

The Federation of the Covenant People

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15th February, 1980.

Dear Sheelagh,

My apologies for not having written before this but I think you know we have been busy altering the offices and then trying to get the various magazines and recordings done. It has been a real case of "rush, rush, rush" but now at last, I am hoping to get my mail up to date.

First of all let me say that we are busy on a reprint of "The Patmos Story" which hopefully, will be ready shortly. Meanwhile, we have noted your order and will see you get a copy. Then, I hope you have had our letter about the next Seminar and that you will be able to be here. Also that things will work out for you with regard to getting a job down here. Will look forward to hearing from you further about all this.

Now to your question on Baptism. There appears to be quite a wide variety of interpretations for the Greek word 'baptizo' and each one according to their own particular denominational persuasion. This is the first point which creates confusion as to the true meaning of the word. From a personal point of view I must say that I have searched the Scriptures as to the formula for the modern concept of total immersion and can find nothing except a mass of tradition based on man's analysis. I find that men teach that complete immersion is necessary because of sin and then rising to a life spiritually. This is incompatible with the baptism of the Lord. He was absolutely sinless - wherefore was it then necessary for Him to be immersed symbolising His death in sin? That He was baptised, none will deny but I would challenge anyone to set out the formula by which this was done - it is not given in the Scripture.

You will note in Matt. 3:11 that John spoke of his ministry of water baptism as a "shadowy thing" anticipating the Coming of the Lord Who would baptise with the Holy Spirit. This in itself must surely give rise to much serious thought. Another fact which must do the same is the Scriptural record of the baptisms which did take place with water. Look at Acts 2:41 and note that in one day, 3,000 souls were baptised. Now where were they? They were in Jerusalem where the apostles had awaited the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Where was the baptismal tank or sufficient water to immerse so prodigious a
/ number

number of people in one day? It is not recorded and one is tempted to ask why not?

I feel that the baptism of those people was according to the O. T. baptism which was sprinkling, for Moses indeed sprinkled the whole Israel nation at one time when he dedicated them to the Lord's Service. You will note that the blood of the sacrifice was always sprinkled on the altar - it was never immersed in it - see Ex. 9:8; 9:10; 24:6; 29:20. Lev. 1:5; 1:11; 3:2; 3:8; 7:2; 7:14; 8:19 etc.

What is really the purpose of this insistence on total immersion? Is it not an outward show of an inward conviction?

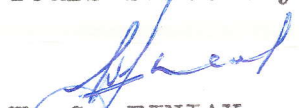
Living quite near to us are a couple who were immersed and great advocates of this form of baptism. If the fruits of their baptism is any judge, the outward show was the most flagrant hypocrisy ever. I am of the opinion that you cannot hide anything from God - not even your personal conviction of sin and repentance. God looks at the heart and not the actions of men - and thank God He does. The quiet fact of a man's conversion is known to God and the truth of his conversion is evidenced in his conformity to the Will of God and not in any man-made tradition which is rather pharisaical in aspect - that they may be seen of men.

There is of course more to all this but when you come down we can discuss it further - or I'll be filling page after page.

All the best then, Sheelagh, and hoping to see you soon. Our best wishes to Mom and Dad too.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,


W. G. FINLAY,
General Secretary.