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## ARTICLE VIII.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

## BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD.

1 Cor. xv. 29.

IN the International Critical Commentary it is stated that thirty-six interpretations of the phrase "baptized for the dead" have been given; three are discussed as to their respective merits, and one is selected as the best that has as yet been suggested. It reads as follows:—

"Persons previously inclined to Christianity sometimes ended in being baptized out of affection or respect for the dead, i. e. because some Christian relation or friend had died, earnestly desiring and praying for their conversion. Such might reasonably be designated as those who receive baptism on behalf of the dead."

It might, I think, well be asked what proof is there that such a practice existed so early in the history of the church, that Paul should have referred to it; and if no such evidence has come down to us this exegesis may be set aside as unsatisfactory. This explanation, in common with all others I have seen, is an attempt to arrive at the meaning of the sentence as though it stood alone, with the emphasis laid on baptism; whereas the whole discussion is upon resurrection, and this section (ver. 29–32) is dealing with the subject from the negative side of the case, and demonstrating the futility of both faith and baptism if there be no resurrection.

To understand, then, the meaning of the words "being baptized for the dead," we must endeavor to see their relation to Paul's argument; and when we see that relation we will also see, I think, that there is a baptism for the dead that Paul did refer to when writing to the Corinthian deniers of the resurrection, and still refers to to-day when we read his great thesis on the resurrection. To make clear the connection of

verse 29 with the argument, it is necessary to go over from the beginning the Apostle's statement of his case for the resurrection.

This section of the Apostle's letter was written to those who were members of the church at Corinth, who had doubtless confessed their faith in Christ by being baptized, but who were now saying that there was no resurrection of the dead. In answer Paul first recapitulates briefly what he had preached to them as the gospel, mentioning many, from Cephas the first to himself the last, who had been eyewitnesses of the risen Lord. Then, asking, "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" he proceeds, first of all, to give them the reason why the Lord Jesus rose; and so important does he deem this reason, so fundamental does he consider it to the proper understanding of what he is about to say, that he repeats it, to emphasize its importance, no less than three times within the compass of four short verses (ver. 13-16). That reason is, *that Jesus rose because mankind rise*. For if the dead are not raised, not even (*οὐδέ*) Christ hath been raised.

That Paul is not here or throughout his argument intending to teach that the resurrection of men depended on the resurrection of Christ, he in verse 15 protects himself from such a construction being put upon his words. There he states his great basal premise as strongly as it is possible to state it: "And we are found even false witnesses of God; because we have testified concerning God that he raised the Christ: whom he did not raise, if indeed after all the dead are not raised."

In verses 13-16 St. Paul is only dealing with the bare fact of Christ's resurrection, and teaching that there would be a resurrection even though Christ had never come to earth.

By his declarations of verses 13-16 he means to say, and his readers to understand, that Christ when dead, if there was no resurrection, was merely one of the great host of the dead, merged with and in no sense differing from them so far as resurrection was concerned. This is well brought out in the

Greek. Verse 13 reads, *εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται*, the preposition *ἐκ* being absent from before *νεκρῶν*, clearly showing that the Apostle was not referring to the peculiarly distinguished resurrection of Christ, but to that which was the common racial inheritance of all men and of Christ.

Having laid down this great foundation assertion (and sure, indeed, must Paul through the Spirit have been of a resurrection to come of the whole race, to have dared thus to make the Christ's resurrection stand or fall with it), he proceeds to recite in verses 17-19 the consequences that follow, if Christ has not been raised; and after that (in ver. 20-28) he enumerates some of the benefits that ensue to, and the glorious future of, the believer if Christ has arisen.

He then returns to the negative side of his case, and puts the three questions of verses 29, 30: Else what will they do that are being baptized in behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised, why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?

That Paul does not refer here to vicarious baptism for the dead, or to the baptism of those for whom deceased friends had prayed during their life, is, I think, very clear; for Paul identifies his own case as being similar to those who were being baptized for the dead, because he unites himself with them by the conjunction with which verse 30 opens. But as we know the circumstances of Paul's baptism,—that he was baptized because of his personal faith in a crucified and risen Christ,—we are justified in believing that those with whom he unites himself in his argument were those who from a like faith had been baptized, and not for any other reason. Yet, nevertheless, it is also plain that in this stage of his argument from the negative side of the case, as to whether there be a resurrection and the proper course of life to pursue if there be none, Paul unites himself to those who have been baptized for the dead. What does Paul mean in his own case here? When we know that, we shall know what being baptized for the dead is.

No one, I think, can doubt that Paul intended us to understand, after the words *εἰ ὅλως νεκροὶ ἐγγείρονται*, the remaining clause of his great basal premise, *οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγγήγερται*; so that we must remember that, whatever meaning we attach to *ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν*, it must be one that takes due account of the inclusion of Christ amongst the dead. That such is Paul's intention is evident for two reasons: First, he draws the same conclusions after his first statements of the great premise in verses 13-16, as he does after its partial recital in verses 29, 30,—conclusions which are logical only when considered in the light of the complete statement; and, secondly, because he comments on his own case, and the conclusions arrived at in it are only reconcilable with the supposition that they are based upon the Christ not having been raised. The meaning, then, of being baptized in behalf of the dead, is baptism for a dead and unrisen Christ.

The questions yet remain, why the article is used? . Why *νεκρῶν* instead of *νεκρῶν*? and lastly the use of *ὑπὲρ*? Can it be fairly used in the manner that is necessary to the proposed exegesis? The use of the article with *νεκρός* appears in verse 29 for the first time, and limits those referred to, to those who have died in the faith of Jesus Christ, and Christ with them if not raised. In verses 13-15 without the article, all dead, including our Lord, are indicated. The plural is used, because Christ and His people are mentioned as being in one and the same state, so far as resurrection is concerned, if there be no resurrection.

In regard to *ὑπὲρ* the usual meaning "in behalf of" is, I think, favored by most translators. In the explanation most approved of by Robertson and Plummer it is said those who were baptized out of affection or respect for some dead Christian, or friend who had earnestly desired and prayed for their conversion, might reasonably be designated as those who receive baptism on behalf of the dead. If that be a legitimate application of the term "in behalf of," it can certainly be used with much greater propriety in connection with the dead when they include Christ Himself whether raised or not, for

He not only asked but commanded all believing disciples to be baptized.

This, if a correct interpretation, makes Paul's argument consistent throughout.

He begins with the statement that if there be no resurrection, we have no risen Christ.

That if there is to be no resurrection, it is folly to act as though there was, by being baptized.

That if there be no resurrection, the highest wisdom is to make the most of this world, and its sensual gratifications.

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#### CAUSE OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE WESTERN TEXT.

[The Editor has received the following from Professor Walter Drum, of Woodstock College, Maryland.]

IN your January, 1917, issue, Mr. Buchanan says: "Ever since 382 A.D., when the Church of Rome began its policy of enforcing the Vulgate of St. Jerome upon the whole of Christendom, there has been a systematic destruction of all Western MSS. The Vulgate was the shibboleth that decided their fate. If they could say Vulgate they were saved; if not, they were cast into the fire" [p. 121].

These words are indicative of the factious spirit, whereby during the past few years, Mr. Buchanan has been destroying the reputation he had earlier gained as a critical editor of the Old Latin text. He is now a special pleader, not a textual critic. His work suggests a one-track mind; that single track is hatred of what he deems to be the ecclesiastical revision of the New Testament by the Church of Rome. Any *facts* that Mr. Buchanan deems to justify the above rhetorical statements are welcome to us Catholics. We are not afraid to face *facts* as they are. We are just as desirous, as is the doctor, to have a critical restoration of the Old Latin text. What we object to is the party spirit of the above quoted words and of many other such passages written of late by Mr. Buchanan.

I respectfully request the doctor to answer the following questions by the statement of facts:

1. What documents of the *Bullarium*, of Mansi's *Councils*, of the Migne *Patrology*, of the Berlin *Kirchenväter Kommission* *Patrology*, of the Vienna *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*, prove that in "382 A.D. . . . the Church of Rome began its policy of enforcing the Vulgate of St. Jerome upon the whole of Christendom," or ever carried out such a policy? I am not aware that the primatial see of Rome ever had a policy to enforce upon the Syriac, Coptic, Byzantine, and other Oriental rites of the Vulgate of St. Jerome. Today there are thirteen Oriental rites in union with Rome. Their Syriac, Greek, Coptic, and other texts of the Bible are just as authoritative to them as is the Vulgate authoritative to the Latin rite. Only the Arabic and Armenian versions show the influence of the Latin Vulgate.

2. What scientific proof is there that since 382 A.D., "There has been a systematic destruction of all Western MSS." by Rome? The Council of Trent, in its chapter and canons on Holy Scripture, did not take up the question of other translations save the Latin; did not reject the Old Latin explicitly; was opposed rather to such Latin versions as those of Erasmus, Beza, etc., merely declared that, of existing Latin versions of the Bible, the Vulgate was to be held as authoritative. Just as the Syriac Church, without positively legislating against the Old Syriac text, gave its attention to the conservation of the Peshitta; so the Latin Church, without condemning the Old Latin, gave its attention to the conservation of the Vulgate. That this attention was not so inquisitorial and drastic as Mr. Buchanan thinks, is shown by the fact that the *Psalterium Romanum*, which was intended to be part of the Vulgate of St. Jerome, was ousted from use by the *Psalterium Gallicanum*, St. Jerome's translation of the LXX Psalter; and today the Psalter, that was meant to belong to the Vulgate, is used only in the Vatican and the Milan cathedral.

3. What proof is there that Western MSS. of the Old Latin text were burned, if they could not "say Vulgate"?

The loss of the Old Latin MSS. is paralleled by that of the Old Syriac MSS. Until 1842 A.D., we had no MS. evidence of an old Syriac text; now we have at most the MSS. Syr.-Cur. and Syr.-Sin. of the Gospels. To explain the complete loss of the Old Syriac text, excepting only the Gospels and patristic citations, is there any need to say that, after the revision by Rabbula, 411-435 A.D., all Old Syriac MSS. were burned? Without better evidence, it would be lacking in the scientific poise of the textual critic, it would be special pleading, to write: "If they said Peshitta they were saved; if not, they were cast into the fire."

[Mr. Buchanan's Reply.<sup>1</sup>]

1. In A.D. 423 Theodoret, a Syrian, born in Antioch and afterwards made Bishop of Cyrrhus, wrote:—

"Tatian composed the Gospel Book called *Diatessaron*, after excising the Genealogies and all other passages that shew the Lord was born of the seed of David. . . . I have found more than two hundred such books HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM BY THE CHURCHES IN OUR PART OF THE WORLD. These I have every one COLLECTED AND DESTROYED, and submitted the Gospels of the Four Evangelists [containing the Genealogies in agreement with the Vulgate]."

2. In 735 A.D., in his *Retractationes in Act. Apost.* Bede wrote:—

"We have seen things in the Greek [from which St. Jerome made the Vulgate] which are altered, or added, or wanting [from our own Latin Text]. Whether these things happened by the negligence of the translator who omitted them, or changed them; or whether they were depraved or rejected by the carelessness of copyists I have not been able to discover. It would be an impiety to suspect that the Greek copy [of the original scripture] had been falsified previously. So I advise the [British] reader to read the Vulgate ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF ERUDITION and not to make his copy of the Bible agree with it, unless he finds the Vulgate supported by the earlier Latin translation that he has in his own edition."

<sup>1</sup>For the sake of clearness and emphasis, Mr. Buchanan capitalizes certain words.—Ed.



In this and other passages of his works, Bede testifies that in 735 A.D. the Church of Britain had a radically different Bible text from that of the Vulgate. Where are the copies of this British Bible to-day which Bede advises should not be Vulgatized? They could not have perished by themselves. They must have been destroyed by those who had the keeping of them in the Middle Ages. And where is Bede's own translation into Anglo-Saxon of St. John's Gospel from a British text — the work he completed on his deathbed? Not one copy have we been able to find in any of the libraries of Europe, although for twenty years we have sought for it diligently. Bede's St. John could not have perished accidentally — for the last works of great men are the most treasured by their countrymen.

3. Beatus in Spain in the eighth century used a text that is similar, wherever it differs from the Vulgate, with that of the newly found Codex Huntingtonianus. In the Morgan MS. of Beatus, copied in the tenth century (968–970 A.D.), there are at least five thousand erasures; and wherever the ancient Scripture text of Beatus is erased, it is always in order to substitute the approved Vulgate of St. Jerome. This erasing was done by a commission that operated in the year 1220 A.D., and wrote a record of their work on the last leaf of the Morgan MS. We have copies of other Spanish MSS. that have been treated to the same drastic revision. Those that were not so revised were destroyed. The same excisions of all Western readings are found in Irish MSS. Irish MSS. were either corrected to agree (in the main) with the Vulgate or destroyed.

4. In England in the thirteenth century a certain Bishop of Exeter, named Grandisson, ordered all copies of the Bible to be destroyed that did not contain Alcuin's Vulgate, and that text to be substituted for them.

The Council of Trent (1545–63) anathematized all who used or received any text but that of the Vulgate. The Decree is as follows:—

DECREE OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT CONCERNING THE CANONICAL  
SCRIPTURES AT ITS FOURTH SESSION.

" [The Decree defines the Sacred Books, and then proceeds:] If any man does not receive the entire Books with all their parts, as they are accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church, AND AS THEY ARE EXHIBITED IN THE ANCIENT LATIN VULGATE, as sacred and canonical; and knowingly and of set purpose sets aside the above declarations, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA."

Pope Clement VIII. in 1562 issued a Papal Bull which is prefixed to all printed copies of the Vulgate even to this day. Its chief contents are as follows:—

I.

" . . . Let no man within ten years on this side of the Mountains or beyond the Mountains, or anywhere else, print any Bible except in our own, Vatican Printing House."

II.

"If any Printer in any Kingdom, State, Province, or place (whether it be subject to the temporal power of the Holy Roman Church or not subject) WITHIN the specified ten years, or AFTER the specified ten years, print, sell, have on sale, or otherwise put forth or make known any copy of the Sacred Scriptures other than according to this Standard Copy [the Clementine Vulgate] . . . beside the loss of all his books, and other temporal penalties inflicted at our will, let him by that act incur the sentence of major excommunication, from which (unless he is at the point of death) he can be absolved only by the Roman Pontiff."

III.

"We command all and each — Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops and other Prelates of churches and places of worship, that they without any violation and in perpetuity take care and enforce that these written directions be obeyed by all and each in their churches and under their jurisdiction. Those who resist are to be put down by ecclesiastical censures, and by other convenient remedies both of the law and its enforcement (after first being cited to appear); and for this purpose the help of the secular arm is to be invoked, if need so require."

As to the statement that St. Jerome's first-issued Psalter has been "ousted" in the Vatican and in Milan Cathedral by the Psalter which St. Jerome issued later, with emendations

based on a further study of the Septuagint, the reply is that to replace the Quarto Editions of Shakespeare by the Folio Edition of Shakespeare cannot be called "ousting"; for the result is still Shakespeare. There has been a real and studied and persistent ousting, by the Holy Roman Church, of the Western form of text used in Britain by Bede and in Spain by Beatus. Manuscripts of the spurious Gospels, viz. *The Gospel of James*, *The Gospel of Thomas*, *The Gospel of the Infancy*, all of which arose in the second century, abound in Europe's libraries in copies ranging from the tenth to the fourteenth century. They abound because they were not sought for and destroyed. Manuscripts of the ancient text of the four canonical Gospels used by Bede and Beatus do not abound, and are only recoverable from erasures and Palimpsests, because they have been diligently sought out and destroyed by the propagators of the Vulgate.

Take an example. The ancient Church Book of Tarragona Cathedral, the Codex Huntingtonianus, has had all its Western readings washed out, and then the Vulgate written *in their place* on the same precious vellum. This substitution took place about 1200 A.D. The ancient text was thought to have been destroyed, and only thus did it survive the scrutiny of the censors of MSS. of the Middle Ages. Before the Vulgate appeared, the Western Text held the world. Its disappearance can be accounted for only by its ordered destruction.