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LUTHER AND ZWINGLI.

A PARALLEL AND A CONTRAST.

1.

Dr. Kattenbusch thinks that a comparison of Luther and Zwingli will in every sincere Protestant induce the wish that nature might have made these two men into one.¹⁾ Each, he thinks, possesses that which is the principal lack of the other. They seemed destined to supplement each other, at least, to so shape their labors as to make them serve their joint interests. Reciprocal kindness and mutual helpfulness should have characterized their coexistence in an era that was big with promise for the good of the Church and of humanity in general. As a matter of fact, their meeting in the arena of historical events presents a most melancholy spectacle. It is the most fatal accident that could happen to the cause of the Reformation. With a discretion that is more wise than just Dr. Kattenbusch holds that it will not do to determine the amount of guilt that must be charged against either the one or the other of these two remarkable men, who brought on the saddest of the many internal conflicts in which Protestantism during the last four hundred years has had to engage. In this conflict, it is said, each of the original combatants appears limited by the peculiarities of his character. The

1) PRE 3 16, 156.

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD.

“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they, then, baptized for the dead?” (1 Cor. 15, 29.)

Mormonism teaches: “The living are baptized in our Temple in the names of, or as proxies for, their dead an-

4) *Encycl. Britan.* 11 26, / 254. This writer (Rev. William Augustus Brevoort Coolidge, M. A., F. R. G. S., Ph. D., Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford) will surely not be suspected of Lutheran bias in what he says about Zwingli.

cestors, the efficacy of the ordinance depending upon its acceptance or rejection by the one for whom it is performed. The Apostle Paul's clear reference in ecclesiastical history proves that it was a *doctrine* of the early Christian Church. This, with many other precious truths, has been restored to the Latter-day Saints by *revelation*." (*The Tourist's Guide*, published by the Bureau of Information, Temple Block, Salt Lake City, 1916.)

The Mormon "revelation": "I want you to remember that John the Revelator was contemplating this very subject in relation to the dead, when he declared, as you will find recorded in Revelation 20, 12: 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which was the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'

"You will discover in this quotation that the books were opened; and another book was opened, which was the book of life; but the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works; consequently the books spoken of must be the books which contained the record of their works; *and refer to the records which are kept on the earth*. And the book, which was the book of life, is the record which is kept in heaven, the principles agreeing precisely with the doctrine which is commanded you in the revelation contained in the letter which I wrote to you previously to my leaving my place—that in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven.

"Now the nature of this ordinance consists in the power of the Priesthood, by the revelation of Jesus Christ, wherein it is granted that whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Or, *in other words, taking a different view of the translation, whatsoever you record on earth shall be recorded in heaven; and whatsoever you do not record on earth shall not be recorded in heaven; for out of the books shall*

your dead be judged according to their own works, *whether they themselves have attended to the ordinances in their own 'propria persona' or by the means of their own agents*, according to the ordinances which God has prepared for their salvation from before the foundation of the world, according to the records which they have kept concerning their dead. . . .

“Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the ‘summum bonum’ of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the powers of the Holy Priesthood. For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living.

“Herein is glory and honor, immortality and eternal life. The ordinance of baptism by water, to be immersed therein in order to answer to the likeness of the dead, that one principle might accord with the other. To be immersed in the water and come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead in coming forth out of their graves; hence this ordinance was instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in likeness to the dead.

“Consequently the baptismal font was instituted as a simile of the grave, and was commanded to be in a place underneath, where the living are wont to assemble, to show forth the living and the dead; and that all things may have their likeness, and that they may accord one with another, that which is earthly conforming to that which is heavenly, as Paul hath declared, 1 Corinthians 15, 46, 47, and 48. . . .

“And as are the records on the earth in relation to your dead, which are truly made out, so also are the records in heaven. This, therefore, is the sealing and binding power, and, in one sense of the word, the keys of the kingdom, which consist in the keys of knowledge.

“And now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining

to our salvation. *For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation*, as Paul says concerning the fathers 'that they without us cannot be made perfect,' neither can we without our dead be made perfect.

"And now, in relation to the baptism for the dead, I will give you another quotation of Paul, 1 Corinthians 15, 29: 'Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they, then, baptized for the dead?' "1)

Dr. James E. Talmage, one of the twelve apostles of the Mormon Church and one of the most prominent and able expounders of Mormonism, presents this line of argument: "Christ's atoning sacrifice was offered, not alone for the few who lived upon the earth while He was in the flesh, nor for those who were to be born in mortality after His death, but for all inhabitants of earth then past, present, and future."2)

"Of the multitude of human beings who have existed on the earth, but few have heard, and fewer have obeyed, the law of the Gospel. In the course of the world's history there have been long periods of spiritual darkness, when the Gospel was not preached upon the earth; when there was no authorized representative of the Lord officiating in the saving ordinances of the kingdom. . . . It may very properly be asked, What provisions are made in the economy of God for the eventual salvation of those who have thus neglected the requirements of the Word, and for those who have never heard the Gospel tidings?

"According to certain dogmas that have prevailed among many so-called Christian sects during the obscurity of the spiritual night, and which are yet zealously promulgated, never-ending punishment or interminable bliss, unchanging in kind or degree, shall be the lot of every soul; the award being made according to the condition of the spirit at the time of bodily death; a life of sin being thus entirely nullified by a death-bed

1) Joseph Smith, in *Doctrines and Covenants*, p. 452 sqq.

2) *Articles of Faith*, p. 148.

repentance; and an honorable career, if unmarked by ceremonies of the established sect, being followed by the tortures of hell without hope of relief. Such a belief must rank with the dread heresy which proclaims the condemnation of innocent babes, who have not been sprinkled by man's assumed authority.

"It is blasphemous to thus attribute caprice and vindictiveness to the Divine nature. In the justice of God no soul shall be condemned under any law which has not been made known unto him. . . . No soul will be kept in prison or continued in torment beyond the time requisite to work the needed reformation and to vindicate justice, for which ends alone punishment is imposed."³⁾

Apostle Talmage then tries to prove that the Gospel must be proclaimed in the spirit-world, and continues: "If it was deemed proper and just that the Gospel be carried to the spirits who were disobedient in the days of Noah, is it not reasonable to conclude that like opportunities shall be placed within the reach of others who have rejected the Word at different times? For the same spirit of neglect and disobedience that characterized the time of Noah has ever existed. And further, if, in the plan of God, provisions be made for the redemption of the wilfully disobedient, of those who actually spurn the truth, can we believe that the still greater multitudes of spirits who have never heard the Gospel are to be left in punishment eternally? No; God has decreed that even the heathen nations, and those that knew no law, shall be redeemed. . . . Upon all who reject the Word of God in this life shall fall the penalties provided for such acts; but after the debt has been paid, the prison-doors shall be opened, and the spirits once confined in suffering, now chastened and clean, shall come forth to partake of the glory provided for their class."⁴⁾

"The redemption of the dead will be effected in strict accordance with the law of God, which was written in justice and framed in mercy. . . . And, as Baptism is essential to the

3) *Art. of Faith*, p. 149.

4) *Art. of Faith*, p. 151.

salvation of the living, it is likewise indispensable to the redemption of the dead.”⁵⁾

“As the children learn that without the aid of their progenitors they cannot attain perfection, assuredly will their hearts be opened, their faith will be kindled, and good works will be attempted for the redemption of the dead; and the departed, learning from the ministers of the Gospel laboring among them *that they must depend upon their children as vicarious saviors*, will seek to sustain their still mortal representatives with faith and prayer for the perfecting of those labors of love. . . . And thus, in the mercy of God, His erring, mortal children, who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ on earth, *may become, in a limited sphere, each a savior in the house of his fathers, and that, too, by vicarious labor and sacrifice*, rendered in humility, and, as represented in the baptismal ordinance, typical of death, burial, and resurrection of the Redeemer.”⁶⁾

The 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians presents St. Paul’s doctrine of the resurrection. In verses 1—11 St. Paul states the evidence of Christ’s resurrection; in verses 12—19 the resurrection of Christ is shown to be the foundation of our faith in the general resurrection; in verses 20—28 Paul shows some results to be deduced from Christ’s resurrection; in verses 29—34 St. Paul makes it a point to demonstrate that the life of the believer is an argument for the resurrection; in verses 35—49 he gives analogies helpful for understanding the subject; in verses 50—58 he concludes with a general exhortation.

In v. 29 the apostle’s argument is: “If there be no resurrection, why are some, then, baptized for the dead?” But what is this baptism for the dead? It is necessary that this should be known, in order that the apostle’s argument may be understood. Is it an argument *ad hominem* or *ad rem*? It is not agreed what is meant by baptism, whether it is to be taken

5) *Art. of Faith*, p. 152.

6) *Art. of Faith*, p. 155.

in a proper or in a figurative sense, and, if in a proper sense, whether it is to be understood of Christian baptism, properly so called, or some other ablution. And as little is it agreed who are the *οἱ νεκροί*, or in what sense the preposition *ὕπερ* is to be taken.

1. Some believe *οἱ νεκροί* to mean *the Savior Himself*. Their argument, then, would read: Why are persons baptized in the name of a dead Savior, a Savior who remains among the dead, if the dead rise not? Why believe in the Savior as the Redeemer, and in His statement that He would be raised from the dead, if the dead rise not? This interpretation has found few supporters, because it is an instance perfectly singular for *οἱ νεκροί* to mean no more than one dead person, and would be a signification which the words have nowhere else. And if "the dead" refers to the Savior Christ, who are the *οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι*?

2. Another class of exegetes thinks this passage refers to the *martyrs*: Why do they suffer martyrdom for their religion? Why suffer for a lie as though it were a truth? Why should the martyrs court so stern a fate if Christianity were a deception? This is sometimes called the "baptism of blood," by the ancients and by the Savior Himself, baptism indefinitely, Matt. 20, 22; Luke 12, 50; Mark 10, 38. Godet is inclined to accept this interpretation. But in what sense can those who die martyrs for their religion be said to be baptized (*i. e.*, die martyrs) for the dead?

3. Others hold it to mean baptizing *over the dead*, which was a custom, they tell us, that early obtained. The Greek expositors regard the words "the dead" as equivalent to "the resurrection of the dead" and the baptism as a manifestation of the belief in the doctrine of the resurrection. This sense seems to be pertinent to the apostle's argument, but it does not appear from patristic writings that any such practise was in use at the apostle's time.

4. Some understand the phrase of those who have been baptized *for the sake, or on occasion, of the martyrs*, that is,

the constancy with which they died for their religion and for their hope in a resurrection of the dead might induce others to become Christians. Some, doubtless, were converted to Christianity by observing this, and it would have been a vain thing for persons to have become Christians upon this motive, if the martyrs, by losing their lives for their belief, passed into nothingness, and were to live no more. But, we might retort, the Church at Corinth had not, in all probability, suffered much persecution at this time, or had seen many instances of martyrdom among them, nor had many converts been made by observing the constancy and firmness of the supposed martyrs. Besides, *οἱ νεκροί* seems to be too general an expression to mean only the *martyred* dead. Furthermore, the argument of Matthew Henry,⁷⁾ "to suppose the *οἱ νεκροί* to mean some among the Corinthians who had been taken off by the hand of God," and using 1 Cor. 11, 30 as a proof-text, is quite unwarranted. We have no record of any kind that these persecutions "terrified" some persons into Christianity. The opposite would seem to be more nearly correct.

5. Calvin, Flacius, Estius, and others interpret the Greek *ὅτι τῶν νεκρῶν* in the passage to mean "when about to die," "on their death-bed." According to Buechner,⁸⁾ Cleppenburg and Schroeckh are inclined to the same view. Epiphanius maintains that *νεκροί* is to be translated by "mortally ill" persons, whose baptism was expedited by sprinkling water upon them on their death-bed, instead of immersing them in the usual way; the rite is known under the name of "baptismus clinicus, lectualis."⁹⁾ This interpretation, however, would very easily lead to an *ex opere operato* theory, and seems to resemble the idea of "extreme unction" too much to be Biblical, although we know from ecclesiastical history that there was a tendency to postpone baptism as a rite which was supposed to work as a charm, or because they feared they might break the baptismal covenant before death.

7) *in loco*.

8) *Handkonkordanz*, sub "Taufe."

9) *Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia*, I, 229.

6. Another ingenious interpretation refers *ὅπερ τῶν νεκρῶν* to the imminent danger of violent death at the hands of unbelieving persecutors incurred by those making a public confession of their faith in baptism. "What is the use of incurring such danger if there is to be no resurrection?"

7. Origen, Luther, Chemnitz, and John Gerhard interpret the words as relating to baptism *over the graves* of the members of the Christian community, a favorite *rendezvous* of the early Christians. Origen explained the passage to mean that some Christians were baptized over the sepulchers or tombs of the martyrs to exhibit their willingness to follow them, to die for Christ's sake, because they had a sure hope of a resurrection unto eternal life who were baptized for unbaptized deceased.¹⁰⁾ Luther says that, in order to strengthen their faith in the resurrection, the Christians baptized over the tombs of the dead. But the custom alluded to dates back from a much later period.¹¹⁾

8. Chrysostom's notion was that "for the dead" meant "*for our mortal bodies,*" such as have the germ of death inherent in them, or that men, while living, were gradually dying. Tertullian rendered the Greek word *ὅπερ* in the sense of "on account of" and *νεκροί* by "dead bodies," they themselves, the baptized, as dead persons.

9. Le Clerc and others imagine the words to mean that the living were baptized "*to supply the vacancies left by the dead,*" and thus to convey the idea "conversion of the soul by the Spirit of God." Dr. David Thomas writes: "By those who were 'baptized for the dead' I understand those who from pagan darkness were converted by the Gospel, and were admitted into the visible Church, there to fill up the place of those who by martyrdom or otherwise had been called away by death. The new convert then took the place of the departed saint. Thus conversions in the Church replenish the loss caused by death. No sooner is one Christian removed from his station than another is raised up by God to supply

10) Buechner, *sub* "Taufe," in *Handkonkordanz*.

11) *Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia*, I, 229.

the loss. Since the apostolic day, what myriads of able preachers, evangelists, theologians, reformers, and distinguished saints have passed away! Still the Church goes on, and their places are all occupied. As Joshua succeeded Moses; Elisha, Elijah; Eleazar, Aaron; so one man is ever raised up in the Church to take the place of another."¹²⁾ Indeed, a beautiful thought, but a strained exegesis.

10. The meaning of the clause, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead?" is obvious, namely, that among the many strange opinions and practises which had then prevailed was one which was entirely unwarranted, but which St. Paul does not here stop to examine—*of persons getting themselves baptized, as it were, by proxy for others who had died*. It is probable that some of the deaths alluded to in 1 Cor. 11, 30 had happened to persons who had been cut off before they were actually baptized; and their friends had, as it were, gone through the rite in their stead, in the hope of extending to them some of its benefits. This is the Mormon view-point.

Objection is made to the literal interpretation on the ground that Paul would not have referred to such a superstitious practise with even a tacit approval, and that the practise is in sheer contradiction to Paul's doctrine of justification and Baptism. We agree that this practise of baptizing by proxy is contrary to Paul's teaching of salvation by faith, but that need not prevent St. Paul from referring to this absurd practise in his general argumentation. Hence, it is argued that Paul could not possibly sanction such a practise without reprobation; but that is an *a priori* assumption not warranted by St. Paul's methods (see 1 Cor. 10, 8; 11, 6). He always confines his attention to the question immediately before him, and his present object is merely to urge a passing *argumentum ad hominem*. In the words of St. Paul we discover no opinion of his own concerning the justice or injustice of the rite; it

12) *Pulpit Commentary*, 1 Cor., p. 497.

is; we might say, brought in as an argument *ex concessio* in favor of the object which he pursues through the whole chapter: the proofs for the resurrection of the dead, in particular, an argument that the life of the believers should strongly influence the belief of a person in the resurrection. However much may be objected against the literal interpretation, it is by far more reasonable than the other explanations, and such scholars as Meyer, Alford, Ellicott, Heinrici, De Wette, Neander, Stanley, and Schaff adopt this view.

There is nothing at all surprising in the existence of such an abuse in the medley of wild opinions and wild practices observable in this disorganized church. The Corinthian community was certainly of a mixed character, consisting of individuals of various views, ways of thinking, and different stages of education, so that there might still have existed a small number among them capable of such absurdities. It is doubtful if this custom of posthumous baptism by proxy was ever widely prevalent, and it seems soon to have died out in the Church. And the disuse of this vicarious baptism among orthodox Christians may have been due to the discouragement of it by St. Paul when he went to Corinth, and "set in order" (1 Cor. 11, 34) various erroneous customs.

From patristic literature we infer that baptism by substitution had lingered among, and had been kept alive by, the Corinthians (Epiph., *Haer.*, XXVIII, 7), Marcionites (Tertullian, *De Resurrect.*, 48; *Adv. Marc.*, V, 10; cf. also Chrysostom, *Hom. X* on 1 Cor.), Montanists, and other smaller sects towards the end of the fourth century, a period when the confused views of the Church as to the relations of the external to the spiritual might easily have favored that erroneous custom. Chrysostom tells us further that the proxy who was to be baptized used to be concealed under the bier of the dead man, who was supposed to answer in his name that he desired to be baptized.

How perfectly natural the custom of posthumous baptism by proxy was may be seen from the fact that among the Jews

also a man dying under ceremonial pollution was cleansed by proxy.

The sixth canon of the Synod of Hippo, in 393, forbade the practise of this proxy-baptism.¹³⁾

And what shall we answer when Mormons present the teaching that "the living may be baptized for the dead"? It is clear Bible-teaching that those who have departed this life as unbelievers and impenitent have no second opportunity granted them for repentance. The words of Christ plainly state this. Else what did Jesus mean when He related the parable of the rich man and Lazarus? What did He mean when He commissioned His disciples to baptize all nations and stated: He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be *saved*; but he that *believeth not* shall be *damned*? Furthermore, every Bible student knows that the language in 1 Pet. 3, 18—20 cannot be construed to mean that the *Gospel* was and will be preached to the "spirits in prison." And, pray, where is baptism for the dead *sanctioned*, much less *taught*, in Scripture? Ecclesiastical history proves that it was a *doctrine* in a *given* section of the early Christian Church, but the Scriptures nowhere enjoin this practise upon us; and if it were essential, why do the Sacred Writings fail to make it obligatory? Baptism for the dead is unreasonable and unscriptural, because it would, if enjoined, contradict Christ; and this would be the first and only instance where Paul contradicts himself.

We cannot at this time enter upon an examination of the claims of Joseph Smith relative to the authenticity of his "revelations." We have "Moses and the prophets"; let us hear them. We fail to see from Scripture that it is obligatory to teach a "baptism for the dead."¹⁴⁾

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13) Schaff-Herzog, *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. I.

14) We publish this study mainly for the information it contains on attempted interpretations of 1 Cor. 15, 29. We hold, however, that Luther's explanation is preferable to all others, not only because it is within the meaning of the Greek *ὑπέρ*, but also because it lays due stress on the con-