

THE MAJESTIC BAPTISM OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

or

7 Reasons Why Matthew 28:19 is Speaking of a Spiritual Baptism and not Water Baptism

By Jack W. Langford - November 15, 1989

It has been said, “Ritualism is the most popular religion in the world.” Not only is this true, but it also seems to be human nature to presume that the passage in Matthew 28:19 is talking about a traditional water baptismal ritual to be performed upon new converts to Christianity. Actually, this is the farthest thing from the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ who spoke these words—

*“All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.
Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them
into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
(Matthew 28:18,19 — Lit. Trans.)*

No 1. THE PERSPECTIVE FROM WHICH CHRIST SPEAKS

This passage could never be understood unless one observes the perspective from which Christ now spoke these commanding words. Please take note of the fact that Christ was no longer standing by the waters of Jordan (Mark 1:9), nor was He situated near the springs of Aenon (Jn. 3:23) where He first authorized His disciples to practice water baptismal “purification” (Jn. 3:22-26). That early purification announced His arrival to the nation of Israel (Jn. 1:31) and separated disciples to Himself in a ritual manner only (Jn. 3:26 & 4:1,2). That baptism was Judaic (Matt. 3:15) and found its antecedents in the multiplicity of fleshly water purifications that had long been practiced under the Old Covenant Law of Moses—see Hebrews 9:10,13; Jn. 3:25 & 11:55.

It is very significant that, in giving this command, Christ had traversed from the lowly plains of Jordan up to an appointed “**mountain**” in Galilee—see Matthew 28:16,17. Unless we also traverse in our thinking up to that mountaintop with Christ, we will never see the spiritual power and reality of this commission.

The word “*therefore*,” in verse 19, points back to the fact of Christ’s “*authority*” (v.18) which had been given to him as a result of his glorious accomplishments. The majestic power and position of the risen Savior was now the basis upon which the disciples would be able to march into all the world, discipling people of every nation—“baptizing them.” This “*authority*,” therefore, stands crucial in the understanding of the baptism.

Focusing upon that “*authority*,” we come to realize that Christ was now about to ascend into heaven to be seated at the right hand of His Father in great coronation. He has already ascended from the lowest hell with the very “*keys of death and of hell*” (Rev.1:18). It is also believed that Christ already ascended at least once into his Father’s presence representing His own blood (Heb. 9:11-14; John 20:17) to seal the accomplishments of His substitutionary death, burial and

resurrection. He would soon dispatch the Third Person of the Godhead into the world to minister victoriously in the lives of believers and to convince the world of sin —see John 16:7-11.

This unique “*authority*” has been granted to Him as a result of His glorious redemptive work. In that work He defeated the Devil, gained victory over death and enables believers to live victoriously over sin. He now assumes dominion over all spiritual forces in heaven and on earth.

The “*authority*” that Christ has received also reflects the drastic change from His lowly humiliation as a “*Suffering Servant*” on earth to His glorious exaltation as Lord of all and “*Head over all things to the Church which is His body.*” In this connection, read carefully Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 2:10,15 and also I Pet. 3:22.

Though invisible to the natural human eye, this is the unique perspective from which Christ now speaks. No potentate on earth nor creature in heaven has ever taken, nor could ever take, a more exalted posture than did the Son of God on this occasion. There is no pulpit or platform, in all the history of religious rulers or civil empires, that could ever be as spectacular as this. Christ has gloriously triumphed over all His enemies and made salvation available for all mankind by God’s matchless grace. Now He will grant to His disciples the privilege of sharing in His victory by their proclamation of the good news to all nations on the face of the earth.

Where this evangelism will find fertile hearts, it will result in the spontaneous births of new creations in Christ. The dynamics of this spiritual salvation and the multiplied blessings for each convert were all now going to be encompassed within the scope of the promised “baptism of the Holy Spirit” for this particular Church Age. This is the only baptism that is befitting to the exaltation of Christ. Theologians have properly called this spiritual baptism “The Real Baptism of Christianity” (see Acts 1:4,5; Eph. 1:13 & 4:3-6; I Cor. 12:13, etc.).

To mentally assume that Christ is speaking in this commission of a carnal baptism of water is to retrogress in one’s natural mind back into the baptism of Christ’s humiliation as He stood by the waters of Jordan and contemplated His work as the “Lamb of God.” In contrast, the meditations of the spiritual mind will inevitably draw your thinking to the glorious baptism which stands as a commemoration of Christ’s exaltation.

In some respects I hesitate to say what I am going to say next—for I know the temperament of many who will instantly shut their minds to any criticism of their watery idol. Nevertheless, I believe, like Palestine’s winding Jordan river, which eventually flows into the vast Dead Sea and is characteristically absent of life—so it is, Christendom has created, at the end of its watery ritual doctrine, a vast stagnant pond which is void of life and stinks of putrid self-righteousness. Pope Paul the VI has, himself, stated that the vast majority of Catholics are nothing but “baptized pagans.”

All the water baptisms of the Jordan and its tributaries eventually lead to that lowest spot on the face of the earth—the Dead Sea. All man’s efforts to save himself are but “dead works” (Heb. 9:14). Whereas, the baptism of the “great Commission” stands only in contrast—for it was authorized from the “**mountaintop**” in Galilee, and it plainly speaks of spiritual authority, reality and victory. As we would make application of this passage for this present Church Age, the baptism will be directly administered by the Sovereign Savior, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and indirectly administered by His messengers in their proclamation of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Every humble hearted person who believes upon Christ will instantly receive it.

No 2. “THE GREAT COMMISSION” HAS “THE GREAT BAPTISM”

Most all denominations of Christendom have thoughtfully called this passage of Scripture “the Great Commission”—and rightfully so! This passage of Scripture appears to be the banner for every missionary endeavor. Yet, the very same adherents to these denominations totally overlook the fact that all four Gospels and the book of Acts plainly unite in telling us emphatically that the one and only “greater baptism” to come was “**Holy Spirit baptism**” and not another water baptism—see Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26-33; Acts 1:5 & 11:16.

“And (John) preached, saying, there comes one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit...” (Mark 1:7,8; Matt., Luke, & John).

“Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit—not many days hence.” (Acts 11:16; 1:5).

In all these passages two baptisms are contrasted. Holy Spirit baptism is plainly indicated as the greater, subsequent baptism to come. The spirituality of its substance indicates the reality of its work. In these passages, water baptism, as represented by John’s baptism, is as inferior to the Spiritual baptism as the type and shadow are inferior to the anti-type and substance. As John would point to “The Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,” who would want to turn back to a woolly lamb substitute? In the same manner, ritual baptism of water has no standing in the presence of the Real Baptism of the Spirit. The ritual will phase away as the reality receives preeminence (see John 3:28-31).

The Scriptures are void of any hint that there was another water baptism to come which would be greater than John’s. Neither John nor Christ ever prophesied of a greater water baptism to come. The absolute silence of Scripture on that point serves to ratify the singular importance of that spiritual baptism which was prophesied to come.

All these passages, in the Gospels and the first chapter of Acts, are prophetic in nature. They find their fulfillment only in such a commission as that of Matthew 28:19. If it is proper to call Matthew 28:19 “*the Great Commission*,” then indeed, such a commission must have as its complement “*the Greater Baptism*”—otherwise, you have insurmountable incongruities.

No 3. THE PREREQUISITE FOR THE COMMISSION

The Scriptures further tell us that an absolute prerequisite to the disciples executing this commission was their being “baptized by the Holy Spirit.” I repeat, Christ instructed the Apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they had been baptized by the Holy Spirit before they could take one single step in embarking on their mission—see Luke 24:47-49 and Acts 1:4-8. Note these instructions:

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you: BUT TARRY YE in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

*“And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they **SHOULD NOT DEPART** from Jerusalem, **BUT WAIT FOR** the Promise of the Father, which ye have heard of Me—For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.”*

This prerequisite actually tells us what kind of baptism they are going to effect by their ministry. Nobody needs to be baptized by the Holy Spirit in order to water baptize a person. The fact is, the Apostles had been water baptizing people earlier. The only prerequisite for the apostles to water baptize others was that they, themselves, had earlier submitted to John’s water baptism. A ritually impure person could never purify another (Num. 19:17,18). After submitting to John’s baptism, Christ instructed them to baptize others—see again John 3:22-26 & 4:1-3.

In the case of the Great Commission, the qualification for them effecting this baptism is that they must first have *“the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”* Thus, that very baptism which *prepared* them for preaching the gospel will be the baptism *effected* through their proclamation of the gospel. That means the baptism of the Holy Spirit, in the broadest sense, is the baptism of the Commission for this present church age.

Some have objected to Matthew 28:19 being Spiritual baptism because the text implies that the disciples have a part in doing it, whereas, the Scriptures state that Christ would be the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism. Another logical question follows, “since it is a supernatural baptism, how could mere men do it?”

First of all, that the passage indicates the disciples will have a part in this baptism there is no question. However, it has been pointed out by others, that the passage does not actually say that the disciples directly do it. The disciples are actually to do one thing—“disciple all nations.” “Baptizing them” stands as an adverbial phrase modifying the words before. This means that their preaching, in order to make disciples, results in the “baptism” of the honest hearers.

This objection, therefore, is really very easy to answer. Let us take note of the following facts that will explain this for us. The commission, as given in the Gospel of John (John 20:21-23), says that the disciples are to **“remit sins.”** Now everyone knows that only God can “remit sins.” Yet, this is seemingly what Christ is telling the disciples to do! In I Cor. 4:15 we are told that the Apostle Paul gave spiritual **“birth”** to the Corinthians. Now we know that is impossible for Paul to do. The new birth is by the divine operation of the Holy Spirit. In I Cor. 7:16 and 9:22 we are further told how Christian brethren could **“Save”** others! How can this be when we all know that Christ alone is the Savior? In James 5:19 & 20 we are told that believers can **“Convert”** others, and **“Save”** them, and **“Hide a multitude of Sin.”** Now we all know that only Jesus Christ could directly do any of these things. We must understand, therefore, that preachers do these things *indirectly* through the preaching of the gospel. In fact, that is precisely what Paul says in I Cor. 4:15—*“I have **begotten** you through the gospel.”* So it is with the spiritual baptism of the great commission! The messengers simply make disciples of all nations by proclaiming the gospel—resulting in the *“baptism, salvation, birth, remission of sins, conversion and hiding of sins”* of the repentant believer. Thus Christ remains as the direct administrator of the baptism, whereas the ministers indirectly administer it through their proclamation of the gospel—which gospel is specifically said to be the *“dynamite (power) of God to salvation”* (Rom. 1:16).

No 4. THE BAPTISM IS HOW DISCIPLES ARE MADE

It must be understood that the baptism mentioned in this commission is a description of how the disciples are made. John's water baptism could only make disciples outwardly by ritual and ceremony. The outward ceremony itself could never change the heart. Is that what is being done in this case? God forbid! This may be all that is being done in the ritual baptism of traditional Christendom, but this is not *at all* what is being done in the baptism of this commission. This baptism makes disciples, in fact and in reality, by their supernatural merger *into* the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the strictest sense this involves a spiritual salvation baptism!

Christendom has assumed that the words "in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost" amount to a ritual formula in baptizing people. This is what is being practiced today. However, when one searches the history of the early church in the book of Acts or the Epistles, he never finds this ritual formula being used—not even one single time! Is it really a ritual formula of words??

The plain use of the Greek preposition *eis*, meaning "into," (instead of *en*, meaning "in,") declares that this baptism is actually the placement of the repentant believer "*INTO the person of (the name of) the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*" Alford in his *Critical Greek New Testament and Exegetical Commentary* says, "It is unfortunate that our English Bible does not, here, give us the force of 'eis.' It should have been 'into' as in Galatians 3:27." The American Standard Version did translate it "into" instead of "in."

In John 14, Christ explains to the Apostles about the coming of the Holy Spirit to take up His residence in the hearts and lives of believers here on earth. This was spoken of as "*the Promise of the Spirit*" and equivalent to "*the baptism of the Holy Spirit*" in Acts 1:4,5. In verses 15 through 26 of John 14 it is plainly stated that, in their receiving of the Holy Spirit, the three persons of the Godhead would take up their residence in the believer—

"...the Comforter (or) the Spirit...will abide with you, I (Christ) will come to you...and my Father will love him, and WE will come unto you..."

In John 14,15 and 16, Christ **promises** the Holy Spirit to come to indwell the believer. In Acts 1:4 & 5, Christ reminds the Apostles of "the **Promise** of the Father" and qualifies this by saying they "**shall be baptized by the Holy Spirit.**" This makes it conclusive that the Divine Trinity will indwell the believer by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, therefore, the spiritual baptism of Matthew 18:19 is encompassed within the baptism of the Holy Spirit by virtue of the fact that it does precisely the same thing as Christ promised in John 14.

The baptism "into Christ" (Gal. 3:27 & 28) and "into one body" (I Cor. 12:13) are identical in consequence; this is specifically stated to be the "baptism of the Holy Spirit."

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all ONE in Christ Jesus."

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into ONE body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

Thus, again we have confirmation that the spiritual baptism of Matt. 28:19 is encompassed within the vital and real baptism of Christianity—the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

What about Mark 16:16?

Furthermore, this includes the blessings of the baptism as stated in Mark 16:16—“he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” It has been explained by another that in this particular passage there are *two* qualifiers to help us define the kind of baptism in view—the words “believe” and “be saved.” We know there are two kinds of belief mentioned in the Scriptures. First, a lower form of belief which merely involves the intellect. The devils are said to “believe and tremble.” Secondly, there is the higher form which embraces the affections of the heart of man. Salvation comes when one believes “from the heart.” It is generally admitted that the higher form of belief is in view in Mark 16:16. There are also two kinds of salvation in the Bible as well. There is a lower salvation, which is only physical, for the saving of a life. Then, there is the higher spiritual salvation of the soul for everlasting life. Again, it is admitted, the higher form is in view in Mark 16:16. With these factors in mind, we can make the simple deduction that a higher form of baptism is also in view. Water baptism is the lower form of baptism, and the Spiritual is the higher. We have in Mark a simple statement of cause and effect. “Belief” is the cause and “baptism for salvation” is the effect.

It is also to be noted in this text that when the negative is stated, the baptism is left out—“but he that believeth not shall be damned.” We all know that IF this is talking about a water baptism then any unbeliever could be baptized as well—in fact, every sect that claims to practice water baptismal regeneration testifies to the multitude of those who really aren’t true believers being baptized. However, IF this is the Real Baptism of Salvation then the text is stating an absolute precise fact—the unbeliever will NOT be baptized! Rather, he “*shall be damned.*” Furthermore, the Baptizer in this case never makes a mistake and baptizes a hypocrite.

In summary, we have the exact wording of Matt. 28:19, the exact parallel description of John 14, the exact similarity of Mark 16:16 and the exact statements of Gal. 3:27 and I Cor. 12:13 to tell us that this passage is talking about the spiritual salvation that is now incorporated into the real baptism of the Holy Spirit.

No 5. CORNELIUS THE FIRST ILLUSTRATION

The first man of another nation who illustrates the execution of the great Commission was Cornelius and his household of Gentiles—see Acts 10; 11:1-18 and 15:7-9. Peter evangelized this household of Gentiles who were spontaneously baptized by the Holy Spirit when they believed the gospel. These are the first people of another nation to come into the association of the early Jewish believers. It stands as an important landmark demonstration of the “Great Commission” and the Great Commission “baptism.”

“To this man (Christ) give all the prophets witness, that through His Name, whosoever believeth in Him receives forgiveness of sins. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on those hearing the message... Then I remembered the words of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 10:43,44; 11:16).

Peter later observed that he knew the “**hearts**” of these Gentiles had been “purified” from sin “by faith” (Acts 15:8,9), because they evidenced being instantly baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Thus the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for this present Age, spontaneously comes at the moment of heart faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit baptism is an incorporating baptism. It incorporates the blessing of initial spiritual salvation in Christ to the individual. The inner spiritual washing and cleansing from sin by itself has always been true and available throughout the ages to any who would call upon God's mercy in sincerity and truth. Now however, the inward cleansing from sin becomes a vital part of the "ONE" baptism for this Age—Holy Spirit baptism—which not only places the repentant believer into the body of Christ, but in the process it places him into Christ, and into remission of sins.

Some might say, "yes, but did not Peter later command them to be baptized in water?" Indeed, this is true (Acts 10:47). However, this water baptism was only the temporary continuation of John's baptism which, from the beginning of its inception, was also performed upon Roman soldiers who desired to identify with the Messianic hopes of Israel—see Luke 3:12-14. This is its purpose for Cornelius and his household. They are merely ritually purified unto Israel's Messianic Kingdom hope. They were saved under Peter's ministry, who was an Apostle to the Jewish people (Gal. 2:7,8), and still anticipating their national hope.

Between Acts 10 and Acts 15 many thousands of Gentiles were saved under the ministry of Paul, who is called—"The Apostle to the Gentiles (nations)." At the conference of the Church in Acts 15 it is clearly decided, by Paul's distinctive revelations (Gal. 2:2) and strong determination (Gal. 2:5), that the Law with its "meats and drinks and variety of baptisms" was not to be imposed upon the Gentile converts—see Acts 15:5, 19, 24, 28; 21:25 & Heb. 9:10. This included John's water baptism, which was the last act of righteous purity under the Law system—see Matt. 3:15. The Jewish believers would continue to observe the Law until the close of the book of Acts (Acts 21:20-26 & Heb. 8:13). According to the judgment by the Spirit led counsel in Jerusalem, the Gentiles were totally free from the Jewish ritual Law system. All the Law's "meats and drinks and variety of baptisms" (Heb. 9:10) were not to be imposed upon the Gentiles—Acts 15:24-29. As the national Kingdom hopes of Israel were gradually diminished, then this water baptism would cease as well. The book of Acts is the history of the transition out of Judaism into pure Christianity. As new revelation progressively unfolds, then the ceremonial and ritualistic Law system will fade away until it "vanishes" altogether (Heb. 8:13). See my study on *Baptism In The Book of Acts*.

When we observe the principle of "progressive revelation" (John 16:12,13) to the Church during the book of Acts history, we then will understand the transitory nature of water baptism.

No 6. THE APOSTLE TO THE NATIONS IS NOT SENT TO WATER BAPTIZE

Consistent with the Pauline revelation, that Gentile converts were not to have the ritual Law system imposed upon them, was Paul's commission to preach the gospel, but **not** to water baptize. We are told in I Cor. 1:17 by the Apostle Paul, himself, that he was not sent (by Christ) to (water) baptize. Many theologians have tried desperately to explain away the face value of this testimony by suggesting that Paul was too busy to water baptize. This argument falls flat because anyone who reads the life of Paul knows with a certainty that Paul was never too busy to obey the Lord's command to do anything.

John the Baptist was sent under the Jewish Dispensation to baptize with water—John 1:33, and don't forget that John was a great evangelist. The Scriptures are plain that "he turned many to

the Lord.” No one disputes that testimony. The Apostle Paul, however, was sent under the Gentile Dispensation “NOT to baptize (with water), but to preach the gospel,” i.e., to evangelize. In fact, Paul prefaces his words about this by saying, “**I thank God** I only (water) baptized” several Jewish converts. Now this is plain language! Paul did not want to be known and understood as one who merely was starting a new sect by a water purification rite. His commission was different, and Bible Christianity for this age is different. As we stated earlier, the Jewish converts were still keeping the law system during the book of Acts’ time period and Paul would still perform some of the Jewish rites while God was patiently dealing with them—this included circumcision, headshaving, feast observance, Sabbath keeping and water baptisms (see I Cor. 9:20,21).

If the baptism of the Great Commission was a water baptism, then Paul stands in direct opposition to it—but not only that, he expresses a contempt for it. This, of course, would be totally unlikely if the commission of Matt. 28:19 were a water baptism ordered by Christ. Since the commission of Matt. 28 was to evangelize the nations, then certainly the Apostle to the nations would be in harmony with it. And, indeed, that is the case.

The baptism that Paul administered by his preaching and teaching did not have a single drop of water in it! See and believe Rom. 6:1-6; I Cor. 6:11; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12,13 & Eph. 4:1-5. I have personally challenged preachers for years to try and find any physical water (H₂O) in Paul’s expositions of Christian baptism. It is simply not there!

No 7. THERE IS ONLY ONE BAPTISM TODAY

It would be important to note at this time that none of the Apostles or disciples are ever, one single time, said to have ritually water baptized someone “in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” This fact, itself, should help anyone to see that Matt. 28:19 is not talking about a ritual baptism in water—but rather, the real baptism that is spiritual.

Now we are going to traverse from one “mountaintop” (Matt. 28:16) to another. Many Bible teachers have said that the book of Ephesians is “the **mountain peak** of revelation” for this Church Age. It seems that Paul literally soars up into the “heavenlies” (Eph. 1:3) as he is guided by Divine inspiration to unfold the mysteries about the purpose and plan of God for this Church Dispensation. Herein we learn positively that there is only “ONE BAPTISM” for this age—see Eph. 4:1-5,

“...endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—
there is one body (unique for this age)
one *Spirit*
one hope (unique for this age)
one *Lord*
one faith (unique for this age)
one BAPTISM (unique, unifying and Spiritual for this age)
one *God and Father.*”

Even a casual glance at the passage makes it evident that there are not two different bodies, Spirits, hopes, Lords, faiths, Fathers or BAPTISMS—just one of each! There is not a variety of each, but just ONE of each! Most Bible students know that the baptism that makes Christians and builds the Church is still in effect—Gal. 3:27,28 & I Cor. 12:13, “For by one Spirit are we all

baptized into one body...” Seeing that Christ is still forming His Church by that baptism of the Holy Spirit, as the Scripture says, we conclude that the only baptism for today is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. “All spiritual blessings” (Eph. 1:3) are incorporated within the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As long as Ephesians 4:1-5 is in effect, that baptism will be in effect—because that baptism encompasses the baptism of the commission for this age.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

If anyone should think that this Bible study is a novel and unscholarly interpretation of Matthew 28:19, then let me point out that the work done on the subject of baptism by James W. Dale boldly teaches that the baptism of Matthew 28:19 is a spiritual baptism, and not water. Who is James W. Dale? His works on BAPTISM were simply said to be “The ablest treatise on the subject in the English language” by a veritable galaxy of scholars. Those works consist of approx. 1800 pages, in 5 volumes, of Hebrew, Greek and Latin syntax. His early volumes were endorsed by such men as Thayer (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon), Strong (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance to the Bible), and Schaff (famed History of the Christian Church & Nicene Fathers), etc., etc.. Nearly every seminary graduate and Bible student has these basic Bible study helps of Strong and Thayer on his desk and uses them constantly. It is appropriate to quote from Dale at this time since he gives a very strong statement of summary about this passage of Matthew 28:19—

“The language of inspiration announces a real baptism as distinctly as can be done by the use of words; there is absolutely no evidence of a ritual baptism in connection with these words, either in this passage or elsewhere in the Scripture.”

“This wonderful baptism into the Trinity (depending upon the baptism into the incarnate, atoning, and mediating Son) has no direct or designed relation to a ritual baptism. It was, however, very soon after the times of the Apostles, connected with the administration of the Christian rite, and continued to be used in common with the formula into the name of the Lord Jesus (and later into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost) ... It is admitted, both by ancient and modern expositors, that the practice of the CHURCH is **not** the practice of the APOSTLES. The only question, therefore, on the merits of the case, is this: have the Apostles, or has the Church, since the third century, more correctly interpreted the Commission?”

“Again, these words cannot be converted into a ritual formula, because thereby the transcendent truth which they teach is destroyed. A rite is but a shadow. This baptism as it stands in the commission is a reality.”

(Vol. 4, CHRISTIC BAPTISM, Pages 455, 458 & 461.)

The End