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## ARTICLE V.

### AN INVESTIGATION IN SYRIAC PHILOLOGY.

# By Rev. Benjamin Davies, Montreal.

Those who read with interest the article of Dr. Murdock on The Syriac Words for Baptism, in the Bibliotheca Sacra for Oct. 1850, may be inclined to inquire farther into the subject. The following remarks are respectfully offered in aid of that inquiry. It is indeed much to be wished, for the sake of Syriac philology, that an article on the question were contributed by one of the most learned and judicious of the American missionaries to the Nestorians, on whom chiefly the revival of Syriac literature may be said now legitimately to depend. But in the absence of such a contribution, the following may have its interest and its use.

The question may be thus stated. Is the Syriac ΔΔ, to be baptimed, radically identical with the Hebrew της to stand, and therefore not properly expressive of the outward act indicated by βακνίζω?

It is in the highest degree probable, that the Syrians had once a root to stand; since (2022 pillor (Heb. 7022) is clearly derived from it, and since all the cognate tongues (Heb., Chald., Samar., Arab. and Ethiopic) have it, with substantially the same meaning But of the actual use of the verb in Syriac to denote to stand, no example has yet been found, as Michaelis (in his edition of Castell's Syriac Lexicon sub voce) observes, 'Standi significatione, reliquis linguis Orientalibus communem, apud Syros non reperio.' Yet it has been the general epinion of Syriac scholars, that the word used for Bantiles had originally that very signification, as the same great Orientalist mentions, 'In hac baptizandi significatione conferent haud pauci cum Hebraico אמר stetit, ita ut, stare, sit, stare in flumine, illoque mergi. In this opinion and explanation, even Gesenius concurred, as may be seen under 7727, in the second edition of his Lexicon, by Dr. Rob-But it is not too much to say, that discreet philology will feel some difficulty in accepting this view; Michaelis at least felt it, and declared, " Mihi verisimilius, diversum plane ab אכד, litterarumque aliqua permutatione ortum ex غيث submergere. The existence of some difficulty in the case is also indicated and aptly illustrated by the great diversity which is manifest in the explanations offered by



those who agree in identifying the root in question with the Heb. נמך, to stand. We can point out at least four different explanations. 1. The one above-mentioned, as quoted by Michaelis, and approved by Gesenius. But here we are at a loss to comprehend what could have caused the ceremony to be named in reference to the standing. rather than to the immersion, in the water, seeing that the latter, and not the former, enters into the idea of baptism. Can a parallel be shown, where a transaction derives its name from one of its mere circumstances, rather than from a prominent and significant part of the process? The ecclesiastical use of Eucharist (εὐγαριστία) for the Lord's Supper, can scarcely be deemed a parallel; for the blessing, or viving of thanks, is an important part of the holy communion, the act being even twice repeated (1 Cor. 11: 24, 25; comp. chap. 10: 16). 2. Another view is, that the term means to stand at, or in, the water, in order to be sprinkled, or poured upon. So Dr. Henderson, perhaps on the authority of Schindler in Lex. Pentaglotton, who says, "Stabant enim, qui baptizabantur." But the same difficulty as above, presses us here again. And even if they were baptized in a standing posture, they undoubtedly, as Dr. Murdock well observes (p. 739), stood up also in various other religious acts (e. g. singing); and therefore the verb might be used to indicate such acts just as well as baptism. But of such use of it, there is no instance known. Besides, in the case of young infants, how could the two scholars here concerned, apply their own idea, "stabant enim, qui bentizabantur?" 3. Others think the meaning arose thus: to stand, then, to establish, or confirm, and then to be baptized, the rite of confirmation being in the Syrian and other Eastern churches administered immediately after baptism, and by the same person. Augusti, Dr. Lee of Cambridge, and Moses Stuart. But there is no proof that the rite of confirmation, as it is called, was practised so early as the apostolic days, when doubtless was already employed for Bunsiles Out; or, if the apostles did practise that rite, it clearly was not always done immediately after baptism (see Acta 81 14-17, 14: 21, 22). And besides, as Dr. M. justly argues (p. 740), if this verb in the causative conjugation, Aphel ( ), to cause to stand, to confirm, served to express the administering of baptism, we should certainly expect the passive form of that conjugation, ( محككياً ), to be caused to stand, to be confirmed, to express the receiving of baptism; whereas there is no instance of this form, but Vol. VIII. No. 31. 48

on the contrary, the simple intransitive form ( ) is employed in that sense, though by hypothesis it properly means, to stand. 4. Lastly, we have Dr. Murdock's theory (p. 740), "that the early Syrian Christians, in conformity, very probably, with apostolic example and usage, employed the neuter verb [ [to stand, ] to denote the reception of Baptism, because they associated with that the idea of coming to a stand, or of taking a public and decisive stand, on the side of Christianity." This original suggestion has certainly been set forth in a pleasing manner, and is theologically very acceptable; but yet it appears to be philologically beset with difficulties, in common with the foregoing theories. Nor is it easy to see how it could apply to infant baptism. Could tender babes and little children be supposed "to take a public and decisive stand on the side of Christianity?"

One thing is very clear, namely, that if either of the above views be correct, it must follow that the use of and its derivatives, as expressive of baptism, was strictly technical, or peculiar to the language of the church, whilst the ordinary or secular meaning was simply, to stand, or some modification of that idea, and had no correspondence to  $\beta \alpha \pi r i \zeta \omega$ , as found in classical Greek. Indeed, Dr. M. (p. 736) goes even farther than this, and affirms that the Syrian Christians, from the first, appropriated the verb exclusively to the baptismal rite, and that consequently we cannot expect to find it used in any other sense, in any of the existing Syriac books, except in the term for pillar, which he considers to be derived from it. But, now, let us see whether these conclusions be philologically correct. Are they warranted by facts, in the usage of the language?

The most ancient Syriac work now extant, is the Peshito version of the Bible, made early in the second century; and in it we find undeniable proofs, that Δ and its derivatives were actually used where neither the baptismal rite, nor any sort of standing, was intended. The verb occurs once in the Old Testament, in Num. 31: 28, where it means something like plunging: "All that abideth not the fire, ye shall make go through the water." Here the Hebrew property is rendered Land and will not apply in this case, where mere things are spoken of. In the New Testament we find several instances besides those in which the rite of baptism is intended. See John 5: 2, 4, 7, and 9: 7, where in each verse molumbifoga, pool, or properly swimming-place, is expressed by the



derivative محمدة, which clearly has not here its ecclesiastical meaning of baptism or baptistery, a notable instance of which is found in Heb. 6: 4, where portodéries enlightened is explained in the very same terms that denote 'went down into the pool' in John 5: 4. No doubt the translator in Heb. 6: 4 intended to express 'who have once gone down into the baptistery,' and not 'who have once come to bantism; nor 'who have descended into baptism,' as it is translated in a work called Horse Aramaics, Lond. 1843. In Heb. 9: 10 the same derivative stands for Bearrouse in the sense of washing or Jewish ablution; so also in Mark 7: 4, 8. The verb is found in Luke 11: 38 and Mark 7: 4 for βαπτίζομαι in its non-ecclesiastical sense of bathing. Dr. M. mentions (p. 736), that in these places in Mark and Luke, the Modern Syriac Version by the American Missionaries, has substituted other terms for those of the Peshito to express ablution. change is open to at least one objection, viz., that it takes away from the Syrian reader so many clear proofs that win is not a purely eccleriastical term, any more than the Greek Burrilo. One other class of passages remains to be mentioned, viz., those which speak of sufferings as overwhelming, which idea is conveyed by this very verb and a derivative from it, answering to βαπτίζομαι and βάπτισμα; see Matt. 20: 22, 23, Mark 10: 38, 39, Luke 12: 50. It turns out then that upwards of ten passages are to be found in the Peshito Bible, in which the Syriac words, elsewhere employed in that version for baptism, do not signify the Christian rite, and where they cannot mean anything like standing. The verb occurs in two or three instances also in the Apocrypha: in Judith 12:7 it reads that Judith 'went forth to the valley of Bethphalu by night and bathed (Loon مدمد) in the fountain of water,' where the Vulgate has 'et baptizabat se in fonte aque,' and the Greek καὶ έβαπτίζετο ἐν τῷ παρεμβολῆ ἐπὶ τῆς zavýc voň vôcevoc. And in Susanna 13:15 the verb occurs in the same sense three times, and here the Greek has lovouas and the Latin lavor. The passage is found in the Versio Syriaca Altera of Walton's Polyglott.

We may here inquire in passing, what in ecclesiastical usage is the force of this verb? In regard to this, it is worthy of notice that Syrian church writers in speaking of baptism distinguish several kinds besides that of Christ, the first of which is called the baptism of the flood (see Assemani Bibliotheca Orientalis, III. p. 574) or ordinary bathing (Ibid. p. 857). This mode of speaking clearly recognizes a non-ritual use of the term [Azonom and serves to indi-



cate its real meaning to be immersion. But it is urged that if this were the real meaning understood by the Syrians, they would have used a different word, wall to used a different word, which is admitted by all to signify to immerse. Now the fact is, they have used this word also for the baptismal rite, see in Castell's Lexicon under 45,. have farther proof of this in their Forms of Service for the administration of the rite. In the Nestorian Ritual, compiled by Jesuiahus Adiabenus about A. D. 650 (Assemani loc. cit. pp. 113, 140), the officiating priest is represented as taking the child and dipping him in the water Lists on using such a one is baptized in the name of the Father, etc., and then causing him to ascend from the water was on one one, see Assemani Bib. Orient. IV. (or part 2 of III.), p. 243. Compare with this the Anglican Rubric directing the priest to take the child and "dip it in the water discreetly and warily, saying, I baptize thee in the name," etc. There is another Syriac Ritual printed in a small 4to vol. at Antwerp, 1572, with the title Liber Rituum Severi Patriarche, etc. which Assemani does not mention at all in his great work. If this Ritual be authentic and now in actual use, it must be among the Jacobite or Monophysite Syrians, to whose party Severus belonged (Bib. Orient. II. p. 321). In this Baptismal Service we are told (p. 26) that and he is invoked (p. 36) in these words, "we beseech thee, who dippedst thy head in the water Land Assa, and toiledst and broughtest up the whole world from the depth of sin: we invoke thee. who wast as a son of man baptized by John and receivedst testimony from thy Father and wast declared by the Holy Ghost: we invoke thee, who by thy holy baptism (1,222) openedst heaven which was before closed on account of our sins."1

But to return to the non-ecclesiastical use of and its derivatives,—we have now to add examples from other writings. In general Syriac literature, only very few works have as yet been printed.

<sup>1</sup> On the usage of the terms in question in the Peshito Bible and the Syrian Fathers, there is much light thrown in a small work of rare philological merit, called A Critical Examination of the Rendering of βαπτέςω in the Ancient and many Modern Versions of the New Testament, by F. W. Gotch, A. M., Trin. Coll., Dublin. London, 1841. The celebrated Prof. Ewald once spoke of the scholarship of this work in terms of great praise.



though very many are known to exist in MS, and are deposited chiefly in the great libraries of the Vatican, of Oxford, and of the British Museum.1 In the printed works, the writer's very limited reading has met with two note-worthy passages, affecting the present inquiry. One is in Book L sect. 17 of the Theophania of Eusebius, edited by Prof. Lee of Cambridge, London, 1842, from a MS. which is believed to take its date from A. D. 411. The whole passage is rendered by the distinguished editor himself in a Translation of the work, published at Cambridge, 1843, in these words: "This selfsame Word of God also immerged [ \_ even into the depths of the sea, and determined those swimming natures: and here again he made the myriads of forms which are innumerable, with every various kind of living creature." The other place is in Kirschii Chrestomathia Syriaca, ed. Bernstein, Lipsiæ, 1832, on page 209, where the crocodile, or the leviathan of Job 41: 1, is spoken of by Bar-Hebreus as "plunging ( ) in the depth of the sea." It is needless to observe, that in both these examples the verb can express neither the baptismal rite nor the idea of standing. Dr. Lee has, however, noticed its use in the Theophania as something remarkable (which it certainly is on his theory), and added this note (Translation, p. 9): "This is one of those cases, in which a verb takes a new sense from a metonymical use of it in the first instance. It is taken to signify baptizing, because baptism and confirmation are administered at the same time in the East. And as it is so taken to signify baptizing, so it is subsequently to imply immersion." But where are the parallel cases to illustrate and prove this theory? In the Slavonic languages a word meaning to cross is used for baptizing, from the making of the sign of the cross in the ceremony; but is it used also for immersion? The process of change here supposed would, at least, require a long period of time for its development: first changing standing into confirming, then confirming into baptizing, and finally baptizing into dipping. But it has been shown above, that this last named meaning or one akin to it was, at least, coëval with that of baptizing, both being found in the Peshito, the oldest Syriac work extant and dated early in the second century.

To the preceding evidences regarding the usage of the language,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The rich collection of Syriac MSS. in the B. M. is now fortunately under the care of a most learned and laborious scholar, the Rev. W. Cureton, A. M., who has already earned great and just fame by editing the Syriac Epistles of Ignatius and some other important works found in that collection. Long may he live a promoter in chief of oriental literature!

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is to be added the testimony of native Syrian lexicographers. The most celebrated of these were Bar-Ali and Bar-Bahlul, whose Syro-Arabic Lexicons still exist in MS. in the Bodleian and other libraries. Bar-Ali was a physician and flourished in literature about A. D. 885, see Bib. Orientalis, III. p. 257. The following complete extract is from his Lexicon in the Bodleian, MS. Hunt. 163. For convenience of reference, we may here affix numbers to the Syriac terms explained.

- 1. حصرا اصطباغ اعتباد ايصا انغطاس ومنه يقال الغطس في عيد الدنج .
  - 2. حطم اصطبغ اعتبد.
  - 3. حطرا المعمودية والصبغة.
  - 4. خطم العامول الاسطوانة عامول النور.
    - خصم الذى يغوص ويعتبد.

Of these Arabic explanations the following is the best translation the writer can submit, as he enjoys only the poor help of Freytag's very meagre Lexicon Arabico-Latinum in usum Tironum, 1837:

1. An immersing, a bathing, also a dipping, and from it is named the dipping on the festival of Epiphany.

2. He was immersed, he was baptized.

3. Baptism or immersion.

4. Pillar, column: pillar of light.

5. He who dives or bathes. It will be observed that the Syriac word is the same in Nos. 1 and 3; but in the latter it is explained in its ritual sense, while in the former it appears to have its non-ritual meaning. The Syriac vowel points are not used in the MS. except on Nos. 4 and 5 as above. It may be mentioned here also, that the Syriac word, No. 5, is often used to denote a person receiving baptism; see Castell's Lexicon sub voce, and examples occur in Bib. Orientalis, IV. pp. 256, 259.

Bar-Bahlul flourished about a century later than Bar-Ali. Assemani (Bib. Orient. III. p. 257) simply says 'vivebat anno Christi 963.' His lexicon is considered the best, as Le had the advantage of using several others; and the best MS. of it is said to be in the Bodleian, Hunt. 157, from which the extract below was copied.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See an interesting account of this and some other Syriac works in a letter from Prof. Bernstein of Breslau, published in Bib. Sacra for 1848, p. 390. It is greatly to be wished that the learned Professor's long-promised and much needed lexicon would soon appear.

1. حُعْدا اصطباغ اعتباد وجا به حنین فی موضع يقال خطرا حم تنصيطه وفسره اي تكبن الحرارة ويصلح هاهنا تغوص. 2. محصودية.

3. ادر حصورا الصبيغ العبيد.

4. خصورا حر محز سرة العبول وريبا الاسطوانه من خشب واخرون عامون.

5. خصور غواص

Translation of the Arabic: 1. An immersing, a bathing; and Honain has adduced it in a place (where) it is said one lead and he has interpreted it thus — the heat hides itself in it,' but it is properly here 'dives.' 2. Immersion, baptism. 3. The immerser, the baptizer. 4. According to some and Bar-Sarushvai, a pillar, and it is often called a column of wood, or else pillar. 5. Diver.

A comparison of the above from Bar-Bahlul with the corresponding part in Castell's Syriac Lexicon, may serve to show the correctness of Prof. Bernstein's assertion (Bib. Sacra, 1848, p. 390), that Castell used the work of Bar-Bahlul only superficially, and did not adopt or rightly produce the half of it, though the contrary is professed in the Preface to the Lexicon Heptaglotton, and was apparently believed by Assemani (see Bib. Or. III. p. 257). The real compiler, however, of the Syriac part of the Heptaglotton was not Castell himself but Beveridge, who afterwards became bishop of St. Asaph; see p. 3 of the Preface to Lex. Heptaglotton. Yet, though Beveridge executed that task so badly, it must not be forgotten that he was so remarkably proficient in Syriac as to be able, in his 20th

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Honain was a famous physician and author, who died A. D. 876. One of his works was a compendious Lexicon (see Bib. Orientalis, III. p. 164), from which probably the above example was taken by Bar-Bahlul.

<sup>2</sup> Who is here meant I cannot make out, but the abbreviation probably stands for Zecharias.

A Nestorian bishop, who flourished towards the close of the 9th century and composed a Vocabulary, which is perhaps here alluded to (see Bib. Or. III. p. 261).

year, to publish the first and best grammar ever produced in England for that tongue; see at the end of the Epistola Dedicatoria in his Grammatica Syriaca, Londini, 1658.

No doubt a diligent search in Syriac works, in print and in MS, would furnish many more examples to the same effect as the above. There is, for instance, a small Syro-Arabic Lexicon of the 18th century, preserved in MS. in the British Museum, which exhibits the words numbered 1 and 5 in the above lists, and explains the former by immersing, and the latter by induction, in harmony with Bar-Ali and Bar-Bahlul.

Perhaps, however, the above evidence may suffice to make every scholar say with Michaelis, in reference to , \$\square\( \square\), \$\beta arei\( \square\) and "Mihi verisimilius, diversum [esse] plane ab קמד stare." So thinks also Prof. Bernstein, who is considered the best Syriac scholar now living. He, however, does not, with Michaelis, trace the verb to the Arabic submergere, but compares it with ... "qued transi. habet significationem immersit, immisit aliquid, recondidit gladium in vaginam;" see under , in Bernstein's Lexicon Syriacum to Kirsch's Chrestomathia Syriaca, Lips., 1836. Yet there is no essential difference in the affinities suggested by these two great lexicographers; for in fact these two Arabic verbs, with two others, are, in all probability, radically identical, namely, عبت, غبخ and منبخ عبل غمر In this last form the root exists also in Syriac, in to dive, and in the Coptic WILC, βαπτίζειν, καταποντίζειν, (see Tattam's Lexicon Ægyptiaco-Latinum, Oxon., 1835.) observed that the only difference in the four Arabic verbs, is in the final letters; but these are well known in comparative philology to be interchangeable: thus under פָּרָד, Gesenius gives as radically identical the verbs פָּרֶם, פַּרֶם, and פרש, all conveying originally the idea of breaking. A list very similar to this, might be exhibited also in Arabic and Syriac, with the primary sense of breaking, or separating, e. g. فرس , فرر , فرض , فرد , عنه , يعبي , عنه ب And now, lest it be urged that , second be akin to sec, etc., because the Arabic root has ¿ Ghain, and not Ain, we may observe that the Heb. y and the Syr. \( \simes\) are used for both forms of the Arabic letter (Gesenius's Lexicon under ),) and that the identity of

with is unquestionable, though the apparent dissimilarity in the letters be even greater than between and with Finally, if it be asked why the Syrians, having the choice of to, or told as well as to denote immerse, used the former only occasionally, but the latter habitually, for baptism, the reason may possibly have been, as suggested by Augusti, (Handbuch der Christlichen Archäologie II. p. 311,) that the former word had been already appropriated by the Zabians or Hemerobaptists, (dippers, see Michaelis under to in his edition of Castell,) a half-Jewish sect in the East, supposed to have come down from John the Baptist, and hence called also Disciples of John (Mendai Jahia). The Syrian Christians would naturally wish not to be confounded with such a party, and hence might have adopted another equally appropriate term to denote the baptismal act.

## ARTICLE VI.

#### LIFE OF ZUINGLI.1

By R. D. C. Robbins, Professor of Languages, Middlebury College.

Birth-place, Lineage and Childhood of Zwingli.

THE first day of January, 1484, was the birth-day of Ulric Zuingli, the pioneer of the reformation in Switzerland. Not quite two months before, on St. Martin's eve, in the cottage of a poor miner at Eisleben, Luther was born. The place of the birth of Zuingli was a lowly

¹ The works principally consulted in the preparation of this sketch of the Life of Zuingli, are: "Life of Ulric Zuingli, the Swiss Reformer, by J. G. Hess'; translated by Lucy Aiken." "Huldrich Zwingli, Geschichte seiner Bildung zum Reformator des Vaterlandes, von J. M. Schuler, Zürich, 1819." "Huldrici Zwinglii Opera, completa ed. prim. cur. M. Schulero et Jo. Schultessio," 13 volumes. "Calvin and the Swiss Reformation, by John Scott, London, 1833." "D'Aubigue's History of Reformation," Carter's edition, 1846. Several other works also are occasionally referred to as will appear from the notes.