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L. E. Carpenter

The Language of The Two Ordinances



Reply to a Tract by R. S. Gavin,
Pastor of First Baptist Church,
Huntsville, Alabama,
on the above subject,

By R. N. Moody, Dunlap, Tenn.

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THE LANGUAGE OF THE TWO ORDINANCES

The above is the title of a tract by R. S. Gavin, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Ala., the first division of which is on the "language of baptism" and has for its text Matt. 10: 32: "Every one, therefore, who shall confess me before men him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven."

This text has no reference to baptism, and one would wonder why it should be selected as the text for a discourse on baptism. The reason for this selection becomes apparent when we see his interpretation of it. He lays the foundation for the interpretation of his text with a preamble on "nonessentials," in which he endeavors to show the danger there is to the progress and development of the churches in the the doctrine of "nonessentials."

By some apt illustrations he shows the tendency of "successful men and women of this age" to eliminate the nonessentials from the affairs of everyday life.

He then shows that this habit of eliminating "non-essentials" is being overdone by the average Christian eliminating from his daily life almost every Christian duty, on the ground of "nonessentiality."

He then reaches the following conclusion: "And yet, I am sure that there are no such things as 'non-essentials' in Christian duty. Everything that Jesus Christ commanded us to do is essential. He took no part neither in the doing nor the commanding of non-essentials. If a thing was not essential he let it alone;

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if essential he commanded it. And so it comes to pass that man's whole duty is summed up in this one word: *'Do that which he has commanded you.'*"

This sounds plausible, but he speaks of the eliminated "nonessentials" as Christian duties, and while he insists that everything that Jesus commanded is essential, he artfully keeps out of sight the point as to whether they are essential to the Christian's salvation or not; but every one who is acquainted with Baptist doctrine knows what to expect when he comes to the interpretation of his text. They know to expect an effort to make all commandments apply to the Christian life and essential to Christian duty, but not essential to the Christian's salvation.

He next doctors his text to make it fit his foundation and sustain his theology.

He says: "Our text has a splendid illustration in it of what I mean by saying that the doctrine of non-essentiality has its dangerous side; and the fact that it has is nowhere more clearly seen than in our church life. The text has in it 'nonessential,' so-called. I quote the text now and leave out the nonessential: 'Every one who shall confess me, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven.' The nonessential is the expression, 'before men.' And I say the expression '*before men*' is a 'nonessential,' so called, because the text as I quoted it minus the expression '*before men*' is itself an epitome of the Gospel; for after one has confessed Jesus Christ in his heart there are not enough devils in earth and hell to bar him out of heaven. The very moment he confesses Jesus Christ in his heart Christ confesses him in heaven and he ceases to be a 'child of wrath' and becomes a 'child of God.'"

The above is an unwarranted and shameful perversion of God's Word.

How did he learn that the text has a nonessential in it? And how did he learn that the expression "before men" is that nonessential? There is nothing in the text or context to suggest such an idea. It is a fabrication of his own mind, invented to pave the way for his teaching on baptism.

When we take this passage in its proper connection it shows that the expression "before men" is one of the essentials of it, showing the place where the confession must be made in order that Jesus may confess us in heaven, and it has no reference to baptism whatever.

Hear him again: "And I say the expression '*before men*' is a 'nonessential,' so called, because the text as I quoted it minus the expression '*before men*' is itself an epitome of the Gospel; for after one has confessed Jesus Christ in his heart there are not enough devils in earth and hell to bar him out of heaven." *Wonderful!*

Notice that the only proof offered for this reckless assertion is, "I say."

Having now eliminated the expression "before men" from the text, it remained for his inventive genius to create something to take its place. So he fills its place with his new invention, "confessing Jesus Christ in the heart," without any scripture warrant and nothing to authorize it but his "I say."

The idea is unscriptural and untrue and can only serve to mislead the mind of the reader.

Paul says: "The word is nigh thee in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach: because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"

(Rom. 10: 8-10, A. R. V.). Paul here shows that one must confess with the mouth the faith that is in the heart, and makes it a condition of salvation; and Jesus says, in Matt. 10: 32, that it must be done before men; and all the twisting Mr. Gavin may do will never change it.

Having eliminated the expression "before men" from the text as a nonessential, he holds it in reserve for future use when he will try to show how it is made before men, and to show that it is "essential," but not "essential" to salvation, which we will see further on.

To prepare for this he must get the man saved before he comes to make the confession "before men." To this end he invents the confession "in the heart." So he says: "For after one has confessed Jesus Christ in his heart there are not enough devils in earth and hell to bar him out of heaven." There it is, the man is saved, and, according to Baptist theology, so securely saved that all the devils in earth and hell can not bar him out of heaven; and saved, too, by Mr. Gavin's wonderful (?) invention, confessing Jesus "in the heart."

Let us hear the last sentence of his profound (?) interpretation of his text: "The very moment he confesses Christ in his heart Christ confesses him in heaven, and he ceases to be a child of wrath and becomes a child of God." That is doubtless sound Baptist doctrine, and will be accepted by all who will take Mr. Gavin's "I say" for proof, but it is not New Testament doctrine, for Paul says:

"For we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3: 26, 27).

According to Mr. Gavin's "I say" there is a con-

fession to be made "in the heart," and according to Jesus and Paul one to be made before men (Matt. 10: 32), with the mouth (Rom. 10: 10); and Mr. Gavin makes his invention, confessing Christ in the heart, the more important of the two, as by it he claims that one "ceases to be a child of wrath and becomes a child of God." Thus he gives more weight to his "I say" than to the words of Jesus and Paul.

Having fixed his text so as to make it answer his purpose he brings forward the "nonessential," with the view of showing its "essentiality."

Having proven by "I say" that the confession before men is a nonessential in securing Jesus' confession in heaven, he undertakes to show to what it is essential.

He says: "It is my purpose to emphasize the 'essentiality' of the 'nonessential' in our text, for if it were not essential to confess Christ before men then, to be sure, he would have eliminated this part from the text. My friend, what is your conception of what a Christian is?"

His answer to the above question is: "A Christian is an individual who confesses Jesus Christ in his heart; an individual who accepts Him in his heart as his Savior and Lord. This is the teaching of our text with the 'nonessential' eliminated."

To be sure, that is the teaching of "our text" with the nonessential "*before men*" eliminated and the essential "*in the heart*" stuffed in by Mr. Gavin and confirmed by "I say."

While his definition of a Christian sounds well, it leaves out all acts of obedience, and according to Baptist doctrine makes confessing or receiving Jesus in the heart the only thing necessary to becoming a Christian. It is true that one must believe on Jesus

with his whole heart, but faith is not the only condition of salvation, for faith without works is dead (James 2: 14-24).

He comes now to the question for which he laid his foundation, and for which he has been doctoring his text, viz.: "*How are we to confess Christ before men?*"

Having tortured his text so as to make it teach that confessing Christ in the heart is the only condition of salvation, he is ready to bring in baptism, and it will be easy to make all who will accept his "I say" see that it is not a condition of salvation.

Here is his answer: "I reply: The Bible knows but one way and commands but one way, and that way is *by baptism*." What do we have to confirm this assertion? Nothing but "I reply," "I say."

It is true that in baptism, as in all acts of obedience, one shows the faith that is in the heart, but it is not *the way* the Bible commands us to confess Christ before men. Baptism is no more a confession of one's faith than is any other duty he requires of us. It would be nearer the truth to say that a life of Christian service would be confessing him *before men* than to single out one act like baptism as the *one* way of confessing him.

Again, he says: "The custom we have in these days of asking all who accept Jesus Christ to come forward and give the hand, or to remain at their seats and simply raise the right hand, is an innovation as far from the Bible way of confessing Christ as truth is removed from error. Think you that on the day of Pentecost, when 3,000 confessed Jesus Christ in the heart, that Peter and the rest of them said: 'Let all who confess Christ in the heart come forward and give the right hand'? Ah, no; but, rather, they said: 'Let all who confess Jesus Christ in the heart come forward

and make that confession public by being baptized.' " This is not even a perversion of Peter's language, but is an entirely different one to what he did give the Pentecostians when they asked Peter and the rest of the apostles what to do.

Here are the facts in the case: "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2: 37.)

Not a word said about their confessing Christ in their hearts.

Here is Peter's answer: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2: 38).

There are four items in Peter's answer to the Pentecostians: repentance, baptism, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, three of which Mr. Gavin's new plan of salvation compelled him to ignore, for if they had already "confessed Christ in their hearts" and at that time "ceased to be the children of wrath and became the children of God," and were so securely saved that "there are not enough devils in earth and hell to bar them out of heaven," there was no sense in Peter's answer to them; for, being already children of God and their entrance into heaven unchangeably fixed, they had no sins to repent of or to be remitted, and needed not the gift of the Holy Spirit. So Mr. Gavin, consistent with his new plan of salvation, leaves them out of the instructions he puts in Peter's mouth on the day of Pentecost, and that allowed him to place baptism after salvation, a thing for which he had been planning all the time.

The denominational world in general and the Baptist in particular have had a lot of trouble fixing Peter's

answer to the Pentecostians to make it harmonize with Baptist doctrine, but Mr. Gavin's perversion of it is the most glaring thing I have ever seen.

An incident he mentions we wish to give a passing notice: "A young girl responded and latter applied for baptism at the hands of the church, and at the close of the meeting the pastor baptized her."

The phrase "at the hands of the church" is the point to which I desire to call attention.

Here is the cloven foot of Rome poking out. It is a doctrine of Rome that the Church has sole authority to dispense the ordinances.

It is the duty and privilege of believers in Christ to obey him in baptism, and none has the right to restrain them; and when a church presumes to pass on an applicant's fitness for baptism, or vote him the right to be baptized, it transcends its authority as a Church of Christ.

But as it was a Baptist church to which the girl applied for baptism the case is different. There being no rules in the Bible to govern a Baptist church it remained for those who created it to make a creed by which to govern it; which they did, soon after its creation, in the London, New Hampshire, and Philadelphia Confessions of Faith, all of which "agree substantially as to doctrine."

This confession is the standard of Baptist doctrine and the only source from which it can be learned.

By the same authority that they created the Baptist Church they made this creed; which was only self-assumed authority.

So when a Baptist church requires candidates for baptism to relate an experience, and then approves it, and, by a vote, grants them the right to be baptized, they only exercise self-assumed authority as a Baptist church. But they ought not to pose as the Church of

Christ and presume to do things in his name that he has not authorized. It gives things a sacred air and a semblance of sanctity to use Christ's or his Father's name copiously in connection with its rights and ceremonies, but it is a high sin against God to use his name where he has not authorized it. So, what Baptists do they ought to do as Baptists, and in the name of the Baptist Church, and not deceive an unsuspecting public by claiming to be the Church of Christ.

But the public have themselves to blame for thus being misled, for one reading of the New Testament will show a person that God never established such a thing as a Baptist Church.

Hear Mr. Gavin on the great commission: "The great commission is: 'Go and first prevail on men and women to confess Christ in their hearts; and then have them confess him before men by baptizing them.'" From whom does he quote this? Not from Jesus Christ.

The most concise form of the commission given by Jesus Christ to the apostles is recorded by Mark as follows: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 15, 16). This is so different from Mr. Gavin's "great commission" that both can not be true.

Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Baptists say: "He that believeth and is saved ought to be baptized." Both can not be true. Whom shall we believe? Mr. Gavin's labored effort is an effort to sustain Baptist doctrine against the plain teaching of Christ and his apostles. To that end he selected a text from which to write a treatise on baptism, that had no reference to the subject. Then he eliminated the expression "*before men*," as a non-

essential, reserving it for future use, and filling its place in the text with confessing Christ "in the heart," an invention purely his own, which, according to Mr. Gavin, when made so secures one's salvation that all the demons in earth and hell can not bar him out of heaven, and brings no evidence to sustain it but "I say."

He then brings forward the expression "*before men*," which he has been holding in reserve, and affirms that the only way known to the Bible for us to confess Christ "*before men*" is by baptism, and offers no proof for this but "I reply." Thus he has the person saved eternally before baptism, a doctrine dear to the hearts of all true Baptists.

Then, as an example of the workings of his new arrangements, he takes in hand the conversion of the Pentecostians and remodels it to make it fit his theory, supposing a confession of Christ in their hearts for which there is not a shade of evidence in the Scriptures, and then has Peter tell them to make that confession known by confessing Christ before men by being baptized, which is a fabrication of his own mind. To further confirm his theory he invents a new commission, saying: "The great commission is: 'Go and first prevail on men and women to confess Christ in the heart, and then have them confess him before men by baptizing them.'"

Thus he has a new plan of salvation altogether, and it is confirmed by "I say." Surely, he is entitled to copyright to it.

He now takes up the conversion of the eunuch. After stating that Philip doubtless told him how Christ came and died for man, he falls into an imaginary conversation between them which, in part, is as follows: "The eunuch asked: 'Now, what ought I to do next?' Philip said: 'You ought to confess Christ

publicly.' And the eunuch asked: 'How can I confess him publicly?' Philip said: 'By being baptized.'

Why was it necessary for him to thus draw on his imagination? There can be but one reason, and that was to make the eunuch's conversion harmonize with his new plan of salvation.

Again, he says: "We know that something was said about baptism, and that it was urged by Philip as a duty." True. And we know, as well, that he told him that: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," for that is the proposition that Jesus makes to sinners, and no man can "preach Jesus" without preaching it, and no one can receive salvation or remission of sins without complying with it.

Having fixed his confession "in the heart," and his "great commission," and confirmed it by saying "I say," so as to eliminate the teaching of Jesus and Peter, he proceeds to consider the essentiality of baptism in the light of his newly-invented confession and commission, introducing the subject thus: "And now, since we confess Jesus Christ before men by being baptized, let us consider why it is so essential to thus confess him." In answer to which he says: "I. *It is essential to our Christian influence.*"

This is not sustained by a single passage of Scripture, but is a conclusion of Mr. Gavin, based on his bungling and reckless interpretation of the Scriptures, and it has for its confirmation nothing better than "I say."

What would the fact that one was baptized one, ten, twenty or fifty years ago add to his "Christian influence"? While one's obedience in baptism may serve as an example and incentive to others to be baptized or to live a better Christian life, yet it is not the primary design or essentiality of it.

Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16: 16). Faith and baptism are the essentials of this proposition, and they are essential conditions to the promised salvation, and baptism is made equally essential with faith.

In promulgating this proposition Peter said: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 38).

In this baptism is made equally essential with repentance. They are the essential conditions upon which the Pentecostians were offered remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

If the "believeth," in Mark 16: 16, and the "repent," in Acts 2: 38, are essential to salvation, so is baptism, for it is placed in the same relation to "salvation," or "remission of sins," that they are.

This being contrary to Baptist doctrine, Mr. Gavin endeavors to get it out of the way so as to make the "language of baptism" harmonize with Baptist theology. To this end he selected a text that has no reference to baptism and remodeled it to suit his purpose. By this means he gets baptism into his text in the place of the expression "before men," and after his newly-invented confession "in the heart," at which time one "ceases to be a child of wrath and becomes a child of God."

Thus he gets rid of that doctrine so distasteful to Baptists, viz.: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16: 16), and "repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38).

Again, he says: "2. It is essential to the organized life of Christianity. Understand me here. It is not necessary to the life of Christianity; for in its last analysis it is the announcement before men that such

life exists in the heart. But it is essential to the *organization of that life.*"

He undertakes to illustrate this with the conversation betwixt Jesus and his disciples (Matt. 16: 13-20), in which Jesus asked them who the people said he was, and who they said he was, to which Peter replied: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He then shows that in the days of John the Baptist the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and men and women were pressing into it, and then concludes thus: "But there is but one way to 'press' into the Kingdom of Heaven, and that is by a confession in the heart to the very thing that Peter confessed to: *'that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'* And as I said at the beginning, the man who thus confesses him is a happy man; because Hades, that fell destroyer of all that pertains to the Adam-life, is powerless to bring him within the sweep of its merciless gates."

The reader will notice that the only proof offered for this conclusion is "I said"—the past tense of "I say." But it answers his purpose in getting "the man who thus confesses him" out of the reach of "Hades, that fell destroyer," before he is baptized, and the proof he offers is as good as can be gotten, as his "I say" is as good as the word of any man, and there is not a passage of Scripture to sustain it.

But hear him further: "But while confessing Christ in the heart gets a man into the Church invisible, or, if you prefer it, *into the Kingdom of Heaven*, yet it is not enough for him to stop here. That is the first step in the line of duty. The second is like unto it, to-wit: *Confess him before men.* So it comes to pass that as men and women confess Christ in the heart they 'press' into the Church invisible; and as they confess him before men they press into the Church visible."

We can now see the necessity of his new plan of salvation: "Confessing Christ in the heart." It is to get a man into that unscriptural and meaningless something called the "invisible" church. There is not a hint at such a thing in the Bible.

Hear his definition of a church: "A church is a body of baptized believers." That is true, but in the light of that statement what becomes of the *invisible* church? If I understand what is meant by the invisible church it is composed of unbaptized believers who have "confessed Christ in the heart," which, according to Mr. Gavin's definition of a church, as above, would not be a church.

Here is another *true* statement from him: "My brethren, a New Testament Church can not exist without baptism." Away goes his invisible church again, for it exists without baptism and is, therefore, not a "New Testament Church." Surely the legs of the lame are unequal.

On page 17 he says: "It takes a confession in the heart to get a man into the invisible Kingdom of Heaven. And it takes a confession before men to get him into the visible Kingdom of Heaven—the Church. And so the keys that were entrusted to Peter and the rest is but the faith and practice that Baptists have been holding to ever since, namely: Every man who believes, he ought to be baptized; and after his baptism obtains he is a member of the local church at whose hands he has been baptized, as much so as one who has been a member for a half century."

The following quotation reveals to us what he means when he speaks of the "visible Kingdom of Heaven." His saying that the keys "entrusted to Peter" is the "faith and practice" of the Baptists and that when a man's baptism obtains he becomes a mem-

ber of the local church at whose hands he was baptized, shows that he means a *Baptist church*.

It can not be true that a Baptist church is the "Kingdom of Heaven," "visible" or "invisible," for, in the first place, Baptist churches are not kingdoms, but each church is an independent republic, of which Baptists delight to boast, and all questions are decided by a vote of the body, and not by the New Testament, which is the law of the "Kingdom of Heaven." In matters of business they are a law unto themselves, and in matters pertaining to church organization, membership and discipline the London, Philadelphia, or New Hampshire Confessions of Faith, or abstracts from them, is their law. This creed is absolute. *Not one thing do they do by the New Testament.*

In the second place, there was no such thing on earth as a Baptist church until the seventeenth century, and it can not, therefore, be the "Kingdom of Heaven," the keys of which were entrusted to the Apostle Peter.

From all this we learn, according to Mr. Gavin, that Christianity takes on organic life when those possessed of it are baptized into a Baptist church. That being true, there was no organized Christian life until the creation of the Baptist Church in the seventeenth century.

It would, perhaps, cast some light on the subject to hear Paul on the relation of baptism to the new life: "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" We were buried, therefore, with him through baptism into death that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6: 3, 4).

We see from the above Scripture that walking in

newness of life follows baptism. In the natural birth, though there be embryonic life before birth, the lifetime of the individual dates from birth. Should the birth never obtain, the individual would be counted to never have lived. So in the spiritual birth; the "newness of life" dates from baptism, and if baptism never obtains the individual never walks in the new life.

We will now hear Mr. Gavin on the unbaptized Christian: "The trouble with an unbaptized Christian is that he has his light under a bushel. He is *good*—but *good for nothing*."

Good for nothing! Yet all "the devils in earth and hell can not bar him out of heaven."

Paul says that God "will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life; but unto them that are factious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, *shall be* wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God."

A "*good for nothing*" Christian works no good. How, then, will he obtain "eternal life," . . . "glory, honor and peace"? If nothing else does, his good for nothingness will "bar him out of heaven."

In the course of his remarks on the essentiality of baptism he goes out of his way to give Simon Magus a slap, as follows: "And why should it be thought a thing incredible when this embryonic work of the establishment of the churches was going on. that the Spirit should specially direct, so that even though one should be baptized, as was Simon Magus, who had never confessed Christ in the heart, and was, therefore, still in the gall of bitterness and bond of

iniquity, it would develop in due time, and of right the church should loose herself from him?"

It seems "incredible" that a man posing as a preacher called of God would make such an absurd, false statement as the above, but it shows what stretches men are forced to make to bolster up a false doctrine.

Here is the account of Simon Magus' conversion: "And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed" (Acts 8: 13). Luke made this record thirty years after Simon's conversion, and if his faith was not genuine Luke had not learned it. At least he does not intimate that anything was, at that time, wrong with his faith or heart. He simply states that he believed and was baptized; and Jesus had proclaimed that: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16: 16). So, according to Luke and Jesus, Simon was in a saved condition when his faith and baptism obtained.

As to his confessing Christ "in his heart," Luke says nothing about that. That is a phrase not once found in the Bible, but it serves Mr. Gavin's purpose, to play on, when he wants to discount Luke's account of Simon's conversion.

Mr. Gavin's statement of the matter insinuates that Luke did not give a correct account of it.

Some days after the conversion of Simon, Peter and John came to Samaria and laid their hands on the disciples, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, in connection with which we have this account of Simon's fall: "Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostle's hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him,

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Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me" (Acts 8: 18-24, A. R. V.). The sin with which Peter charges him was thinking to buy the gift of God with money. He then said to him: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (v. 21). He then exhorted him thus: "Repent, therefore, of *this* thy wickedness, and pray the Lord if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (v. 22). It was not for the sins of his past life that he exhorted him to pray, but for the one "thought to obtain the gift of God with money." He *surely* did not entertain this thought before he believed and was baptized and before he saw Peter and John exercising the gift he wished to buy. No, it was not until his faith and baptism obtained, and Peter and John had come down and conferred the Holy Spirit on them, that he had, or could have had, this thought.

On account of this thought, expressed in the proposal to buy "the gift of God," Peter saw that his heart was not right and he was in the "gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity."

If Simon's conversion, as recorded by Luke, harmonized with Baptist doctrine they would not find it so necessary to doctor it. But as it shows that a Christian may fall away after conversion they take the liberty to revise it.

In the foregoing quotation from Mr. Gavin he says

Simon "was, therefore, still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." He adds the word "still," and thus makes it appear that Simon had never been converted.

Why this? Because as it reads in the New Testament it does not agree with Baptist doctrine. Peter said: "Thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Mr. Gavin says he was "still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Thus he makes it cover his past life and invalidate his conversion, and sustain Baptist doctrine.

He reaches the limit of his misrepresentation of Simon's case when he says: "It would develop in due time, and of right the Church should 'loose' herself from him." Thus he would have us believe that if the Church did what "she of right" should have done, she "loosed" herself from him—or turned him out.

So, to itemize Mr. Gavin's version of the case: Simon never "confessed Christ in the heart"; his baptism was therefore invalid; he was "still" in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, and the church "loosed" herself from him. To itemize Luke's account of Simon's case: He believed, was baptized, sinned in thinking to obtain the gift of God with money; Peter exhorted him to repent and pray God for forgiveness for the thought of his heart; he was in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, and he asked Peter to pray for him, which shows that he had repented.

So the last we hear of Simon, except, of course, what Baptists say, he was evidently a penitent man and asking Peter to pray for him. Not a word said about the church "loosing" herself from him.

After reviewing Simon's conversion, he sidesteps a little to take a whack at the Catholics, thus: "It

seems to me that the Catholics have had to resort to some very bad exegesis to make the Scriptures serve their purpose."

I am no apologist for the "bad exegesis" of the Catholics, but I want to say that they have a close second in Mr. Gavin, when it comes to "bad exegesis," and it "seems to me" that it comes with poor grace from him to speak disparagingly of any one's, even the Catholics', "bad exegesis."

On the design of baptism he undertakes to show that Baptists occupy the "golden mean" between two extremes. To illustrate this he uses an illustration that is too ludicrous to pass unnoticed.

He says: "On March the 4th Roosevelt was publicly made President of the United States. But in November before, he was made President in fact by the election of the people! At his inauguration he was declared to be President by the administration of the solemn oath of office, and was accepted as such by the people. And so it is in matters spiritual. Men are made Christians by the electing grace of God and enter into that blessed estate and life through faith in Jesus Christ; but they are declared to be Christians by the solemn oath of allegiance taken in baptism."

This entire paragraph is set in quotation marks. but, of course, is indorsed by Mr. Gavin and must, therefore, be treated as his own production; but it seems to me as an unwise selection; and if I couldn't have originated an argument to sustain my position I would have been far from quoting from a man that didn't know when Roosevelt became President in fact.

The people, by their vote, designate the man they want to be President, but any schoolboy knows he is not President in fact until inaugurated.

But his "exegesis" on this is on a par with his "exegesis" on the Scriptures.

The import of his application of this comparison is that Christians are declared to be such by baptism. Remember, now, that Mr. Gavin said: "The trouble with an unbaptized Christian is that he has his light under a bushel. He is *good*—but *good for nothing*."

So if baptism only declares a man to be a Christian it can only declare him to be a *good for nothing* Christian; which would not be a very complimentary declaration.

Another figure of speech in this quotation decoys him into an awkward predicament. It is this: "But they are declared to be Christians by the solemn oath of allegiance taken in baptism." Who ever heard of a government requiring its citizens to take the oath of allegiance to declare them citizens? Every person informed on the subject knows that an alien is not a citizen until he takes the oath of allegiance. So if baptism is the oath of allegiance a man is not a Christian or citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven until he has taken the oath of allegiance.

Of course, Mr. Gavin would insist that he was a member of the "invisible" Kingdom of Heaven before baptism, which baptism declares him to be, but that "invisible" kingdom or church is a myth of which there is not the slightest trace in the Bible.

Amid all of his blunders we find one mitigating circumstance in his favor, of which he should have full benefit. In the preface of his little book he says: "I am a Baptist because I did my best *not* to be one."

That being true, he is not responsible for being a Baptist and therefore not responsible for believing and teaching their doctrine: but until he learns the way of the Lord more perfectly, I think the Baptist brethren ought to take him in hand and not allow him to run at large and expose an unsuspecting public to the effects of so much "very bad exegesis."

R. N. MOODY.

