

THE W. C. TAYLOR LETTERS

Letter No. 19

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# IMMIGRANT CAMPBELLISM REDIVIVUS

My eyes chanced to fall on an old tract by Alexander Campbell. It is an appeal to the State of Kentucky. A new constitution was to be made. Campbell was urging on our State a provision to set a date for the end of slavery. This "**Tract for the People of Kentucky. By A. Campbell, of Bethany, Va.**" argues that because "the African people are greatly inferior in intellectual endowment in the aggregate with the Caucasian race, they are providentially fitted and predestined to be bondsmen and bondwomen;" and he insists that, had they not had that mission, then the white race would have had to enslave the inferior elements of the Caucasian world. But he held that slavery makes our children companions of these inferiors and corrupts our homes. He shows, by comparing Kentucky prices with those of Ohio, that slave labor impoverishes by producing fewer and inferior farm products. So he wants to set a date beyond which slavery will not be tolerated. Here is his beginning: "Being myself interested in the further prosperity and advancement of this great and noble State, not because it is a much honored member of the great sisterhood of American States, — not because it is the worthy daughter of Virginia, **magna mater virum**; but because in it the first great impulse was given to the cause of evangelical reformation, of whose advocates and membership she has the greatest number resident in any State in the American Union . . ."

I had not realized how precious and vital Kentucky was to the Campbellite movement, or known that Campbellism had here its first great success and its foremost hope. I should have known it. My father, my grandfather, some uncles and cousins and my own brother were in that awful fight with sacramentalism's false gospel for three generations, ready to hold evangelistic meetings or debate whether such a gospel is true or not. In many places the Holy Spirit in Christian experience was almost laughed out of town, with every scorn and sarcasm and ridicule for those who believed in an experience of saving grace that is heartfelt and eternal. I faced this in my own early ministry in Kentucky and attended many such debates. But I had forgotten the living reality that Campbell's tract brings back to mind.

W. W. Horner had a series of articles in THE WESTERN RECORDER some years ago on the his-

tory of Campbellism hereabout. He stressed this fact. WHERE THE PEOPLE WERE DISDAINFUL OF CONTROVERSY and poohpoohed the idea of resisting the aggressions of false gospels by open teaching of the peril and exposure of their advocates, there Campbellism won its foremost victories and captured pastors and whole churches. Too late the city of Louisville and the Bluegrass woke up. I remember that when I was called to the pastorate of the Mt. Sterling Church, half a century ago, I was shown two church buildings there built by Baptists. One was occupied by the Campbellites, for they had taken over the Baptist Church, members and property, and had kept it and used it till that very day. The First Baptist Churches of both Louisville and Nashville were captured by the same apostate young pastor. They excluded the real Baptists and assumed all their rights and property.

Why bring that up? Because, right in this Holy Land of Campbellism, where Father Alexander begat two sects, both Campbellism and Hardshellism, we have had in recent months two sets of lectures by European Baptists, to our Baptist ministerial students, in open advocacy of CAMPBELLISM REDIVIVUS, by men who brought again to Kentucky, from their European background, the same sacramentalism that Alexander Campbell, an immigrant from Scotland, earlier brought over to curse this land. A people who, for fear of controversy, will not withstand false gospels will certainly doom their descendants to hell.

Here are some extracts from my diary. On March 15, 1959: "We heard head of Spurgeon College in a lovely sermon." Favorable start. March 17: "Dr. Beasley-Murray began study of baptism." March 18: "Beasley-Murray was rotten on **Baptism in the books of Acts**, calling it 'sacrament,' for salvation, crown of conversion, the obtaining of the Holy Spirit and much more. It was horrible." March 19: "Beasley-Murray spoke on **Baptism in Paul**. He had felt the reaction against his sacramentalistic language and doctrines, but only reaffirmed it all, stronger than ever. I was disgusted and the audience showed apathy." March 20: "I heard Beasley-Murray on baptism. This was on infant baptism and less alien. But fully 50 per cent of the small audience and 2 or 3 professors got up and walked out as he was about to begin." I read that these lectures were to be given

to all our Southern Seminaries. I do not know whether they were or not. But can you imagine a proceeding of more gall and insolence? And to think of that hellish caricature of the gospel coming from the head of Spurgeon's College (Seminary, we would say). Dr. W. Y. Fullerton tells us, in his **Life of Spurgeon**, of his two great controversies. One with the Evangelical Alliance over Modernism, he resigning from the Alliance. In the other he withdrew from the Baptist Union of Great Britain over baptismal apostasy. On June 5, 1864, in the Tabernacle, he thus spoke: "I know nothing more calculated to debauch the public mind than a want of straightforwardness in ministers. If baptism does regenerate people, let the fact be preached with a trumpet tongue and let no man be ashamed of his belief in it. God forbid that we should censure those who believe that baptism saves the soul because they adhere to a Church which teaches the same doctrine. So far they are honest men ... I hate their doctrine but love their honesty," p. 305. But his unmasking the dishonesty of men who pretend to be Baptists and preach an alien travesty of the gospel was terrible. His protest provoked 150 tracts in answer to him, and a vast controversy for years, from High Churchmen of divers breeds.

Now the almost unbelievable scandal is that Spurgeon's successor as teacher of preachers in Spurgeon's own school should give himself over to propagating this false gospel, on both sides of the Atlantic, and could find nothing better to lecture on than Alexander Campbell's old immigrant "Reformation" of Baptist truth and hope. For the President of Spurgeon's College to do this is almost as unbelievable as that Lucifer has taken over the vice-gerency of the Kingdom of God. It is a world scandal. And can you imagine heaven's revolt, in that great cloud of witnesses by whom we are compassed about, Spurgeon, Carroll, Eaton, Truett, Gambrell, and J. F. Love among them? It is said that God "wipes away all tears from their eyes." Well, there is need of the divine handkerchief now!

Beasley-Murray stated that "the New Testament does not know the phenomenon of an unbaptized disciple." My diary carries the notes of another series of addresses, those of Dr. Arnold T. Ohrn on "The Great Commission," in the main very fine, spiritual and missionary. But on Thursday, Nov. 4, I have in my diary this quotation from him: "The New Testament knows nothing of any unbaptized Christians." Can you believe your eyes? The New Testament only uses the word "Christian" three times and never in any slightest way related to **baptism**. This double attack on the gospel, by the Spurgeon College President and by the Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, one importing his Campbellism from London, the other from Norway, is part of a great High Church campaign to proselyte Baptists to a dogme of

**church and baptism** which is to get them ready to enter the new Catholicism of the World Council of Churches, which will eventually return to Rome, where it came from. The rank and file of Southern Baptists know Campbellism through and through. They are not apt to be misled by a new IMMIGRANT CAMPBELLISM REDIVIVUS. But if we are to let that pass unchallenged, then our name and fate as a people of the New Testament will soon be Ichabod.

My Diary adds: "I made a list of them," I shall do the same for you. Here goes.

First of all, the God-sent originator of baptism was never baptized. That didn't bother him. He knew baptism was not necessary for salvation. But when Jesus came to him, he felt his unworthiness to baptize him, and voiced his sense of inferiority in the statement: "I have need to be baptized of thee." Jesus denied it. If baptism were a necessity, in order to be saved, then Jesus would never have refused the act to anyone. But baptism neither saves, helps save nor keeps saved. It has nothing to do with salvation but to proclaim it as an eternal possession of the believer prior to his immersion. Jesus explains the reason for baptism. "Thus it becometh us to fulfil every righteousness," the Greek says, every act of righteousness, every religious duty, Jesus explains. IT IS "BECOMING" NOT SAVING, said Jesus.

God doesn't make a "law of pardon" with a lot of loopholes in it big enough for sundry pets to crawl through. God isn't a politician! If baptism has any necessity whatsoever for anybody's salvation, then it is absolutely vital for every case of salvation all down the course of history. If baptism was not necessary for John the original Baptizer, then it was not necessary for the salvation of anybody. And Jesus deliberately showed the same fact from the high throne of revelation of Calvary's cross. Two bandits hung there. They both blasphemed Jesus. Then one repented. His mind is utterly changed. His faith in Jesus is full, vocal and amazing. He calls it out loud, humbly, to Jesus in supplication: "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom." The answer of Jesus promises fully, firmly, freely that they would both go to the Paradise of God and be there together that very afternoon. Here is a **sample** salvation, for all the centuries, a penitent believer saved without baptism, without church, without sacraments, for there are none in revealed Christianity, without good works, **SAVED BY JESUS ALONE**. That is Calvary's own sample salvation, to deny and repudiate all false gospels down the ages. Do these illustrious invaders from lands afflicted with a pseudo-Baptist Campbellism not own any New Testaments? Have they read them? Why should they be giving lectures to theological students if they are ignorant of a fact so central as that this unbaptized comrade of Jesus on the cross went to heaven straight from Calvary on that blessed day?

Drs. Beasley-Murray and Ohrn are faced with the problem of secret believers. John, the beloved disciple, tells us: "Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews." Clearly, then, he was not baptized. Neither John nor Jesus made any secret of their baptisms. If Nicodemus and Joseph had been baptized, they would have been publicly identified with Jesus. I studied in Princeton for a season. One of the first persons I met in Princeton was Dr. S. M. Zwemer, great missionary to Islam. We fell to talking. He at once told me where all the small Moslem centers were in Brazil. Then he said he had been visiting a secret believer, a young Moslem who was studying in the University of Chicago. He had said to Dr. Zwemer: "I know that, if my mother learned that I were baptized, it would cause her death from shock. I simply cannot do it while she lives." He told me the number of open converts in the land where he labored so long. I do not remember the number but it seems to me it was less than fifty. He said when someone was baptized, generally he simply disappeared. It was known that his family killed him. Now I believe in the salvation of those secret believers. There may be millions of them in heaven. My Bible affirms REPEATEDLY that EVERY BELIEVER — not just the baptized believer, not just the Baptist believer, not just Protestant believers — every believer is saved, has eternal life, shall never come into condemnation, "is freely justified from all things," Acts 13:39, etc. Of all the millions who have been saved, EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM WAS SAVED WITHOUT BAPTISM, for when he believed, trusted Jesus Christ for salvation, he was then and there saved, before a clock could tick. That is simply a question of the veracity of the Son of God.

That is no more horrible thought than to deny this. Dr. Ohrn insisted that baptism is immersion alone. Then the vast number of Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Lutheran and other Protestant believers are saved without baptism, or else they are damned for the lack of an immersion in water. No. These two lecturers don't believe that! They simply don't believe what they preach. It is a horrible doctrine from which all within them would revolt. I am not saying that these unbaptized believers are members of true churches or are obedient in regard to baptism. Baptist churches baptize a lot of such people. I think I have known even Catholics and Campbellites who were saved, in spite of their lack of anything that merits the name of baptism. Sometimes I thank God for human inconsistency. The same mind can harbor inconsistencies and contradictions, can even argue that no one but the baptized believers are saved but be himself or herself a believer, saved in spite of his own vile error. We are never saved by our BELIEFS. They are saved by faith, which is trusting Jesus, even in the midst of very confused and confusing opinions.

Let me say, in simple justice to Dr. Ohrn, that he seemed to me vastly different from Spurgeon's sacramentalist successor. A reviewer of a recent book of his in THE BAPTIST TIMES indicates that Dr. Beasley-Murray is an unbeliever of other revealed truth. But I felt that Dr. Ohrn was a heartfelt believer in the Savior, with a rich experience of grace, indicated in every address, and with a great devotion to much truth and to the missionary proclamation of it to all men. This queer bit of false gospel which he said and passed on, namely that "the New Testament knows nothing of any unbaptized Christians," seemed to me an alien and uncouth addition to his thinking, in subservience to a Continental High Church Baptist theory, yet not in any way a part of his real thought-life in its relations to God. But his savedness and sincerity do not give validity to a palpably false notion that belies the whole New Testament and the gospel of grace. May I present some more unbaptized Christians in the New Testament?

How about all the people converted before John the Baptist and Jesus came of age and began baptizing? You see the supreme interest of the boy Jesus, AT TWELVE YEARS of age, in things biblical. I cannot imagine that either he or John the Baptist lived 30 years and then all of a sudden began to witness to men in such a way as produce faith, BUT THAT NEITHER HAD EVER cheeped a word of the gospel till their thirtieth birthday. What about all those in whom they awakened faith, before baptism came into existence? What about that blessed group in Luke I and II? This is Christmas Week. Do you think the shepherds to whom angels sang are all in hell for the lack of an immersion, in case they died in the next quarter of a century? I don't. What about priest Zacharias and good Elizabeth? What about Mary, the mother of our Lord? Was Jesus born of an unbeliever? No. He was born of a Psalmist, of whom Elizabeth said, "Blessed is she that believed." The virgin mother, a sinner saved by grace, cried out in her MAGNIFICAT: "My heart hath rejoiced in God my Savior"! That was some 33 years before baptism existed. But these are names in our New Testament, people saved without baptism.

I'll call two other names of men whose feet touched Palestine's soil and who talked with Jesus before three witnesses. They were Moses and Elijah, in the Transfiguration. Were they saved? Were they baptized? Yet they appeared in heaven's own glory. They were in heaven, so to speak, on credit. They were supremely concerned about Calvary. That was the basis of their being in glory. They knew it, came to talk to Jesus about his redeeming death, help nerve him to go straight forward to it.

You have the whole Epistle to the Romans, in essence, in Gen. 15:6. Abraham was a believer and righteous by faith. God has been taking people to heaven without baptism a lot more centuries than he has been taking baptized people there. But all are there because they are believers, not because of any rite known to men. What about all the believers who first heard the gospel from the pilgrims who went from all over the world to the feasts in Jersalem, knew of Jesus, trusted in him, but died before the first missionaries reached their lands, baptizing? What about visiting the sick and dying in our hospitals? If the nurse called you and said: "There is a dying man in Room 510. He wants someone to tell him how to be saved. Will you go, sir"? What do you say, sir? Do you repeat, "The New Testament knows nothing about any unbaptized Christian; he wouldn't last till we could get him baptized, so there is no hope for him. Just let him die"? NO. You wouldn't say that. You would go and bear your witness and maybe he would believe and go to the same heaven Jesus demonstrated is open to the dying sinner who believes, when he took a dying but converted thief from the cross where he was saved, without baptism, and made him a fellow-resident of the paradise of God. There isn't a minister of any real gospel who for an instant believes that only baptized people are Christians. Are we going to put

up over our Baptist hospitals a sign, "If you come in here and die, better be baptized first, for the only EXIT the hospital has for unbaptized Christians is to hell"? No! Leave that to the sacramentalist hospitals. To a man, we believe in some deathbed conversions. We have a gospel for a battlefield. My pastor in Rio was the first evangelical chaplain Brazil had. He went to Italy with the Brazilian soldiers who fought with our sons. He, another Baptist and other soldiers were very near the German lines, in trenches. A grenade in their trench killed a soldier in the group, but not at once. The Baptist soldier turned to my pastor a little later, with a heavenly light in his eyes. He had led his dying comrade to Christ and into heaven, we know. If you deny that, how can you look yourself in the face in the mirror? Salvation can't wait, sometimes. It never waits on any rite.

These are handsome men, bright thinkers, good orators. But this thing they are preaching, together with the ardent followers of the pope and of Alexander Campbell, is the devil's false gospel they have borrowed. Stop it, brethen. You don't believe what you say.

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