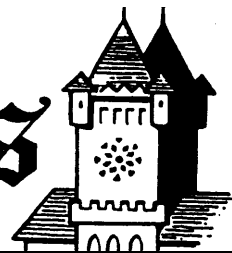


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STUDIES IN BAPTISM

by Ray R. Sutton

No. 9: The Robe of Salvation

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.. (Gal. 3:27). And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him... (Col. 3:10). And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph. 2:24).

At baptism, new clothing is put on — apparel which covers every aspect of life. Some groups in the church have thought it best to be baptized in the nude to heighten the imagery. A close reading of Genesis three, where God condemns nakedness, also condemns such a practice. Wrong as it is, these groups have attempted to emphasize that baptism is a *clothing rite*, and that side of baptism has been neglected. This essay, and the ones to follow (D.V.), strive to develop the clothing imagery associated with baptism. A better understanding can only serve to improve one's view of his own baptism.

First, baptism must be considered as the definitive point where *clothing* occurs. Paul explicitly says, *as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ* (Gal. 3:27). Previous essays have discussed the relationship between baptism and salvation, and all the points do not need to be stated again. It only needs to be mentioned that the writers of the New Testament clearly saw a connection between the events. Pelagianism is avoided, and justice done to Scripture, however, if baptism is seen as both the claim of God and simultaneously, an inescapable profession of faith. The gospel is visualized in baptism, so the appropriate visual response is to receive it upon oneself. Thus, baptism is the *official*, and this word should not mitigate the reality, putting on or salvation of Christ.

The definitive nature of this clothing at baptism is reinforced by its Old Covenant counterpart, circumcision. First, Paul refers to circumcision as a "putting off" of the flesh, and Jude (v. 23) speaks of the flesh as a garment. Clearly, then, circumcision was the point where one left the life of living in the flesh and entered a new life. In some pagan cultures, the rite of passage into puberty has been expressed by slaying an animal on behalf of the young subject, symbolizing *his* death, skinning the animal, and giving it to be worn in battle or while hunting. It was thought that the animal would give him *resurrected strength*

and power. (Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries. The Encounter Between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities*. Translated by Philip Mairet [New York: Harper & Row, 1967].)

"Second, by inference, circumcision was also a "putting on," but baptism is *explicitly* so. Thus, one sees a discontinuity between the two, which is a reflection of an essential dissimilarity between the Old and New Covenants. The Old Covenant continually came up to life, but never issued into it. So circumcision had its emphasis on the killing side of the covenant, and failed to bring the age of the New Covenant. With the killing of Christ, the circumcision made without hands (Col. 2:11), the new age came. Baptism is the definitive point, therefore, of putting off and putting on.

A second point to be made about clothing imagery as it relates to baptism is the parallel between the church's clothing-baptism, and Adam and Eve's after the fall. At that time God provided clothing to facilitate the carrying out of the cultural mandate. Adam and Eve needed atonement — covering, and protective garments to overcome the elements. This atonement, visualized in the animal skins God provided, corresponds to baptism. The similarities are numerous in that, one, it was a *robing* God provided. He killed the animal to baptize them, as He did His son to baptize us with Jesus' death (Rom. 6:3). Two, their clothing was a picture of the gospel that served as a constant reminder of God's saving work. Every time a baptism takes place, one should recall his own, and more importantly, that God has "wrought so great a work."

Three, the clothing rite in the baptism of Adam and Eve included a *commission* (Gen. 3:22-24). God "sent him forth from the garden of Eden," thus parallel is found with the Great Commission of Jesus. He sent his disciples (Matt. 28:19), and sends the church at baptism — the definitive beginning to that commission. Four, Adam and Eve were to "dress" (Gen. 2:15) the world as they should have done the garden. If baptism is clothing, then to go forth baptizing disciples, indeed "dressing" the world nation by nation, is an extension of the original mandate cast in terms of the New Covenant sacrament.

Third, understanding of the relationship between baptism as a clothing ritual and salvation, provides insight into passages where garment language is used, but baptism is not expressly mentioned. In the parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:1-14), the King sees a man without a wedding garment after the servants have gathered in the guests. For entering without the proper garment, he is

bound and cast out. According to what has been developed, the garment is Christ, and according to the context, the one cast out is Israel. By extension and in application to baptism, the visual picture of being clothed in Christ, one could not sit down to eat at Christ's table unless he had been baptized. Baptism is the garment that admits entrance into the King's house. In the early church, the baptismal font was at the door of the church for this reason. After one was baptized he could then enter and commune with God's people. One could never have the second sacrament without baptism.

Fourth, the relationship between baptism and being clothed in the salvation of Jesus points out that salvation is meant to be worn. If baptism is the visualized gospel, and the reception of it is being clothed in Christ, then to live like Christ is to wear one's baptism. To live for Him, in other words, shows that baptism has occurred. Thus baptism does not stop at the rite, it continues on in righteousness. Baptism is the clothing of the Christian which is put on in the water, and is kept from becoming tarnished in the faith-walk.

Fifth, since there is a relationship among the rite of initiation, clothing, and salvation, one would expect to see this same relationship in the rejection of God's clothing. Since people wear their salvation, inescapably, fashions and styles have been radically affected by morality. In fact, the clothing itself is an expression of the kind of salvation one seeks. When a culture turns from Christ, the clothing comes off. On the one hand, man becomes obsessed with his own flesh. On the other, he attempts to return to some sort of naive state before sin entered the world. In both cases the clock is turned back, and man takes a descent into his own death which comes from rejecting Christ as his clothing.

That clothing cannot be separated from morality, says much about how a society views salvation. Likewise, the way the church lives is telling of the clothing it really wears. If Christ is its clothing, then it should manifest the kind of apparel which Christ wears in Scripture. In the next essay, this subject will be examined in further detail.

CHRISTIANITY **AND** THE CALENDAR

by James B. Jordan

No. 15: The Alternate Sabbath

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If anyone of you or of your generations becomes unclean because of a dead person, or is on a distant journey, he may, however, observe the Passover to the LORD. In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall observe it. . . . But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person shall then be cut off from his people. . . .'" (Numbers 9:9-13, NASV)

How do we handle "works of necessity" on the sabbath day, especially in a technological society where works of necessity seem to multiply? Overlooked for centuries, this passage nestled away in Numbers sheds light on the problem.

Let us assume that we are living in a Christian land. The magistrate is considering sabbath legislation. Yet he and the officers of the church are faced with the fact that many kinds of factories must remain open continually, or they cannot remain open at all. Christianity has given rise to a technological civilization, but that very technology is undermining the sabbath, or so it seems.

One possibility is simply to shut down all these factories. "If you can't shut the machines down one day in seven, then you may not remain in operation." The Bible, however, gives us a creative alternative, which is to set up an alternate sabbath for those who must work on Sunday.

First of all, let us be clear on the fact that the Passover was a sabbath festival, so that the principles which apply to the Passover sabbath may be applied to any other sabbaths, including the sabbath day. According to Numbers 9:9-13, if a man could not keep the Passover in the first-month, there was a second Passover held in the second month which he was to attend. It was not a matter of choice; he had to attend in the first month if he were able to do so.

There were two possible reasons why he might not be able to attend in the first month. First, he might be ceremonially unclean through contact with some source of uncleanness. Thus, he could not draw into the presence of God. He would have to wait until the second month.

But second, he might be away on a journey. Now what kind of journey is this? It is not a religious pilgrimage, obviously. Nor is it a vacation, for the festivals in Israel were their vacations. No, it is a business trip. The man is away on a caravan, and caravan journeys took months sometimes. The sabbath of the Passover was made flexible enough to accommodate the increased business that the blessings of the covenant would bring about. *One aspect of the covenant* (blessings, business opportunities, technology) *is not opposed to any other aspect of the covenant* (rest, festival, holy convocation).

So, how does our Christian magistrate frame his legislation? He states that no labor contract will be valid unless it provides the laborer with at least one day off every week. It must be the same day every week, and it must be either Sunday or Monday.

The church, likewise, would need to set up "Monday Churches" for people who regularly labor on Sunday. These churches might have their own pastors, and surely would have their own elders out of their own ranks.

The officers of church and state would still have to decide what businesses and factories legitimately might remain open seven days. Department stores, for instance, have no business being open on the Lord's Day.

How about restaurants? That is one of the sticky questions that crops up continually. There are two possibilities. Either cooking is a "work of necessity," or else it is a sin for the wife to do any normal kitchen work on the sabbath. Exodus 12:16 tells us that cooking food is proper on a sabbath: "And on the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and a holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be done by you."

Now, this verse is sometimes read in conjunction with Leviticus 23:7 to mean that no laborious work might be done, whereas on the normal weekly sabbath day no work

at all was to be done. Against this interpretation, however, is the fact that the expression “you shall not do any (kol) work” is used both for the weekly sabbath in Lev. 23:3 and also here in Ex. 12:16, where allowance is given for cooking food.

Similarly, while they were not to gather manna on the sabbath, they apparently might cook it. Exodus 16:23 says: “Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning.” The Jews understand this to mean that what is baked and boiled is partly eaten and partly left over until the sabbath, but this is not what the text implies. Rather, what is left over for the sabbath is what had not been cooked, implying that it would be cooked on the sabbath.

Also, the fact that fires were not to be increased on the sabbath day (Ex. 35:3) does not mean that they could not be kept going, as they must have been. In No. 13 of this series we argued that this law was ceremonial in character: only God’s fire was to be increased on the sabbath day. If (again I say, if) this is read to mean that only God’s food (the sacrifices) was to be cooked on the sabbath day, so that Israel was to cook no food on the sabbath, then we must still see that this was a “ceremonial” provision, not applicable as such in the New Covenant.

The early church shared a love-feast on Sunday nights, which must have been cooked on Sunday (1 Cor. 11:17-34; Acts 20:7ff). This is all in keeping with the association among sabbath rest, Christian fellowship, and festive meals, an association found throughout Scripture.

If the elders of church and state are persuaded that preparing food is a “work of necessity,” then they will not punish wives and servants who prepare food on the “sabbath. The question then becomes whether what is necessary for the domestic economy may be extended to the larger economy under the division of labor; that is, may professional restaurants remain open? Possibly so, provided that the church is making alternate worship services available and the state is ensuring an alternate day of rest. Such decisions as this, however, must be made by the rulers of church and state.

AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

by Gary North

No. 9: Suretyship: Transferring Liability

My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth (Prov. 6:1-2).

The author of Proverbs is adamant about the necessity of avoiding surety. “Surety” is another word for co-signing for a loan. One man agrees to become responsible for the debts of another person, should that person default on his debt. The man who “strikes his hand” is obligated to honor the terms of the other man’s contract. He has accepted personal liability for another man’s economic performance.

Avoid such obligations, Proverbs teaches. “He that is surety for a stranger shall smart [know no peace, NEB] for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure” (1 1:1 5). “A man void of understanding striketh his hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend” (1 7:18). “Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts” (22:26).

There are rules for dealing with people who ignore this advice. If you lend to a stranger — a person in the community who is not of the faith, and who therefore has no covenantal obligations either to the church or the wider covenanted community — be sure to take collateral from the person who has become the co-signer. The co-signer is now the “lender of last resort” for the stranger. The stranger may default. He may escape to a foreign land in the middle of the night. The person who has co-signed is therefore the most important individual in the transaction, as far as the creditor is concerned. Twice in Proverbs we find the following advice: “Take the garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge [collateral] of him for a strange woman” (20:16; 27:13).

The “strange woman” is synonymous with religious apostasy, which Proverbs contrasts with wisdom, meaning the fear of the Lord (Prov. 2). The strange woman represents the culture of Babyion (Rev. 17:3-6), a Jezebel culture. Anyone who would co-sign for such a person lacks good judgment. He is all too likely to be cheated by the predictably faithless debtor for whom he has co-signed. Collect collateral in advance from such a person.

The motives for co-signing are varied. The obvious one is friendship. A person is approached by a friend, who asks him to “strike hands,” or in modern terminology, to “put his name on the dotted line.” Why is this necessary? Why doesn’t the friend simply put his own name on the dotted line? The fact is, he does, but the creditor is doubtful about the ability of the first debtor to make good on the debt. The creditor may not be willing to transfer assets to this person, or at least not at the prevailing rate of interest. The creditor may want to extract a higher rate of interest in order to compensate himself for the extra risk involved in loaning to a high-risk debtor.

If this higher rate of interest is so high that the debtor is even less likely to repay the loan, the creditor simply refuses to make the loan. In order to decrease the risk of loss on the loan, the creditor imposes a new restriction. He tells the debtor to locate a more solvent person who will agree to repay the loan should the original debtor default. This lowers the risk premium involved in the market rate of interest. Because the risk of loss is lower, the risk premium is lower, and therefore the rate of interest can be set lower. The creditor is protected. By spreading the risk of default, the creditor believes that his loaned funds are more likely to be repaid.

The co-signer therefore increases his own financial exposure. He is being asked to co-sign because a lender is doubtful about the character of the debtor, or about his competence, or whatever. The co-signer is saying that friendship, or his own personal evaluation of the debtor’s ability and willingness to repay, counts for more than the evaluation of the potential creditor. He takes on the liability of repayment. He says, in effect, “the evaluation of my friend by the creditor is incorrect, and I will demonstrate

my confidence in my own superior judgment by co-signing."

There is another possible motivation: *charity*. The co-signer expects his friend to default, but he co-signs anyway, in order to enable the first man to achieve his life's goals. Co-signing such a loan is *an act of grace* - an unmerited gift. This was Christ's motivation in laying down His life for His friends (John 15:13). He became surety for them (Hebrews 7:22). -

Insurance contracts were developed in the late Middle Ages that involved co-signing by risk-takers. Insurers would guarantee investors in some trading venture that if a merchant's ship sank, they would repay the investors. For this, the insurers were guaranteed an insurance "premium": a fixed percentage of the original investment. This was called "bottomry." Because they bore the risk of failure, insurers made the venture possible, for investors would then put money into the project. But insurers ("co-signers") were paid for taking this risk. And they spread their risk by insuring numerous ventures.

Modern civil governments have taken on many responsibilities that private, voluntary co-signers might otherwise be asked to bear — and which they would decline to accept. But unlike private insurers, the State does not enter the loan market in quest of financial profit. *The State is buying political support and expanding State power by means of its ability to "sign the taxpayers' names on the dotted line."* For example, the State creates guarantees for the repayment to lenders of private, profit-seeking loans to private companies or foreign nations, should the debtors default, thereby subsidizing both the lenders and the recipient companies or foreign governments. These State-subsidized debtors therefore obtain loans at below-market interest rates, since the risk premium in the private loans' interest rates falls sharply.

The State also creates guarantees for depositors who put their money into Federally insured banks and other lending agencies. This subsidizes these lending institutions

and all those who borrow from them, since they can do business at lower interest rates. Higher-risk debtors can now obtain loans, because taxpayers *are implicitly compelled by their rulers* to co-sign for the Federal/ly Insured lending institutions. Farmers receive guarantees for crop prices; they also gain access to below-market interest rates for home loans. The housing market especially has been subsidized for two generations in the United States by various loan guarantee programs. An important political goal for any special-interest group is to become eligible for the subsidy of government co-signed loans.

Because all loan markets are now linked directly to the currency systems, domestic and international, the whole fabric of Western trade is threatened by default. The world has loaned to "strange women"; in fact, the whole system of modern political economy is operated by "strangers" to the faith. And because the co-signing is political and compulsory, few of the faithful can escape.

Modern interventionist civil governments have produced compulsory co-signing on a scale never dreamed of by the author of the Proverbs. In effect, all tax-financed welfare programs are a form of surety. Citizens have become financially liable for each other's mistakes, tragedies, and incompetence. The results are becoming clear: the threat of massive bankruptcies, either openly, or through the concealed bankruptcy produced by monetary inflation.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of His people, He became surety for them (Heb. 7:22). The enormous cost involved in His becoming personally liable for His people's eternal debts to God provides the most graphic example in all of history of the potential costs of one's voluntary assumption of other men's personal liabilities. *Christ bore unlimited liability.* Only a manfully willing to bear a great deal of risk — and who has the capital to repay the debt completely — should contemplate becoming surety for a friend. He must limit his liability.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

There are still some copies of Wilhelm Balke's monumental study, Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals available at the low, low price of \$8.95 plus \$1.00 shipping and handling. Balke retails for \$17.95 - our price is a full 50% off!!! Don't miss this special! Offer good only while supply lasts.

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