

Baptized Into His Sole Name

THE first form of the Church is marked by great simplicity. Believers lived in a close fellowship of brotherly love. "The original form of the assembly of disciples was that of one family. It is in this light that we must look upon them when gathered together during the period of expectation, and also on the morning of the day of Pentecost."

But by the operation of the Spirit this sense of fellowship had been made clearer. They knew themselves, as they had not before, to be one in Christ Jesus, the newly baptized and the original disciples being blended into unity by the consciousness of a common sharing of redemption and by the might of Christian love.

The substance of the doctrine into which the disciples were baptized was that Jesus is the Messiah. "They ascribed to him," says Neander, "the whole idea of what the Messiah was to be according to the meaning and spirit of the Old Testament promises, rightly understood. They acknowledged him as the redeemer from sin, the ruler of the kingdom of God, to whom the whole of their lives was to be dedicated; whose laws were to be followed in all things, while he would manifest himself as the ruler of God's kingdom by the communication of a new divine principle of life, which to those who are redeemed and governed by him imparts the certainty of the forgiveness of sins."

Baptism, therefore, referred to faith in the Messiahship of Jesus. The disciples were most probably baptized into his sole name. This was the whole of the Christian faith, and contained, as in a germ, the whole of Christian doctrine.

(The Story of the Christian Church by George R. Crooks, New York: Eaton & Mains, 1897, 26, e-book, Paragraph structure modified)