

# SOME COMMENTS ON RECENT MAGAZINE ARTICLES

BY

DR. WILLIAM L. PETTINGILL

DR. J. OLIVER BUSWELL

DR. ARTHUR F. WILLIAMS

REV. JAMES R GRAHAM

## CONCERNING WATER BAPTISM

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(A LETTER TO A BROTHER IN CHRIST)

This is to acknowledge receipt of Dr. Buswell's magazine, the November edition of "The Bible Today," in which you marked for my perusal the article entitled, "Both Sides of the Baptism Question," containing Dr. Buswell's reply to the message of Dr. William L. Pettingill, "The Evils of Infant Baptism," printed in the September, 1945 edition of the I.F.C.A.'s Voice. In the same mail I received from you a copy of the magazine published by Mr. James R. Graham of Glendale, California, and read his comments on Pauline truth and water baptism. I have just finished reading the water baptism message of Pastor A. F. Williams, in the December edition of "The Bible Today."

While neither Dr. Pettingill, Dr. Buswell, Mr. Graham nor Dr. Williams, pastor of the First Baptist Church of New York, proved what they think they believe concerning water baptism, we should congratulate them on not being afraid to print their "water baptism theories." The great majority of the wise leaders among the Fundamentalists have decided to state, "I believe in water baptism for this present age and dispensation of grace," but they choose not to give the Scriptures to support just what they believe as to the form, formula and significance of the ceremony. These men are wise, for when they print what they think they believe they reveal the utter confusion that exists among Christians as to the mode and meaning of water baptism and they prove by their lack of obedience to II Timothy 2:15 that they are indeed workmen who need to be ashamed; because they do not rightly divide the Word of truth. They would be wise, if they do not want to be Bereans or do not want their readers to be Bereans (Acts 17:11), to follow the example of Mr. John Darby, who replied, when he was asked, "What do you hold concerning

water baptism,” “I hold my mouth.” All of the four brethren are defenders of traditions rather than Bereans.

### A YOUNG CHRISTIAN’S CONFUSION

At the time I received the copies of the magazines, which you had marked, a young man was in my office to talk with me on the very subject discussed by the four brethren. This was the first time I had met this young man. He told me that from early childhood he had heard his “Campbellite” father and his “Baptist” mother argue and disagree as to the meaning of water baptism. His father believed that a person received water baptism to make him a Christian, whereas his mother believed that water baptism is intended for only such persons as are Christians and the water ceremony convinces others that they are Christians. The young man remarked that his “Campbellite” father gave ten or twelve Scriptures to prove his position, whereas his “Baptist” mother could quote only the experience of Cornelius. But the young man saw that neither his father nor his mother was honest with Mark 16:16 to 18, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and these signs shall follow them that believe . . . Cast out demons, speak with tongues, drink poison without injury, heal the sick by the imposition of hands.” By the way, not one of the four brethren mentioned above has had the courage to deal honestly with this great commission of the Lord. Each one of them revises and abridges these words of the Lord Jesus Christ and twists other Scriptures to defend his tradition. Well, the young man joined the Pentecostals, as he thought they were the only group of Christians who accepted the entire program of Mark 16:16 to 18, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:5 to 15 and Acts 19:2 to 6. The Pentecostals did not change Mark 16:16 to 18 to read, “he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized, and no signs shall follow,” as do the Baptists. But he did learn that the water baptism did not save the Pentecostals and they were deceiving themselves and others concerning the miracles. He was disgusted and confused and one day while reading his Bible he read Ephesians 4:3 to 6, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit . . . one body . . . one baptism.” He said to himself, “all the denominational churches have ‘two’ baptisms, and this must be the reason why there is such utter confusion concerning the Scriptural significance of water baptism. The Lutherans and Presbyterians and Methodists all believe in sprinkling children as well as adults, but they each give a different meaning to the ceremony. Without one single verse to support their various theories, they scripturally call water baptism a Christian sacrament. The Baptists, the Campbellites and Pentecostals demand immersion and they are as much disagreed as to the meaning of the ceremony as are the three ‘sprinkling’ denominations.” The young man knew there could be no Christian unity, with any kind of water baptism, which Dr. Pettingill acknowledges has divided Christians and caused more hatred and violence and bloodshed than any other Bible doctrine. Of course, Dr. Pettingill thinks this will continue until all Christians believe in his “watery grave” witness theory, which is perhaps the most ridiculous of all theories. Dr. Pettingill teaches a Divine baptism in Romans 6:3 and a human, physical baptism in Romans 6:4, in spite of the fact that he dogmatically and boldly contends that the one baptism, for Christian unity, in Ephesians 4:5 is the Divine baptism and not any act of man.

Then the young man looked for Christian fellowship in some church organization where the people of God believed that “one baptism” did not mean “two baptisms.” He found a

preacher who seemed to preach what Dr. Pettingill thinks he preaches (but does not), “grace plus nothing.” But the preacher called him an “O’Hairite” and wouldn’t take him in, although he acknowledged the young man was a member of the Body of Christ and had eternal salvation by the Lord’s baptism. The young man had never heard of me, nor of my teaching. But he and I learned after our interesting talk that we believed the same thing. We began by believing what John the Baptist said about water baptism: “I have come baptizing with water that Christ might be made manifest to Israel” (John 1:31). We also believed that when the Holy Spirit led Peter to say to Israel on the day of Pentecost, “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38), He did not lead Peter to say, “repent, believe, be saved, receive the Holy Spirit, and then be baptized in water as a witness to the world.”

### CONFUSED DOCTORS

Now back to the Buswell-Pettingill-Williams-Graham-I.F.C.A. “Bible Today” debate; how glad I am that these Christian gentlemen have printed their contradictory, fantastic water baptism theories. Their printed confusion is enough to make a Berean out of any thinking Christian, and there are a few such Christians, who refuse to be blind followers of blind leaders.

I personally rejoice that Dr. Buswell has the “spunk” to call Christians together for a public discussion of water baptism. Such a conference has long been needed. I wonder if Dr. Buswell would permit me as much time to present what I believe as he does Dr. Pettingill. He should certainly include me with the other speakers after what Dr. Pettingill wrote what he did about him. Dr. Pettingill wrote in the September Voice that my “no water” is less evil than Dr. Buswell’s Presbyterian, infant baptism. But I think we may be sure that the confused Fundamentalists will see to it, that water baptism shall not have an open public-meeting discussion. It is best to keep the laymen ignorant. Silent boycott is their only hope to perpetuate the ceremony which they cherish above any desire to obey Ephesians 3:9.

One thing about which the four brethren agree is to condemn and malign the “one baptism” Christians and call them “ultra-dispensationalists.” What they call “ultra-dispensationalism” is the very principle which Dr. Buswell used in his “water baptism” article to prove that physical circumcision had an important, God-given place in two former dispensations, but after having served its purpose it was abolished and is forbidden in this present age and dispensation of grace. How did Dr. Buswell prove this? Not by the Four Gospels when circumcision was still God’s order; not by the writings of any of the twelve apostles, but by studying past dispensations in the light of Pauline truth, the Divine revelation which the risen Christ gave to Paul, to show that spiritual circumcision had superseded physical circumcision. This our brother could prove by Philippians 3:1 to 6 and Galatians 6:15. He referred several times to Colossians 2:11 and 12. By the simplest principle of Bible study, if Colossians 2:11 is spiritual circumcision, the baptism of Colossians 2:12 is also spiritual.

### THE THEOLOGIANS AND CHURCH HISTORY

At least to his own satisfaction, Dr. Buswell has exposed Dr. Pettingill’s profound ignorance of church history, but both Dr. Buswell and Dr. Pettingill offered little Scriptural proof

of what each thinks that he believes concerning water baptism. But each might have truthfully said that the early church fathers disagreed more than they do. We must be careful about accepting much of the program for the Body of Christ, in this present economy of grace, on the authority of church history. We might land at St. Peter's in Rome, or reach some of the conclusions that Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses and British Israelites have reached, to support their diabolic teachings. What has not been proved by church history?

Now think of the pity of it! Dr. J. Oliver Buswell is president of the National Bible Institute of New York City, and young men under him are being trained to go out to be ministers of Christ, who, according to the Word of God, are to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. (I Corinthians 4:1 to 4). Dr. William L. Pettingill is the "Goliath" among the ministers connected with I. F. C. A. He is looked up to by many Christian workers, who consider him an able Bible teacher. Dr. Buswell says that he believes that water baptism, by sprinkling, superseded "circumcision." Dr. Pettingill stated in his "Voice" article, "I would unhesitatingly say, no water baptism rather than the baptism of infants . . . Happily I am not thus compelled to choose between two evils." I am glad that Dr. Pettingill prefers my water baptism teaching to that of Dr. Buswell. In Dr. Pettingill's opinion, both Dr. Buswell and I teach "evil." He seems to be the spokesman for the I.F.C.A. The I.F.C.A. tolerates "evil" in its camp, for Dr. Buswell is a member of that organization. If Dr. Pettingill and other like-minded brethren remain members of an organization where evil is winked at, God will hold them responsible. "Come out from among them." How can two walk together unless they be agreed? In all our Bible teaching, Dr. Pettingill and I are more nearly agreed than are Dr. Pettingill and Dr. Buswell.

Dr. Pettingill teaches openly, without reservation, that the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, for Christian unity, is not water baptism, but the Divine baptism. He likewise disagrees with most of his fellow-members of the I.F.C.A., who teach that the members of the Body of Christ, in this age and dispensation of grace, are working under the so-called "great commission" of Matthew 28:19 and 20. In this Dr. Pettingill disagrees with his fellow-Baptist, Dr. Williams. Dr. Pettingill teaches that the baptism of Romans 6:3 is the Divine baptism; but that the baptism of the next verse, Romans 6:4, is physical, water baptism, received from man by man. According to Dr. Pettingill's absurd, fantastic theory, water baptism is the believer's witness to the world that he has been baptized into the death of Christ, and raised to walk in newness of life; that his old man has died and therefore, should be buried. He believes that sprinkling is not a burial but that immersion is. With Dr. Pettingill, as well as with many other Fundamentalists, immersion is the "watery grave witness" that the believer has been raised from the dead to seek those things which are above; that his old man has been crucified. Dr. Pettingill has not answered Dr. Buswell that Christ was not buried "under," but above the ground.

Dr. Pettingill and others, who must wholly ignore such Scriptures as Mark 16:14 to 18, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:5 to 15, Acts 19:2 to 6, Luke 3:3, Acts 22:16 to blindly propagate their unscriptural "watery grave" teaching, will admit when questioned, that the very moment the believer meets God at Calvary and receives Christ as his Saviour, he that moment, by grace, passes out of death into life; that he is that moment crucified and dead with Christ, baptized into His death; that he is at that same moment raised up and seated in the heavenlies in Christ. (Ephesians 2:5 and 6). When should the burial take place? Between the "baptism" death and the resurrection? Then the moment the believer receives Christ and eternal life, without any kind of

a water ceremony, he is buried with Christ by baptism. Dr. Buswell, Dr. Williams and Mr. Graham say this. I think Dr. Pettingill believes this. I know that Dr. Buswell believes this. Presently I shall quote Mr. Graham to prove that he believes this.

Very few sinners of the world witness the “watery grave” ceremony. To them water baptism proves nothing but a religious ceremony practiced by most Christians, differing with different denominations. In Colossians 3:1 to 15 the Holy Spirit instructs Christians how to prove to saints and sinners that they have been raised with Christ to walk in newness of life . . . “Put to death the deeds of the flesh . . . Put on the new man . . . Put off the old man.” You cannot put off the old man once for all in water. This must be done every day. Certainly no one puts on the new man under the water.

I am sure that Dr. Pettingill will agree that a sprinkled, saved Lutheran or Presbyterian has been buried with Christ by baptism, whereas the unregenerated, immersed member of a Baptist church has not been buried with Christ in baptism. But if Dr. Pettingill insists that the “baptism” burial of Romans 6:4 is water, he must teach that no sprinkled believer is saved; for certainly no one has been raised from the dead who has not been buried. Saved Lutherans, saved Presbyterians and saved Baptists were buried with Christ the moment they were saved.

According to Luke 3:21, Jesus Christ was baptized with water. According to Luke 12:50, Jesus Christ was baptized when He died on the cross. According to Colossians 1:27, Christ is in the believer. Can the believer in this age of grace go down under the water without taking Christ down? This would make the third baptism of Christ. When the believer takes his old man, for burial in the watery grave, when he is immersed, does he not take his new man under with his old man? Is it Scriptural to bury the new, living man? You see how absurd is this teaching of Dr. Pettingill and Dr. Williams. Not much thinking.

Now, Dr. Pettingill prefers my water baptism teaching to that of Dr. Buswell. But between the two of them, so far as I am concerned, there is little choice, inasmuch as Dr. Buswell repudiates water regeneration or any saving value in sprinkling infants or adults. Whether either is evil, both are foolish; and you see that these theories are as far apart as the East is from the West. If either of these two spiritual leaders gives the correct Scriptural meaning of water baptism for members of the Body of Christ, the other leader’s teaching is far worse than absurd.

#### DR. BUSWELL—CIRCUMCISION

As I was ordained as a Presbyterian minister, I know Dr. Buswell’s unscriptural theory quite well. On page 312, “The Bible Today” (Nov. 1945), Dr. Buswell wrote . . . “Bible students have not paid sufficient attention to the discussion of circumcision and faith in Romans, chapters 3 and 4. Paul says of Abraham, “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision.” (Romans 4:11.) “Of course, for adults the rule is to believe and be baptized, precisely as the Old Testament rule was believe and be circumcised.” (See Romans 4:11). “Similarly the Christian church from the earliest days has used baptism as an equivalent of the Old Testament, as an equivalent of circumcision in the case of male children.” Thus we see the teaching of the Presbyterian church,

that sprinkling superseded circumcision, the circumcision having been the seal of the old testament and the sprinkling the seal of the New.

The Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised and some years later was baptized. More than forty years after Christ was circumcised eleven of the twelve apostles condemned Peter for baptizing a man who had not been circumcised. (Acts 11:1 to 5). This proves that no uncircumcised man was baptized with water while Christ was on earth or during the first nine chapters of Acts. In Philippians 3:3 to 5 and in Colossians 2:11 we learn that circumcision took on a new meaning. In I Corinthians 12:13, I Corinthians 1:17, Ephesians 4:5 and Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:3 to 5, we learn that baptism took on a new meaning. A believer must be both circumcised and baptized to get into heaven; but neither the circumcision nor the baptism is physical.

If baptism takes the place of circumcision, why baptize little girls? Girls were not circumcised.

#### ABRAHAM NOT AN OLD TESTAMENT SAINT

Dr. Buswell has made the great blunder that 99% of Christians have made. He erroneously quotes Romans 4:11 as referring to "The Old Testament." Neither does he know the difference between "Abram" and "Abraham," the meaning of Galatians 3:8 and the significance of the 430 years in Galatians 3:16 to 19. According to Galatians 3:8 and Galatians 3:17, 430 years before the Old Testament was given at Sinai, Abram, the uncircumcised heathen, was justified in uncircumcision. It was when Abram was declared righteous in uncircumcision that the Scriptures foresaw that Paul would preach the gospel of uncircumcision to the heathen. (Galatians 2:7 and Galatians 3:8). There was no uncircumcised "Abraham." "Abram" became "Abraham" at the age of 99 when he was circumcised. (Genesis 17). This was 24 years after Abram, the heathen, was declared righteous in uncircumcision (Romans 4:7 to 11), as an uncircumcised heathen. (Genesis 12:1 to 6 and Genesis 15:5 to 9). It was then that the Scriptures saw Romans 4:4 and 5 and Romans 3:24 and Galatians 3:8 and Titus 3:5 to 8. In John 7:22 the Lord Jesus Christ told the Jews that circumcision was instituted before the law was given at Sinai. It was given to the fathers who were not "old testament" characters. In Galatians 3:19 we learn that the "law" covenant (the old testament) was added to the promise that God made to Abram (430 years after God's covenant with Abram). This verse and Galatians 3:24 and 25 teach us that the "law" covenant, made old after Christ died on the cross (Hebrews 8:9 to 13), was for a temporary and parenthetical dispensation (Galatians 3:19).

#### IS THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT IN FORCE

Dr. Buswell should know that if the Abrahamic covenant was made old and vanished away, as did the "law" covenant (Hebrews 8:13), then there is no Scriptural authority or foundation for his Presbyterian "covenant" church. The "old covenant" vanished away but not the Abrahamic covenant. When Moses received the covenant for Israel at Sinai, Moses was 80 years old; and at that time that "law" covenant was decidedly new; not old. It was made "old" about 1500 years later. (II Corinthians 3:7 to 17, Hebrews 8:13). But the covenant that God made

with uncircumcised Abram, and with circumcised Abraham, was not made “old” by Christ’s death and resurrection. (Galatians 3:16 to 19). I cannot begin to number the Christians, who have said, after re-reading Jeremiah 31:31 to 37, Hebrews 8:9 to 13, Galatians 3:16 to 19 and Galatians 3:8, “how blind I was not to see that ‘from Adam to Moses’ (Romans 5:12 to 14) there was no ‘old testament’ or ‘old covenant.’” This serious blunder is responsible for many of the blunders in the dispensationalism of Dr. Buswell and Dr. Pettingill and Dr. Williams and Mr. Graham and most of the Bible Schools in this country. Adam, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel) and Israel’s twelve sons all lived and died before Sinai, and not one of them was an “old testament” character and circumcision was of the fathers. (John 7:22).

If Dr. Buswell will carefully read John 7:22, Galatians 3:8 and Galatians 2:7 and Galatians 3:16 to 19 and Romans 4:7 to 12, and learn that Abram was an uncircumcised Gentile at the time he was justified in uncircumcision, that he was declared righteous by faith 430 years before “the old testament” was added, and was circumcised when he was 99 years old when he became “Abraham,” he must decide that if water baptism has taken the place of circumcision, then believing Jews, not believing Gentiles, should be baptized. You and I, who are Bereans, know that God would not be the author of such confusion, that a water ceremony lasting a very few moments has taken the place of a mark in the flesh that remained until death. The theory that water baptism takes the place of circumcision is without any Scriptural support. The seal of members of the Body of Christ is not water, but the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:12 to 14, Ephesians 4:30).

## THE CHURCH AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

Dr. Pettingill is most consistent in teaching that the Body of Christ in the dispensation and age of grace is not working under the so-called great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20. I wonder what Dr. Williams, who disagrees with Dr. Pettingill on this point, would do, if the members of his church organization would go all over New York City, men, women and children, and carry out the great commission, as faithful Christians should do, if this program is for today. They would not fully obey the commission by “discipling” the sinners of New York, or leading them to Christ; they would have to baptize them with or in water. But Dr. Williams, without giving one verse of Scripture to support his instructions, would say, “you disciple them and then bring them to me for a public baptism.” This is tradition; not the Bible; as is also the title “reverend” and the division of Body-members into clergymen and laymen. Where did we get the common practice, “let the laymen evangelize or ‘disciple’ and let the clergymen do the baptizing”? The water ceremony today is much the same as the circumcision of Paul’s day; to take away the offense of the cross. Think of the religious pride and presumption of man, to think that he can add one iota to the perfect, redemptive, finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ by his religious water ceremony! Dr. Williams certainly wrote the truth when he said that the great majority of Christians do not know what happened to them when they were baptized. I am afraid Dr. Williams belongs to the same “Know-Nots.”

I wonder if Dr. Williams or Dr. Pettingill or Dr. Buswell or Mr. Graham would say with Paul, “I thank God that I baptized only a few of you,” or “I thank God that I speak with tongues more than ye all,” or “forbid not to speak with tongues”? (I Corinthians 1:14, I Corinthians 14:18)

and 39). Paul became all things to all men that he might save some (I Corinthians 9:20 to 24), but after spending 18 months in Corinth, that large city, Paul knew not whether he had baptized more than four or five people. Just imagine Paul saying to Dr. Pettingill or to Dr. Williams, "I thank God that I helped very few Christians to witness to the world that they had been baptized into the death of Christ, had been buried with them and had been raised from the dead!" Of course, I Corinthians 1:14 to 17 is positive Scriptural proof that regeneration is not by water baptism.

#### OUR GREAT COMMISSION—(RECONCILIATION)

When the Lord Jesus gave the commission of Matthew 28 and Mark 16 the nation Israel had not been set aside; for they had not yet been given the opportunity to receive or reject Christ in resurrection. (Acts 5:29 to 32 . . . Acts 13:30 to 46 . . . Romans 11:11 and 15 and Romans 11:30). Reconciliation and salvation and mercy were given to the Gentiles, when and because Israel was set aside, according to the verses just quoted. Then God's great commission and truth concerning the new creation was given; the word and ministry of reconciliation. (II Corinthians 5:16 to 21).

#### PAUL'S MISTAKES?

In Mr. James G. Graham's "Life in the Spirit," December '45 edition, you read his foolish accusations against Paul, setting forth Paul's mistakes. You remember the preacher's comment on Ingersoll's lecture, "The Mistakes of Moses." The preacher said that he would not give much to hear it; but he would give a fortune to hear Moses speak on the mistakes of Ingersoll. Let dear brother Graham make the application. (II Corinthians 2:14, II Timothy 4:7).

Mr. Graham at one time seemed to know something of God's program for and concerning the Church, which is Christ's Body, but now after reading several of his publications, in which he ridicules the dispensationalism of the Pretribulation Premillenarians and knows not the difference between Israel's prophesied kingdom and the unprophesied Body of Christ, in my judgment he is about the most confused "thinker" of any Fundamentalist I know of. He ridicules "the rapture," "the blessed hope." I want to deal with this in another message, but here note his comments on water baptism. On page 15 of his December, 1945, "Life In The Spirit," Mr. Graham has a subheading . . . "Paul And Baptism." This follows his paragraph in which he calls me and some of my friends, "Neo-Tubingens." This is a new one to be added to "Ultradispensationalists," "Hyperdispensationalists," "Bullingerites," "Spiritual Hydrophobes" and "Extremists." What a pity that our brother is not some kind of a dispensationalist that will deliver him from his delusion concerning the kingdom of heaven and give him at least a little knowledge of the Church of the Mystery, the meaning of Ephesians 3:1 to 6, Colossians 1:25 to 27 and Colossians 4:3 and 4. He uses the same old argument used by many other Christians to prove that the Church of the Mystery is not a different Church from other Bible churches, by quoting "SAME BODY" in Ephesians 3:6. Our brother, who seems to be such a thorough Greek student, should look at the Greek word "Sussomos" in Ephesians 3:6, and know that it is "The Joint-Body." But little wonder he is making no effort to obey Ephesians 3:9, when he thinks that

the apostle Paul and the twelve apostles were out of the will of God all during the Book of Acts, when the Twelve confined their testimony to the Jews and Paul became a Jew to the Jews. You know what I know, that not one single Christian, who is practicing or teaching water baptism for this age, is preaching the mystery of Christ in obedience to Ephesians 3:9. If apologies are in order in heaven, dear brother Graham will have plenty to make. Somehow Mr. Graham makes me think of Apollos before Aquila and Priscilla took him in hand to show him the difference between John's baptism and the "grace" message (Acts 18:24 to 28). His confusion is appalling. Our brother does not seem to know whether he is a Jew in the holy land or a member of the Body of Christ seated in the heavenlies. He has not the slightest knowledge of the difference between the gospel of the kingdom and the unsearchable riches of Christ. (Matthew 4:23, Ephesians 3:8). Therefore, we should not be surprised that he does not know the difference between John the Baptist's statement in John 1:31 and Paul's statement in I Corinthians 1:17, why John was sent to baptize, whereas Paul said plainly, "Christ sent me not to baptize." This statement of Paul, together with his statements in Galatians 1:11 and 12, Acts 13:46, Acts 18:6 and Romans 11:30 and Romans 11:15, should convince any thinking student of God's Word that Paul was not working under the so-called great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20.

#### THE SEVEN-FOLD UNITY

Now hear Mr. Graham's words:

"We have in Ephesians 4:3 to 6 the seven unities, the irreducible minimum for Christian fellowship, and communion, the indispensable essentials of saving faith. ONLY ONE BAPTISM is necessary to vital relationship to Christ and with His people. We are therefore opposed to any form of water baptism being insisted upon, as a requisite to fellowship in a local assembly."

Then our brother proceeds to show his contempt for the two groups of Christians, "the rabid water-Baptists with their hydromania" and the no-water Christians with "a kind of spiritual hydro-phobia" . . . "dispensing with a sacrament of the church . . . water baptism." We challenge our brother to look up the Greek and find where water baptism is a sacrament and if there is any sacrament in Romans 6:3 and 4, Ephesians 4:5 and Colossians 2:12. Our brother too is a defender of tradition which is contrary to sound doctrine. If the one Divine baptism is sufficient for vital relationship to Christ and with His people and no water is necessary for membership in the local assembly, then the only thing that water baptism can do is to break up the Body of Christ into unscriptural sectarian assemblies with twenty different water ceremonies, thereby creating disunity instead of the unity commanded in Ephesians 4:3 to 6 quoted by Mr. Graham, with one baptism, which is not water. Water baptism makes Pharisees, bigots and persecutors of many Christians who take their water theories seriously.

#### DR. ARTHUR F. WILLIAMS . . . THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIANS.

Dr. Williams, in December 1945 . . . "The Bible Today," (page 335), wrote: "With multitudes the ordinance has degenerated into a meaningless ritualism, required by tradition as a sort of necessary inconvenience of those who would unite with the church." . . . "Thousands are baptized every year who could not give a Scriptural reason for their act."

Then in the paragraphs and pages that follow our loyal Baptist brother thinks that he has given a Scriptural reason why he was baptized and why he baptizes others, and it is plain from his “watery-grave” theory that he is sure that the Lutherans, Christian Reformed Churches, Presbyterians, Dunkards, Methodists, Campbellites, Quakers, Episcopalians, in fact, all others, including many Baptists, teach and practice error concerning water baptism. We would like to ask what Dr. Buswell means by “Both Sides of the Baptism Question.” This “Baptism Question” is a polygon, even Babylon.

On page 337 Dr. Williams mentioned “the Christ-dishonoring doctrine of “baptismal regeneration.” Would it not be interesting to hear a debate between Dr. Williams, the Baptist, and Dr. Walter Mayer, the Lutheran, on Mark 16:14 to 18 and Acts 2:38 and Acts 19:2 to 6 and Mark 1:4 and Acts 8:5 to 15. The Lutheran would prove his water teaching by the Scriptures. The Baptist would not. The baptism in Romans 6 is meritorious and efficacious and makes a new creature out of the one baptized, makes a living saint out of a dead sinner, and if it is water, then the Lutheran is right and Dr. Williams is wrong. Dr. Kenneth Wuest, a member of the faculty of the Moody Bible Institute, their Greek teacher, stated in print that the Greek construction of the sixth chapter of Romans rules out water baptism. Christ’s death baptism (Luke 12:50) is the believer’s baptism. (Romans 6:3 and 4). It is this “death” baptism that brings the believer into that identification with Christ, concerning which our brother Williams wrote in such forceful language. But our brother would mar his identification with his fellow-Christians (Romans 12:3 to 5) by adding to the Divine baptism a water ceremony which is just as meaningless, just as contrary to sound Bible doctrine, as the ceremonies of the Lutherans, Presbyterians and Campbellites, although it is difficult to see how the Lutherans can use Mark 16:16 in making babies, “Lutheran Christians,” when faith and water are there linked together. They are bold to say that faith, without water, will not save. They should be equally bold to say that water, without faith, will not save. They also will admit that thousands of their baby Lutherans grow up to be lost Lutherans.

We know that Dr. Williams would not make the foolish statement made by Dr. Buswell in “The Bible Today” (November edition), page 313: “. . . we baptize our children in the hope and in the faithful expectation, that when they reach the age of discretion they themselves—partly by the agency of prayers and tears and faithful parenthood, wholly through the agency of the Holy Spirit will believe and be saved.” All of us should be in favor of that baptism of tears when our children come to realize that they are lost, condemned, ruined sinners, apart from the grace of God; and as parents, we should rejoice when they learn and believe the truth of Romans 5:20 and 21, Ephesians 2:8 to 10 and II Timothy 1:9 and 10. But just as many unbaptized children of Baptist parents come to conviction and decision as do sprinkled children of Presbyterians; and when these children, Baptist or Presbyterian, are saved, they are saved by grace through faith in the perfect, redemptive work of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, without water or any other religious ceremony; by the washing of regeneration, the work of God and not of man. A believer proves that he has been born of the Spirit by walking in the Spirit and fulfilling the righteousness of the law (Romans 8:4, Galatians 5:25, Galatians 5:22 to 24); and not by knowing that he was sprinkled twenty years ago or by drowning his old man in a tank of water. The believer cannot take his old man under without taking his new man under

also, and many times after he buries his old man he is conscious of the fact that he did not leave his old man in the watery grave; and all the neighbors know this fact too.

## THE WORD BAPTISM

Surely Dr. Buswell was right in challenging the repeated statement of the Baptists that the word “baptism” in the Bible always means immersion. The word “washings,” in Hebrews 9:10. is the Greek “baptismos,” referring to the divers baptisms in the old testament. Many of them were sprinklings and pourings. Then in Matthew 20:23 the death of James (Acts 12:1) is called “baptism.”

## THE BAPTISM AND SIGN PROGRAM OF THE TWELVE

Dr. Williams, Dr. Buswell and Dr. Pettingill all know that the twelve apostles were baptized with water many months before they received the Holy Spirit and that they did not receive another water baptism after Christ’s death and resurrection. At the time they were baptized with water they knew not the first thing about identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. (Luke 18:31 to 34; John 20:9; Mark 9:10). So they were not “Williams” Baptists. The Twelve were sent to baptize. They were also told, in very plain language, “cast out demons,” “raise the dead.” They did. If our brethren are to baptize, because of Christ’s plain command, why do they not raise the dead, cast out demons? Why do they not command the Lord’s disciples to sell their property and bring them the money? They say Acts 2:45 and 46 and Acts 4:32, communism, was a kingdom program; but the water of Acts 2:38 was a “grace” program. This is handling the Word of God deceitfully. They should know that “baptism,” “baptize” are used just about 100 times in the New Testament Scriptures, and without a single exception water baptism is mentioned in connection with a Jewish feast or ceremony or with a miraculous sign such as tongues, physical healing, angelic visitations, jail deliverances and earthquakes. No steward of the mysteries of God can give any intelligent, Scriptural exegesis to show why tongues, signs, visions, circumcisions, healings and angelic visitations are not to be included in God’s “grace” program for members of the Body of Christ that will not eliminate the water baptism. (Acts 19:2 to 6; I Corinthians 12:28). During the transitional “Acts” period there were many signs and wonders and several baptisms. After the close of Acts we find a “signless” program and “one baptism.”

## THE WATER BAPTISM OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Hear Paul’s testimony concerning his baptism in Acts 22:16: “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” There is a great difference between “Wash Away Thy Sins” and “Bury Your Old Man.” Our brethren should read again Mark 7:13.

## JOHN’S BAPTISM . . . THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

In his article on baptism, in "The Bible Today," Dr. Williams has stressed the significance of Jordan in connection with the baptism of John's disciples and Christ. If there is any Scriptural truth to his arguments, then a baptism in a tank of water in the First Baptist Church of New York City is inadequate. Christians should go to the holy land for a Jordan baptism.

He repeated several times the meaning of Christ's baptism, "to fulfill all righteousness." Christ came also to fulfill the law. (Matthew 5:17 and 18). When and how did Christ fulfill the law? "The law had a shadow of good things to come." Christ came and took away the first (the shadow) and established the second (the good things to come). (Hebrews 10:1 to 10; Romans 10:4). Christ was baptized under the law. On page 339 Dr. Williams wrote . . . "The very righteousness God's infinite holiness demands His infinite grace has provided." "Now this is the righteousness concerning which Christ spake at His baptism." Page 340 . . . "Do not attempt to make yourself presentable to God through any vain effort to fulfill all righteousness, but submit yourself unto the Lord Jesus Christ in Whom God has provided everything a guilty sinner needs." Page 341 . . . The Lord's water baptism was a "foreshadowing of His death, burial and resurrection." "The symbol must correspond with the reality which it anticipated." Page 343 . . . "The spiritual reality . . . our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection . . . this truth is set forth in the terms of the symbolism of baptism." Page 341, "Not in His (Christ's) baptism, but in His death was He made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "Christ fulfilled a righteousness for us." Page 341—"In His baptism our Lord went down into that which spoke typically of His death."

Now you have noticed Dr. Williams' words, "foreshadowing," "symbolism," "typically." Then he states clearly and positively that there is no righteousness for a sinner either in Christ's water baptism or the believing sinner's water baptism. Yet, our brother knows that we have our righteousness because of Christ's baptism, His baptism on the cross. (Luke 12:50). He knows that because of the sinner's faith in that death baptism of Christ, that believing sinner is baptized by God into the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 6:3). In the language of Dr. Williams, the reason for Christ's typical and real baptism was so that God might provide righteousness for the believing sinner. He admits that righteousness is not a human attainment, but a Divine gift. Whose righteousness is it? It is God's righteousness. (Romans 4:5; II Corinthians 5:21). If God gives it to the believer as He gave it to Abram (who was not baptized in water), the believer does not have to go in water to prove to God that He has the righteousness which He found at Calvary, in Christ. God knows all about it. (II Timothy 2:19). Dr. Williams is sure that no faith whatever in water is necessary to become righteous. But the attitude of some Baptists toward unimmersed Christians causes one to doubt whether or not they have faith in their water ceremony. As a good evangelical Baptist pastor, Dr. Williams wants always to be absolutely positive that a person has God's righteousness by grace, through faith, before he puts him under the water. So Dr. Williams is sure that the believer is righteous, without water, before that believer is baptized. God is sure about it. God's way for the believer to prove it to his fellow-man is to walk in the Spirit and fulfill the righteousness of the law, (Romans 8:4), and not go back to the "water" foreshadowing and symbolism fulfilled by Christ in His death, resurrection and ascension. No man can convince his neighbor that he is righteous by burying his old man in water. This is done by putting the old man off, not once for all in water, but every day

and every hour, by knowing Christ in the power of His resurrection, by walking in newness of life. Dr. Williams and Dr. Pettingill acknowledge that every saved Lutheran and every saved Presbyterian has God's righteousness, because of Christ's "death" baptism; that they have been buried with Christ by a baptism in which there was no water baptism. If by faith I have the real, what need have I for the foreshadowing that was typical of that act of the Lord of glory that guarantees me eternal redemption?

According to the Word of God, rightly divided, and according to the unanimous verdict of Dr. Buswell, Dr. Williams, Dr. Pettingill and Mr. Graham, righteousness, without water baptism, is altogether acceptable to God. Any religious ceremony of man does not and cannot add one iota to God's perfect righteousness. If it does not frustrate the grace of God, it surely confuses God's people. No Christian, who has been baptized in water, is one whit more righteous than the Christian who has not been. Never once is the word "witness" used in the Bible in connection with the water baptism of a member of the Body of Christ. Neither is there one verse of Scripture in God's message and program of grace to suggest that the member of the Body of Christ should be buried in water, as a testimony of his identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. Man is incurably religious and is so overwhelmed by the grace of God that he finds it just about impossible to trust and rest in the perfect, redemptive work of the perfect Christ. He feels that he must do something to add to the work of Christ. Some become steeped in ritualism. Some must have rosaries and images and holy things. Some must have Sabbaths and religious days and meat ordinances. Some must have visions, signs and tongues. Some must have one of the twenty different water baptisms.

It does seem that Dr. Williams, Dr. Pettingill, Dr. Buswell and Mr. Graham are very ungracious, if not cruel, in condemning the water baptism ceremony of several million Lutherans. To them sprinkling is a sacred ordinance, a very precious, miracle-working, religious sacrament. In the judgment of Dr. Williams, Dr. Buswell's sprinkling practice is a meaningless rite. According to Dr. Pettingill, it is far worse; it is evil.

I am sending you a copy of a book I have just published, "Is Water Baptism a Watery-Grave Witness?" After you read it, I ask you to decide, if there is any more senseless, fantastic, unscriptural water theory than the one taught and practiced by Dr. Williams and Dr. Pettingill.

The one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is, in God's "grace" program, one of conditions for Christian unity. No Baptist preacher is contending for the truth of the one Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 23 and Ephesians 4:4. So long as he contends for the Baptist name, he will not contend for the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 and he will not see "the dispensation of the mystery."

I am sending copies of this letter to Dr. Buswell, Dr. Pettingill, and Dr. Williams and to some of the I.F.C.A. preachers, including the editor of the Voice, asking them to permit me to have part in their public "waterbaptism" discussion, when and if they hold such a conference. They should be wise enough to know that they are not going to settle this question of water baptism by debating for several hours, or several days, whether "Presbyterian" baptism is as Scriptural as "Baptist" baptism. They know that from now on, more and more, they are going to have to meet and answer the "no-water" Fundamentalists with something more than religious boycotts, ridicule and sarcasm. They had better get busy. We most heartily welcome the public discussion, if it is to be honest.

If the Lord tarries, in my humble judgment, in twenty years there will not be an outstanding “grace” Bible teacher, who will teach water baptism as a part of God’s spiritual program in the dispensation of grace.

As I promised you, I am sending you, under separate cover, a copy of my new, large book, entitled “ 170 Sermon Outlines And Bible Studies.” You will see that it is arranged for Sunday School classes.

If there are any questions that come to your mind after reading this lengthy epistle, shall be glad to have you send them to me.

With my very best wishes and Christian love,

Very sincerely yours

J. C. O’Hair