

THE CHURCH OF
"PSYCHIANA"

(THE TEACHING WHICH IS BRINGING NEW LIFE TO A SPIRITUALLY DEAD WORLD)

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NUMBER TWO

by
DR. FRANK B. ROBINSON



"PSYCHIANA"



LESSON NO. 11

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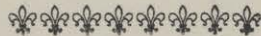
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BY

DR. FRANK B. ROBINSON

Fellow American Society Psychical Research, Author "AMERICA AWAKENING" "THE GOD NOBODY KNOWS" "CRUCIFIED GODS GALORE." "LIFE STORY OF FRANK B. ROBINSON" "WHO AND WHAT GOD IS" "IS THE STORY OF JESUS FACT OR FICTION" "THE NAME OF THE BEAST" Editor "PSYCHIANA" Quarterly, Founder "PSYCHIANA" Brotherhood, and author and founder of The Church of "PSYCHIANA."



ABSOLUTION AND THE CONFESSION OF SIN OF HEATHEN ORIGIN

Some Christian writers have labored to make it appear that this is exclusively a Christian doctrine, while others have labored as hard to get it out of their Bible, or make the people believe it is not therein taught. We shall show, upon scriptural and historical authority, that both are wrong.

There can be no question as to this rite having existed outside of Christianity, or of its being much older than Christianity. History proves both. Nor can it be successfully denied that it is taught in the Christian Scriptures, both the confessing of sins and that of forgiving sins. The apostle James, with respect to the former, is quite explicit. He enjoins, emphatically, "Confess your faults one to another." (James v. 16.) The practice of forgiving sins is also enjoined. Forgiving one another is recommended both in Ephesians (iv. 32) and Colossians. (iii. 13). "And whatsoever ye shall lose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," (Matthew xviii 18), is interpreted as conferring the power to forgive sins.

And then we remark that the practices both of confessing and forgiving sins are very ancient pagan rites and customs. Speaking of their prevalence in ancient India, the author of the Anacalypsis remarks, "The person

offering sacrifices made a verbal confession of his sins, and received absolution." Auricular confession was also practiced among the ancient Mithriacs, Persians, and the Parsees proper of the same country. Mr. Volney tells us, "They observed all the Christian sacraments, even to the laying on of hands in the confirmation." (211). And the Christian Tertullian also tells us that "The priests of Mithra promised absolution from sin on confessions and baptism," while another author adds, that "on such occasions Mithra marked his followers (the servants of god) in their foreheads," and that "he celebrated the sacrifice of bread, which is the resurrection."

In the collection of the Jewish laws, called "the Mishna," we are told the Jews confessed their sins by placing their hands upon a calf belonging to the priest, and that this was called "the Confession of Calves." (See Mishna, tom. ii. p. 394.) Confessing sins was practiced in ancient Mexico; also under Numa of Rome, whose priests we are informed, had to clear their consciences by confessing their sins before they could offer sacrifices. The practice of confessing and forgiving sins as recommended in the Christian Bible, and practiced by some of the Christian sects, has been the source of much practical evil by furnishing a pretext and license, to some extent, for the commission of crime and sin. While sins can be so easily obliterated they will be committed--perpetrated without much remorse or restraint. "In China (says the Rev. Mr. Pitrat, 232), the invocation of Omito is sufficient to remit the punishment of the greatest crimes." The same author tells us, "The ancient initiation of the pagans had tribunals of penance, where the priests, under the name of ROES, heard from the mouth of the sinners themselves the avowal of their sins of which their souls were to be purified, and from the punishment of which they wished to be exempted." (Page 37.) The granting of absolution for sin or misconduct among the early primitive Christians was so common, St. Cyrian informs us, that "thousands of reprieves were granted daily," which served as an indirect license to crime. And thus the doctrine of divine forgiveness, as taught by pagans and Christians, has proved to be demoralizing in its effects upon society.

ORIGIN OF BAPTISM BY WATER, FIRE, BLOOD, AND THE HOLY GHOST

Baptism in some of its various forms, is a very ancient rite, and was extensively practiced in several Oriental countries. It was administered in a great variety of forms, and with the use of different elements. Water was the most common, but fire and air, wind, spirit, or ghost were also used; and both the living and the dead were made the subject of its solemn and imposing ceremonies.

We will notice each of these modes of baptism separately--appropriating a brief space to each.

BAPTISM BY WATER.

"Baptism by water," says Mr. Higgins, "is a very old rite, being practiced by the followers of Zoroaster, by the Romans, the Egyptians, and other nations." It was also in vogue among the ancient Hindoos at a still earlier date. Their mode of administering it was to dip the candidates for immersion three times in the watery element, in the same manner as is now practiced by some of the Christian sects, during the performance of which the hierophant would ejaculate the following prayer and ceremony: "O Lord, this man is impure, like the mud of this stream! But do thou cleanse and deliver his soul from sin as the water cleanses his body." They believed that water possessed the virtue of purifying both soul and body--the latter from filth and the former from sin. The ancient Mexicans, Persians, Hindoos and Jews were in the habit of baptizing their infants soon after they were born. And the water used for this purpose was called "the water of regeneration." Paul speaks of being "saved by the WASHING of regeneration." (See Titus iii. 5.) Those who touched these infants before they were baptized were deemed impure. And this was unavoidable on the part of the mothers, they were required, as in cases of the mothers of Chrishna and Christ, to present themselves on the eighth day after accouchment to the priest in the temple to be purified. The Romans chose the eighth day for girls and the ninth for boys. The child was usually named (christened) at the time it was baptized. And in India, the name, or God's name, or some other mark, was engraven or written on the forehead. This custom is several times recognized in the Christian Bible, both in the Old and in the New Testament. (See Ezek. ix.4; Rev. xiv. 9; xix. 20, etc.). John speaks of a mark being made on the forehead. (See Rev. xiii. 16.) Also of the name of God being written on the forehead. (Rev. iii. 12.)

THE DOVE DESCENDING AT BAPTISM.

At this stage of our inquiry it may be stated that several of the ancient religious orders had the legend of a dove or pigeon descending at baptism--a counterpart to the evangelical story of "the Spirit of God descending in bodily shape like a dove," and alighting on the head of Jesus Christ while being baptized by John in Jordan. (See Luke iii.22). It will be observed here that the spirit, or soul, of God descended not only in the manner, but in "BODILY SHAPE like a dove." This accords with the tradition anciently prevalent among the Hindoos, Mexicans, Greeks, Romans and Persians, or Babylonians, that all souls, or spirits, possessed or were capable of assuming, the form of a dove. Hence, it is reported of Polycarp, Semiramis, Caesar, and others, that at death their souls, or spirits, were seen to leave the body in "bodily shape like a dove," and ascend to heaven. "The Divine Love, or Eros," says Mr. Higgins, "was supposed by the oriental heathen to descend often in the form of a dove to bless the candidate for baptism." These traditions,

doubtless, gave rise to the story of the dove descending at Christ's baptism--that is God in the shape of a dove, for that is clearly the meaning of the text. We are also informed by our author just quoted, that a dove stood for and represented, among the orientalist, the third person of the Trinity, as it does in the gospel story of Christ--he being the second member of the Christian Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It was considered "the regenerator, or regenerating spirit," and persons being baptized were said to be "born again" into the spirit or the spirit into them; that is, the dove into or upon them.

What a master-key is furnished by these oriental religions for solving the mysteries of the Christian Bible! How much more lucid than Divine Revelation--so-called!

We will quote again from Higgins: "Among all nations, from the very earliest period, water has been used as a species of religious sacrament. Because, as it dripped from the clouds, it was observed to have the power of reviving drooping nature and creating anew, or regenerating the whole vegetable kingdom in spring, it was hence chosen as an emblem of spiritual regeneration and a medium of baptism. Water was the element by means of which everything was born again through the agency of the Eros, Dove, or Divine Love." And, hence, the ceremony of dipping or plunging (or, as it is modernly termed, baptizing) came into vogue for the remission of sins and "the regeneration into a new and more holy life."

Some streams were supposed to have more efficacy in these respects than others. Hence, nearly all religious nations had their "Holy Rivers," "Holy Water," "Sacred Pools," etc. The Hindoos resorted to the "Holy Ganges," the Egyptians to the "Holy Nile," the Chaldeans and Persians to the "Holy Euphrates," the Greeks to their "Holy Lustral Water," the Italians to the river Po, and the Jews and Christians to their holy river Jordan. If Jordan was not called "holy," it was undoubtedly considered so, else why did Elisha order Naaman to wash seven times in that stream instead of Damascus, which was much nearer and more accessible? And why was Christ baptized in Jordan? "And all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, were baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt iii vi.) Why, as several streams were handier to a large portion of the candidates, simply because Jordan was considered to be "more holy." And Christians had their sacred pool of Bethesda, as the Hindoos had their Sahar.

The rite of baptism was at first generally practiced in caves--as were also other religious rites; and as these caves were often difficult of access, and their mouths, doors or gates narrow and difficult to enter, they fully exemplify Christ's declaration, "Straight is the gate and narrow the way that leadeth unto life." (Matt. vii. 14.) And when he declared, "Except a

man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven" (John iii.5.) he was only seconding the exhortation of the priests to enter these subterranean vaults and be baptized by water in the form of dipping, or emersion.

BAPTISM BY SPRINKLING.

Owing to the scarcity of water in some countries, and its entire absence in others, and the fatal effects sometimes resulting from the practice of baptizing infants and invalids by immersion, a new mode of baptism eventually sprung up, now known as "sprinkling," in which water was sometimes used and sometimes blood. Virgil, Ovid and Cicero all speak of its prevalence amongst the ancient Romans or Latins. We are informed that the ancient Jews practiced it upon their women while in a state of nudity, the ceremony being administered by three rabbis, or with decorum. Blood, being considered "the life thereof" of man, was deemed more efficacious than water, and hence was often used in lieu of that element. The Greeks kept a "holy vessel" for this purpose, known as the *Facina*. The Romans used a brush, which may now be seen engraven upon some of their ancient coins and sculptured on their ancient temples. The Hindoos and Persians used a branch of laurel or some other shrub for sprinkling the repentant candidate, whether water or blood was used.

In some countries the rite was practiced as a talisman against evil spirits. The Mexicans never approached their altars without sprinkling them with blood drawn from their own bodies, as the Jews sprinkled the walls and door-posts of their temples with blood under the requisition of the Levitical code. This mode of fancied purification by sprinkling either with water or blood we find recognized, and apparently sanctioned, in the Christian Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. Ezekiel says, "I will sprinkle clean water on you." (Ezek . xxxvi. 25.) Peter uses the phrase, "The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (i Peter i.2) And Paul makes use of the expression, "The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. xii. 24), which we regard as an indirect sanction of the senseless heathen idea of effecting spiritual purification by drops of blood. (See Potter's *Antiquities* and Herbert's *Travels*.)

BAPTISM BY FIRE.

Baptism by fire was a form or mode of application which seems to have been introduced from the belief that it was productive of a higher degree of purification. There were several ways of using fire in the baptismal rite. In some cases the candidate for immortality ran through blazing streams of fire--a custom which was called "the baptism of fire." M. de Humboldt, in his *Views of the Cordilleras and Monuments of America*, informs us it prevailed

in Indian, Chaldea and Syria, and throughout eastern Asia. It appears to have been gotten up as a substitute for sun-worship, as this luminary was believed to be constituted of fire, though in reality there never was any such thing as sun or solar worship. Christian writers represent the ancient Persians as having been addicted to solar worship. But Firdausi, Cudworth and other authors declare that neither they nor any other nation ever worshipped the sun, but merely an imaginary Deity supposed to reside in the sun. Heathen nations have been charged with many things of which they were not guilty; though it is true that in the spirit of Christ's exhortation, "Whosoever loseth his life for my sake shall find it," some of the candidates for the fiery ordeal voluntarily sacrificed their lives in the operation, under the persuasion that it was necessary to purify the soul, and would enable them to ascend to higher ports or planes of enjoyment in the celestial world. And some of them were taught that sins not expurgated by fire, or some other efficaciously renovating process in this life, would be punished by fire in the life to come. Here we will mention that there is a seeming recognition of this ancient heathen rite in both departments of the Christians' Bible. Isaiah says, "When thou walkest through fire thou shalt not be burned." (lxiii.2.) And the Baptist John recognizes three modes of baptism; "I indeed baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with fire and the Holy Ghost." (Matt. iii. 11.) And Paul teaches the necessity of being purified by fire. (see i Cor. iii. 15.) So it is both a heathen and a Christian idea.

BAPTISM BY THE HOLY GHOST.

This fanciful ceremony is both a Christian and a heathen rite, and is undoubtedly of heathen origin. The mode of applying it was to breathe into or upon the seeker for divine favors. This was done by the priest, who, it was believed imparted the Spirit of God by the process. The custom, Mr. Herbert informs us, was anciently quite common in Oriental countries, and was at a later date borrowed by Christ and his apostles and incorporated into the Christian ceremonies. We find that Christ not only sanctioned it, but practiced it, as it is declared when he met his disciples after his resurrection "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'" (John xx.22.)

And the following language of Ezekiel is evidently a sanction of the same heathen custom: "Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." (xxxvii. 9.) Let it be borne in mind here that breath, air, wind, spirit and ghost were used as synonymous terms, according to Mr. Parkhurst, and this breathing was supposed to impart spiritual life, being nothing less than the Spirit of God, the same as that breathed into Adam when "he became a living soul." (See Gen.ii, 7.)

BAPTISM OF OR FOR THE DEAD.

It was customary among the Hindoos and other nations to postpone baptism till near the supposed terminus of life, in order that the ablution might extinguish all the sins and misdeeds of the subject's earthly probation. But it sometimes happened that men and women were killed, or died unexpectedly, before the rite was administered. And as it would not do for these unfortunate souls to be deprived of the benefit of this soul-saving ordinance, the custom was devised of baptizing the defunct body, or more commonly some living person in its stead. The method of executing the latter expedient, according to St. Chrysostom, was to place some living person under the bed or couch on which the corpse was reclining, when the defunct was asked if he would be baptized, the living man responding for the dead, answered in the affirmative. The corpse was then taken and dipped in a vessel prepared for the purpose. This silly practice was in vogue among the early Christians, and Paul seems to regard it as an important custom. "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead not rise at all." (Cor. xv. 9.)

The inference derivable from this text is, that Paul held that the labor of baptizing the dead would be lost in the event of the falsification of the doctrine of the resurrection, but otherwise it would be valid--which evinces his faith in the senseless and superstitious practice. It will be observed from the historical exposition of this chapter that all the various ancient heathen modes and rites of baptism have been practiced by Christians, and are sanctioned by their Bible.