed sphere, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas, so that *they* might go to the Gentiles, and they themselves unto the circumcision. But if Peter, James and John had believed that Matt. xxviii, 19, applied to them, *they would never have done this*.

## WHAT THE <sup>5</sup>TWELVE DID.

Scripture fortunately for us—and unfortunately for Mr. Goodman and the traditionalists—tells us in Acts ii, exactly what the Twelve did in conformity with their Commission. Peter then addressed Jews and Jews only: “*Ye men of Israel,*” he says, “Hear these words.” Peter and the Twelve therefore clearly considered the Gentiles *then* to be outside the sphere of their ministry. And in full accord with this view of theirs, when Peter writes his two Epistles, he writes to Jews scattered throughout certain provinces of Asia Minor; while James writes to the twelve tribes scattered abroad—a strange aberration this from their duties if, as Mr. Goodman tells us, Matt. xxviii, 19, had been binding on *them*. They, as a matter of fact, knew better, and instead of *baptizing Gentiles in the Name of the Trinity*, as Mr. Goodman would have them, and us, do, *they baptized Jews in the Name of the Lord*.

We know therefore that the Twelve never disciplined the Gentiles, baptising them in the Name of the Trinity, *after* Pentecost. Did they ever do so *before*? If so, they had only the ten days between our Lord’s ascension and Pentecost in which to disciple “all the Gentiles”; and these ten days we know that they spent at Jerusalem, their time being taken up with prayer, Acts i, 4, 14. Now if they did not act on the Matthew Commission *before* or *after* Pentecost, it is clear that

### THAT COMMISSION TO THE GENTILES AWAITS A FUTURE DATE.

Meanwhile we Gentiles evangelize the Jews, not the Jews us. When the Church is gone the order will be reversed, and Jewish successors of the Apostles will go forth, and, as the Lord declares in Matt. xxiv, 14, “this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto *all the Gentiles*, and *then shall the end come*.” Mr. Goodman says that the evangelization of the Gentiles by the Jews, under Matt. xxviii, 19, is in operation *now*, the Lord says, it is *just before the end*, i.e., the setting up of His Kingdom.

## A FAIR QUESTION.

How then, it may be asked, do you reconcile their commission to the Gentiles in Matthew, with the commission they received to the Jews? Very simply. *The Church had intervened at Pentecost.* But this is "Kingdom truth so called," as Mr. Goodman disdainfully terms it, and is therefore quite beyond his ken. If he, instead of thus writing, would take his Bible and master the first elements of it, of which he is profoundly ignorant, he would be able to understand—what is quite unintelligible to him now—how the Church having intervened, *an entirely new system, with an entirely new formula* as to Baptism, was set up. Baptism was during this Church period to be *in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, as the Acts, and the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians shew. But when the Church is gone, the Jewish successors of the Apostles in the latter day, will go forth at the Lord's bidding to disciple the *Gentiles*, and to baptize *them* in the *Name of the Trinity*.

But this mission to the Gentiles by Jewish successors of the Apostles has most certainly never yet taken place. It awaits, as I have just shewn, a coming day. If Mr. Goodman thinks otherwise, instead of carping at Kingdom truth, let him produce evidence of the Eleven preaching to Gentiles, and baptizing them in the Name of the Trinity. If Mr. Goodman will produce such evidence I will give fifty guineas to Müller's Orphanages: he, if he fails to do so, giving the same sum to that deserving institution. Will Mr. Goodman accept this challenge? I venture to prophesy that he will not, for the fact is that no such evidence exists, *or could exist*. If it existed, and the Eleven, supplemented later by Matthias, discipled the Gentiles, and baptized them in the Name of the Trinity, they *wilfully abandoned* their special commission to the Jews, given to them by God, and invaded his sphere of labour to the Gentiles specially given by God to Paul.

## THE DIFFICULTY AS TO "GO YE."

But someone perhaps, and quite rightly, asks, "Did not our Lord in Matt. xxviii, say, *Go ye?*" Assuredly He did. How then, I shall be asked, do you explain the "Ye"?



This is a fair question, and it admits of a very simple answer. The Lord always regards the testimony of the Apostles *as one and indivisible*. He did so in the first commission to the Twelve in Matt. x, where He expressly told them not to go to the Gentiles, but to go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel (verses 5, 6). In verse 23, He says, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come," i.e., they would be at their appointed work when the Son of Man re-appeared.

But, it may be objected, they are all dead, and the Son of Man has not returned. True, but their successors in the latter day, when the Church has gone, will take up the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom ("Kingdom truth" again to which Mr. Goodman so ignorantly objects), and will go forth to preach to *Jews*—the House of Israel—the Gospel that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, i.e., that the King is Coming, *continuing the testimony of their predecessors*, and taking it up just where their predecessors in the Lord's day left it off. In other words, the testimony of the Jewish preachers, the Apostles and their successors, was regarded by the Lord as *one and indivisible*. The individual preachers might die, but their testimony remained unchanged.\*

### AN ILLUSTRATION.

An illustration from the natural world may help to make this clear. A newly-arrived visitor to Murren in the Swiss Alps, stands in the village and gazes in wonder at the two giant mountains Monch and Eiger, which seem almost to overhang him. After a time he advances a few hundred yards and finds to his surprise that he is standing on the brink of a huge fissure, some three or four thousand feet deep, which separates the plateau on which Murren stands from the mighty mountains opposite. He, quite unconscious of its existence, had gazed before over the intervening fissure. The fissure was there, but he saw it not. Now let us apply our simile.

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\* For further instances of our Lord's usage in this respect, see Matthew xxiv, 15, 20, 21, 23, 26. Our Lord says, "When ye therefore shall see." But His disciples never saw these things. Their fulfilment awaits, as verse 27 proves, the day just preceding the coming of the Son of Man.

Our Lord's eye, in commissioning the Twelve in Matt. x, ranges over the present interval of the Church, which was then, as revealed to Paul, a mystery hid in God (Eph. iii, 9), in order that it may rest upon the fulfilment of the commission then given to the Twelve, by their successors in the latter day. Such teaching as this is, of course, "Kingdom truth so-called run mad," to Mr. Goodman, but it is the teaching of the Holy Ghost all the same.

And may I tell him that there is such a thing as madness in opposing Kingdom truth, and that he is badly afflicted with it? The Lord give him deliverance from his obsession, and the Word of God will be a new book to him, and his ministry much more profitable to others.

Now it is to be noticed that the *first* commission given to the Twelve to preach to Jews only, runs on *till the Son of Man comes*. The *second* commission given to the Eleven runs on also *till the end of the Age*. Strictly speaking the Church is not an Age or Dispensation: it is an interval, a parenthesis, in the midst of the age of Law, which, starting at Sinai runs on till the setting up of the Kingdom by Christ at the Millennium. And as the Lord's eye had, so to speak, bridged the Church interval in commissioning the Twelve in Matt. x, so, in exactly the same way, His eye bridged the Church interval in Matt. xxviii. That is to say, *He entirely omits the present time*, and the commission then given to Jews to disciple the Gentiles has never been acted upon, nor has the formula of baptism in the Name of the Trinity, which connects with that commission, ever been scripturally used. Knowing this full well—for the Eleven had had, as Acts i, 3 tells us, the advantage of talks with the Lord on the Kingdom during the forty days—the Apostles baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. *If we desire to baptize scripturally we shall do the same*.

To sum up: the Apostles will have two bands of successors in the latter day. The one will act under the commission given in Matt. x, and go to *Jews* only: the other will act under the commission in Matt. xxviii, and go to *Gentiles* only. The commissions will be contemporaneous, for the *first* goes on till the Son of man comes: the *second* to the end of the Age, and the Coming of Christ to end it.

## WHY BAPTISM WILL IN THE COMING DAY BE IN THE NAME OF THE TRINITY.

And, ere we leave this subject, I should like to answer another question. It is formulated by a sister who writes: "I quite understand how impossible it is to baptize unto the death of Persons who have never died" (Oh, my dear sister, what a lot you could teach Mr. Goodman!), "but will you tell me why, in a coming day, this will be done among the nations?" Certainly, I will do so with pleasure.

In the present day baptism has to do with death and resurrection; "We are buried with *Him*" (not buried with the Trinity) "by baptism unto *death*, that like as Christ was *raised* up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Now being identified with Christ in death and resurrection is essentially Church truth. But when the Church goes at the Rapture, the truth which applied to it will be *totally inapplicable to the people of that day*. The age of the Law will have recommenced: the Temple will be rebuilt at Jerusalem (Ezekiel xli, 1): instead of a rent veil there will be doors to shut the worshippers out of the Holiest (xli, 23): sacrifices will be re-instituted (xlv, 15, 18, 23): the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles will be observed (xlv, 21, 25), but *not* that of Pentecost, for the type it contained found its fulfilment in the Church at Pentecost. Now, since the Law will be re-established, *how could death and resurrection with Christ be preached?* How could you tell a man that he had become dead to the law by the body of Christ, when God told him that he was under the law? The law applies to man in the flesh—"as long as he liveth (Rom. vii, 1, 2)" but, as identified with Christ in death, we are no longer in the flesh or under the law: "We have died to that wherein we were held (Rom. vii, 6)", "Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit (Rom. viii, 9)." But men and women under the law in that day will be men and women in the flesh, and in the flesh only. The distinctions of the flesh will also be observed; there will be Jews and Gentiles: now, in the Church, there is neither Jew nor Gentile. In that day, the middle wall of partition between the two, now broken down by God, will be rebuilt, and the whole of Pauline teaching

as to the Church, since the Church is gone, will become null and void. Christian baptism therefore, in which we are buried unto Christ's death, would be wholly unsuited to the case of the people of those days, and it will be superseded by baptism in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and the successors of the Apostles will go forth to disciple the Gentiles, baptizing them in the Name of the Trinity, and teaching them to observe all things that Christ, *when on earth*, had commanded them. What He subsequently taught Paul from the glory would be wholly, as we have shewn, unsuited to their case.

"5. The fact that the Father did not die for us does not prevent our being baptized in both names. We are brought into fellowship with both. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son (the Lord) Jesus Christ (I John i, 3)."

The matter under discussion is not fellowship, but baptism. Baptism does not bring us into fellowship with the Trinity, *it buries us unto Christ's death*. How can anyone be buried unto the death of the Father or the Spirit, who did not either of Them die? It is fatuous nonsense.

6, 7 and 8 are grammatical interpretations of Mr. Goodman's of the word "in" in connection with the Name of Christ, with which neither the A.V., the R.V., nor that most accurate of translations Mr. Darby's New Translation, agree. They all render the passages in the Acts which Mr. Goodman quotes, "In the Name," so we may safely do the same. Besides, whatever the preposition used may be, the formula remains in the Name of the Son and not of the Trinity.

"9. The idea of 'burial before death' is grotesque and denies the Scripture, 'We have been planted together in the (or by the, R.V.) likeness of His death (Rom. vi, 5).'"

God says in Rom. vi, 3, "We are buried with Him (Christ) in baptism unto death" (i.e., with a view to death). If this is not burial before death words have no meaning. This plain statement of God's, since it is absolutely destructive of Mr. Goodman's unscriptural idea that baptism is a public confession of a past fact, is characterised by Mr.

Goodman as grotesque. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that, if Mr. Goodman maintains that statement, it is blasphemous.

Baptism of the Jews under John was, as my tract shews, *unto* repentance, and *unto* the remission of sins. So too, Christian baptism is *unto* Christ's death. If we have learnt the meaning of that, we shall be baptised, not because we have died, but with a view to death as to all our past life in the flesh.

"10 That anything can put away sin except blood is a shocking proposition, and shews to what fearful folly your doctrine leads. It denies the fundamental doctrine "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

In Acts xxii, 16, Ananias said to Paul, "Arise and *be baptized and wash away thy sins.*" Mr. Goodman has the audacity to call this exhortation of Ananias "fearful folly." As usual, he sets up his private judgment against God's Word. It is impossible to reason with a man like that. I have shewn in my tract that this has reference to *Jews* only: baptism in their case *did* wash away their *national* sin, not judicially of course, but positionally, and in the government of God. The "fearful folly" is to be found not in me, but in the case of the man who denies what God says.

At the same time, since as Mr. Moody once truly said, "A lie will run round the world while the truth is putting its boots on," I hereby, and now, and finally, nail the lie to the counter that I, a preacher of the Blood as the alone atonement for sin for forty-four years, hold that aught else can judicially put sin away. On the other hand, I maintain that Ananias, speaking by the Spirit of God, exhorted Paul, a Jew, to be baptized and so wash away his specific sins of rejecting the Messiah, and persecuting that Messiah's followers. This inspired exhortation by Ananias is to Mr. Goodman "a shocking proposition," and "fearful folly." A solemn pronouncement this from a reputed teacher, and blasphemous if he understood what he is writing about. But, alas, he is in complete ignorance of his subject. He has blindly and obstinately closed his eyes to "Kingdom truth," and as we all know, there is none so blind as he who will not see.

George Goodman, George Goodman, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks!

But I fancy I hear someone say, "Why all this pother about the formula of baptism? What *does* it matter in whose Name we are baptized?" It matters everything. By not baptizing scripturally in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and baptizing instead in the Name of the Trinity, brethren have completely lost sight of the dependent truth—and a solemn and heart-searching truth it is—of baptism being the believer's burial with a view to death with Christ. Truly, "they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." For burial with a view to death they have substituted, in most cases, a command to be obeyed, and in a few others, the public confession of the fact that the baptized person has died with Christ. But burial with a view to death has nothing to do with the past or the public: the *future life* of the believer down here *is alone in view*—a life to be dominated for the future by a burial which closes the scene on the past life in the flesh, and introduces the believer into newness of life lived in another sphere.

### A RECAPITULATION.

I have proved beyond all cavil from God's Word that baptism in the Name of the Trinity was *never* administered by the Eleven to whom that formula was given, for it was given them in connection with their (future) discipling of the Gentiles. This discipling they never embarked upon, for they received a subsequent commission to go to Jews only, and the formula of baptism given to them in Matthew xxviii, is still therefore in abeyance. Meanwhile, as Acts ii, 35; viii, 16; x, 48; xix, 5, prove, the formula the Apostles adopted was, "In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ," or some variant of it. Paul, similarly, who *was* subsequently commissioned to go to the Gentiles, though he did not as a rule himself baptize, tells us in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians (and founds his arguments on the fact), that the Roman and Galatian saints were baptized unto the same Name. The issue, therefore, which brethren have to face is this:

**Will they follow tradition or the Word of God?**

For myself I take my place with one who withstood tradition, not unsuccessfully, some centuries ago, and say—

"HERE I STAND; GOD HELP ME; I CAN NO OTHER."