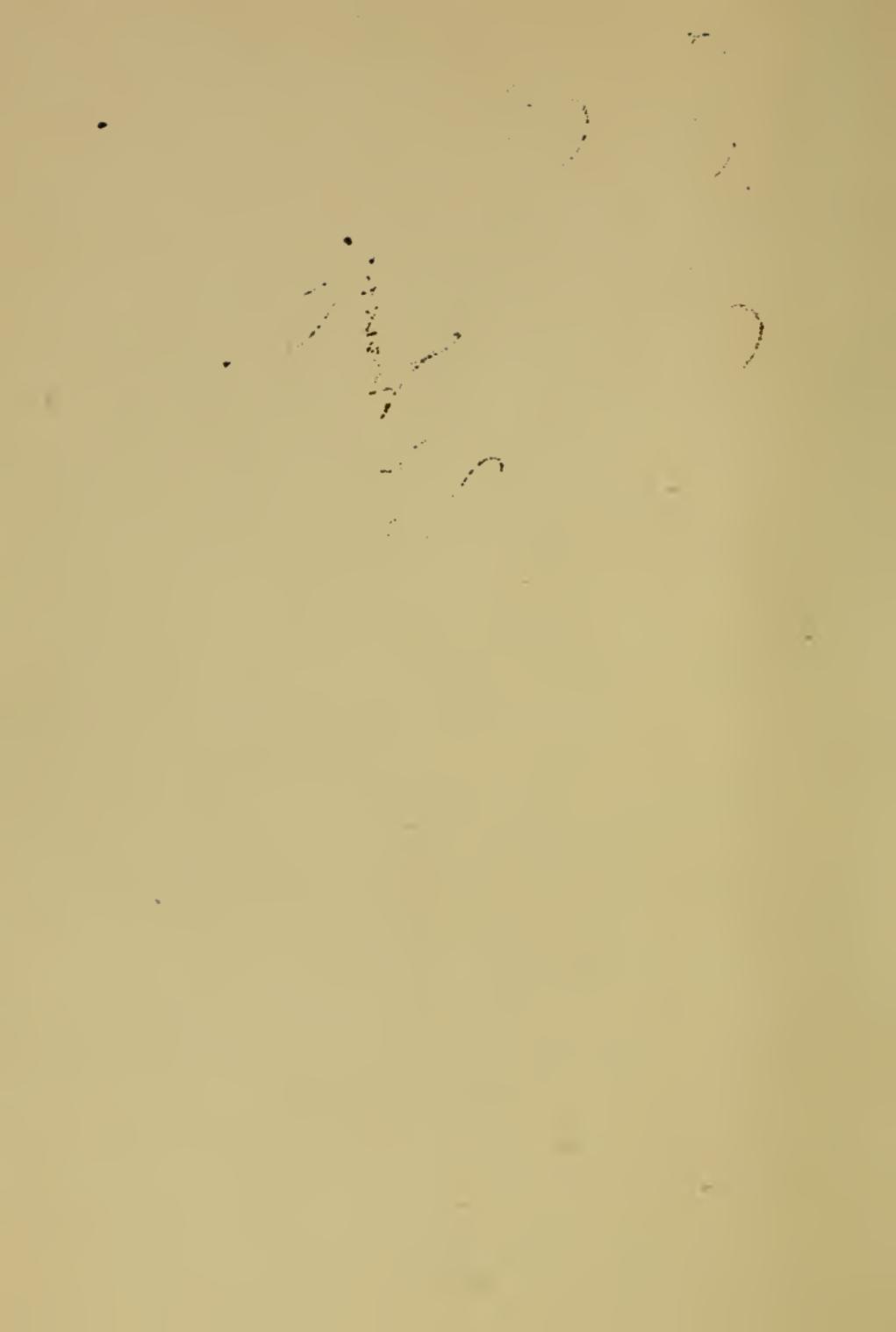


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The doctrine of Christian
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THE DOCTRINE
OF
Christian Baptism

AN EXPOSITION OF ITS NATURE, SUBJECTS,
MODE, AND DUTY.

REV. J. W. ETTER, D. D.


DAYTON, OHIO:
PRESS OF UNITED BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE.
1888.

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ADDENDA.

- Page 145. Eleventh line from bottom, read, אָמֵן.
הִאְמַן בִּיהוּה.
- Tenth line from bottom, read, וַיַּטְבֵּל.
- Page 172. Sixth line, read, וַיַּטְבֵּל.
רְחֵץ.
- Seventh line from bottom, read, בְּעֵתֶה נִ.
- Page 175. Third line, read, בְּעֵתֶה נִ biathathni.
Same line, read, baath.

PREFACE.

In presenting this book to the Christian public, I have no apology to offer for adding to the numerous volumes on the subject of Christian baptism, other than what would appear a natural expectancy that, after a short respite of sectional controversy on certain phases of baptism, the time has come for some one to state the present attitude of the question, "What is the nature, mode, and duty of Christian baptism as accepted by a large majority of Christian scholars?"

No systematic treatise on Christian baptism, that I know of, has appeared since the publication in this country of the Bryannios manuscript, which throws much additional light on the question of mode. I have, therefore, given this feature of my subject some attention in the present volume. The discussion is sufficiently amplified and simplified to make it intelligible to all ordinary readers.

THE AUTHOR.

Lebanon, Pa., May 19, 1888.

INTRODUCTION.

The rites and ceremonies of Christianity are neither numerous nor burdensome. The great body of Protestants hold that Baptism and the Lord's Supper include all the sacramental ordinances that belong to the Christian Church. The Roman Catholics have added five others—Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction; but none of these five carry with them the true marks of a sacrament. Christian sacraments are distinguished from superstitious rites by three marks. (1.) They were ordained by Christ himself. (2.) They are signs or emblems. (3.) They are seals. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances that bear these marks, and hence are the only “sacramental ordinances of the Christian Church.”

The mode, design, and subjects of Christian baptism have, during many centuries, given rise to an untold amount of polemic discussion. Theologians of almost every shade of belief have gone into the field of controversy, and when they have exhausted all their skill, have left the subject where they found it—unsettled. Everything essential to the eternal salvation of the soul is plainly set forth in the word of God, but when men get out into the realm of rites and ceremonies, and contend that some particular virtue inheres in the manner in

which certain rites or ordinances are performed, they get into difficulty unless the form is specifically set forth in the Scriptures.

The nature, design, obligation, and efficacy of Christian baptism should be carefully studied by all Christians, and especially by Christian ministers. This ordinance comes to us by Divine authority. When our Lord commissioned his disciples to go out and preach the gospel to all nations, he also commissioned them to baptize. The command to preach is no more authoritative than the command to baptize. They are joined together in the great commission. "Here we date the divine origin of baptism as a standing, obligatory, and perpetual ordinance of the Christian Church. Here is the great charter from which the Christian ministry in all ages drew their Divine authority for the administration of this ordinance."

If it were not possible for us to know anything about the nature, design, and efficacy of this ordinance, this would not free us from the obligation, because the Lord commands it to be done. Abraham did not understand the design of the Allwise Father when he commanded him to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, but that did not prevent him from going forward. Obedience was his rule of action. Our Divine Lord says, "If ye love me keep my commandments." Every step the Christian takes along the line of obedience will give him new strength and vigor. The faultless Christ was careful to fulfill every righteous ordinance of the law, thereby teaching us the necessity and importance of obedience.

From one cause and another the ordinance of baptism is too much neglected by those professing to be the disciples of Christ. Thousands are this day living within

the pale of the visible church who have never been baptized. Ministers, not a few, who have gone out under the great commission, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, seldom mention the subject of Christian baptism. They seem to forget that he who bade them go and preach the gospel, also bade them baptize in the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is to be perpetuated as long as the gospel is preached and the Christian Church continues. In the face of this truth, it is not easy to understand how an enlightened Christian can innocently, either neglect or refuse to observe this ordinance.

With respect to the mode of baptism the controversy has been long and fierce. "There seems to be but one way to account for this, and that is that the mode is one of the minor questions connected with theological polemics, concerning which Divine inspiration has not seen proper to furnish us *explicit* and *positive* testimony."

The author of this book has very carefully and thoughtfully gone over this whole field, and in an able manner defended the faith and practice of the United Brethren Church. He has treated on the mode, obligation, design, and subjects of Christian baptism in a scholarly manner. His style is easy as well as entertaining, and cannot fail to interest and profit all who may read it with care. I therefore most cheerfully and heartily commend it to Christians everywhere, and especially to the ministers and members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

J. WEAVER.



RECOMMENDATION.

Having examined the manuscript of a book, written by Rev. J. W. Etter, D. D., on the subject of "Christian Baptism," we take pleasure in stating that his discussions are not only fair to those who may differ with him, but able and convincing. The work well represents the average sentiment of our Church, and, in our judgment, should be published.

J. WEAVER.

Z. WARNER.

Dayton, Ohio, May 4, 1887.

Dr. Hott concurs in this report.



CONTENTS.

PART I.

THE NATURE OF BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS.

Comprehensiveness of the term <i>baptismos</i>	23
— Of heathen and non-religious origin.....	24
General meaning of the term baptize.....	25

CHAPTER II.

SPIRITUAL, OR REAL, BAPTISM.

Nature of spiritual baptism as illustrated.....	27
— In the Old Testament.....	27
— In the New Testament.....	28
— In the Church of the past and present.....	30

CHAPTER III.

RITUAL BAPTISM.

Nature of ritual baptism as distinguished from real.....	32
— Purification, the general sense of Jewish ritual baptisms.....	33
— Deeper significance of these purifications taught by Christ.....	34
— Proselyte baptism.....	35

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN'S RITUAL BAPTISM.

Nature of this species of baptism explained.....	36
— Repentance, its fundamental idea.....	37
— A mediation between the Old and New Testament theocracy.....	39
— Proof that John's baptism was non-Christian.....	39

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST'S BAPTISM.

A unique baptism, distinguished from John's and the Christian baptism.....	41
The real nature of Christ's baptism	43

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIAN RITUAL BAPTISM.

Origin of Christian baptism	45
Spiritual baptism a prerequisite for Christian ritual baptism.	46
Christian baptism defined and explained.....	47
— Not an <i>instrument</i> of grace as taught by the Church of Rome, but a symbolic ceremony of initiation into the visible Church.....	52

PART II.

THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIAN ADULTS.

Qualifications for adult baptism.....	65
I. Faith in Christ.....	65

2. Some knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity	66
3. A life of obedience and Christian practice.....	66
A credible profession and promise of obedience the only external evidence of such qualifications.....	68

CHAPTER II.

THE INFANT CHILDREN OF CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

Protest of the Baptists.....	69
✓ Infant baptism a legitimate induction from the teachings of Scripture.....	71

SECTION I.

The Covenant Relation of Children to the Church.

PROPOSITION I.— <i>There is a presumptive and inductive evidence that the infant children of believing parents are entitled to baptism, because of the covenant relation which they sustain to the visible Church</i>	72
FIRST PREMISE.—The Christian Church of the New Testament and the Jewish Church of the Old Testament are one and the same.	75
SECOND PREMISE.—Infant children of believing parents were members of the ancient Jewish Church by virtue of the Abrahamic covenant	75
CONCLUSION.—Therefore, the infant children of to-day are members of the Church, and entitled to the modern ordinance of baptism, unless the scriptures of the New Testament teach anything to the contrary.....	81

SECTION II.

Infant Baptism in the Apostolic Church.

PROPOSITION II.— <i>There is a presumptive and inductive evidence that the infants of professed Christians were baptized in the Apostolic Church</i>	91
--	----

1. No mention being made in the New Testament of the baptism of adult Christians raised in Christian families, the inference is that they received the initiatory rite in infancy	92
2. The New Testament records several instances of FAMILY baptisms.....	94

SECTION III.

Testimony of Church Fathers.

PROPOSITION III.— <i>The testimony of the early Church fathers corroborates these evidences that children were baptized in the Apostolic Church.</i>	97
1. Justin Martyr.....	97
2. Irenaeus.....	98
3. Tertullian	98
4. Origen.....	99
5. Ambrose.....	99
6. Cyprian	99
7. Augustine	100
8. Pelagius.....	100

CHAPTER III.

SOME OBJECTIONS TO INFANT BAPTISM CONSIDERED.

1. Baptism should not be administered to an unconscious, especially unregenerate, person.....	103
2. Infant baptism deprives the subject of the rights of private judgment, and, therefore, is contrary to the word of God.....	105
3. Faith is mentioned in Scripture as necessary to baptism; but as infants cannot believe, therefore they should not be baptized.....	106
4. If infants ought to be baptized, they ought also to be admitted to the Lord's Supper	107
5. Christ was not baptized in infancy, and we should, like him, wait until adult years.....	III

6. Persons baptized in infancy may, after their conversion in adult years, desire to be rebaptized.....	112
7. As infants are saved without baptism, it is useless to administer it to them	114
Whose children are proper subjects for baptism?.....	115

PART III.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAIN PROPOSITION OF DISCUSSION.

Liberalism of our Article of Confession on Mode.....	121
Controversial nature of mode unwarranted by Scripture.....	122
THE MAIN PROPOSITION OF DISCUSSION.— <i>Scripture no- where teaches, either by phraseology, example, or precept, that there is only one mode of baptism.....</i>	128

CHAPTER II.

DISCUSSION OF THE WORD BAPTIZE.

FIRST SUB-PROPOSITION.— <i>Modalism cannot be proved from the word BAPTIZO.....</i>	131
Leading Baptists insist on a univocal definition of the word	131

SECTION I.

Classic Literature.

I. In this department of literature the word means: (1.) To dip. (2.) To dye or tinge. (3.) To wash or be wave- beaten. (4.) To sink. (5.) To immerse. (6.) To bury. (7.) To immerse partly. (8.) To drown. (9.) To make drunk. (10.) To stupefy. (11.) To overpower or over- whelm. (12.) To sprinkle, etc.	135
--	-----

2. Impossibility of proving the Baptists' univocal definition.	142
3. Dr. Dale's modern definition approved	144

*SECTION II.**Transition from Secular to Sacred.*

1. Dr. Carson's radical position.....	148
2. New meanings given to many classic words by the New Testament writers.....	150
<i>First.</i> —The New Testament Greek is almost a distinct and independent dialect.....	152
<i>Second.</i> —The inspired writers used current Greek words to express ideas of which classic heathen had no knowledge. Examples : <i>Deipnon, arete, charis, ekklisia, paliggenesia</i> ; Acts 23:8.....	151
3. Reason for changing and modifying the classic use of the word <i>baptizo</i>	154

*SECTION III.**Sacred Literature.*

Various meanings of the word.....	156
1. In the New Testament : (1.) To wash. (2.) To sanctify or inspire. (3.) To endure or suffer. (4.) To initiate	156
2. In the Old Testament : (1.) To wet or moisten. (2.) To dip, plunge, immerse. (3.) To terrify	170
3. In the Apocrypha.....	176
4. In patristic literature.....	177
5. In various versions of the Bible.....	182
6. Testimony of eminent authority.....	183
— Conclusion.....	187

CHAPTER III.**DISCUSSION OF THE EXAMPLES OF BAPTISMS RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.**

SECOND SUB-PROPOSITION. — <i>Modalism cannot be proved from any scriptural example of the ordinance of baptism.</i>	190
--	-----

Introductory remarks.....	190
1. John's baptism.....	191
2. Baptism of Jesus by John.....	198
3. Baptism of three thousand on the day of Pentecost.	207
4. Baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch.....	218
5. Saul's baptism.....	220
6. Baptism of Cornelius and his friends.....	221
7. Other miscellaneous examples	223
— Conclusion	225

CHAPTER IV.

PRECEPTS AND TEACHINGS ON MODE EXAMINED.

THIRD SUB-PROPOSITION.—<i>Modalism cannot be proved by any precept or teaching of the sacred Scriptures</i>	227
Modalism lacks the important requisite of scriptural sanction, and therefore tends to Romanism.....	227
Passages of scripture used to support modalism considered.	229
1. I. Peter 3:21.....	229
2. Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12; I. Cor. 15:29.....	232
3. Ezek. 36:25; Isa. 52:15, etc.....	238
4. Isa. 44:3; Joel 2:28, 29	240
— Conclusion.....	241
— General conclusion on mode.....	242

CHAPTER V.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS UPON MODE.

History testifies that in the early Church immersion was the rule, while sprinkling or pouring was the exception...	245
After the thirteenth century sprinkling became the rule, and immersion the exception.....	249
The recently discovered manuscript entitled, "The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," the best historical evidence on liberalism of mode	251
The many unwarranted ceremonies added to immersion by the early Church	257
Christian art in favor of liberalism.....	258

PART IV.

THE ETHICS OF BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

DUTY OF OBSERVING THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

Inexcusable laxity in the observance of this sacrament.....	267
Our obligation rests upon the following considerations :	
1. The nature of this solemn institution.....	269
2. Baptism is a mode of confession	274
3. The example of Christ and his apostles.....	275
4. The command of Christ to his apostles.....	278
<i>First.</i> His command an expression of his will	281
<i>Second.</i> Obedience an expression of our love for him	282
5. Conscience pleads for obedience	283

The Doctrine of Christian Baptism.

PART I.

THE NATURE OF BAPTISM.

THE NATURE OF BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS.

The general term *βαπτισμός* (*baptismos*), baptism, has a very broad application. Paul speaks of the “doctrine of baptisms” (Heb. 6: 2), and of “divers washings,” *βαπτισμοί* (*baptismoi*), (Heb. 9: 10), restricting its use, no doubt, to the various religious rites in the Jewish and the Christian churches. But the “doctrine of baptisms” pervades both classical and biblical literature; and, in its generic sense, is not an idea peculiar to Christianity alone. It was known as early as the days of Homer and Elijah, or about nine hundred years before Christ. It was used by Pindar 500 b. c., who was contemporary with Ezra, the priest. Aristotle and Plato frequently used the word *baptizo* to describe acts which, in external form as well as in general import, were not identical, but were analogous to the Christian ordinance of baptism.

The word *βαπτισμός* (*baptismos*) originated among the heathen. Libanius, a Greek philosopher, 390 b. c., speaks of “Grief baptizing the soul;” and Evanus, 250 b. c., in his fifteenth epigram, says of Bacchus, the great god of wine, that “He baptized with sleep, the neighbor of death.” Diodorus, 60 b. c., in speaking of the overflow of the river Nile, says, “The greatest number of the wild animals, overtaken by the river, perished, being baptized.” The writings of ancient poets and philosophers abound with these baptisms, used in numberless ways and a variety of applications, none of which, however, can have any reference to the symbolic use of our Christian baptism; for they were penned before baptism was known as an ordinance of the Christian church.

Nor did the heathen attach to them (baptisms) any religious signification, or connect them with their worship of the gods. Water was not essential, nor necessarily associated with their idea of baptisms. Whatever object was superinduced, or affected by the application of any influence, material or immaterial, was said to be baptized. The doctrine of baptisms originally was non-theological. Hence all systems of faith, such as atheism, pantheism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Mormonism, Judaism, etc., recognize this use of the

term, and accept in common this classic notion of baptisms. The term is international and inter-denominational, and has been current in all ages.

Jewish historians and philosophers like Josephus and Philo, as well as the early Church fathers, held, among them, the doctrine of baptisms derived from the ancients. They speak of cities baptized by robbers, reason baptized by gluttony and drink, waters of creation baptized by the Spirit, the earth baptized by the deluge, of baptism by circumcision, confession, repentance, iniquity, misfortune, etc. Christ speaks of his baptism of suffering. Innumerable as are these baptisms in number and in kind, they can, however, be generalized under one head so as to form one collective idea, or common conception of baptisms. The generic has many species. When we speak of classic, Judaic, Johannic, or Christian baptism respectively, we speak of a doctrine of baptism as a specific branch out of the genetic stem.

The general "doctrine of baptisms" may be defined in the words of Dr. James W. Dale: "Whatever act is capable of thoroughly changing the character, state, or condition, of any object, *by placing it in a state of physical interpolation*, is capable of baptizing that object; and

whatever *influence* is capable of thoroughly changing the character, state, or condition, of any object, *by pervading it and making it subject to its own characteristic*, is capable of baptizing that object; and by such changes of character, state, or condition, these acts and influences do, in fact, baptize their objects." ("Judaic Baptism," p. 57.) A careful examination of the term, baptize, leads to the conclusion that whatever exerts a *complete effect*, or *controlling influence*, is a baptism; and it is on this general idea that all doctrines of baptism are based.

CHAPTER II.

SPIRITUAL OR REAL BAPTISM.

Under the general definition of baptism, we will first describe such special kinds of baptisms as have a religious application, and bear upon Christian baptism; but which, however, are distinguished from Christian baptism.

Spiritual baptism is an effect produced upon men by the influence of the *Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit is the agent, men are the objects; and the influence which the former may exert upon the latter, is a spiritual baptism. It is the highest type—the only *real* baptism spoken of in the Scriptures.

The spiritual operations of the Paraclete among God's chosen people, is prominent in the Old Testament. Of Bezaleel it is said, "I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Ex. 31: 3). Moses was divinely endowed for his high calling; and when part of his duties was shared by the seventy elders, it was said, "I will take of the spirit which is upon

thee, and will put it upon them" (Num. 11:17). Joshua, Moses' successor, was one "in whom is the spirit." (See Num. 27:18.) Judges and kings shared this holy influence. When Samuel anointed David, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (I. Sam. 16:13); and it is also said to have departed from Saul. Prophets uttered maledictions, delivered messages, and announced coming events, through the influence of the same Spirit. The writers of the Old Testament spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. All these manifestations of the Spirit's influence, acting upon the minds of men, whether by teaching, comforting, sanctifying, guiding, or inspiring them, are only different ways of expressing a *spiritual baptism*, which we understand to mean a holy unction, a peculiar animation received from on high.

In the New Testament this divine endowment is designated by the proper name—*baptism*. John the Baptist, speaking of the special work of the Holy Ghost, which should follow the death and resurrection of Christ, says, "He that cometh after me . . . shall *baptize* you with the *Holy Ghost*, and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). We know in what this baptism by the "Holy Ghost" consisted; but it has become a question what the baptism of

“fire,” here mentioned, means. Some of the early Church fathers made it to mean hell-fire; others, like Hilary, Ambrose, and Origen, gave it a purgatorial sense, believing it to mean a purifying fire through which the faithful shall pass before entering heaven; others say, it is a figure for tribulation, penitence, etc.; but the most probable explanation is, that “fire,” in this passage, is used as a hendiadys, and is epexegetical or explanatory of the words, “with the Holy Ghost.” The sense will, therefore, be, “He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost through the outward symbol of fire,” viz., “cloven tongues like as of fire” (Acts 2: 3), fire being one of the scriptural emblems of purification. (See Isa. 4: 4; Jer. 5: 14; Mal. 3: 2; Acts 2: 3.)

Christ frequently reminded his followers of this special exhibition of real baptism, foretold by his forerunner John. “John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” On the day of Pentecost, the one hundred and twenty, with soul, body, and spirit aglow with celestial fire, were “all filled with the Holy Ghost.” What

a baptism was that! What a controlling influence did it have over the baptized! Peter, timid in Pilate's hall, becomes an immovable "rock" before the threatening Council. They all speak other tongues that are familiar to strangers present at Jerusalem. They perform miracles, and preach with new power. They were baptized with miraculous gifts and burning zeal.

This extraordinary baptism, as a preparatory endowment for promulgating the gospel, has, for the last eighteen centuries, been followed by *minor* baptisms of the same Spirit, descending upon men singly or collectively; and producing spiritual changes, similar in kind, but different in degree. Ever since Christ breathed upon the disheartened disciples assembled in the bolted chamber, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," there have been many such holy infusions, or spiritual baptisms, in lonely cottages and crowded sanctuaries, transforming sinners into saints, and ingrafting them into the true Vine of the Church; "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I. Cor. 12: 13).

The baptism upon an individual is a divine quickening of the soul, a complete change of the moral and spiritual state, resulting in regeneration of life and sanctification of the soul. He

that has not yet received this spiritual anointing, has not yet assumed the Christian life. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3: 27). "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8: 9).

CHAPTER III.

RITUAL, BAPTISM.

This is a *symbolic ceremony* of a spiritual baptism,—an adopted visible act which is understood to adumbrate an inner state of heart. It is a human act, employs material emblems, is applied to the physical body, and, in itself, can accomplish no moral or spiritual change in the recipient. It is entirely *ritual*, but symbolizes the *real*. The former is related to the latter, as shadow and substance; and, therefore, in both time and importance, must never precede but follow it, and can be of no value without its antecedent reality. A shadow must proceed from a substance, a sign must signify a thing. The real is preparatory to the ritual. The latter is not necessary to the former, but the former is necessary to the latter. The former without the latter would be genuine, but the latter without the former would be base hypocrisy.

But ritual baptism is a general rite which includes all forms of ceremonial baptism, and was often applied to material objects as well as to liv-

ing beings. The symbolizing element used in the ritual was *water*, *blood*, or *ashes*. The thing symbolized, in the most general sense, was *purification*. Water, blood, and ashes are all significant emblems of cleansing, and were employed by the Jews in their ritual ablutions. These baptisms for ceremonial cleansing sprang from the usage of the Mosaic law, and were in common use for hundreds of years before the institution of Christian baptism. Paul refers to them in Hebrews 9: 10, where he speaks of the Jewish ritual service which "stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings;" and these "divers washings," or baptisms, were all ceremonial. Some, for the cleansing of a leper (Lev. 14: 2-9), or of an unclean person (Num. 19: 17-19), and others for consecration of a Levite before entering upon the functions of his office (Num. 8: 6, 7). We also read of ablutions by the washing of Aaron and his sons before anointing them with the holy oil (Lev. 8: 6); ablutions of priests before approaching the altar of God (Ex. 30: 17-21), to which David, no doubt, referred when he said, "I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar" (Psa. 26: 6). For the expiation of an unknown murder, the elders of the nearest village washed their hands over a heifer,

beheaded in the valley, saying, “Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it” (Deut. 21: 1-9); and, perhaps, in conformity with this Jewish custom, Pilate washed his hands in water, as a declaration of his innocence of the blood of Jesus. (Matt. 27: 24.) These ceremonies signified cleansing. It was the “blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean,” which, symbolically, “sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh” (Heb. 9: 13).

In Christ’s time, the deeper significance of this inward cleansing through the blood of the atonement, as symbolized by baptism, was not understood by the Jews; and hence, John’s baptism gave rise to a dispute between John’s disciples and the Jews concerning *purifying* (John 3: 25); and when Christ said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3: 5), he would teach that, to be cleansed externally and ceremonially as a Jew, one must also be internally regenerated, and spiritually renewed by the Holy Ghost.

In the language of the prophets, cleansing with water is used as an emblem of the purification of the heart, which, in the Messianic age, is to glorify the soul within, and embrace the whole of

the theocratic nation. (Ezek. 36: 25 ff.; Zech. 13: 1.)

In the time of the Pharisees, these ceremonial baptisms became excessive through their affectation of extraordinary purity, insomuch that Christ reproved them for this hypocrisy involved in their fastidious adherence to external rites of moral purity, while the heart was utterly unclean. (Matt. 23: 25.)

Proselyte baptism was an established rite among the Jews, before and during Christ's time. This Jewish rite was probably, originally, only a purifying ceremony, and was subsequently raised to the character of an initiating and indispensable rite, co-ordinate with that of circumcision and sacrifice.

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN'S RITUAL BAPTISM.

In further preparing the way for the discussion of our subject proper, we will select, from the vast catalogue of ritual baptisms, two preparatory, religious rites, which are called *water* baptisms; because water,—not blood and ashes,—is the symbolizing element; and because they constitute the first rudiments of Christian baptism. These are John's baptism and Christ's baptism.

John was the last of the Old Testament prophets. He came in the spirit of Elijah, pointing the Jews to the coming Christ. John's titular name, "Baptist," was given him because of the prominence that was given to the ordinance of his baptism; and the qualifying name, *John's*, is used, not to designate the particular *administrator*, but the *distinctive nature* of his baptism. Peter's baptism, Paul's baptism, Philip's baptism, etc., do not represent different kinds of baptism, but one; while John's name is associated with a rite that is *sui generis*.

It is the common opinion that John the Baptist

did not introduce a *new* rite, but only gave it a new meaning. In his time, many baptisms were common among the Jews, especially the custom of baptizing proselytes, and John's baptism was, therefore, not considered by the Jews as an innovation. Proselyte baptism arose gradually out of the Jewish habit of purifying by ablution; and, for the first time, was raised to the importance of an initiatory ordinance co-ordinate with that of sacrifice and circumcision, after the temple service, and when, in consequence of imperial edicts, it became difficult to circumcise converts. John's baptism symbolized neither purification nor spiritual regeneration. It was not for the purpose of ceremonial cleansing, therefore not *Jewish*. It was not *into Christ*, therefore not *Christian*. It was transitional from the old dispensation to the new. It had not the character of an immediate, but merely of a preparatory consecration for the glorified kingdom. Hence, when Paul found, at Ephesus, certain disciples who had received only John's baptism, they were baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19: 2-5.)

John's baptism signified REPENTANCE. He came "preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Luke 3: 3). The sum of all his work of teaching, and the cardinal points of his

preaching, are briefly contained in his first startling exhortation, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” His doctrine consisted of the real baptism of repentance, not mere legal ablution or expiation, the performance of external ceremonies which the self-righteous Pharisee deemed sufficient to secure for him a participation in the kingdom of God; but a godly sorrow for sin as a preparatory condition for the remission of sin, and for the sanctifying baptism of the Holy Spirit which Christ was about to send upon the world. His cry was, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. . . . I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me . . . shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” The baptism of true repentance must precede the baptism of the Spirit.

John’s ritual baptism, therefore, was a symbol of his preaching. He preached the “baptism of repentance,” and “baptized with the baptism of repentance” (Acts 19: 4). As a visible sign to the people, it expressed a distinct acknowledgment and hearty renunciation of sin, and a real amendment of life, all of which were necessary for admission into the kingdom which John proclaimed to be at hand.

Hence, John's ministry of baptism was a mediation between the Old and New Testament theocracy,—a stepping-stone from the Judaic to the Messianic form. The fundamental difference between the ordinance instituted by Christ and that of his forerunner, was, that of the presence in the one case, and the absence in the other, of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 3:11.) Their closest approximate correlation consists in a blending of the two essential processes of initiation into Christ, namely, repentance and regeneration: and their relation to each other as antecedent and consequent, the latter being sequel to the former. Hence Christian baptism is a complement to John's baptism. What was lacking in the one is found in the other.

That John's baptism, then, was not Christian, is evident: (1.) Because it was practiced six months before Christ entered upon his public ministry, and, therefore, before the Christian Church was established. (2.) Because it was not administered in the name of the Trinity. (3.) Because it was not a rite of initiation into the Church. Those of Jerusalem, and all the people of Judea, Pharisees, and others, who were baptized by John, were not, therefore, acknowledged as professing Christians. (4.) Because it was a baptism unto

repentance, and only prepared them for the beginning of Christ's grace in the heart. (5.) Because those who had received only John's baptism were again baptized by Paul. (Acts 18:24-26; 19:1-7.) Of the multitude who were converted on the day of Pentecost, many, no doubt, had been baptized by John, and yet they were re-baptized into the Christian faith.

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST'S BAPTISM.

It is said in Mark 1: 9, Jesus “was baptized of John.”

This baptism is unique and exceptional. As an example, it stands alone, is unlike all others, and cannot be classified with any known order of baptisms any more than Christ’s office of mediatorial Messiahship can be compared with anything known in human or angelic administration.

In general character, it was not reformatory like John’s baptism, but rather initiatory like the Christian ordinance; but in special design it essentially differed from both. John, who was Christ’s kinsman by birth, the last prophet of the old dispensation, and the first herald of the new, baptized his disciples “*confessing their sins.*” But Christ was without sin, and therefore needed no baptism of *repentance* “for the remission of sins,” which was patent to John, who remonstrated against Christ’s request to be baptized by him,

saying, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”—the sinless Master to the sinful servant! Christ’s courteous answer, “Suffer it to be so now,” concedes the propriety of John’s objection, and implies that, in *this* case, the act would be an exception to every one of the many who came to be baptized by him; but that it was in fulfillment of “all righteousness,” upon which he was now about to enter publicly.

This baptism is recorded by Luke as notably distinguished from all the rest, when he says, “Now when *all the people were baptized*, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, etc.,” implying that Jesus waited until all other applicants for baptism that day had been disposed of ere he presented himself, that he might not seem to be merely one of the crowd. “Thus, as he rode into Jerusalem on an ass, ‘whereon yet never man sat’ (Luke 19: 30), so now he shall lie in a ‘sepulchre wherein was never man yet laid’” (John 19: 41), so in his baptism, too, He would be “separate from sinners.”¹

Nor was Christ’s baptism of a Christian nature as symbolic of the new birth. The most essential ideas conveyed in the Christian ordinance are not at all applicable to the person of Christ. To

1. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown’s Commentaries, *in loco*.

him it was neither a *sign*, shadowing forth inward cleansing from the defilement of sin, nor a *seal* of covenant fidelity. It was an act of righteousness performed before Christian baptism was instituted ; and could not have been a baptism in the name of the Trinity, which would have been an irrelevant and trifling act.

Christ's baptism was a ceremonial inauguration into his great Messianic career. The three crowning years of his life were prefaced by thirty years of quiet, thoughtful days of preparation; and, now, when the time had come for his public induction into his mediatorial work, he comes to his forerunner, as the only acknowledged prophet extant who was empowered to administer what should be equivalent to the holy anointing oil of the kingly and priestly office, and asks to receive from John an initiatory rite which would introduce him into his office as the Melchizedek of the new dispensation. A divine attestation, both in a visible (the Dove), and an audible (the *Bath-Kol*), form, was publicly given as to the sacred character of Jesus, and the unique nature of the ordinance.

The simultaneous occurrence of the application of water, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, made Christ's baptism both ritual and spiritual.

All in all, it was a direct and immediate consecration, indicating the commencement in the career of the Founder of the new theocracy, which began at his baptism and ended upon the cross, where he said. "It is finished."

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIAN RITUAL BAPTISM.

We now come to that kind of baptism which is to form the subject of our present discussion.

It is called "Christian," because it was instituted by Christ (Matt. 28: 19), is an ordinance of the religious organization founded by him, and signifies that saving faith in him, by the exercise of which the believer is inwardly cleansed and renewed by the Holy Ghost, and admitted to the spiritual community known as Christians. John's baptism did not make his followers Christians, but pointed them to the One who "taketh away the sins of the world." It was a preparation for the real baptism.

Its origin was, therefore, subsequent to John's time, and is to be found in the record of our Lord's life, and the writings and practices of his apostles. Properly, it began after the resurrection, and the mission of the Holy Ghost. There is no evidence that Christ himself ever baptized, though his disciples exercised that function by deputation (John 4: 1, 2); nor is there evidence that any of the

apostles received the symbol of Christian baptism, though some of the early disciples, in imitation of Christ, may have been baptized by John. (John 1: 35-40).

What was the nature of the baptism under Christ's administration at *Aenon*, is not clearly taught. (See John 3: 22, 23.) But after the resurrection, when the Church received her new and high commission, Christian baptism was authorized as a positive and perpetual institution, in the command, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28: 19). Here we have the creed as well as the formula,—"*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" And, on the day of Pentecost, when the Church received consummate endowment for her future mission, Peter enjoined his Master's orders on every one, to be baptized "*in the name of Jesus Christ*" (Acts 2: 38). The three thousand, as the first fruits of the gospel preached in the Christian Church, were baptized. From that time on, the disciples went everywhere, preaching and baptizing in the name of Jesus.

In the new dispensation of grace, true, spiritual baptism is considered a prerequisite for Christian ritual baptism. Peter said, concerning Cornelius

and his friends, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the *Holy Ghost* as well as we?” The baptism of the Spirit must precede the baptism of water; that of the soul must antedate that of the body. Otherwise the Christian ordinance would be without effect or meaning, as in the case of Simon Magus (Acts 8: 9–23), who, though he was outwardly baptized, nevertheless, was declared to be “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” His was merely speculative assent, without true, saving faith. Character is not effected by the outward symbol of water, but by the Holy Ghost; but this symbol is the appointed rite of initiation into Christ’s Church, and becomes a means of grace like that of the Lord’s Supper, prayer, and the Word of God, only after we have received the inward baptism. We must distinguish between the sign and the thing signified.

What, now, is the nature and design of Christian ritual baptism?

It is a symbolic ceremony of initiation into Christ’s visible Church; and, by divine appointment, becomes a means of grace, whereby our title to covenant blessings is solemnly confirmed.

No saving virtue is attached to the mere *ceremony*. It is no direct instrument of grace, convey-

ing regenerating influence through the functionary channels of the ordinance by some objective, supernatural power belonging to it. The tendency of ritualistic Churches is, ~~to unduly~~ exalt ecclesiastical ceremonies. The Jewish Church, in the time of Christ, had become so extremely ritualistic as to substitute rites and ceremonies for faith and practice. "The Reformation was, in its essential character, a protest against ritualism. It proclaimed salvation by a living faith, which purified the heart, in opposition to the doctrine of salvation by rites and ceremonies. . . . Ritualism is a broad, smooth, and easy road to heaven, and is always crowded. It was much easier in Paul's time to be a Jew outwardly, than to be one inwardly; and circumcision of the flesh was a slight matter when compared to the circumcision of the heart."¹

It is, however, no empty or meaningless rite, in the Zwinglian sense, as we shall now proceed to show.

Although baptism is a mere ceremonial act, it is, nevertheless, *symbolical*, pointing for its efficacy, not to the symbol, but to the thing symbolized.

A symbol (from *σύν* and *βάλλω*, to throw together,

1. Dr. C. Hodge, "Systematic Theology." Vol. III., p. 583.

i. e., by comparison) is a visible sign, or representation of something spiritual, by the figure or property of something natural. Symbols are intended to represent revealed doctrines. Thus, the temple, with its utensils and services, was the shadow, having its real substance in the New Testament Revelation. The sacred emblems in the holy eucharist set forth the body and blood of Christ as an offering for sin. Likewise in baptism, we visibly and outwardly, through the appointed symbol of water, applied according to a given formula, profess our faith in Christ as the ground of our invitation into his Church, and adoption into the favor and family of God. (Gal. 3: 26-29; Rom. 6: 3-11; I. Peter 3: 21.)

Through the act of baptism, we enter into solemn covenant with God, respecting the following:

We, thereby, covenant to renounce the devil and all his works (Eph. 5: 11; Prov. 4: 14, 15; II. Cor. 6: 14, 15; I. John 3: 8-10; John 8: 44; James 4: 7; Eph. 4: 27); the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that we will not follow nor be led by them (I. John 2: 15, 16; Rom. 12: 2; 8: 13; Gal. 5: 24); we also confess that we believe in God the Father (I. Cor.

8: 6), Almighty (Rev. 4: 8) Maker of heaven and earth (Gen. 1: 1); and in Jesus Christ (I. Cor. 8: 6), his only Son (John 3: 16), our Lord (John 13: 13), who was conceived by the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1: 18), born of the Virgin Mary (Luke 2: 4-7), suffered under Pontius Pilate (Mark 15: 15), was crucified (Mark 15: 25-28), dead (John 19: 33), and buried (John 19: 41, 42). The third day, he arose from the dead (Luke 24: 5-7). He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty (Acts 1: 9-11; Heb. 10: 12). From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead (Matt. 25: 31-33; II. Tim. 4: 1). That we believe in the Holy Ghost (Acts 2: 2-4; John 14: 16, 17, 26), the holy catholic Church (I. Cor. 12: 12, 13; Rom. 12: 4, 5; Heb. 12: 22, 23), the forgiveness of sins (I. John 2: 1, 2), the resurrection of the body (I. Cor. 15: 42-44), and life everlasting (Matt. 25: 46).

We not only avow our present union with Christ's Church, and participation of his grace; but also pledge our future obedience to keep God's holy will and commandments (John 14: 15, 24), and to walk in the same all the days of our life (Matt. 10: 22), God being our helper (John 15: 5; Phil. 4: 13).

This is called the "Baptismal Covenant," and

expresses the faith in which adult believers are baptized.

All the above items of faith, experience, and promises are signified or symbolized by baptism; and, on *our part*, the water applied according to the formula in Matthew 28:19, is an outward sign of this inward state of grace.

But, on *God's part*, it is a seal, or *pledge*, both to believing adults and their children, whereby all covenanted blessings promised to Abraham, and subsequently glorified in the dispensation of the Spirit, are repeated and confirmed; and in which He engages to confer on us all the benefits of his atonement, so long as we remain faithful to the vows made in our baptismal covenant.

The invisible God, in his stipulations with man, has often employed visible signs as pledges, or seals, of his fidelity to the contract. When he instituted the Passover, he appointed a bloody sign upon the posts and lintels of the houses of Israel as a pledge, saying, "When I see the *blood*, I will pass over you." When he assured Noah that the world should no more be destroyed by water, he set the rainbow in the sky as a guarantee of his promise. When he promised to be a God to Abraham and his posterity, he appointed circumcision as the pledge; so, when he engaged

to save men by his blood, he appointed water baptism, as both a *sign* of our allegiance to God, and a *seal* of all the blessings which he promised to those who, by faith in, and obedience to, him, will continue steadfast unto the end.

But neither the human sign, nor the divine pledge, can make any one a Christian. They are only legal forms which entitle us to the privilege of Christ's Church. They imply previous adaptation or qualification for initiation, and without them are illegal. Until a foreigner is naturalized, he is not qualified to take the oath of allegiance to a country. A civil officer is inaugurated into his office by taking the oath of fidelity; but this does not make him a governor, or a president. It only ratifies his election by giving it public recognition. It confers authority, but does not confer fitness for the office, nor qualification for its duties. So the administering of the form and vows of Christian baptism to an applicant does not make him a Christian; but it publishes a Christian profession, formally initiates him into the Church, and entitles him to all its benefits and privileges.

But, to make the external act the sole instrument, or immediate cause, of spiritual effect, by saying that the ordinance conveys grace *ex opere*

operator, is to land in the doctrine of *baptismal* regeneration. Many of the early Church fathers attributed to the water a certain kind of sanctifying influence, which, they thought, was derived from the brooding of the Spirit over the waters in the days of the creation. The “water itself was baptized by the Spirit,” they say, and, hence, sanctified by the Spirit, it has received power to sanctify from sin. They believed that water baptism was identical with the new birth. The Church of Rome has never abandoned this heresy of baptismal regeneration. She does not make it merely a sign of the thing signified, but both the sign and the thing itself. She defines baptism as the “*sacramentum regenerationis per aquam in verbo.*” It is essential to salvation, confers grace, remits sin, sanctifies the soul, and is the only appointed channel for the communication of grace to the sinner.

Mormonism teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins, and washes away all taint and guilt to date. This rite may be repeated indefinitely, and must be so often as one wanders and becomes disobedient. Also, all who gather from foreign lands, or from any region outside, must be re-baptized as soon as possible after reaching Zion. Immersion is the only valid form, because it cleanses from all sin.

The Scriptures mostly used in support of these doctrines, are the words of Christ to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3: 5).

“Born of water” cannot refer to external Christian baptism, for that ordinance was not yet instituted at the time when these words were uttered. Therefore, our Lord answered Nicodemus’ perplexity, by saying that His words must not be understood in a *literal, physical* sense, but in a *spiritual* sense. He did not mean physical birth, nor water regeneration; but the passage is analogous to the one in Matt. 3: 11, in which “fire” is used, not literally, but emblematically.¹ To be born of water and the Spirit is to receive a spiritual cleansing of the soul, similar to washing of the body by water. In Isa. 55: 1; Ezek. 36: 25; Jer. 2: 13; John 4: 10; 7: 37, 38; Rev. 21: 6; 22: 17, no one would understand by the term, “water,” the physical element, or even sacramental water.

The “washing of regeneration,” in Titus 3: 5, and the washing away of sins, in Acts 22: 16, must be explained in a similar way.

Whatever interpretation be assigned these controverted passages, that of a regenerating signifi-

1. See chapter on Real or Spiritual Baptism, p. 27.

cance would be anti-scriptural, and opposed to the analogy of faith. Regeneration always precedes, but never accompanies baptism, and it is an antecedent qualification for its legal observance. When the eunuch applied to Philip for baptism, he said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." On the day of Pentecost, "they that gladly received his word were baptized." When Peter finished his discourse to Cornelius and his friends, he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which *have received the Holy Ghost* as well as we?" Here, as in all scriptural teaching on the subject previously cited, grace is signified, but not imparted, by baptism.

Baptism, then, though not an *instrument*, is, however, a real *means of grace*, that is, one of the ordinary channels through which grace is conveyed to the believer. No virtue is due to the sacramental act, nor proceeds from the administrator of the ordinance, or his office. There is no more efficacy in the water used in baptism, than in the bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper; but by the exercise of faith on the part of the recipient, and the operation of the Holy Ghost accompanying the external act, all the benefits signified by the ordinance are applied

and conveyed to him, anewly confirming God's promises, and strengthening our faith by the blessing which follows our obedience to the command of God. "Unless the recipient of this sacrament be insincere, baptism is an act of faith, it is an act in which and by which he appropriates the offered benefits of the redemption of Christ. And, therefore, to baptism may be properly attributed all that in the Scriptures is attributed to faith." Like prayer, the Lord's Supper, and the Word of God, baptism is an appointed means of grace, and ministers to the sanctification and salvation of the believer.

Christian baptism, then, is an outward act which does not *impart* inward cleansing and renewing of the heart; but becomes a medium of *expressing* to the world all the hope of our salvation upon the terms of God's covenant, and by faith in him who instituted and blessed this holy ordinance.

This doctrine of the nature of Christian baptism is taught in the symbols of most of the Reformed and Protestant Churches.

The twenty-seventh article of the Church of England, says: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not Christians, but is also a sign of regeneration, or new

birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God."

From the latter half of this article, the charge of some sort of baptismal regeneration has been laid upon the Church of England, as well as upon the Protestant Episcopal Church, which has adopted the article in its liturgy. But this charge has not been well sustained.

The seventeenth article of the Methodist Episcopal Church is substantially the same, with an omission of the more objectionable part above referred to.

The Heidelberg Catechism says: "Is then the external baptism of water the washing away of sins? It is not. For the blood of Jesus Christ alone cleanses from all sin. Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins? God speaks thus, not without sufficient cause, not only that he may teach us, that just as the pollution of the body is purged by water, so our sins are expiated by the blood and Spirit of Christ; but, much more,

that he may assure us, by this divine symbol and pledge, that we not less truly are cleansed from our sins by inward washing, than by external and visible water."

The Westminster Confession, article twenty-eight, says: "Although it be a great sin to contemn, or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered but really exhibited and confirmed by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's will, in his appointed time. The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person." The latter part, being a peculiarity of Calvinistic doctrine, is not essential to our idea of the nature of baptism. Watson, volume II., page 647, says, "It (baptism) is both, as to infants and to adults, the sign and pledge of that inward grace which, though modified in its operations by the difference of their circumstances, has respect to, and flows from, a

covenant relation to each of the three in whose one name they are baptized—acceptance by the Father, union with Christ as the head of the mystical body, the Church, and the communion of the Holy Ghost."

Primarily and principally, then, Christian baptism is an open confession of our faith, and a federal transaction, whereby all the covenanted blessings of grace promised to Abraham, and continued and perpetuated through the redemption by Christ, are signified, sealed, and conveyed.

Secondarily it becomes a ceremonial form of *initiation* into the visible Church of Christ, in conformity to circumcision, which was the rite of induction into the Abrahamic Church (Gen. 17: 9-14), of which the Christian Church is a continuation and improvement. Spiritual renovation is the real initiation into the community of Christ's Church, by which we become partakers of his grace and salvation; but a public avowal of this inner cleansing by means of a divinely appointed symbol, is what ceremonially constitutes us members of an outward organization, known as "the visible Church of Christ." God, ever since he has had a Church on earth, has also had an adopted form of admission into it,— "a token," whereby his subjects should be recog-

nized as members of his Church on earth (such a sign was circumcision, afterward succeeded by baptism), although spiritually one might be a member of the *invisible* Church without the visible sign of initiation. (See Rom. 2: 28, 29; 4: 9-12; Phil. 3: 3.) This seems to be the proper interpretation of Gen. 17: 14. The uncircumcised were “cut off” from God’s people not *spiritually*, but *organically*.

Having now shown the difference between the real and the ceremonial initiation into the Church, it is further necessary to discriminate between the ceremonial initiation into *the* Church, and that into *a* Church. We are not baptized in the name of any human leader, nor of any particular denomination or branch of the Christian Church, but in the name of the “Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” This is the formula of induction into the catholic or general Church of Christ, and expresses the relation we sustain to it. To be baptized “in the name of Paul” (I. Cor. 1: 13), or “unto Moses” (I. Cor. 10: 2), is to be made believers in, and disciples of, Paul and of Moses; but to be baptized in the name of the Trinity, or what is equivalent, “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19: 5), is

to be inducted into the organic visible union with Christ as the representative of the Godhead.

We are not to be baptized in the name of any sectarian founder, or any ecclesiastical body of Christian believers. We become members of a Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, or United Brethren Church, by subscribing to her confession of faith and form of Church government; and her special form of initiation into Church fellowship has reference to only a *part* of the general Church of Christ, and, therefore, baptism, which has reference to *the* Church, is not a proper form for induction into *a* Church. When an infant or adult is baptized, though he be thereby ceremonially introduced into the visible Church of Christ, he is not thereby constituted a member of any particular branch of that Church. A preacher does not baptize by virtue of his Presbyterianism or Methodism, but by virtue of his office as a minister of Christ.

But on this whole subject of baptism, it is important to distinguish between spiritual baptism and ritual baptism. The ceremonial is always the non-essential part; the religious act lying at the foundation of the ritual in obedience to divine command, is necessary to salvation.



The Doctrine of Christian Baptism.

PART II.

THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIAN ADULTS.

Since Christian baptism is an outward and visible expression of an inner state of grace, none, among adults, but believers who profess faith in Christ are qualified to receive this sacrament. To knowingly administer the rite to an unregenerate person, would be a sacrilegious mockery of the gospel and its institutions, and a hypocritical subterfuge on the part of the applicant. Whatever renders one fit for communion in the visible Church, will also be a sufficient credential for assuming the baptismal vow.

This qualification implies three things:

1. *Faith in Christ*.—When the eunuch asked Philip what should hinder him from being baptized, the reply was, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest”; and generally throughout scriptural teaching, and the practice of the

true Church in all ages, believing is considered a preparatory requisite for the exercise of this rite.

2. *Some degree of knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.*—Faith in Christ would imply this, for we must know something about a truth before we can believe in it; but independent of this general knowledge, we should have some special understanding of the import and design of the scheme of salvation, especially as related to sinners who have become reconciled to God through the atonement, of all of which our profession through baptism is significant. In the early Church, candidates for baptism were required to pass through a preparatory course of instruction.

3. *A life of obedience and Christian practice.*—True faith manifests itself by works, and knowledge by practice. This evidence that we are striving to follow Christ is necessary before taking the pledge of baptism, which consists in a renunciation of the world, the devil, and all his works. We not only proclaim our faith in Christ, but attest it by this solemn consecration to God and his service forever.

As to the requisite qualification of an adult for baptism, we can be guided only by external evidence. Among the Roman Catholics, all those born within the pale of the Church are, for this

reason, members of the same, and, therefore, independent of, any spiritual change or religious profession, are entitled to the sacrament of baptism. This practice seems to be derived from the ancient theocracy in which all the descendants of Abraham, through Isaac, were members of the Commonwealth of Israel, and entitled to all its privileges and ceremonies. Even in those times and countries where the Church and the State are united into one head, all native born citizens, by virtue of their nationality, may be members of the established Church; and often to such an extent did ecclesiasticism become secularized that no man could become an apprentice in any business or profession, or secure an office in the government, unless he would first produce a certificate of baptism and confirmation. But in all true evangelical Protestant Churches, *character*, and not birthright, is a qualification for the exercise of any Church ordinance.

The Church may possibly be deceived upon the evidence of men's profession, and, perhaps, sometimes administer baptism to an unworthy applicant; but we do not claim infallibility in the matter of detecting all forms of religious hypocrisy, for Christ does not expect us to search the heart, nor does he want us to sit in judgment over

men's secret motives of sincerity. A *credible profession*, and *promise of obedience*, is all that need be expected to satisfy our judgment of a truly regenerate heart; and upon such evidence we may receive men and women into the visible Church by baptism. Whether every such a communicant is also a member of the invisible Church, is the prerogative of God to decide. The externally organized Church of Christ is compared to a net which catches both good and bad fish, and to a field of grain having tares among the wheat, which, for the sake of the good wheat, we are not to pluck out, but are to reserve this right to the Lord of the harvest.

CHAPTER II.

THE INFANT CHILDREN OF CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

We now begin to tread on contested ground, every inch of which has been critically canvassed, and elaborately discussed by Pedobaptist and Anabaptist writers during the last century. The subjects of infant baptism and mode are the most controverted points in polemic theology; and as our line of march extends through this hostile region, we do not wish to cowardly evade the foes on the battle field by taking a round-about course, but will enter into the contest in the interest of truth, even though we may be wounded in the attempt.

The Baptist position is, that there is no scriptural warrant for infant baptism; and many denounce its practice in the strongest and most uncharitable terms. Dr. Alexander Carson, the great leader on the Baptist side in this controversy, after trying to show that the divine commission to the apostles forbids the baptizing of children, says, on page 169 of his "Work on Baptism," "I am willing to hang the whole con-

troversy upon this passage;” and, on page 170, he boasts of his confidence, in a manner that is sacrilegious, by saying: “Even if I found another command enjoining the baptism of the infants of believers, I should not move an inch from my position. . . . I would gainsay an angel from heaven who should say that this commission may extend to the baptism of any but believers. . . . Here I stand entrenched, and defy the ingenuity of earth and hell to drive me from my position.” In one of the Baptist journals (*The Western Baptist Recorder*), we find such language as this: “Of all damnable heresies in the black catalogue which has befouled the name of Christianity, we consider infant baptism the most damnable. If other heresies have damned their thousands, this has damned its tens of thousands.”

What specimens of bigoted intolerance are such invectives, which, on the one hand, proclaim a dogmatic notion infallible even against a counter revelation, or an angel; and, on the other hand, would brand as damnable heretics all who do not believe and practice according to this doctrine. It would fain call down fire from heaven, or kindle a furnace seven times hotter than any ordinary anger would demand, for all who presume to question its infallibility. There have been many grand

and good men like Luther, Knox, Howe, Baxter, Wesley, Doddridge, Payson, etc., who, according to such doctrine of the crime of infant baptism, have been gross impostors who will have to answer for the souls of “tens of thousands”!

Our position is, *that infant baptism is a necessary inference from the teachings of Scripture, not by express command, but by evident implication or induction from scriptural teachings.*

We are asked again and again by Baptist writers to produce a single precept, or scriptural passage, that enjoins us to baptize children. We ask them, in turn, to bring forward a single passage in which the two-fold nature of Christ is clearly asserted, or the doctrine of the Trinity as three in personality and one in essence, is stated in so many precise and formal words. Do we not bring together the various declarations of inspired truth touching these subjects, and then by combination, inference, and induction, arrive at results which undoubtedly establish the doctrine of the dual nature of Christ, and the triunity of the Godhead? We challenge our opponents to show us a passage in the whole Scriptures that authorizes the observance of the first day of the week as Sabbath, or the right of Christian women to commune at the Lord's table, or the practice of

family worship. Yet the scriptural validity of these institutions as observed by all the Baptists (excepting one branch), is never questioned by them. They prove them to be scriptural on *the same ground* that we prove infant baptism to be scriptural, namely, by *inference* and *induction*; and our Baptist friends must either acknowledge the soundness of our principle concerning infant baptism, or give up the right of women to commune, and the first day of the week as Sabbath, and family worship, and the doctrines of the God-man, and the Trinity, as “damnable heresies.”

We need no direct command to make the commission to baptize extend to and include children of believers, for there is enough information contained in the Old and New Testament to sanction the lawfulness of child baptism, and to warrant its habitual practice in the early Church.

Section I.

THE COVENANT RELATION OF CHILDREN TO THE CHURCH.

We claim a scriptural basis for infant baptism, and offer as reasons for its practice a few plausible propositions.

Proposition I.

THERE IS PRESUMPTIVE AND INDUCTIVE EVIDENCE THAT THE INFANT CHILDREN OF BELIEVING PARENTS

ARE ENTITLED TO BAPTISM, BECAUSE OF THE COVENANT RELATION WHICH THEY SUSTAIN TO THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

The visible Church embraces all those who *profess* the true religion; but it would be useless to expect it to consist exclusively of the truly regenerate, for in all ages the congregations of professed Christians have not been entirely free from unworthy representatives. Even among the twelve, there was found a Judas. To exclude any one from membership in the visible Church, there must appear apostasy, deduced not from the exercise of private judgment concerning men's hearts, but upon sufficient evidences of outward conduct, rendering it incompatible with a Christian character; or they must be of such a nature as are forbidden membership by the Holy Scriptures.

Upon this idea of Church polity it would seem, that those who oppose the initiatory rite for admitting children to the visible Church should prove, first, their *moral unfitness* for such membership; or, second, that, though proper subjects, they are nevertheless *directly forbidden such privileges* by the Scriptures.

The *first* is fully settled by Christ, who be-

stowed unlimited salvation upon all children¹ by blessing them, and teaching his disciples this memorable doctrine, “Forbid them not: . . . for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

By “the kingdom of heaven,” in this passage of Scripture, we must understand, either the visible Church on earth, or the invisible Church in heaven. If the Church on earth is meant, the case is settled that they are fit for initiation into the Church. If the second meaning be adopted, the case is equally clear; for if they are worthy of membership in the Church above, surely they are worthy of membership in the Church below.

The expression, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven,” is in the present tense, and therefore does not necessarily imply future salvation, but has respect to their present relation to the kingdom as members of Christ’s Church; although the words may admit of a prospective application to children, because the obligation assumed in the ordinance, together with the subsequent instruction in godliness, usually is instrumental in their permanent fidelity to the true Church. (Prov. 22: 6.)

1. Matthew and Mark both use the diminutive, *παιδία* (*little children*), and not *παιδάς* (*children or youth*), in the sense of *adult offspring*. Luke 18: 15, uses *βρέφος* (*infants*), and this same word is rendered *babe*, in Luke 1: 41, 44; 2: 12, 16; Acts 7: 19. Hence the expression, “children,” has reference, not to adult descendants, but to *little ones*.

The *second* alternative, viz.: prohibitory exclusion from the Church, can find no support anywhere, and must, therefore, be abandoned. The presumption in the first proposition is in our favor. The *onus probandi* rests with our opposers; and our conclusion must stand until disproved by counter evidence. No opposer of infant baptism has ever attempted to show a prohibitory precept. On the contrary, we now propose to show that in the Scriptures children really are recognized by suitable ordinances as members of Christ's Church.

1. *The Christian Church of the New Testament, and the Jewish Church of the Old Testament, are one and the same.*

Scripture speaks not of several Churches, but of *one*—"the Church of the living God." It was founded on the ancient covenant made with Abraham by God, when he promised that his posterity should be as the stars of heaven in multitude; that he would be a God to him and his descendants, and that in his *seed* all the nations of the earth should be blessed. By "seed," was not meant Abraham's descendants collectively, but one person, namely, Christ. So Paul teaches in Gal. 3: 16, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds,

as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed,
which is Christ."

This covenant was called by God, an "*everlasting covenant*" (Gen. 17: 7), of which he appointed circumcision as the sign and seal. Its promise and blessing was the redemption of the human race through Christ—the gospel which Paul says was preached before unto Abraham, and was, therefore, the *protevangelium*, or first gospel to our fallen parents. It was a repetition of the promise made long before to Adam immediately after the fall, and reiterated through prophecy until the time of its fulfillment.

Now the covenant made with Abraham still remains operative in the Christian Church in all its essential features. It is the same covenant of grace, promising salvation upon the same terms, and embracing the same fold. The blessing promised to Abraham has come upon us, says Paul (Gal. 3: 14); and in his address to Agrippa, says, "I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers." If the Church under the old and new dispensation is not identical, why then should Paul say to the Churches of Galatia, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal. 3: 7). "If ye be Christ's,

then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3: 29). Hence the New Testament Christians are declared to be Abraham's children, and heirs of the same blessing.

Ecclesiastical identity is much like political identity. If, under different generations and administrations during successive periods of time, there has existed the same governing power, and the same constitution in the main, it is the same state. Under both old and new dispensations of grace, there have been the same King, the same law, the same gospel, the same Mediator, and the same conditions of salvation. The Pentecostal Church, to which "The Lord added . . . daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2: 47), was a continuation of the same body which is called, "The church in the wilderness" (Acts 7: 38). Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill. "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition" (Eph. 2: 14). The Old and New Testament is the history and doctrine of *one* Church, *one* leader, *one* faith. The Jehovah, or "angel of the Lord," who delivered Israel out of Egypt, wrought signs and wonders for the deliverance of his people, and gave them the law from Sinai, was the same Messiah that was born in Bethlehem, and cruci-

fied upon Calvary. Abraham, David, and the prophets were saved by the same faith in the same atonement by which you and I to-day are saved; they, by looking *forward*, we, by looking *backward*, to Calvary. Christ said, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and *he saw it*, and was glad.” He saw it by *faith* afar off.

The Bereans were commended, because they daily searched the Old Testament Scriptures to see if Paul’s teaching harmonized with that standard. (Acts 17:11.) In Romans 11, Paul shows that the Gentile Christians were grafted in and partook of the root and fatness of the old olive tree, thus forming not two, but one tree.

Thus we find that the “Church of the living God,” in all ages, was under the same covenant of grace, though under different dispensations, and is, therefore, one and the same, “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

2. *Infant children of believing parents were members of the ancient Jewish Church, by virtue of the Abrahamic covenant.*

It is a well understood fact that, according to God’s covenant with Abraham, every infant became a member of the theocracy by being circumcised on the eighth day after birth. This

was also the ceremonial ordinance of induction into the Church.

It has been very strenuously argued that circumcision was no more than a civil badge, and that it signified only temporal citizenship in the Jewish nation. But there is abundant evidence that it was also a religious act, and signified ecclesiastical union. Among the Jews, every male child, on the day of its circumcision, was called *Chatan*, because it was then considered as espoused to God, and united to his people.

So identical were the Church and State under the old economy, that admission to the one was also admission to the other, and exclusion from the one was also exclusion from the other. In the ancient theocracy, the high priest, priests, and Levites were civil as well as religious officers; and the sacrifices and festivals were both national and religious services. The engagement contained in the covenant was, that Jehovah would bless Abraham, and that he should be the father of many nations, which refers to his *spiritual* seed as well as to his *natural* descendants; and that they should possess Canaan, which included also their heavenly inheritance. (Heb. 11:13, 15.) Circumcision, therefore, admitted infants to Church membership, as well as to national citizenship.

That circumcision was not exclusively national, is evident from the fact that it was instituted *long before* the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, at which time the people were, for the first time, inaugurated as a nation; and because Abraham “received the sign of circumcision, a *seal of the righteousness of the faith* which he had yet being uncircumcised” (Rom. 4: 9–12); and, lastly, because it signified a spiritual state of the heart. Paul says, “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and *circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter*” (Rom. 2: 28, 29). “We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit” (Phil. 3: 3). Such a kind of circumcision seems to find a substitute and representative in the modern ordinance of Christian baptism. (Col. 2: 11, 12.) All this does not look as though circumcision were only a political badge, but rather intimates that the chief design was to symbolize the promised redemption of the world through the seed of Abraham. Children, then, were included in the ancient covenant of grace, which made them members of the Church.

Again, they were expressly embraced in the divine covenant with Moses, who said: “Ye stand

this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your *little ones*, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day" (Deut. 29: 10-12).

It is evident that in the Old Testament Church, parents who consecrated themselves to the Lord by solemn vows, usually brought their children with them; and as natural sponsors, or the lawful representatives of their children, contracted obligations for them by a sort of *alter ego*, which secured for them the benefits of the covenant, unless the children themselves voluntarily renounced the engagement assumed in the adopted ordinance of circumcision.

3. We have now reached the important point at issue. From these two premises we are prepared to draw our conclusion, *that if the Churches under the old and new dispensations are one and the same, and, that if the infant children of the Jewish commonwealth were recognized members of God's visible Church through the adopted ordinance of circumcision, then our children, also, are members of*

the Church of to-day, and entitled to the modern ordinance of baptism, UNLESS the Scriptures of the New Testament teach anything to the contrary.

Unless there can be somewhere found a positive precept which excludes children from Church membership, or which revokes the privilege which they always enjoyed from the beginning of the ancient Church, the conclusion is inevitable that they have a right to them *now*. By a positive precept, infant membership became a law of the Church, and it requires a positive precept to annul it. *Where is the record of such nullification?* The Church was organized in Abraham's time. It provided for the admission to membership of both believing adults and their little ones. Children, then, being put into the Church by positive law of God, and remaining there for successive ages without interruption, can be put out only by positive law of God.

True, we often hear it said that when Christ came, the whole Jewish law and ceremony passed away: but we must distinguish between the Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic covenant made at Sinai. The giving or abrogating of the latter could not effect or annul the former; for Paul says, "That the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four

hundred and thirty years after, *cannot disannul*, that it should make the promise of none effect" (Gal. 3: 17); for the covenant promise to Abraham was declared to be an "*everlasting covenant*," having reference to the gospel, and possessing, in its very nature, the element of permanency, and therefore it could not be abolished by the transitory ritual of Moses. The gospel dispensation is a continuation and completion of the great design of the Abrahamic covenant; and neither Christ nor his apostles ever repealed it.

Instead of the children's relation to the Church being changed, Paul assumes it as a matter of course, that it continues as before, when he says, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (I. Cor. 7: 14). This is a strong proof-text for infant membership, and has caused the anti-Pedobaptist not a little trouble. It would sometimes happen, in Paul's day, that the husband would be converted from paganism to Christianity, while the wife remained a heathen; or the wife be converted while the husband continued an idolater. The question then was, will the marriage union, in such a case, be Christian, and what relation would their children sustain

to the Church? The apostle, in proving to the Corinthians that the marriage union is Christian, though one of the parties was no believer, reminds them what would be a natural consequence if this were not so,—a consequence which they would not be willing to accept as true,—“else were your children *unclean*,” argues Paul, “but now,” as you all admit, “are they *holy*,” or clean.

It is well known to a student of oriental language and literature, that the Jews called all who belonged to the Church of the covenant, by the term “holy,” or “clean,” and the Gentiles, or those outside its pale, “unclean.” The appellative, *āγιος* (*agios*), is not bestowed, in the New Testament, on any person not a member of the Church of Christ. See Acts 26: 10, where Paul says, “Many [*ἀγίων, agion*] of the *holy persons* [i. e. saints] did I shut up in prison”; and in Romans 15: 25, “I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto [*ἀγίους, agiois*] *the saints*.” Paul writes on various occasions, thus: “Who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, to be called to the *holy persons*;” “To the *holy persons* at Ephesus”; “To the *holy persons* at Colosse”; “To all the *holy persons* in Christ Jesus at Philippi,” etc. To prove that this interpretation of the terms, “clean” and “unclean,” is correct, consult Gen. 7: 2; 8: 20; Ex. 28: 38; Lev.

10:16; 27:30; Num. 18:17, where the term, “unclean,” is used in reference to things unfit for sacrifices to God, and “holy” for things fit to be offered. This sense of these words was familiar to the apostles.

Paul’s argument, then, is, If one believing parent does not sanctify the marriage, then their infant offspring would be aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, but now are they admitted to be partakers of the covenant, and within the pale of the Church.

To render this passage in the epistle to the Corinthians, as Drs. Gill, Carson, and other Baptists do, “Else were your children *illegitimate*, but now are they legitimate,” would not only do violence to the language, but would be as absurd as to say, “Else were your children *cripples*, but now are they sound.”

This passage, properly interpreted, is good authority in support of the continuation of infant Church membership in modern times; and instead of finding a *prohibitory precept* anywhere in the New Testament, we have here a *recognition* and *republication* of the old Abrahamic covenant, which entitles children to Church membership now as well as then.

But the Church and the subjects of its mem-

bership being the same under both dispensations, the *initiatory ordinance* has, however, been changed from that of *circumcision* to that of *baptism*, in perfect harmony with what we might expect under a fuller development of the gospel. It is a settled fact, that believing adults and their infants entered the visible Church by the same door, the same ordinance. Circumcision was, at first, the initiatory rite. Baptism is now that rite. The former was a *preparatory* and *temporary* affair, not adapted to the milder, more enlarged, and universal application of the gospel. Under the old economy, many of her rituals were grievous, but now Christ says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." The severe is changed to the lenient. Under the Jewish polity, circumcision was administered only to males, although females were admitted to Church membership without the carnal sign or seal of the covenant, being represented by the males; but under the broader dispensation of grace, we have, in baptism, a form of the covenant sign, which is not only milder, but equally applicable to male and female. Such a change, then, might reasonably be expected under an improved form of God's kingdom. The Jewish Church was in a state of minority or non-

age. (Gal. 4.) It was the Church in fact, but not in maturity.

One thing is incontrovertibly settled, viz.: circumcision has passed away, and baptism has come in its place. Do not both the past and the present ordinance answer the same purpose? Do they not both signify the same thing, and are they not essentially seals of the same covenant? Circumcision was the ceremonial door of entrance into the visible Church. So is baptism now. Circumcision was the *sign*¹ of a gracious covenant. So is baptism now. Circumcision signified the "righteousness of faith." So does baptism now. Both, then, have the same import, the same purpose, in the main. As Paul says, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism" (Col. 2: 11, 12). The righteousness of faith was the same in the patriarch and in the apostle. Seals have changed, but the righteousness of that saving faith in the one great atonement has not changed, and cannot change until the end of time. If baptism has not taken

1. A sign differs from the *thing* signified. See Rom. 4: 11: "He (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.

the place of circumcision, we have now no seal of the covenant, no initiatory sacrament for adults. But if baptism now takes the place of circumcision in the Jewish Church, it must also be applied to the same subjects, namely, believers, and their infant children, *unless* we have a new command respecting subjects. But such a command nowhere exists.

Now, what was the force of the commission given to the apostles, “Go disciple all nations, baptizing them,” etc.? The command does not specify any class; but it must be remembered that the baptizing of adults and children was no new thing when this commission was first given. As circumcision gradually died out, the custom of baptizing heathen converts began to prevail,¹ insomuch that no one was surprised, or called it an innovation, when John the Baptist adopted the practice of baptizing his followers. Dr. Lightfoot says that proselyte baptism was a baptism of *families*, and declares, “It was as well known before the gospel began that men, women, and children were baptized, as that the sun is up.”

1. Maimonides, the great luminary of Judaism, said, “In all ages, when a heathen was willing to enter into the covenant of Israel, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon himself the yoke of the law, he must be first circumcised, and secondly, baptized, and thirdly, bring a sacrifice; or, if the party were a woman, she must first be baptized, and secondly, bring a sacrifice.” The Talmud, and many Jewish writers, speak distinctly on proselyte baptism.

Jesus before his ascension, ratified baptism as the initiatory rite into his Church. He did not say whether the subjects should be adults or infants, or both. That was too self-evident. Whom must the disciples have understood Christ to mean, when he said, "Baptizing *them*"? They knew that children were included in the covenant ceremony from the days of Abraham until the Savior gave this great commission to preach and to baptize; that he did not intimate any purpose to *exclude children*, but, on the other hand, not long before, blessed them; that he taught adults that unless they became as little children, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven; pronounced them fit subjects for the Church, and charged us, "Forbid them not." If the command had been, "Go preach the gospel which was before preached to Abraham, *circumcising them*," there could have been no possibility of denying that infants were included. But now, in this commission, "baptizing" is substituted for "circumcising." How then can an express change of sign make any change in the subjects signified, unless it be expressly so stated?

"Suppose," says Dr. Edwin Hall, "a man orders his servants to mark the sheep of his flock with a bloody sign, and is careful to add, 'See that

you apply this sign to all the lambs also.' Afterwards, he sees fit to dispense with the bloody sign made with a knife in the flesh, and ordains that his servants mark his sheep with paint; but he says nothing about the lambs. Will those servants, because the marking is a 'positive institution,' argue that the lambs are no longer to be marked? As they buy more sheep with lambs, will they mark the sheep, but say they have no warrant for marking the lambs? The contrary. And so, from the very circumstances of the case, the disciples of Christ, understanding the design and import of baptism, and having been previously accustomed to extend another sign of the same import and use to children, would naturally interpret the command to baptize, as implying the baptism of infants."

Our proposition is now established. If the Church of the Old and the New Testament is one and the same, built upon the same Abrahamic covenant; if infants were included in the covenant, and recognized as members of the Church upon the stipulated sign of circumcision; if now the sign, or rite of initiation, has been changed from circumcision to baptism, while the same covenant, embracing the same subjects and signifying the same thing, still remains unchanged,

the conclusion is inevitable that the children of professed believers are now Church members, and entitled to the ordinance of baptism. It is self-evident, therefore, that when Christ commanded the apostles to baptize the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that they should act on the principle to which they had been accustomed, according to the law which made no distinction between adults and their children. There is almost as much authority for excluding believers as for excluding children.

Section II

INFANT BAPTISM IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

Proposition II.

THERE IS PRESUMPTIVE AND INDUCTIVE EVIDENCE THAT THE INFANTS OF PROFESSED CHRISTIANS WERE BAPTIZED IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

In the first proposition, we established the fact that the infants of believers had the same right to baptism that their parents had enjoyed, and that this right has never been changed or revoked by Christ or any of his apostles. What then could be more natural than that when the apostles baptized a head of a family, they should also baptize his infant children? At least, it is impossible to prove that they never did so. Scrip-

ture makes it evident that children are fit subjects for baptism. The question now is, Is it also evident that children were baptized in the Apostolic Church?

We claim that it is for the following reasons:

1. There is not a single instance in the New Testament, if we except Christ, of a person who had grown up from childhood as a member of a Christian family, that was baptized in adult years.

Since it has been customary since the days of Abraham to receive members into the visible Church through an established ordinance, the inference is that such New Testament Christians were initiated by being circumcised or baptized *in infancy*. Being “made under the law” (Gal. 4: 4), Christ was circumcised on the eighth day, and also baptized in adult age. Why did he receive both ordinances which, we claim, were similar in design as initiatory rites? Let it be remembered that in Christ’s days upon earth both initiatory ordinances were in force, but in a transitional state, from circumcision to baptism. At his birth, circumcision was in common practice, but now baptism sprang up along side of it; and to sanction this latter as a proper rite in lieu of circumcision, he, thirty years afterward, submitted to baptism as fulfilling all righteousness.

Although different in *nature* from either Jewish circumcision or Christian baptism, it was, nevertheless, similar in design to both; and Christ's observance of both initiatory ordinances left it optional with men to choose which one of the two they wished to practice.

Christ's subsequent *command* to baptize his disciples, however, had the effect of changing the rite from circumcision to baptism. Soon after his ascension, much discussion arose as to whether circumcision should continue to be observed. A large portion of the converts to Christianity had come from among the Israelites. Some of them insisted that every Gentile convert should be circumcised before he should be admitted to entire fellowship. To settle these differences, a council was called at Jerusalem, where "There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them (*i. e.*, Gentiles), and to command them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15: 5). The final decision of this council was publicly rendered by James, the Lord's brother, who, no doubt, was president of this conference, as follows: "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God" (Acts 15: 19). All acquiesced, and so there

went forth a proclamation of emancipation from circumcision, which was destined to become the chart of liberty to the Church for all ages, and in all the world. (Cf. Col. 3: 11.) However, as a prudential conciliation, Paul circumcised Timothy after he had been baptized, no doubt, because his mother was a Jewess and his father was a Greek; but when he was asked to circumcise Titus, he refused, all this indicating that there existed a tendency to change from the Jewish to the Christian ordinance. It was not until some time after Christ's resurrection that circumcision was entirely abandoned, and baptism took its place. During this transitional period, however, one or the other of these rites was considered essential to organic Church membership.

The conclusion derived from all these facts is, that if adult Christians of the New Testament were not baptized in mature years, they must have been baptized in infancy. If not baptized, then they were circumcised, which was equivalent to baptism.

2. The New Testament records several instances of *family* baptisms.

In Acts 16: 15, it is said that Lydia "was baptized, and her *household*." In I. Cor. 1: 16, Paul says, "And I baptized also the *household* of Ste-

phanas." Of the jailer at Philippi, Acts 16: 33, it is said "he and *all his*" were baptized. There can be no doubt that these "households" included infants and minor children. At least, the Syriac, one of the oldest and best of all versions, made in the first century, says of Lydia, "And she was baptized, *with her children.*"

The baptism of households, though few upon inspired record, is mentioned in a way that indicates its being no *extraordinary* occurrence, but a thing generally practiced, of course. There is not the least recorded symptom of opposition, or demurring against such family baptisms, simply because the induction of parents with their children was an ancient practice, well understood, and never revoked. Hence, the apostles, instead of specifying the subjects in three words, by saying, "We baptize *men, women, and children,*" tell us in one word (the import and application of which was well understood by both Jew and Gentile) who were the subjects of their baptism, viz., "households," which expression is equivalent to adults and their children.

The scriptural use of *oikos* (*oikos*), "household," is distinguished from *oikia* (*oikia*), which not only includes the *oikos*, but extends to its appurtenances, servants, etc. The first is masculine, the

second feminine, and cannot be used interchangeably. The former is used in sense of *family*, of which children are the primary objects, the latter, according to Aristotle, is used to “comprise those who are servants and those who are free.” But without depending on the critical and discriminating import of the word *oikos* and *oikia*, common sense will suggest that if the word *oikos*, so often used in Scripture, does not always *include*, it does not invariably *exclude*, little children. Who would say that none of the *oikoi*, “households,” to which the apostles went, breaking bread (Acts 2:46), and in which they taught (Acts 5:42), contained infants and children? To place the question beyond a doubt, Paul says that a bishop is “One that ruleth well his own [*oikou*] house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (I. Tim. 3:4). Why then should it seem a thing incredible that the “household,” in Acts 16:15, and I. Cor. 1:16, also included little ones? If children were included, they were also baptized, unless a law existed which forbade them this privilege.

To justify infant baptism, it should be deemed enough to find an ancient law of God sanctioning such an ordinance, even though not a single example of infant baptism could be found. But we have both *precept* and *example*.

Section III.

TESTIMONY OF CHURCH FATHERS.

Proposition III.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS CORROBORATES THESE EVIDENCES THAT CHILDREN WERE BAPTIZED IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

1. *Justin Martyr*, about forty years after the death of St. John, A. D. 140, wrote his *Prima Apologia*, in which he says, "Many persons of both sexes, some sixty and some seventy years old, were made disciples to Christ *from childhood*." They must, therefore, have been baptized during the lifetime of some of the apostles; for Jude, Thomas, and Luke died about A. D. 74, and John, A. D. 100; and hence, at the time of these child baptisms, they (*i. e.*, apostles) were still living witnesses. In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, he tells us that they received baptism in place of circumcision, "We are circumcised by baptism with Christ's circumcision." If infant baptism is an heretical, human innovation, it was introduced twenty or thirty years before the death of St. John; yea, about twenty years before he wrote the book of Revelation, and his three epistles. If this practice had been an odious innovation, why did he not oppose or denounce it as he did

the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes? His silence in the epistles and Revelation sanctions its observance. We have pedobaptism in the days of the apostles without opposition.

2. *Irenæus*, born three years before the death of St. John, lived about thirty or forty years after the apostles. He says, "The Church learned from the apostles to baptize children."

3. *Tertullian*, born about A. D. 145, in his treatise, *De Baptismo*, opposes infant baptism, not because it was unauthorized by Scripture, but because he considered it too important an ordinance for uninstructed children, since its blessing once forfeited could never be retrieved nor restored. He had imbibed the superstitious doctrine of baptismal regeneration, that it actually washed away all past sins; and that sins committed after baptism were, therefore, peculiarly dangerous, and that the atonement of Christ availed only for the pardon of sins committed before baptism, that post-baptismal sins are unpardonable, or must be atoned for by the sinner himself. Hence he advised that not only infants, but young men and women, and even young widows and widowers should delay baptism until they should be less exposed to temptation; and, as a result of his teaching, for one hundred years many Christians

postponed their baptism until the close of life. Constantine followed this example.

Tertullian's opposition to infant baptism proves *its existence in the early Church*. He does not attempt to show, as many of our Anabaptists do, that infant baptism is an innovation, or unlawful, or that it was not practiced in the Apostolic Church, all of which would have been weighty arguments in his age, but he opposes it for reasons which both Baptists and Pedobaptists regard as futile and erroneous. It is enough to our purpose to have this testimony, that infants were baptized in Tertullian's time, and that his predecessor, Iranaeus, says that *this practice they "learned from the apostles."*

4. *Origen*, born A. D. 185, the most learned of the fathers, was baptized in infancy. In his *Commentary on Romans* (Lib. V., cap. 9), he says, "The Church received a tradition or injunction *from the apostles to give baptism even to infants.*"

5. *Ambrose* says, "The baptism of infants had been the practice of the apostles and of the Church till now."

6. *Cyprian*, and his council of sixty-six bishops, held at Carthage about two hundred years after Christ, in answer to a question proposed by Fidus, whether it would not be better to delay

the baptism of infants till the eighth day after their birth, answered thus: "So far as pertains to the case of infants whom you think ought not to be baptized within the second or third day from their birth, and that the ancient law of circumcision should be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after birth, it seems to all in council far otherwise. On the contrary, it was our unanimous decision, that the grace and mercy of God should not be denied to any as soon as born." This decision of an ancient general Church council established the fact that, two hundred years after Christ, the practice of infant baptism was universal, no one disputing its validity. Fidus only wished to postpone it until the child was eight days old.

7. *Augustine* says, "The custom of our mother Church in baptizing infants must not be disregarded, nor accounted needless, nor believed to be anything else than an ordinance delivered to us *from the apostles*," and declares that "it was not instituted by any council, but was *always* in use." This testimony alone should be conclusive.

8. *Pelagius*, in his celebrated controversy with *Augustine* on original sin, was accused of denying the right of infant baptism, whereupon he exclaimed, "Men slander me as if I denied the

sacrament of baptism to infants. I never heard of any one, even the most impious heretic, who asserted that infants are not to be baptized."

Many more testimonies could be produced from the patristic ranks did we deem it necessary to multiply proof further. The witnesses to infant baptism are as numerous as those to the resurrection of Christ. We appeal to the testimony of the Church fathers, not on account of the soundness of their theology; for all through their writings comes up their notion that baptism was for the remission of sins—a kind of saving, instead of symbolic, ordinance; but because they are witnesses to an *historical fact*, that infant baptism was everywhere practiced for hundreds of years after Christ, without any denial of its appointment by God to be continued forever during the history of the visible Church.

What now is the conclusion from the premises discussed in this chapter? It is an incontrovertible fact that infant baptism existed in the days of the Church fathers. Whence did they get it? Irenæus, Origen, and Augustine concur in answering, "From the apostles." Whence did the apostles get it? From Christ, and the established custom of "household" baptisms in their day. Whence did the "household" baptisms

come? From the ancient days of Abraham, when family circumcisions served the place of family baptisms. From whom did Abraham get his authority? From Jehovah.

Here we have reached the highest authority for infant baptism. We have reached a double authority. The practice of infant baptism is based, first and chiefly, on Christ's command to baptize the "nations," irrespective of age or capacity; and secondly, in the continuation of an ancient covenant made by God with Abraham, which recognized our little ones as part of God's spiritual kingdom, and enjoins us to consecrate them to the Lord and his service forever; and until some one can prove that children are unfit subjects for this ordinance, or that it has been repealed, do we claim the right of its observance at the present day.

CHAPTER III.

SOME OBJECTIONS TO INFANT BAPTISM CONSIDERED.

1. *Baptism should not be administered to an unconscious, especially unregenerate, person.*

The objector regards the application of baptism to infants as a useless expedient, if not a sinful mockery of a divine institution; "For," he says, "an ordinance which signifies inward cleansing is applied, not only to a subject that is *now unconverted*, but that may *never* be converted."

So far as the bare *act* is concerned, there can be no virtue in it, either to an adult or an infant. It is no saving device, no regenerating instrument, but a symbolic act; and as such, is a seal of covenant relation appointed by God as a perpetual token of his great promise. If we cannot understand the reason for its appointment, we should be satisfied to know that God ordained it, no doubt, for some wise purpose.

But unconscious, unregenerate infants were also circumcised. The objection against this would be the same as that against infant baptism, viz.: of what benefit to the unconscious child? Paul,

it seems, anticipated this objection when he asked (Rom. 3: 1), “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?” and gives the true answer, “Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them *were committed the oracles of God.*” Whatever minor points were indicated by this ordinance, the chief one was that Abraham’s posterity were heirs of the promise, and circumcision was its sign, as the rainbow was a sign of God’s promise to Noah. “For what if some did not believe? shall their *unbelief* [Revised Version, “want of faith,”] make the faith of God without effect? [Revised Version, “of none effect the faithfulness of God”?] God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3: 3, 4). Circumcision, like baptism, was not only a seal of the Abrahamic covenant, but signified inward cleansing “in the heart, and in the spirit.” But what if the rite be administered to children, says Paul, who “did not believe?” “Shall their unbelief [*i. e.*, unregenerate state,] make the faith [*covenant*] of God without effect?” Shall this nullify the ordinance that it should not be applied to infants?

Let no one, in derision, call infant baptism, “*baby sprinkling,*” or “*base mockery.*” No doubt, in the Jewish nation, there were mockers who

were severely rebuked for ridiculing infant circumcision; even Moses might have lost his life for not paying proper respect to that divine ordinance. (See Ex. 4:24-27.) All fault finding with a divine appointment is, to say the least, irreverent.

But will this act of consecration be of no benefit to the child? Will the obligation which the parent assumes to "train up the child in the fear and admonition of the Lord," and the earnest prayers that the benefits of the covenant may be bestowed upon the child, be of no avail in its religious education? Was it no benefit to Samuel that his pious mother "lent" him to the Lord from his early childhood? These solemn obligations, faithfully kept, have been blessed of God to the conversion of many who otherwise might have been lost to the Church. From published official returns, it has been observed, that two thirds of all that are received into Pedobaptist Churches on profession of faith have been baptized in infancy. This shows something of the influence of baptismal vows upon those who are the subjects of paternal training.

2. "*Infant baptism deprives the subject of the rights of private judgment, and therefore is contrary to the word of God.*" [Preface to Woolsey's "History of Baptism."]

This objection is answered by Ridgley, in his "Divinity," volume IV., p. 187, where he says: "Consent is not necessary; for infants receive inheritances. This by force of municipal laws. But are not the laws of God of equal force? 'Baptism (it is said) implies obligations, which can be founded only in consent.' Then it will follow that infants are not bound by human laws, for they have not assented to the social compact. They are (moreover) under no obligations to obey their parents, guardians, or masters, because they either did not choose them, or were incompetent to make such choice. Nay, further, they are not bound by the laws of God himself, because they have not consented to his authority; and if they never consent, they will always be equally free from all obligations and all sin. Such are the consequences of the above obligation."

3. *Faith is mentioned in Scripture as necessary to baptism, but since infants cannot believe, therefore they should not be baptized.*

All passages making faith a qualification for baptism, have reference to adults, otherwise the same reason for excluding infants from baptism would also exclude them from heaven. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Infants cannot believe, therefore infants are damned. It is also

said in sacred writ, "If any would not work, neither should he eat." Infants cannot work, therefore infants must not eat. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." All conclusions founded on such reasoning are erroneous.

But the element of faith is not ignored as important even in pedobaptism. The child is not baptized upon a profession of *its* faith, but upon that of its *parent*, or sponsor. Such vicarious faith on the part of parent has often been of great benefit to the child. It restored Jairus' dead daughter to life, and healed the afflicted child of the Syrophœnician woman; and this while they were as unconscious of the act of the parent as the *slumbering* child is when the believing mother offers it to God in holy baptism. If the covenant with Noah, and *his faith*, availed to the saving of his household from the flood, why may we not believe that, in like manner, God's covenant with Christian parents, and their faith will avail to the saving of their children, if they continue, by well-doing, to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless?

4. *If infants ought to be baptized, they ought also to be admitted to the Lord's Supper.*

Not at all, until they have knowledge to "discern the Lord's body." We must distinguish

between the design of these two ordinances. Baptism is a *formal* reception of God's covenant; while the eucharist is a grateful *recognition and remembrance* of the atonement made by Christ in our behalf, and requires of its participants a theoretical knowledge of God's method of salvation. The absence of such knowledge on the part of the infant, disqualifies it to engage in its observance.

As circumcision has been succeeded by baptism, so the passover has been succeeded by the Lord's Supper. Circumcised infants were not admitted to the passover until they could understand its significance, although Horn, in his "Introduction to the Holy Scriptures," informs us that the Jews were accustomed to "clear the tables, that the children might *inquire* and be *instructed* in the nature of the feast." Christ, though circumcised in infancy, did not attend the passover until twelve years of age, "after the custom of the feast" (Luke 2: 42), which was, according to eminent commentators, the earliest age at which children might be admitted to the feast. (See Calvin, Patrick, Poole, Rosenmüller, Kühnöl, Bloomfield, and Doddridge.) Stackhouse ("History of the Holy Bible," b. 8., c. 1.) says, "Till a child was twelve years old, he was not obliged to go to Jerusalem at the time of the passover."

Twelve years old. This was the transition age from childhood to manhood, when it became independent of parental support, and was supposed to assume the responsibilities of life. Commenting on this age of a Jewish boy, Dr. F. W. Farrar says: "It was the age at which, according to Jewish legend, Moses had left the house of Pharaoh's daughter; and Samuel had heard the voice which summoned him to the prophetic office; and Solomon had given the judgment which first revealed his possession of wisdom; and Josiah had first dreamed of his great reform. At this age, a boy of whatever rank was obliged, by the injunction of the rabbis and the custom of his nation, to learn a trade for his own support. At this age, he was so far emancipated from parental authority that his parents could no longer sell him as a slave. At this age, he became a *ben hattorah*, or 'son of the law.' Up to this age, he was called *katou*, or 'little;' henceforth he was *gadol*, or 'grown up,' and was treated more as a man; henceforth, too, he began to wear the *tephilin*, or 'phylacteries,' and was presented by his father in the synagogue on a Sabbath, which was called from this circumstance, the *shabbath tephilin*. Nay, more, according to one Rabbinical treatise, the *Sepher Gilgulim*, up to this age a boy

only possessed the *nephesh*, or animal life; but henceforth he began to acquire the *ruach*, or spirit, which, if his life were virtuous, would develop, at the age of twenty, into the *nishema*, or reasonable soul.

This point, too,—the completion of the twelfth year,—formed a decisive epoch in the Jewish boy's education. According to Juda Ben Tema, at *five* he was to study the Scriptures (*Mikra*); at ten, the *Mishna*; at thirteen, the *Talmud*; at eighteen he was to marry; at twenty, to acquire riches; at thirty, strength; at forty, prudence; and so on to the end. Nor must we forget, in considering this narrative, that the Hebrew race, and, indeed, Orientals generally, develop with a precocity unknown among ourselves, and that boys of this age (as we learn from Josephus) could and did fight in battle, and that, to the great detriment of the age, it is to this day regarded as a marriageable age among the Jews of Palestine and Asia Minor" (Life of Christ, p. 31).

The time, however, at which a child is capable of discerning the body of the Lord does not depend so much upon a fixed number of years, but upon mental and religious developments. But no such age and qualification, on the part of the child, are necessary to baptism.

We must also distinguish between *infant* and *adult* membership. Our little ones are citizens of the United States as truly as their parents by virtue of inherited birthright, but while in their minority they are not entitled to the privileges of the ballot-box because of a want of prescribed qualification. Likewise children are members of the *Church* by virtue of the atonement, and entitled to the benefits of its initiatory ordinance, but not until *converted* and *instructed* can they participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. "The apostles baptized households, but never admitted households as such to the supper" (A. A. Hodge, "Outlines of Systematic Theology," p. 499). Therefore, in the case of the child, a qualification for baptism is not necessarily a qualification for the sacred communion.

5. *Christ was not baptized in infancy, and we should, like him, wait until adult years.*

We have before observed that Christ was circumcised in infancy, and that this was the Jewish rite of induction into the Church which took the place of our infant baptism in modern times. His baptism by John at thirty years of age, at the formal commencement of his Messianic career, was a public recognition of the new rite of initiation, just as his observance of the first day of the

week as Sabbath, sanctioned its future observance in place of the seventh day. In Christ's time, when the Church was changing from the Jewish to the Christian type, he often observed the ordinances peculiar to both. It was not until after his resurrection, and before his ascension, that he commanded to *baptize* all nations, and that circumcision, as a rite, ceased. Christ's example, therefore, in respect to his circumcision on the eighth day after birth, and baptism at thirty years of age, was not intended to be imitated by any of his followers. The first rite, which he received in infancy, namely, circumcision, was essentially and properly our pedobaptism, and the second rite, in adult years, was really no baptism in the Christian sense. (See pp. 42-44.)

6. *Persons baptized in infancy may, after their conversion in adult years, desire to be re-baptized.*

Such a possibility of dissatisfaction with first baptism, cannot set aside the weight of testimony in favor of infant baptism. Some are not satisfied with the first day of the week as Sabbath, but their protest does not overthrow the validity of our Lord's day. Baptism is a standing covenant; and, on the part of God, needs no renewals or repetitions. By it the child sacramentally accepts all the covenant blessings of salvation. If

afterward it forfeits its title to salvation by disobedience and unbelief, and in adult years is pardoned and re-instated, it only *recovers* its title to salvation which it had unconditionally in infancy. It only returns to fulfill its part in the contract. There need be no second formal engagement. God's terms of salvation are unchangeable; and the holder of this docket is entitled to its benefits only during the time in which he is faithful to his part of the stipulated covenant. When a naturalized man, after having taken the oath of allegiance, violates the laws of his country, it does not annul the obligation involved in the oath of allegiance. Circumcision was not repeated to a Jew. Baptism need not be repeated to a Christian.

Whether or not an infant baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, and in adult years uniting with the Protestant Church, should be re-baptized, is an open question. Since the reformation, the Roman Church, compelled by its old usage and principles, continued for some time to acknowledge the validity of Protestant baptism, while Protestants in turn admitted the validity of Roman Catholic baptism. The question of re-baptizing converts from the Romish Church, has recently been discussed in various Church councils without reaching any definite conclusion.

7. *As infants are saved without baptism, it is useless to administer it to them."*

But the same objection might be offered against adult baptism, since we do not consider this ordinance essential to the salvation of either adult or infant. If of no saving efficacy, why observe such empty ceremony? We are not always able to give a reason for God's commandments. It is the province of faith and obedience to follow the Lord's directions without asking any questions, for it is said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," and, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

But is infant baptism a useless device? Is it no means of grace? Is it no instrumentality of spiritual edification to the parent and child? Does the solemn act of presenting a child to God, and entering into responsible engagements to rear it in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have no spiritual influence upon the heart and lives of parent and child? How many such pledges have been sanctified to the salvation of whole families, eternity alone can tell! None of God's institutions are vain things. None of the subjects of his atonement, if prepared, are to be denied the initiatory rite into his Church; and whenever a father or mother seeks membership

in the Lord's fold, parental instinct, sanctified by divine grace, prompts him or her to say, "Here Lord am I and the children whom thou hast given me." And His blessed response has always been, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

Before dismissing the subject of infant baptism, we will add a remark upon the question, *Whose children are proper subjects for baptism?*

All infants, irrespective of ancestry, are born alike, so far as their moral condition is concerned. No grace of sanctification or degree of spiritual attainments in this life on the part of the parent, can intercept the transmission of inherited depravity upon their offspring. So no infant, on the ground of natural descent from wicked parents, is excluded from the gracious provisions of the atonement, which provides unconditional salvation for all the innocents of the human race. There is, then, no difference in moral adaptation of all infants to membership in the visible Church.

But all this is no reason why every parent's infant should be baptized. Baptism is not merely a ceremony of Church relationship, showing who are members of God's kingdom, but especially a *covenant*, in which the baptized, or his lawful rep-

representative, engages to do certain things, and thereby solemnly consecrates himself or his child to God and his service. It is an act of faith. Christian parents (both, or either one of them, according to I. Cor. 7:14,) who themselves give evidence of godliness, and faith in the Lord, are proper persons to bring their children to baptism. They alone are spiritually qualified to execute the baptismal vow, by obligating themselves to teach their baptized children the fear of the Lord, to watch over their spiritual welfare, to restrain them from evil associates and habits, and as much as in them lieth, "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The officiating clergyman, before he consecrates a child by baptism, must demand from some responsible person a guarantee that proper religious training will be administered to the baptized child. Of course, religious parents can give the best guarantee, when they themselves walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. The apostles baptized the households only of believers, evidently because ungodly parents cannot dedicate their children to God in sincerity; for, to assume the baptismal vow, except "in good faith," would defeat the great design of the ordinance, and expose it to open scandal.

As a substitute for the unfitness of irreligious parents to assume baptismal pledges in behalf of their children, some have admitted sponsors, who shall not only be witnesses of the covenant, but actually take the place of the parent in pledging and administering the future education of the child. But unless these sponsors also adopt the child, or in some other way become its sole master, or absolute governor, they can not take the place of the parents while they are living.



The Doctrine of Christian Baptism.

PART III.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAIN PROPOSITION OF DISCUSSION.

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ has always accorded to her communicants liberty of conscience, or the right to exercise their own private judgments in matters pertaining to non-essentials.

In her “Confession of Faith,” upon the subject of baptism, she says, “The *manner* of which¹ [*i. e.*, the mode of administering the ordinance] ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual.” According to this article of faith, the officiating clergyman has no right to dictate to the subject for baptism the mode of applying the water to the candidate, in the observance of this ordinance. *This prerogative rests entirely with the applicant.* The Church

1. The late Church Commission on Revision of Confession of Faith and Constitution, renders it, “The *mode* of baptism.”

looks upon the mode with entire indifference, and respects the honest convictions of everybody in this matter.

This article of confession conceding liberty of conscience is not adopted out of a motive of accommodation, or a desire to adapt itself to the prejudices and peculiarities of all Churches and persons; but because it is most in harmony with Scripture, reason, and common sense.

So incidental a question as whether one should be sprinkled or immersed in baptism, is as unimportant in the role of Christian duty, as was the controversy between the Jew and the Corinthian Gentile concerning things offered unto idols, the former maintaining that it was wrong to eat those things offered unto idols, and the Corinthian, on the contrary, contending that it was right to do so. On this much controverted subject, Paul was appealed to for advice; and his answer was, "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience' sake" (I. Cor. 10: 25); "Meat commendeth us not to God" (I. Cor. 8: 8); "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth" (Rom. 14: 3); "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14: 5). Such passages

plainly teach that so small a matter as the eating or not eating of meat offered unto idols, was, *per se*, without any attribute of moral character. Eating gives no spiritual advantage, and not eating is no spiritual loss. The advice is, do as you please. Were the subject of modalism in baptism submitted to Paul, he would, no doubt, answer in a similar way; and classify this mooted question with his list of non-essentials, such as "meat, drink, an holyday, a new moon, or a sabbath day," of which he said, "Let no man therefore judge you" in these things (Col. 2: 16).

Yet unimportant as is this insignificant question, it has become a battle field for endless controversy. Thousands of pens, sharp as swords, have been engaged in the conflict, and hundreds of books have been written *pro* and *con*;¹ and now, after a literary warfare of more than a hundred years upon the question, Is sprinkling, pouring, or immersing the only proper Bible mode of baptism? the victory, to-day, is undecided. Contestants on either side are beginning to feel the insecurity of their position; so that just now there is a temporary lull in the storm, a seeming respite in trying to further defend a

1. A gentleman in Philadelphia has collected "more than three thousand works, large and small, on Baptism," says Dr. Hamilton, in his Prefatory Note to "Compendium of Baptism," p. 6.

vulnerable cause; each party is making some concessions to the other, and it is to be hoped that soon they will amicably compromise their quarrel by allowing that sprinkling, pouring, and immersing are all right and scriptural, and should be administered indiscriminately, according to the wish and judgment of the applicant.

This is the principle of the article of confession before quoted, which we are about to defend.

It seems strange indeed that there ever should have arisen any discussion on the mode of baptism. The only authoritative precept for baptism is contained in Christ's commission to the disciples, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19, Revised Version). Here *three* things are commanded: first—going to the nations, or people; second—making disciples of them; third—baptizing them; but in none of these three injunctions is there any reference to the *mode* of performing any of them. What folly if the Church should ever begin to discuss the scriptural mode of *going*! Shall it be by walking, or running, or leaping? Shall the preacher travel on horseback, or in a vehicle, or in the cars, in a boat, or in a ship? Surely common sense would

suggest that the important duty is to "go," not how to go. The Church never troubled herself much about the mode of performing the second injunction—*discipling the nations*—whether conversion to Christianity, in order to be scripturally valid, must be effected through the form of teaching, or preaching, or conversing, or singing, or praying; by the use of Methodistic theology, Presbyterian symbol, Lutheran doctrine, or Baptist confession. All these diversified forms of applying truth to men, are admitted to be justifiable modes and means of accomplishing one and the same essential thing, namely, conversions to Christianity, or discipling of the people. To be a stickler for such methods of evangelization, rather than for the principle of it, would be straining out a gnat, or "tithing mint and anise and cummin," and leaving undone "the weightier matters of the law."

There exists no controversy upon the manner of performing the essential duties involved in the great commission; therefore, how strange that the manner of "*baptizing*" should become such a bone of contention among Christian people. We are commanded to "go," but not how to go; we are commanded to "disciple the nations," but not under what particular denominational banner we

are to do this; likewise the command is to “baptize,” but not a word is said as to the mode of doing it. Why, then, should any branch of the Christian Church become enthusiastic over the mode of a duty, the least important of all enjoined in the great commission, and say nothing about the mode of carrying out the other two commands of our Lord, viz., going and discipling? Consistency forbids giving such undue prominence to one of the possible modes of obeying Christ’s command; and reason revolts at the idea of making a non-essential the test of fitness for participation in our Lord’s Supper, and for membership in any branch of God’s Church.

Why is there no discussion upon the modes and ceremonial particulars of obeying other appointments made by Christ and his apostles? We are commanded to assemble ourselves for public worship, but nothing is said about the mode of holding these meetings, or of the particular rituals by which the exercises are to be regulated. Christ commanded us to pray, but said nothing as to time—whether in the morning, or noon, or night,—or mode—whether silent or vocal,—or posture—whether it be essential to stand, or sit, or kneel in order to pray acceptably. He also enjoined upon us the ordinance of the

Lord's Supper; and here we have abundant and clear evidence of the mode and subsidiary circumstances in which the rite was originally observed, but no branch of the Christian Church considers them of any importance, at least not worthy of discussion, or essential for initiation. Christ and his apostles, at the original institution of the eucharist, met in the night, we meet in the day. They met on Thursday, we usually on Sunday. They met in an upper room of a private dwelling, we meet in the public sanctuary. They used unleavened bread, and the pure juice of the grape, we use the leavened bread, and various kinds of drinks. They received it in a recumbent posture, we receive it standing, or sitting, or kneeling. Then only males participated, now both male and female. Who would argue that any or all of these accidental circumstances should constitute the fundamental basis for the observance of this sacrament? If the specific form and external modes have no essential importance in any of the commands of God, why should mode be considered so grave and all-important a question in this matter of baptism?

When it comes to matters of secondary importance, or of doubtful authenticity, it is always best to exercise charity, and shun exclusiveness.

Our article of confession does not condemn any mode, but approves all. If the Baptist says, "I baptize by dipping," we say, that is right. If the Pedobaptist says, "I baptize by sprinkling," we say, that is right; but if either says, "This is the only mode," we say emphatically, no. What right has a minister, who is called of God to preach and to administer the ordinances in the Church of Christ, to refuse to baptize a Christian in any way that his conscience approves? for who can tell whether the minister's commission is to sprinkle or immerse? but, without controversy, he is to baptize in the name of the Holy Trinity. On questionable subjects, we have no right to tyrannize over other people's consciences. "Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?" (I. Cor. 10: 29.)

Having indicated the meaning of the article of faith, and shown its reasonableness, we are now ready to prove its scriptural basis upon the following great proposition, as the foundation of our discussion on mode.

Proposition.

SCRIPTURE NOWHERE TEACHES, EITHER BY PHRASE-OLOGY, EXAMPLE, OR PRECEPT, THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE MODE OF BAPTISM.

By putting the proposition in a negative form,

we indicate the line of argument to be pursued. The general presumption is in favor of our proposition—water baptism, regardless of mode,—since, in the history of the Church, it always has been, and is to-day, indiscriminately practiced throughout Christendom.

Day, and the most of able rhetoricians, agree that “the presumption is generally in favor of what already exists, and against a change, whether the question be one of truth, of right, or of expediency.”¹ The burden of proof, then, lies with the advocates of a *unus* modal baptism. Such vindicators have tried to prove, with all the ingenuity of logic and exegesis, that there is only one mode to the exclusion of all other modes of applying water in Christian baptism. It is our purpose to *disprove* what they claim to have *proved*; or to re-assert and re-fortify a general presumption which they have impugned; and, therefore, we assume the defensive in a negative proposition, as above stated.

In making good this proposition, we will take up the main arguments and proof-texts used by our opponents in proving modal baptism, and

1. Day's “Art of Discourse,” p. 158. Drs. Carson and Broadus, two able Baptists, oppose this definition of a presumption, but in this opposition they differ from nearly every other logician, and have the weight of testimony and argument against them.

expose the fallacies upon which their conclusions rest, and the unsoundness of their doctrinal position. These proof arguments may be classified under three heads: first, verbal; second, illustrative; third, imperative. The first bases its discussion upon the word baptize; the second, upon Bible examples, and the third, upon divine commands, direct or indirect, as to mode of baptism. This threefold division covers the general ground of controversy on this subject, and will constitute the three cardinal points of discussion under our main proposition. This proposition will now be treated under the three following sub-propositions:

1. *Modalism cannot be proved from the word baptize.*
2. *Modalism cannot be proved from any scriptural example of Christian baptism.*
3. *Modalism cannot be proved by any precept or teaching of the sacred Scriptures.*

CHAPTER II.

DISCUSSION OF THE WORD BAPTIZE.

Sub-Proposition I.

MODALISM CANNOT BE PROVED FROM THE WORD
 $\betaαπτίζω$ (BAPTIZO).

The Baptists are the most radical modalists; and their fundamental argument for immersion, as *the mode*, rests upon the meaning of the word $\betaαπτίζω$ (*baptizo*). The controversy turns mainly upon the *meaning* of this word. Here lies the crucial test of the theory; and its meaning constitutes the basis of the Baptist Bible Union translation of the New Testament.

Rev. Alexander Carson, D. D., LL. D., the leading and most learned on the Baptist side of the controversy, says, repeatedly and emphatically, "*My proposition is that it [baptizo] always signifies to dip, never expressing anything but mode.*"

Rev. T. J. Conant, D. D., LL. D., another prominent leader of the immersion theory, gives as its ground meaning, "To immerse, to submerge, to dip, to plunge, to imbathe, towhelm."

Rev. Richard Fuller, D. D., says, "*Baptizo al-*

ways denotes a total immersion. . . . The word, I repeat it, means nothing but immersion. . . . The word *baptizo* has but one meaning, and always means immerse.”¹

Dr. Carson, in making good his sweeping assertion that $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\zeta\omega$ (*baptizo*) “always signifies to dip,” admits that he has all the lexicographers against him. The authorities that oppose him from this source are, indeed, overwhelming, when we find that such learned lexicographers, ancient and modern, as Hendricus, Stephanus, Scapula, Stokins, Passor, Suidas, Bretschneider, Schrevelius, Ewing, Parkhurst, Greenfield, Robinson, Ainsworth, Schleisner, Groves, Wahl, Donnegan, Dunbar, Liddell, Scott, and Grove, give the word a wider and more varied signification than that of immersion.

The learned Cox defies us “to point to a single lexicon which does not give dipping, plunging, or immersing as the unquestionably settled, and universally primitive, meaning of the word.”

To meet this challenge, we quote from Chapin’s “Primitive Church,” pp. 43, 44: “The oldest native Greek lexicographer is Hesychius, who lived in the fourth century of the Christian era. He gives only the word $\beta\acute{a}\pi\tau\omega$ (*bapto*), and the only

1. “Baptism and the Terms of Communion: An Argument,” pp. 19, 45.

meaning he gives the word is *αντλέω* (*antleo*), to draw, or *pump*, water."

Next in order comes Suidas, a native who wrote in the tenth century. He gives only the derivative *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*), and defines it by *πλύνω* (*pluno*), to wash. "We come down to the present century, at the beginning of which we find Gases, a learned Greek, who, with great labor and pains, compiled a large and valuable lexicon of the ancient Greek language. His book, in three volumes quarto, is a work deservedly held in high estimation by all, and is *generally used by native Greeks.*" The following are his definitions of *ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ*:

"*Βρέχω* (brecho), to wet, moisten, bedew; *λοιώ* (louo), to wash, to bathe; *αντλέω* (*antleo*), to draw, to pump water."

These lexicographers, who were native Greeks, do not recognize the idea of immersion in a single one of their definitions. We do not, of course, adopt these authorities as alone infallible, but simply wish to answer Mr. Cox's defiance, that we cannot "point to a single lexicon which does not give dipping, plunging, or immersing as the unquestionably settled, and universally primitive, meaning of the word"; and to show that, in classic Greek, the word has been used in various senses, and does not "always signify to dip," according to the dictum of Dr. Carson.

But the study of Greek lexicons can be of little use from a philological point of view. To determine the particular meaning of a word, in any language, and in any instance, we must go to its general literature, and ascertain the special sense in which the author used it, bearing in mind that the original meaning of a word may be changed in a subsequent age, since, in the progress of society, new ideas produce new words, or new senses of old words, so that lexicons need frequent revisions. Dr. Carson himself lays down this law of interpretation: "The meaning of a word must ultimately be determined by an actual inspection of the passage in which it occurs, as often as one chooses to dispute the judgments of the lexicographers. The practice of a language is the House of Lords, which is competent to revise the decisions of all dictionaries."

Carson, in his disregard for dictionaries, resorts to classic literature for what he considers an unanswerable argument to his creed, and a proof of his proposition that *baptizo* "always means to dip." But here he is again opposed almost as much as by the lexicographers; for an examination of non-biblical authors shows that they used the word in as many different senses as is indicated by the lexicographers.

The true position of an unbiased mind is, that $\betaαπτίζω$ (*baptizo*), like many other classic words, *admits of various renderings*. Dr. Carson says, “Immersion is the only meaning of the word, in every instance, in the whole compass of the language” (*i. e.*, the Greek language). But let us proceed now to quote a number of selections from the Greek writers, to show that they used the word in *various* senses, and then see what becomes of Dr. Carson’s extravagant assertion.

Section I.

CLASSIC LITERATURE.

In the department of classical literature, the word *baptize* means:

1. *To dip.*

In the Thirteenth Idyl of Theocritus, we have an account of the drowning of the boy Hylas, who went to a fountain to draw water for a supper of Hercules and Telamon, in which it is said, “The youth held the capacious urn over the water, hasting to *dip* it,” etc. Here the word used for dip is $\betaάπτω$ (*bapto*), the radical word from which $\betaαπτίζω$ (*baptizo*) is derived. The etymological syllable of *bapto*, according to Prof. Stuart, is the triliteral $\betaάπ$ (*bap*), “whose leading and original signification seems to have been dipping,

plunging," etc. Numerous examples might be adduced to show that this root word originally meant to dip, or immerse, and that this was its most common and accepted meaning. But afterwards it received a *secondary* meaning, as we shall see in the next example.

2. *To dye, or tinge.*

This meaning was naturally derived from $\beta\acute{a}\pi\tau\omega$ (*bapto*), because articles were generally dyed by dipping them into a coloring element. Finally, the idea of dipping was lost, and any process by which a substance was colored, was called baptizing it. Homer, speaking of a battle of frogs and mice on the borders of the lake, says, "The lake was *dyed with blood*" ($\dot{\epsilon}\beta\acute{a}\pi\tau\epsilon\tau\omega\; \alpha\mu\alpha\tau\iota$, *ebapteto aimati*). What a wonderful monstrosity of ideas to give this word the sense of immerse, and say that the lake was immersed in the blood of a mouse! And yet Dr. Gale, in order to defend his theory, made it so appear, and for which Dr. Carson criticised him severely.

This primitive word, also, means to partially dip, to moisten, to smear, to bedew, to imbue, to temper, to cleanse, without any regard to mode.

3. *To wash, or be wave-beaten.*

Plutarch, in his life of Theseus, quotes a verse from the Sybilline oracles, a poetic prediction

concerning the fortunes of the ancient city of Athens. We give it in the original: “*Ἄσκος βαπτίζη*” ^{Rebutta} *δῦναι δέ τοι οὐ θέμις ἔστιν*” (“Thou mayest be *washed* [*βαπτίζη*] O bladder, but thou canst not go under,” *i. e.*, dive). Here is used the regular New Testament word for baptize; namely, *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*), which is an extension of the word *βάπτω* (*bapto*), and its meaning in each case must be determined by the specific nature of the subject spoken of. Dr. Conant, in his work on “*Baptizein*,” translates the word in the above quotation with *immersed*, and Dr. Carson and Dr. A. Campbell, with *dipped*; but such a rendering will conflict with the word *δῦναι* (*dunai*), *dive*, *go under*, which really is the word signifying to immerse, or *to go into*, or *under*, *to enter*, or *to penetrate*, according to the best lexicographers.

Now, according to these Baptist interpreters of language, we should translate, “Thou mayest be dipped (or immersed,) O bladder, but thou canst not be dipped (or immersed).” The word *δῦναι* (*dunai*), *dive*, determines the sense of *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*) in this instance. Theseus consulted the Delphic oracle concerning his fortune, and the oracle compares his fate to a bladder (*ἀσκός*, *askos*, which really was the ancient bottle made of the skin of animals), which, though tossed and washed by the

foaming sea, should, however, not be permitted to submerge beneath the waves. Hence, we are justified in giving the word, in this quotation, the sense of *washing or tossing by wave-beating*.

4. *To sink.*

Josephus, in narrating a hazardous scene in his own life, says, “Our ship having been baptized ($\betaαπτισθέντος$, *baptisthentos*) in the midst of the Adriatic, being about six hundred in number, we swam through the whole night.” The meaning here is so evident as to need scarcely any comment. This baptizing was not a *temporary, momentary* dip, in the Baptist sense of baptizing, but an *immersion without an emersion*. The sense of sinking, no doubt, is also involved in the following sentence from Dion Cassius: “Ships which were in the Tiber, and lying at anchor by the city, and at its mouth, were baptized” ($\betaαπτισθεντες$, *baptisthentes*); and in that of Strabo, lib. 6, speaking of a lake near Agrigentum, says, “Things that elsewhere cannot float, do not *sink here*” ($\betaαπτιζεθαι$, *baptizesthai*).

5. *To immerse.*

Strabo, describing the effect of a rapidly-flowing stream through a very narrow channel, says: “To one who throws down a dart from above into the channel, the force of the water resists so

much, that it is hardly *baptized*” ($\betaαπτίζεσθαι$, *baptizesthai*). Here we have an instance of immersion in the true sense of the baptism rite; namely, a *total, temporary, momentary dip*.

6. *To bury.*

Polybius, a Greek historian, describing the loss of a body of cavalry by sinking in a marsh, says, “Themselves baptized by themselves ($\cdot\text{Αὐτοὶ δὲ νπ'}\;\dot{\alpha}\text{υτῶν βαπτιζόμενοι}$, *Autoi d' up' auton baptizomenoi*), and sinking in the marshes, were all useless, and many of them perished.”

7. *To immerse partly.*

Porphyry, a Greek philosopher and scholar, in speaking of the Styx, the fabulous river of Hades, which the Brahmins regarded as a test of innocence or guilt, says, “Being innocent, he gets through without fear, having the water to the knees; but when guilty, proceeding a short distance, he is baptized ($\betaαπτίζεται$, *baptizetai*) up to the head.” This evidently was a partial immersion in the Styx.

Again, Lycophron, in “Cassandra,” ver. 1121, says, “The child shall plunge ($\betaάπψει$, *bappsei*) his sword into the viper’s bowels.” No child could plunge, from end to end, a sword into a viper’s bowels. The handle, at least, must be excepted, for its bowels could not contain a sword. *Baptizo* here can mean only a partial immersion.

8. *To drown.*

Lucian, another Voltaire of Grecian literature, and a polished rhetorician, makes Timon the man-hater to say, “If the winter’s torrent were bearing any one past, and he, stretching out his hands, were entreating to be laid hold of, I would push him headlong, baptizing (*βαπτίζοντα*, *baptizonta*) him, so that he may not be able to come up again.” Here is, evidently, an immersion without an emersion, which must result in death by drowning.

9. *To make drunk.*

Plato, one of the most eminent of the Greek philosophers, and most illustrious pupil of Socrates, makes a character, in his dialogues, speak of the effects of wine thus, “For I am myself one of those who yesterday were baptized (*βεβαπτισμένον*, *bebaptismenon*); that is, intoxicated.” Likewise, Athanasius, in his “Philosophical Banquet,” says, “You seem to me, O guests, to be flooded with vehement words, and to be baptized with unmixed wine.” There can be no doubt of the specific meaning of the word as used by Plato.

10. *To stupefy.*

Josephus, in his “Antiquities,” Book X., chapter 9, describes the assassination of Gedaliah with “Seeing him in this condition, and baptized (*βεβαπ-*

τισμένον, bebaptismenon) into insensibility and sleep by drunkenness, Ishmael, leaping up with his ten friends, slays Gedaliah, and those reclining with him, at the banquet.”

11. *To overpower, or overwhelm.*

Libanius, in his funeral oration over the death of the Emperor Julian, speaks of “grief baptizing (*βαπτίζοντα, baptizousa*) the soul, and darkening the judgment.” Also, from Achilles Tatius we have the expression, “Misfortunes assailing baptize us.”

12. *To sprinkle.*

Josephus, in reference to purifying by the ashes of a heifer, according to Jewish custom, says, “Those, therefore, defiled by a dead body, introducing a little of the ashes and hyssop branch into a spring, and also baptizing by these ashes put into spring water, they sprinkled both on the third and seventh day.”

We might greatly extend this list of quotations from profane writers in Greek literature, and show the many other senses in which the word has been used. We might instance Plato, who speaks of a youth baptized with sophistry; or Diodorus Siculus, speaking of baptizing people with tears; or Plutarch, speaking of being baptized (oppressed) by a debt; or Heliod, baptized with calamity; or Marcus Antonius, who says, “The

soul is baptized (tinctured) by the thoughts"; or Dionysius Halicarnassus, who applies it to baptizing (thrusting) a spear between the ribs of a man. But enough has already been brought forward to show that the word is, by no means, limited to *one*, and ONLY *one*, meaning, never "expressing anything but mode"; and none but the most daring controversialist will assert its univocal application.

We willingly confess that dip, or immerse, is the sense in which the word is mostly used in classic Greek, but deny that this is its *only* meaning. Drs. Carson, and Fuller, and Conant, and Campbell, with immense and unwearied labor, have ransacked the pages of Greek literature, and now come back to report that they have found immerse to be the only meaning of $\betaαπτιζειν$ (*baptizein*).

Dr. Carson says it means "to dip, and nothing but dip, throughout all Grecian literature." Dr. Conant says, "The word $\betaαπτιζειν$ (*baptizein*), during the whole existence of the Greek, as a spoken language, had a perfectly defined and unvarying import. In its literal use, it meant to put entirely into, or under, a liquid or other penetrable substance, generally water, so that the object was wholly covered by the inclosing element." Dr.

Fuller says, “*Baptizo* signifies to immerse, and has no other meaning.” Dr. Campbell, in his great debate with Dr. Rice, says, “*Baptizo* can never authorize or sanction any other action than dipping, or immersing.”

These four champions of the immersion theory are boldly asserting much more than they can ever prove; for our above quotations show a number of different meanings in which the word actually has been used by Greek writers. If only one example of *baptizein*, in Greek authorship, could be produced as an exception to the meaning of immerse, the Baptists’ proposition, that it “*always* means to dip,” in Greek, must fall to the ground, and be published as untrue. But we can point to a multitude of exceptions as witnesses against the *dicta* of these learned immersionists.

When Baptist authors undertake to prove that *βαπτίζειν* (*baptizein*) NEVER has any other meaning than immerse, in the whole realm of Greek literature, they are assuming a task as difficult and presumptuous as that of proving that there are no worlds in God’s universe, except those which astronomers have already discovered. They try to prove a negative in an almost unlimited field. Have they examined every sentence, and explored every meaning, in the lexicons and language of

all Grecian literature? Until they have done this, the result of their investigation is as doubtful and untrustworthy as those of the atheist, who, after a biased and partial research, declares "*there is no God.*" That they have overlooked or perverted the meaning of *βαπτίζω* in many instances, we have already shown by the foregoing examples of the various meanings of the word.

Greville Ewing, author of a Greek grammar, and a Greek and English scripture lexicon, says, "I distinctly deny that the Greeks have always understood the word baptism to signify dipping. . . . We are prepared to show that it signifies the application of water, or some other liquid, in any manner, or for any purpose: by effusion, affusion, perfusion, or infusion; by sprinkling, daubing, friction, or immersion; wholly or partially, permanently or for a moment; for purifying or defiling, ornamenting or bespattering, washing away what was found adhering, or covering with what was not there; for merely wetting the surface or causing the liquid to sink into the inmost core." The native Greek evidently knew nothing of the idea of dipping to express mode as *essential* to the use of the word.

If we wished to ascertain the most common and universal meaning of *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*), both in

profane and sacred literature, we find it expressed in "A Compend of Baptism," the recent work of Dr. William Hamilton, who follows the theory of Dr. James W. Dale in his masterly and elaborate works on baptism. He says, p. 34, "1. *Baptidzo*, in its primary sense, expresses CONDITION CHARACTERIZED BY COMPLETE INTERPOSITION (position within), without the form of the act by which such interposition may be effected. 2. In secondary use, *baptidzo* expresses CONDITION, THE RESULT OF COMPLETE INFLUENCE, effected by any possible means, and in any conceivable way."

By comparing this idea of *baptizo* with the former examples quoted from Greek literature, we see that this is the most essential power and use of the word. The word, no doubt, has the primary meaning of the Hebrew עָמַן (*aman*), occurring in Genesis 15: 6, "And he believed in God" (אָמַן בְּיַהֲוָה *veheemin bayha*); that is, "Abraham [aman] stood firm in God." We find that in the Peshito, a Syriac translation of the Bible, the word βαπτίζειν is invariably translated by a word which corresponds to the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic word, agreeing in sense with the Latin *stare* (to stand), or *perstare* (to stand firm—continuing to stand). Transfer this root origin or general meaning to the many specific senses in which

baptize is used, such as dye, wash, sink, bury, drown, intoxicate, overpower, and even as applied in Christian baptism, as expressive of an inner state of grace, and we see its general applicability and ground meaning. “He that believeth and is baptized (that is, *standeth fast* in the faith,) shall be saved,” outside of its new meaning, as signified by a Christian ordinance, is its most fundamental import. The word denotes “*complete effect, controlling influence*, by whatever means it may be accomplished. It may be by immersion, by sprinkling, by affusion, by drinking to excess, by drowning, by overwhelming argument, by drugs, by gluttony. It is folly to contend for one unvarying mode, in the face of such varied instances.”¹

Hence, says Dr. J. W. Dale, “Whether I say, ‘He is baptized into (or under the controlling influence of) sleep,’ or, ‘He stands firm, is established, confirmed in sleep,’ I say substantially the same thing. If I say, ‘He is by wine baptized into (under the controlling influence of) insensibility,’ or, ‘He stands firm, is established, confirmed in insensibility,’ I say substantially the same thing. If I say, ‘He is by a drug baptized into (that is, under the controlling influence of,

1. Dr. William Hamilton’s “Compend of Baptism,” p. 45.

stupor,' or, 'He stands firm, is established, confirmed in stupor,' I say substantially the same thing. If I say, 'He is, by immoral teaching, baptized into (that is, under the controlling influence of,) fornication,' or, 'He stands firm,' I change the word, but I do not change the sentiment."

Now, against such a generic definition of baptize, as the result of the latest definition, no objection can reasonably be offered, either philosophically or historically. If a univocal meaning must be adopted (which, necessarily, we do not admit as essential to our use of the meaning of the word in the Christian ordinance), we cheerfully accept this latter and later definition, in lieu of the much-contested Baptist position that it "*always* means to dip." The distinction is all-important. If the assertions of Drs. Carson, Fuller, Conant, and Campbell, and many others who follow these leaders, can be established, it is proved beyond controversy that, so far as the classic use of the word is concerned, the act of baptizing could be performed in only one mode; if the philological definition of Drs. Dale and Hamilton can be verified by facts (which, we think, has been satisfactorily done) then the act or state of baptism expresses *controlling influence without any allusion to mode*.

We have now shown that the Baptists' definition of *βαπτίζειν* (*baptizein*), in classic literature, is untrue when subjected to examination and actual test. *Here is their first fundamental error.*

Section II.

TRANSITION FROM SECULAR TO SACRED.

But the philological argument, by which Baptists try to prove immersion as the only lawful mode of baptism, consists of another *fundamental error*, based upon the first error already exposed.

Dr. Carson, having proved, as he supposed, that *βαπτίζω* always means to immerse, in classic Greek, is sure that *all the New Testament writers must use the word in the very same sense*. Homer, Pindar, Aristotle, Xenophon, and other secular Grecian writers, must decide the meaning of a word which Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the other inspired writers used. The new meaning of Christian ideas, as expressed by the evangelists and apostles, must be entirely governed by the heathen vocabulary. Carson says, “When I have proved the meaning of a word by the authority of the whole consent of Greek literature, I will not surrender it to the supposition of the strict adherence of the Jewish nation . . . to the Mosaic ritual. . . . I care not if there had never been a human being

immersed in water since the creation of the world, if the word denotes immersion . . . I will contend for it as confidently as if all nations had been in the practice of baptizing (immersing) each other. . . . If I have established the acceptation of this word by the consent of use, even an inexplicable difficulty in this case would not affect the certainty of my conclusion.” And then, although an “inexplicable difficulty” appears in Mark 7: 4, he daringly asserts, “Though it were proved that the ‘couches’ could not be immersed, I would not yield an inch of the ground I have occupied.”

How shall we argue with a man who pronounces his dogma infallible against an array of opposing evidence, and even puts the evangelists to the torture when he stretches them upon the rack of heathen classics, and makes them confess to his creed whatever he dictates? “He is often right, often wrong; but whether right or wrong, he is equally confident”; and he “would send the angel Gabriel to school if he opposed his theory.”¹

Dr. Carson’s linguistic argument for immersion is a duplex fallacy—a falsehood based upon a falsehood. Syllogistically expressed, it would be: *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*) always means dip, in classic liter-

1. Dr. Hamilton.

ature; therefore, it always means dip in scripture writings.

It has often been demonstrated by Pedobaptist writers that Dr. Carson's first proposition is untrue; but even if it *could* be sustained by abundant evidence, would his conclusion, in respect to the New Testament or sacred use of the word, be true?

Let us now make this fact plain. Philology establishes the fact that, in all languages, many words lose their original sense, while a change of age, custom, and people often gives new meanings to old words. Several things conspire to give many ancient Greek words new and Christianized meanings in the New Testament times.

First. The New Testament Greek is almost a distinct and independent dialect. Every one will notice the difference between classic Greek and Hellenistic Greek. Says Prof. E. Robinson: "The language of the New Testament is the latter Greek as spoken by foreigners of the Hebrew stock, and applied by them to subjects on which it had never been employed by native Greeks. . . It was, therefore, the spoken language of ordinary life which they learned, not the classic style of books which have elsewhere come down to us. . . It will be obvious that an appeal merely to

classic Greek and its philology, will not suffice for the interpreter of the New Testament." It is sometimes called *hybrida lingua*—a Jewish Hellenistic dialect, combining Greek words with a Hebrew phraseology. It is often no more than Hebrew thought in Greek clothing. Hence, the Septuagint Version, the Apocrypha, and Philo, are useful helps for the study of sacred Greek. The study of a good grammar of the New Testament, or "Winer's Idioms of the Language of the New Testament," as well as a comparison of classical New Testament dictionaries, will show that the language of the New Testament has many lexical and grammatical deflections from the pure Greek use and classical idioms.

Second. The inspired writers used current Greek words to express ideas of which classic heathen had no knowledge. This gave a peculiar phraseology and turn of expression, caused by the new ideas introduced by Christianity. A. A. Hodge, in "Outlines of Theology," p. 484, says, "The New Testament writings are a revelation of new ideas and relations, and hence the words and phrases through which these new thoughts are conveyed must be greatly modified in respect to their former etymological sense, and heathen usage."

If the doctrines of the New Testament differ from the notions and philosophies of the heathen; if Christianity becomes *sui generis*, then the writers of the new doctrine of Christ may often depart from the strict *usus loquendi* of Attic Greek, and adopt idioms conformed to the peculiar doctrines of the Christian system. Many Greek words, therefore, have become entirely changed in their meaning in transferring them from the heathen Greek to the Christian Greek, or in changing from the classical to the sacred use.

For example, the classic word *δεῖπνον* (*deipnon*) expressed the *principal meal* of the Greeks and Romans; it also means a *feast*, or *banquet*. But this same word, expressive of convivial feasting, was adopted by the evangelists to represent the *Lord's Supper*, an institution unknown to the heathen classics, and who had no word to express the sacred meaning which our Savior gave to it when he broke a piece of bread, and gave a sip of wine. Again, the New Testament writers could find no word in the classic Greek to express the idea of Christian virtue, for the heathen knew nothing of such traits of character. Our evangelists did not coin a new word, but adopted the classic word *ἀρετή* (*arete*), which is derived from *Ἄρης* (*Mars*), the god of war, which meant to the

Greek mind, prowess, courage, warlike manhood; but Christian literature has given this word a new signification. So with the word *χάρις* (*charis*), meaning external beauty, outward personal attractions, to which a new use is appropriated in the New Testament, so that it is made to mean Christian *grace*, an inner state of life. The same transition of meaning occurred in such words as *ἐκκλησία* (*ekklesia*), church, *παλιγγενεσία* (*paliggenesia*), regeneration, etc. Even in our own language, words are constantly undergoing a change of meaning; and for this reason our English version of the Bible needs occasional revision. Instance such words as "charity," "prevent," "conversation," "deacon," "everlasting," etc. To argue that *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*) always means dip, in scripture language, would be the same as arguing that, because *αἰώνιον* (*aionion*), primarily and usually in the Bible, means everlasting, that, therefore, it always has that meaning whenever and wherever used.

Again, take the eighth verse of the twenty-third chapter of Acts: "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both." Translate all the Greek words in this verse according to the classic definitions, and it would be: "For the Sadducees say there is no *rising up*, neither

messenger, nor wind," etc. If we are to follow the doctrine of Dr. Carson, that the meaning of scripture phraseology must be determined by classic definitions, such must be the rendering of the above passage; and the Sadducees would be merely represented as unbelievers in some of the laws and operations of the physical world—not believing in winds or agitated air, in ascending balloons or rising smoke, or anything opposing the law of gravitation.

Shall the heathen authors here be appealed to for an explanation of what Luke meant in this verse? The poor unchristianized Greeks knew nothing of a bodily resurrection in the New Testament sense, of angels or of spirits. They had no such conceptions, and no words to express such ideas. The men who were first to express these new ideas, made use of three old classic words, *ἀνάστασις* (*anastasis*), *ἄγγελος* (*anggelos*), and *πνεῦμα* (*pneuma*), the nearest by analogy to the new revelation, and gave them a grander, higher, spiritual meaning.

Now (even upon the supposition that *baptizo* had a univocal meaning in the classics), the same reason exists for *changing and modifying* the classic use of *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*). The signification of the ordinance of baptism, as instituted by Christ, was something *new*. No word in the Greek language,

or any modern language, has an exact equivalent. The best that can be done is to adopt a classic word, and let it represent all that is implied in Christian baptism, regardless of its original or classical signification. *Baptizo*, signifying controlling influence by whatever method it is effected, may fitly be made to express the prevailing grace and controlling influence of the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the ordinance of Christian baptism. The word baptize, in the New Testament, does not refer to the *mode* of applying water, but to the design and import of the application, denoting a ritual purifying and referring to an essential truth for its signification, which neither the words sprinkle, pour, nor immerse can convey.

Whatever idea the word was used to express in the Attic Greek, this, evidently, is the sense and use of the word in the New Testament when used in reference to Christian baptism. Says Dr. Edwin Hall, in his "Law of Baptism": "Will any Baptist maintain that evangelists and apostles may not explain their own meaning in just the same way that heathen Greek may explain them? Will any Baptist maintain that, where the testimony of New Testament writers differs from that of the heathen Greeks, the New Testament witness

is not to be heard before any heathen and before all the heathen classics together? In fine, the question here is, Is the Holy Ghost a competent and credible witness as to the sense in which the Holy Ghost uses the word baptize?"

What, now, is the result of our finding thus far?

1. That *baptizo* does not *always* mean dip, or immerse, in classic Greek.

2. That even if it had a strictly universal meaning in the ancient classics, it evidently would have lost some of its native peculiarity, and acquired some new shade of meaning in its transition from its secular to its sacred application.

3. That modalism is, therefore, an idea foreign to both the old and the new meaning of the word.

Section III.

SACRED LITERATURE.

If now we turn from *profane* to *sacred* literature, we find the same diversity of meaning in the use of the Greek word *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*).

1. And first, we quote from the *New Testament*, omitting all reference to the word as used in the ritual sense of Christian baptism; for if the word used to express this Christian ordinance has any reference to mode, it surely cannot be determined

in loco, for the particular examples of the observance of the Christian ordinance in the New Testament record, in which the word is used, afford no data for a philological argument. The question of mode in Christian baptism, in another view of the subject, will be discussed exegetically and historically under another sub-proposition. The sacred literature, from which we may learn something concerning the meaning of the word, consists of the writings of the early Church fathers, the Apocrapha, and the sacred Scriptures, Old and New Testament.

In the New Testament the word means:

1. *To wash.*

“And when they come from the market, except they *wash* [βαπτίσωνται, *baptisontai*], they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing [βαπτισμοῖς, *baptismous*] of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables [*i. e.*, couches]” (Mark 7: 4).

In Luke 11: 38, the word βαπτίζω (*baptizo*) is used in the same sense of washing.

Here all Baptist writers, except Dr. Campbell, agree that the mode of immersion is expressed. But a little candid reflection will make it very clear that the essential and self-evident meaning of the word, in these connections, is *to wash*, as a

process of purification, without any regard to the manner of washing. The mode may have been by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling. The tradition of the elders prescribed these ablutions as ceremonial purifications, which were performed always before eating and after returning from market.

No doubt, especially in the warm seasons, these Pharisaical lustrations from the contaminations of the *agora* (market-place) were often performed by bathing, or complete immersions of the whole body, particularly among the wealthier classes, who had leisure and ample conveniences for such complete washings. Or, that washing may sometimes have been in the mode of sprinkling or spirling, as in Japan, seems probable from the fact that some of the ancient manuscripts, especially the *Codex Vaticanus*, have the word *rantisontai* (to sprinkle), instead of *baptisontai*.¹

But the weight of evidence seems to preponderate in favor of the *pouring* process. We know that this was, and still is, the most common mode of washing in the Oriental countries. Dr. Schaff, in his "History of the Apostolic Church," p. 569, says, "In support of this [that *baptizo* has the general sense to wash, to cleanse], a confident

1. See margin in Revised Version.

appeal can assuredly be made to several passages; namely, Luke 11: 38, with Mark 7: 2, 4, where *baptizein* is used of the washing of hands, which in the East was performed by *pouring*." And Dr. Robinson, in his lexicon of the New Testament, says, "The usual mode of ablution in the East is by *pouring* water on the hands. This is done by a servant." Thus in II. Kings 3: 11, we read of Elisha, the son of Shaphat, pouring water on the hands of Elijah. The custom of hand washing among the Jews was that of an attendant pouring water out of a jar or pitcher on the hands of the guest or master. A circumstance which corroborates this is recorded in John 2: 6, at the marriage in Cana, where "there were set there six water-pots of stone, *after the manner of the purifying of the Jews.*" These vessels, evidently, were there for cleansing purposes, "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews." Dr. Robinson, in his "Biblical Researches," vol. II., p. 451, says that he dined in a house at Hebron, where "one went and washed his hands by having water poured upon them in an adjacent room." And Pitts, speaking of the Mohammedans, says, "The table being removed before they rise from the ground on which they sit, a slave or servant, who stands attending on them with a cup of water, to give

them drink, steps into the middle with a basin or copper pot of water, something like a coffee-pot, and a little soap, and *lets the water run upon their hands*, one after another, in order as they sit. . . . It is probable that Mohammed followed, on this subject, the book of Leviticus."

But when we have testimony from history, both sacred and profane, that the Orientals *generally* washed their hands and bodies by pouring water upon them, we have not *proved* that they *always* cleansed themselves in this manner. Three methods of washing prevailed in the East,—immersing, pouring, and spirling,—and until some one can successfully prove that *only one* was practiced *always and in every case* of Jewish purification, are we justified in giving the word any modal signification.

In Hebrews 9: 10, it is plainly asserted that the ceremonies of the Mosaic law stood in "divers washings" (*διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς, diaphorois baptismois*). If the word under discussion has only one unvarying meaning,—immerse,—then how could there be any *diversity*? We cannot conceive what meaning to apply to "divers" here, if it has not reference to the various kinds and modes of purifications. Some were performed by the use of blood, some by ashes, some by water; some in

the way of sprinkling, some of pouring, and others of dipping or diving. Here we have a diversity of baptisms, but not a diversity of immersions. We know that Dr. Carson makes the “divers” baptisms, or washings, refer only to those purifications which, under the law, were performed by immersions, and the only proof he has to offer for this belief is, that *baptizo* “always means to immerse.” But this is the very assertion which we deny.

Dr. Carson, unable to prove immersion in this example by fair argument, however, will not yield the case. He says, “Many examples from the Jews, and also from the Greeks, it is said, prove that the hands were washed by pouring water on them by a servant; and I care not that ten thousand such examples were brought forward. Though this might be the usual mode of washing the hands, it might not be the only mode, which is abundantly sufficient for my purpose. The possibility of this is enough for me.”¹ But a possibility does not prove it to be an historical fact; and then Carson falls back again on his only refuge, that infallible definition, “We have here the authority of the Holy Spirit for the Jewish custom. He uses the word *baptizo*, and that word

1. “Baptism in Its Mode and Subjects,” p. 67.

signifies to dip, and *only to dip*.” We will let him have his hobby; it will do for a pet, but not for an argument.

All parties interested in the modal controversy (Carson included) agree that *baptizo*, in Mark 7: 4 and Luke 11: 38, means *to wash*; but the discussion is over the *mode* of washing.

But the Jews not only washed themselves, but had also received and held the tradition of many like things, such as “the washing [$\betaαπτισμούς$, *baptismous*] of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of couches.” It is not worth while to discuss the mode of washing these vessels, for common sense teaches us that sprinkling, pouring, and dipping are indiscriminately and promiscuously combined in washing such small objects. But how about the “massive couches”? The “couches” were sofas on which the guests reclined during eating. They were often large enough for four persons to recline on, and the frames were, among the opulent, finely embellished, and the coverlets rich and perfumed. Clement of Alexandria says that the Jews “frequently washed ($\betaαπτίζω$, *baptizo*), according to custom, the couches.” It is not at all likely that these large and fine sedans were always immersed in water for cleansing purposes, although Dr. Carson affirms, “Whatever might have been

their size, they might easily be immersed in a pond. But even on the supposition that they were too large to be immersed (dipped) entire, I have contrived to take them to pieces, and immerse them in parts." This manner of meeting the difficulty, only proves to what unnatural and inconvenient shifts a man is driven when he tries to maintain a uniform mode of washing. If couches belonged to household furniture, then, according to Numbers 19: 18, they were cleansed by sprinkling.

But if any one is still contending for either mode of washing these couches, let him turn to the Revised Version, and find that the word "couches" is omitted from the text, and hence the controversy is cut short. Let us be sure that they *washed couches* before we wonder *how* they washed them. All learned and elaborate disquisitions upon the mode of the washings referred to in Mark 7: 4 and Luke 11: 38 must be fruitless; and the only thing clearly established after years of discussion is, that *baptizo* in these texts means *to wash*.

Dr. Edwards' words may fitly close these remarks on Mark 7: 4: "*Baptizo* has, indeed, been used for all the modes of washing,—sprinkling, pouring, and immersing,—whereas it does

not express the one nor the other, but *washing* only; and this may be done in either of the modes; and, therefore, when we read of any person or thing being baptized, we cannot conclude from the word itself whether it was done by affusion, aspersion, or immersion."

2. *To sanctify or inspire.*

"But ye shall be baptized [*βαπτισθήσεσθε*, *baptis-thesesthe*] with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1: 5).

In this passage, we have the same word as is used in Mark 7: 4 for ceremonial washings; but here how different its meaning! how much more extended its application! how much loftier its conception! how exceeding divine its benedictions! In the first instance, it represented only an external, formal act; in this, it signifies an internal, heavenly inspiration. On the day of Pentecost the disciples were baptized "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." It was a baptism of sanctification, permeating every member of the body, and every faculty of the soul. It was a divine endowment of gifts and graces, by which they wrought signs and wonders in the world. They were newly sanctified, and miraculously inspired, for the great mission and ministry of their future life.

Drs. Carson, Fuller, and Conant have a hard

time here in forcing the idea of immersion in this Pentecostal baptism. Dr. Carson says, "The disciples were immersed into the Holy Spirit by the abundance of its gifts; they were literally covered with the appearance of the wind and fire." Did the learned Baptist Doctor forget that there was no such thing as wind or fire in this outpouring of the Spirit; but a "*sound¹²* like that of "the rushing of a mighty wind, and '*tongues' like* as of fire"? "That this philosophy of a house full of wind," says Dr. Halley, "is not of scripture, but of Dr. Carson, I would have skeptics take notice, lest they should profanely ask, Was it ever empty of wind? or, If there was more than usual, what kept the building together?" It is a hard task to adopt a creed as infallible, and then compel the Holy Ghost to say nothing that will not easily harmonize with it. *Baptizo* does not "always mean to dip," for here it means to sanctify or inspire.

3. *To endure or suffer.*

"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized [*βαπτισθῆναι*, *baptisthenai*] with the baptism [*βαπτισμά*, *baptisma*] that I am baptized with [*βαπτίζομαι*, *baptizomai*]?" (Matt. 20: 22.) See, also, parallel passages in Mark 10: 88 and Luke 12: 50. .

Here a reference to the context will make it evident that our Savior is speaking of his atoning sufferings and death; for he often spoke of his sufferings as a “cup.” “If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” No one can be in doubt as to what Jesus meant by drinking this cup; nor by his language to Peter, who used his sword in defense of his Master against the cruel mob: “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”

He also represents his sorrows under the figure of a baptism; and the language of the verse, divested of its symbolical dress, would be, “Are ye able to *endure* the *sufferings* which I *endure*? ” Even in the Baptist’s Bible Union translation, the word *baptizo*, in Mark 10: 38, is rendered by “endure”; thus, “Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink, and endure the immersion which I endure.” “Why not be consistent,” says Dr. William Hamilton, “and say, ‘Immersed with the immersion with which I am immersed’? ”

Dr. Carson, in order to make this figure for suffering conform with his theory of immersion in water, quotes (Psalm 124: 4, 5): “Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul.” But this has no reference whatever

to our Savior's suffering, and is, therefore, not pertinent.

"That which is immersed in a fluid," says Dr. Carson, in this same connection, "is completely subjected to its influence." Exactly so. We have before said that the word *baptizo* generically signifies complete, controlling influence, but we deny that this pervading influence is always affected by the mode of immersion. Especially so in the case before us. Christ, in the days of his passion, was under the influence of suffering, both of physical and spiritual pangs, from Monday until Friday eve. If it is at all proper to speak of the mode in which this baptism or influence of suffering was superinduced, it seems rather to have been *poured* upon him as from a cup of bitterness. If we think of the wrath of God, which he endured for sinners, it was "*poured out*." If we think of his "stripes," borne for the salvation of the race, they were "*laid on him*." If we think of the sweat and blood, it "*dropped*" from his pores, or *trickled* down his hands and side.

Whatever may have been the mode (at most, a very insignificant matter), one thing is clear, that the "cup" and the "baptism" here represent the entire catalogue of his suffering experience. Well does Dr. J. W. Dale say that in it were the "Incar-

nation, the manger, the temptations of the wilderness, the contradictions of sinners, the scoff, the derision, the blaspheming, the buffeting, the thorn, the nail, the spear, the forsaking by his Father! and he drank it all, and was baptized into death, ‘that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’”

4. *To initiate.*

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized [*ἐβαπτίσαντο*, *ebaptisanto*] unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (I. Cor. 10: 1, 2). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, in their excellent commentary, give the following explanation, which is commonly received and adopted by all exegetes: “The people were led to believe in Moses as God’s servant by the miracle of the cloud protecting them, and by their being conducted under him safely through the Red Sea; therefore, they are said to be ‘baptized into him.’ (Exodus 14: 31.) ‘Baptized’ is here equivalent to *initiated*.” Just as real Christian baptism inaugurates, or initiates, the believer into the kingdom of Christ, so this miraculous deliverance of the Israelites served as an entrance into the confidence of their leader, and a renewal of their faith in the

God of Moses. They were all baptized, or initiated, into Moses. "What a grand baptism! Jehovah the baptizer, the millions of Israel, with their infant children, the subjects baptized, the cloud and the sea the agency, and Moses the receiving element! A baptism out of infidelity and murmuring into the belief and fear of the Lord, and of his servant Moses."¹

Why stumble again at the word *baptizo*, and quarrel about the mode of this baptism, when there is not the least ground for an argument upon it? Carson calls this "a *dry baptism*"—"a *real immersion*." What does he mean? Does he mean that a "dry baptism" (*i. e.*, immersion) is "a real immersion," and that, therefore, a *wet* baptism is not a real immersion? Carson sees that he cannot possibly get any water here in contact with the baptized Israelites,—for they went over "on dry land,"—so he conceives of a "dry baptism," which he affirms to be a "real immersion." But here the Doctor proves too much. He proves that the word *baptize* no more means to immerse than does sit, walk, or fly, or any other verb in the language, signify to immerse; for if *baptizo* means to be immersed, enclosed, surrounded, entirely submerged in *any* substance or

1. Hamilton's "Compend of Baptism," p. 78.

element, *wet or dry*, then we cannot think of *any* verb expressing an act, or state, in which such an immersion, *wet or dry*, is not plainly implied. “The fish *swims*” implies that the fish is immersed in *water*—a wet baptism. “The bird *flies*” implies that the bird is immersed in *air*—a dry baptism. “The earth-worm *crawls*” implies that it is immersed in *earth*—both a wet and dry baptism. Strictly speaking, we are all, and always, immersed, and even he who is placed in a vacuum, is entirely enclosed within a receiver. If *baptizo* can be made to mean a dry or wet immersion, so, also, can any other verb in the language. Proving too much, we prove nothing. Let us not depart from the plain and essential meaning of a word, which is made evident by the sense in which the writer used it, and force it into an absurd signification in every case, for the sake of casting it into the stiff mold of a univocal definition.

2. With these few examples, sufficient, however, to illustrate that the word is not used in a uniform sense in the New Testament, we proceed to produce illustrations of three different meanings of the word from the *Old Testament*.

We, of course, quote from the Septuagint Version, which is very closely allied to the New Testament Greek, and which was the language

extensively used in Palestine in the days of Christ and his apostles. This version of the seventy was made during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, a few centuries before Christ; and most of the quotations in the New Testament were made from this version.

The first example is from the primitive $\beta\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omega$ (*bapto*), which means:

1. *To wet or moisten.*

“His body was wet [$\dot{\epsilon}\beta\acute{\alpha}\phi\eta$, *ebaphe*] with the dew of heaven” (Dan. 4: 33).

The original Chaldee word, which corresponds to the $\beta\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omega$ (*bapto*) of the Septuagint, means *to wet, to moisten, to imbue*. Nebuchadnezzar, driven out into the fields, and under the open sky, was exposed to the distilling mists and rain of the clouds. The meaning here is too obvious to require any further comment.

2. *To dip, to plunge, to immerse.*

“Then went he [Naaman] down, and dipped himself [$\dot{\epsilon}\beta\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\iota\sigma\omega$, *ebaptisato*] seven times in Jordan” (II. Kings 5: 14).

That the word *baptizo* is here correctly translated by “dipped,” in the authorized version, is based upon the best kind of evidence. If we had here nothing but the word *baptizo*, which the seventy used to express the washing of the Syrian

nobleman, we might be in great doubt as to the mode of his washing; for *baptizo*, philologically considered, may or may not have reference to temporary immersion, but there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the original Hebrew word בָּתַל (tabal), which these seventy-two elders of the Israelitish tribes translated with *baptizo*. A sufficient proof in favor of making this baptism a clear case of immersion is that בָּתַל (tabal), the word used in this verse, is a modal verb, and means to dip, or immerse.¹ If the writer of this history wished to express the specific mode of immersion, he surely could not have done it in any better way, or by choosing any other Hebrew word in its place; for, while there is another word, בְּעֵל (taba) which means to immerse, it also means to seal, to impress, etc., and such a word would be almost as equivocal as *baptizo*; but בָּתַל (tabal) is univocal.

The Hebrew word for *washing*, which is used irrespective of mode is רָחַץ (rahatz). Examples of this use of the word are found in Gen. 18: 4; 43; 31; Exodus 29: 17; Psa. 51: 7; 73; 13; Isa. 1; 16; 4: 4; Jeremiah 4: 14; 2: 22, etc.; but neither *rahatz* nor *taba* is used, but *tabal*, and, therefore, there can be little doubt as to the mode of washing in this instance.

1. Comp. Hamilton, p. 68, for an exception.

Here anti-Baptists are straining a point when they undertake to prove that Naaman was *not* immersed. Dr. William Hamilton's argument is based upon the Septuagint Version. He says, "In the passage respecting Naaman, the word *baptizo* is used, and not *bapto*. What is the reason of the difference? The seventy must have had a reason for using a different word, *baptizo*, instead of *bapto*, which is employed to translate *tabal* in other places." The only plausible reason is, that the translators of *tabal*, no doubt, knew that *baptizo*, as well as its primitive *bapto*, is used to signify immersion; and so far as the philological use of the word is concerned, it is immaterial which of the two words they used. If *tabal* in the Old Testament *always* means to immerse, and if *baptizo*, which is used to translate it in the Septuagint, *often* means the same, there can be no doubt that immerse is the idea here intended to be conveyed.

Other Pedobaptists argue that Elisha used the word *λοισαι* (*lousai*), "go and wash," in the preceding verse, when his command was given to Naaman. If *baptizo*, in verse fourteen, means to immerse, then Naaman did not "baptize himself according to the saying of the man of God," for he was not to immerse, but to wash. But we have before shown that *λοιω* (*louo*) and *βαπτιζω* (*baptizo*)

are often equivalent in meaning, both signifying to wash, without designating any *mode* of washing. When, therefore, Elisha commanded Naaman to wash, he did not intimate whether he should do it by sprinkling, pouring, or dipping; and when Naaman chose to wash by plunging or dipping seven times in Jordan, he did nothing inconsistent with “the saying of the man of God.”

Let the opposers of immersion be careful, lest they fall into the same error of which they accuse their Baptist brethren; namely, that of *exclusive* definition. It is as difficult to prove that *baptizo* *never* means immerse as to prove that it *always* means immerse. In avoiding one extreme, we may veer into error in an opposite direction. Our object in this discussion is to show the golden mean, in a common sense view of the word *baptizo*, neither limiting it to only one meaning, nor ignoring any of its plain and self-evident definitions.

3. *To terrify.*

“My heart wanders, iniquity terrifies [*βαπτίζει*, *baptizei*] me” (Isa. 21: 4).

This passage, evidently, is a prophecy and vision of the scene described by Daniel 5: 1-6. The prophet supposes himself one of the banqueters

at Belshazzar's feast, on the night when Babylon was taken by surprise. Fearfulness, caused by iniquity (בָתְהָנֵה bathane, from בַּאֲתָה bayath), suddenly came upon him terrifying him. The vengeance of God overwhelmed him. All the fright, trembling, and surprise are signified by the one word *baptizei*.

In examining the character of the Babylonian destruction, we cannot see how *baptizo* here can have any reference to any mode used in the ordinance of baptism by water. Terror is a thing that *shocks the mind*, and the idea of wetting the body by sprinkling, pouring, or dipping, is distinctly foreign to it.

We have now discovered *seven* different senses in which the word *baptize* is used in the *Sacred Scriptures*; and such is its varied and specific meaning in each passage quoted, that a univocal meaning could not be applied; nor could the various different meanings assigned in their respective connections be used interchangeably, without utterly destroying the sense of the different passages. We have already seen that modalism in respect to a uniform meaning of the word, cannot be established from its use in the classics, so no more can it be established philologically from its use in the canon of Holy Scripture.

3. Two baptisms of *washings* occur in the Apocrypha—the one in Judith 12: 7: “She went out by night into the valley of Bethulia, and washed herself [*ἐβαπτίζετο, ebaptizeto*] at the fountain of water in the camp”; the other is from Ecclesiasticus 34: 25: “He who is washed [*βαπτιζόμενος, baptizomenos*] from a corpse, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?”

In the first instance, it is not probable that a chaste and beautiful woman, like Judith, would go out in an open and public spring in the camp, among a large army of two hundred thousand men, at the evening twilight, and immodestly expose herself by immersing in their presence.

As to the mode of ceremonial purification in the second passage, an explanation may be found in the nineteenth chapter of Numbers, where the process was that of sprinkling ashes mixed with water upon the unclean person, and to which Paul has reference in Hebrews 9: 13, that “the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh.”

Dr. Carson translates *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*), in Ecclesiasticus 34: 25, with “dippeth,” and Dr. Conant translates *λούτρον* (*loutron*) by “bathing,” as synonymous with immersing. But this was not the mode of washing as represented by Christian

antiquity. Dr. William Smith says, "On ancient vases, on which persons are represented bathing, we never find anything corresponding to a modern bath, in which persons can stand or sit; but there is always a round or oval basin resting on a stand, by the side of which those who are bathing are represented standing undressed and washing themselves."

A practice similar to these Christian lustrations still prevails in India, according to the testimony of Lowenthal, the missionary, who says, "The Hindoos use a small urn called a *lota*, with which they bathe at the river, pouring water over the body."

As we have already referred to a baptism by washing, in our examination of the New Testament *baptizo*, we will not further discuss the mode in the present instance, but re-assert that *baptizo*, in the Apocrypha, as well as in the Old and New Testaments, and in classic Greek, often means to wash, without any expressed *mode* of washing.

4. We now turn our attention to *patristic literature*, or the literature of the Church fathers, whose writings are very abundant, and whose thorough knowledge of the Greek language cannot be questioned; for most of them thought and wrote in that language. Especially were they

familiar with the new and Christianized meanings which many Greek words had acquired in the days of Christ, by the acquisition of new doctrinal ideas peculiar to Christianity.

The sense which they gave to the word *baptizein* must, therefore, be the best philological authority which we have upon the subject. Their doctrine concerning the nature of the ordinance of Christian baptism cannot always be trusted. Many of them believed in baptismal regeneration. Their fanciful notions attributed to the water some saving virtue, by supposing that when the Spirit "brooded over the face of the waters," in the days of creation, it baptized them into a sort of sanctity, so that water applied to a person in the name of the Spirit, would bestow upon the recipient a certain sanctifying and saving influence. But we are not accepting their *doctrine*, but their use and understanding of the word *βαπτίζειν* (*baptizein*).

It is certain that the word with the fathers was modified from the classic Greek, and had received some sacred meaning, for they had learned to use it in a *religious* sense as attached to it in the Christian era.

It is often difficult to give a specific word a meaning that will exactly express the sense in

which the fathers used it; but one thing seems clear, that whenever and wherever they employed it, it will always sustain the general sense given it by Dr. Dale; namely, *changed condition*, or *controlling influence*. Though generally used in reference to the ordinance of Christian baptism, it very seldom can be made to point to any mode, either expressed or implied.

Dr. Carson boldly says that “there is not an instance in all the fathers in which *baptizo*, or any of its derivatives, are used except to signify immerse.” Let us see. Our first example is from—

Basil. In commenting on Psalm 29:10,—“The Lord sitteth upon the flood,”—he says, “A flood is an overflowing of water, covering all that is under it, and purifying every defilement. Therefore, he calls the grace of baptism a flood.” Basil here uses the word in the sense of a *covering and purifying*. Here, then, may be a reference to immersion, and in favor of Carson’s theory.

Cyril of Alexandria. He says, “We have been baptized, not with mere water, nor yet with the ashes of a heifer, but with the Holy Spirit and fire.” A faint allusion to the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, and therefore of no special service to the Carsonian doctrine.

Jerome. He also has in mind the mode of

sprinkling, when in his interpretation of Ezekiel 36: 25, 26, he says, "Upon the believing and those converted will I pour the clean water of saving baptism; and I will cleanse them from their abominations, and from all their errors. . . . It is to be observed that a new heart and right spirit may be given by the pouring and sprinkling of water." But in the following examples, mode is not at all connected in the use of the word baptize.

Ambrose. "Whence is baptism, except from the cross of Christ, from the death of Christ?" How can Dr. Carson make this baptism "signify immersion"?

Justin Martyr. "What, then, is the record of circumcision to me, having received testimony from God? What need is there of *that* baptism to one baptized by the Holy Ghost?" If *Martyr* calls circumcision a baptism, how can Dr. Carson call it an immersion?

Tertullian. Speaking of the water and the blood, he says, "These two baptisms he poured forth from the wound in his pierced side." Dr. Carson will yet have hard work to defend his theory, that the "fathers *always* used the word for immersion."

Origen. In his seventh homily on the sixth of

Judges, he says, "The outpouring of his [Christ's] blood is denominated a baptism"; and in his notes on Matthew 20: 21, 22, he says, "*Martyrdom* is rightfully called a *baptism*." Worse and worse for Carson.

Athanasius. "John was baptized by placing his hand on the divine head of his Master." It is time that the champion of Tubbermore surrender his position.

Eusebius. Speaking of a female catechumen, who was burned before receiving water baptism, he says, "She received the baptism *which is by fire*, and departed from this life." Here is some comfort for the staunch immersionist, provided the victim was completely enveloped in the flames. But how about—

Didymus of Alexandria. In his comments on I. Cor. 10: 1, 2, he makes Moses a type of Christ, when he says, "The waters securing safety for the people, signify the baptism." Here Didymus affirms that *safety* signifies *baptism*. Carsonism must be a failure.

Clemens Alexandrius. Speaking of a backslider, whom John was the means of reclaiming, he says, "He was baptized a second time with tears." The baptism of tears and of blood seems to have been a favorite phraseology with the fathers. What a

willful perversion of their ideas is the modern Baptist interpretation, which would make it appear that they were *immersed* with tears and blood!

Dr. Carson, in trying to set up an absolute monarchy of mode as against a republican liberty of conscience, has inaugurated a crusade upon the Pedobaptists, under the banner, “**BAPTIZO ALWAYS, EVERYWHERE, AND EVERY TIME MEANS TO DIP.**” At first, he seemed destined to conquer and to usurp everything before him, and his boasted followers claimed for him universal dominion; but the crowned sovereign is beginning to get into close quarters. Being routed out of the citadel of *classic literature*, he seeks refuge among the inspired men of the *Bible*, who, learning the weakness of his cause, desert him; when lo! he flees to the *Apocryphal* regions for help. Now driven from place to place, in order to save his life, he is finally pursued into *patristic* lands, the last hiding-place, where he is completely surrounded, and at last *captured*, after waging a long warfare in a hopeless cause.

5. An additional evidence that *baptizo* is not limited in reference to one mode, is found in the different *versions* of the Bible.

Martin Luther translates the word by *taufen*,

which, according to E. A. Weber's English and German dictionary, means to baptize, to christen. He does not use *eintauchen*, *versunken*, *vertiefen*,—words equivalent to our English word immerse.

The Syriac Version translates *baptizo* with the word which signifies “to confirm, to establish.” The Vulgate, like the English Version, transfers the word instead of translating it, thus leaving each one to judge for himself as to the various modal meanings of which the word admits. In the Dutch, Danish, and Swedish versions, the word is translated with a phraseology that does not indicate mode. Dr. Henderson, who was fully acquainted with the languages of Northern Europe, says, “That neither Luther, nor the authors of the Dutch, Danish, and Swedish versions had any intention of conveying the idea of immersion as implied in baptize, is obvious from the preposition which they have used with the verb. Thus we read in German, **MIT** *wasser taufen*; in Danish, *døbe MIT vand*; in Swedish, *dopa MED vatn*; in Dutch, *doopen MET wasser*.”

6. There is an abundance of *eminent authority* against a univocal definition of *baptizo*, a few of which we here produce.

Dr. Thomas Scott, the eminent commentator, says, “Some, indeed, contend zealously that bap-

tism always signifies immersion; but the use of the words *baptize* and *baptism*, in the New Testament, cannot accord with this exclusive interpretation."

Dr. Adam Clarke, an eminent linguist and theologian, says, in his comment on Matt. 3: 6, "In what form baptism was originally administered, has been deemed a subject worthy of serious dispute. Were the people dipped or sprinkled? for it is certain *bapto* and *baptizo* mean both."

Johann Benedikt Carpzov, in his *Isagoge*, page 1085, says, "Baptism is a Greek word, and in itself means a washing in whatever way performed. whether by immersion in water, or by aspersion."

Dr. Owen, a great and learned man, says, "No one place can be given in the Scriptures wherein *baptizo* doth necessarily signify either to dip or plunge."¹

Dr. John Robinson, of Cambridge, says, "The English translators did not translate the word *baptize*, and they acted wisely, for there is no word in the English language which is an exact counterpart of the Greek word as the New Testament uses it, containing the precise ideas of the evangelists, neither less nor more."

Dr. Tracy, in "Encyclopedia—Religious Knowl-

1. Works, Vol. XXI., p. 557.

edge," p. 23, says, "The word baptism is derived from the Greek *baptisma* and *baptizo*, and more remotely from *bapto*, and properly signifies a *washing*, whether the substance washed be partially or wholly immersed in the liquid, or the liquid be applied to the substance by running, pouring, rubbing, dropping, or sprinkling."

Timothy Dwight, a distinguished theologian of this country, says, "I have examined almost one hundred instances in which the word *baptizo* and its derivatives are used in the New Testament, and four in the Septuagint, these, so far as I have observed, being all the instances contained in both. By this examination, it is to my apprehension evident that the following things are true: That the primary meaning of these terms is *cleansing*—the *effect*, not the *mode* of washing; and that these words, although often capable of denoting any mode of washing, whether by affusion, sprinkling, or immersion (since cleansing was familiarly accomplished by the Jews in all these ways), yet in many instances cannot, without obvious impropriety, be made to signify it at all."

John Dick, in "Lectures on Theology," vol. II., p. 377, says, "Nothing certain as to mode can be learned from the original term *baptizo*."

George Hill, in his "Divinity," p. 470, says, "Both the sprinkling and the immersion are implied in the word *baptizo*."

Richard Watson, in "Institutes," vol. II., p. 650, says, "The word itself, as has often been shown, proves nothing. The verb, with its derivatives, signifies to dip the hand into a dish . . . to wet the body with dew . . . to paint, or smear the face with color; to stain the hand by pressing a substance; to be overwhelmed in the waters as a sunken ship; to be drowned by falling into water; to sink, in the neuter sense; to immerse totally; to plunge up to the neck; to be immersed up to the middle; to be drunken with wine; to be dyed, tinged, and imbued; to wash by effusion of water; to pour upon the hands, or any other part of the body; to sprinkle. A word, then, of such large application affords as good proof for sprinkling, or partial dipping, or washing with water, as for immersion in it."

Charles Hodge, in "Systematic Theology," vol. III., pp. 526, 527, says, "In the classics, in the Septuagint and Apocryphal writings of the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and in the writings of the Greek fathers, the words $\betaάπτω$ (*bapto*), $\betaαπτίζω$ (*baptizo*), and their cognates are used with such latitude of meaning, as to prove the

assertion that the command to baptize is a command to immerse, to be utterly unauthorized and unreasonable."

A. A. Hodge, in "Outlines of Theology," p. 484, says, "The word $\betaαπτιζω$ (*baptizo*), in form, though not in usage, the frequentative of $\betaαπτω$ (*bapto*), occurs seventy-six times in the New Testament, and is the word used by the Holy Ghost to convey the command to baptize. Its classic meaning was dip, submerge, sink. Besides these, we have the nouns of the same root and usage, $\betaαπτισμα$ (*baptisma*) occurring twenty-two times, translated *baptism*, and $\betaαπτισμός$ occurring four times, translated *baptism* (Heb. 6: 2) and *washing* (Mark 7: 4, 8; Heb. 9: 10). . . . It is an important and universally recognized principle, that the Biblical and classical usage of the same word is often very different."

W. B. Pope, "Compendium of Christian Theology," vol. III., p. 322, adds his testimony: "The word baptize, in the original Greek, whether in its classic or in its scriptural use, is capable of both significations [immersion and sprinkling]. . . . The word in all its forms refers to the contact of water without prescribing the manner."

What, now, is the conclusion from this philosophical examination of the word $\betaαπτιζω$ (*baptizo*)?

1. That Dr. Carson and his followers are wrong in teaching that “*baptizo* always signifies to dip, never expressing anything but mode.”
2. That whatever be its relative meaning in profane and sacred literature, this word, in its untranslated form, is *always* used in the New Testament in speaking of the ordinance of Christian baptism.
3. That when so used, its ritual, Christianized signification is always the same, as referring to the application of water to a person in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
4. But that not the least intimation is furnished as to the *mode* of applying the water, *so far as the meaning of the word is concerned*.

Therefore, to return to our first SUB-PROPOSITION, we repeat, that MODALISM CANNOT BE PROVED FROM THE WORD *βαπτίζω* (BAPTIZO).

We have, of course, based this position of our argument exclusively upon verbal definition—a mere philological aspect of the word. We have examined the lexicons, produced specimens from the writings of classic authors, sacred Scriptures,—Old and New Testament,—Apocrypha, Church fathers, versions, etc., in which the word *baptizo* occurs. We have carefully examined the meanings which these different writers gave to the

word, and now are fully prepared to say that, instead of always having *only one* meaning, it has a *multitude* of meanings. No one, unless prejudiced by preconceived notions, will dare to deny this fact. We can appeal to no higher court for the true meaning and sense of a word, in any language, than to those who have written and used the word in that language; for Dr. Carson himself says emphatically in capitals, “**USE IS THE SOLE ARBITER OF LANGUAGE, AND WHATEVER IS AGREEABLE TO THIS AUTHORITY, STANDS JUSTIFIED BEYOND IMPEACHMENT**” (p. 46). “Use,” this “sole arbiter,” has testified that *baptizo* has various meanings.

Almost every word admits of several significations; but, perhaps, no word in any language has such a wide latitude of meanings and variety of applications as the word *baptizo*.

In the midst of such a catalogue of definitions and jargon of confusion, how shall it be possible to establish a univocal definition of unvaried meaning, much less to give it any certain *modal* signification?

Scholars and linguists may study the philology of *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*) until they die, and they will never be able to decide anything as to its mode. To turn to the *word itself* for an argument is idle and useless; and he who consults this uninspired oracle will receive no certain response.

CHAPTER III.

DISCUSSION OF THE EXAMPLES OF BAPTISMS RECORDED
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.*Sub-Proposition II.*

MODALISM CANNOT BE PROVED FROM ANY SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLE OF THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

Here we pass from the *philological* to the *historical* argument. Having shown conclusively that nothing can be ascertained from a discussion of the word *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*) as to mode, let us now examine the inspired record, to see if any illustration of the ordinance of ritual baptism will throw any more light upon the subject of mode. Can any instance in sacred writ be produced that is decisive and conclusive on this question? We surmise not. Both parties in the controversy claim certain Bible examples of baptism as corroborative historical proofs of their theory of mode. They say, “Here, at least, is a clear case of immersion, sprinkling, from the use of the word, or under the existing circumstances, being *impossible*”; or, “Here is a plain example of sprinkling or pouring, immersion, in the nature of the case, being *impossible*.” But a candid and

unbiased examination will show that there exist no such impossibilities, *the only impossibility being that of proving the existence of such impossibilities.* No one has yet been able to explain satisfactorily, either by exegesis or history, in what mode any of the New Testament baptisms were administered. This, no doubt, will remain a perplexing and unsolved question, until the Lord shall see fit to give us additional revelation thereupon. But as the matter of mode is so unimportant and unessential to valid baptism, we do not expect nor need any such revelation.

It is strange that the same example which is used by one to prove immersion, is used by another to prove sprinkling or pouring. This only shows that the circumstances of the case admit of either mode, and that it is almost as easy to believe that the subjects were baptized in one way as in another.

True, there are instances where the weight of probability preponderates in favor of one or the other mode; but a probability is not equal to a proof.

Example A.

JOHN'S BAPTISM.

The following texts are the subjects of controversy: "And John also was baptizing in Ænon

near to Salim, because there was much water [*υδατα πολλά, udata polla*; *i. e.*, “many waters,”—margin in Revised Version] there” (John 3: 23). “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan [“in the river Jordan,”—Revised Version], confessing their sins” (Matt. 3: 5, 6). “John did baptize in the wilderness” (Mark 1: 4).

From this record of John’s baptism, who is prepared to demonstrate, upon sufficient evidence, in what mode John baptized the people? On the doctrine of immersion as implied in the above passages, the arguments *pro* and *con*, hitherto advanced, are total failures. Let us trace them to their ultimate conclusions, and detect their fallacies.

The Baptists, of course, first and last, build their faith on their way of defining the word baptize. John the Baptist baptized the people, *must* mean that John the Dipper dipped the people. We have already shown the fallacy of this philological argument, in our first sub-proposition. As soon as immersionists can show that God, by divine inspiration and unalterable decree, *fixed* a uniform and infallible definition of this word, will we accept, without controversy, the sufficiency of

their argument. Such a proof would forever settle the question, whether or not John baptized by immersion. But such proof has never been presented. It is not, therefore, decided that John ever immersed the subjects of his baptism.

On the contrary, the anti-Baptists try to show, from topography, modern stand-points, and mathematical calculations, the absurdity and impossibility of immersing the great number that flocked to John's ministry for the purpose of receiving his baptism. They claim that—

1. “The wilderness” where John baptized was an *extensive desert*, with only here and there small oases with scanty water, not sufficient for the total immersion of a single person; that even at *Ænon* and the river Jordan, where “there was much water,” the people who had gathered together, out of mere curiosity to see and hear John, were not provided with “*baptismal robes*,” or a *change of clothing, etc.*

All this will do when we wish to speak of the *inconveniences* of dipping, under the existing circumstances; but it is far from meeting the requirements of a positive proof against immersion. If John considered immersion necessary to valid baptism, the obstacles and inconveniences in the way could easily have been overcome. Some kind

of baptismal font could have been constructed in the “wilderness” for the occasion, as well as those now provided in nearly all Baptist churches; and if this would have proved too laborious a task, the people knew how easily they could assemble at the river Jordan, which flowed through the midst of the “wilderness,” and which had every facility for dipping, and to which, it is said, John often resorted for baptism.

If the people wished *change of clothing*, what, we ask, was in the way to hinder such accommodations? Why study how to create obstructions like these, and not reflect how easily they could have been removed in order to meet the requirements of immersion? Even in the midst of grave embarrassments, men of purpose, like John the Baptist, have surmounted barriers, not by yielding to circumstances, but by making circumstances yield to them. It is easy for an opponent of immersion to imagine all sorts of difficulties under a given circumstance; but until he has *proved* the existence of such difficulties, and that such difficulties *could* not be removed, or *were* not removed in the performance of what John may have deemed a bounden duty, he has guessed much, but proved little.

2. The anti-Baptists claim that it was impos-

sible for John to immerse so great a multitude as is described in Matt. 3: 5, 6, during the short time of his ministry.

It is said that "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," were baptized of or by John. By an examination of the census of the population, at this period of the history of Jerusalem, *all* Judea, and *all* the portions of Palestine, that were baptized by John, some have tried to calculate, although with various results, the number baptized. Mr. Thorn estimates the number at two millions, Hibbard at three millions, Goodwin at three hundred thousand, and others make the number even less. They also fix the time during which John must have been engaged in his ministry of baptizing, ranging from six to twelve months. Deducting one wintry season, forty-three Sabbaths wherein it was unlawful for John to baptize according to Jewish custom, and allowing six hours each day for actual work in immersing, it is estimated that he must have actually immersed one in about every two seconds of time! Hence, they exclaim, *Impossible!* **IMPOSSIBLE!!** and infer that the alternative—sprinkling or pouring—is the only mode possible under the given circumstances.

Such reasoning is more fanciful than truthful.

It overlooks *two* fundamental facts. The language used by Matthew, to express the number baptized, must be understood either in a (1) *literal* or a (2) *figurative* sense. If the expression, "Jerusalem," "all Judea," and "all the region round about Jordan," is a hyperbole, it is simply childish to subject it to strict arithmetical calculation. When John says that the things which Jesus did while on earth, if they were all written out, "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," we might try to compute the millions upon millions of volumes necessary to verify the literal statement of the evangelist, until everybody would exclaim, *Impossible! Impossible!!* But a hyperbolical expression, whenever used, is an emphatic way of saying "*a great many.*" No doubt, John baptized a *great many*. A thousand, or a million, might be figuratively expressed as a great many; but how can we give any definite figures to a number expressed by a figure of speech?

But even upon the supposition that the language of Matthew is to be explained literally (which, however, no one would attempt to do), there cannot be produced scriptural evidence that so great a number could not all have been immersed. Leaders of great religious movements

usually have their assistants, or subordinates, so that they do not perform all the work personally, but are aided instrumentally by others in the administration of their office, as in the case of Moses (Ex. 18: 25, 26) and Samuel (I. Sam. 8: 1). It is said that Jesus and Paul baptized, not with their own hands, but with those authorized by them to do the work for them. So the assertion that the multitudes were baptized “by” or “of” him (John), may be like another, where it is said that “Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him in prison,” when it is understood that Herod was the authoritative cause, not the executing officer, of the arrest. We have numerous instances in scripture of a company under a leader, assisting and uniting in the work of his office.

Who, then, is prepared to prove that if John baptized more than would have been possible for himself to do in the time allotted, he was *not* amply assisted by his disciples as deputies, so as to render the work comparatively easy? The exaggerated “impossibilities” of immersion, which many anti-Baptist writers love to dwell upon, are huge myths manufactured out of fanciful material, without any real foundation at all.

But in disproving the impossibility of immersion, we have not proved that the people were

immersed; for Dr. Carson well says (p. 73), “In proving that a thing is not impossible, there is no obligation to prove that any of the possible ways of solution did actually occur. The bare possibility of existence is enough”; and the way is open for the employment of any mode.

The question then remains, “How did John baptize his followers?” Perhaps he immersed them, perhaps he sprinkled water upon them, perhaps he sprinkled some and dipped others, as was most convenient, or as each applicant desired or preferred. Neither mode was *impossible*, or *unlawful*, or *unreasonable*. Where scripture is totally silent concerning controverted points, and gives insufficient data upon which to base a conclusion, it is folly to pretend to prove from scripture a preconceived notion, handed down to us by tradition. Such are our notions about John’s mode of baptizing.

Example B.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS BY JOHN.

This example, philologically and critically considered, is one of the strong, illustrative evidences in the Bible in favor of immersion, as will be seen from the following texts: “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up [*ἀνέβη, anebe*] straightway out of the water [*ἀπὸ τοῦ νεροῦ, apo tou udatos*].”

(Matt. 3: 16.) “And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan [*εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην, eis ton Iordanen.*]” (Mark 1: 9.)

Some light is thrown upon the import of the word *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*) by its adjuncts or accompanying conjunctions.

The preposition *ἐν* (*en*), primarily meaning *in*, never has the meaning *into*, except when following a verb of motion; it indicates a state of rest *in* the place whither the motion is directed. The Jews, in writing Greek, often used the Greek *ἐν* (*en*), as equivalent to the Hebrew *בְּ*, where the classic Greek simply used the dative case, without any preposition. Hence, Matthew, Mark, and Luke often used it with the instrumental dative; and in Matt. 3: 11, “I indeed baptize you *with* water [*ἐν ὕδατι, en udati*] unto repentance [*εἰς μετάνοιαν, eis metanoian*],” indicates the element used in John’s baptism, namely, “*with water*,” rather than a position in the element, namely, *in water*. The phrase, *ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ* (*en to Iordane*), simply signifies position in *Jordan*; whether in the Jordan dale, on the bank of the inner channel, or *in* the water of the river, who can tell? And if any one could decide the question of exact position, who will tell us in what way the water was applied, as

expressed by the words *ἐν ὑδατι* (*en udati*)? This use of the preposition, of course, applies to John's baptism.

But in the case of Christ's baptism we have the word *εἰς* (*eis*), instead of *ἐν* (*en*), with the accusative *Ἰωρδάνην* (*Iordanen*), “was baptized of John *in* or *into* the Jordan [*εἰς τὸν Ἰωρδάνην, eis ton Iordanen*].” This, in connection with the phrase *ἐκ τοῦ ὑδατος* (*ek tou udatos*), seems to describe a case of immersion. It is, at least, the *only* example in scripture in which this grammatical construction connects the word baptize with water in a way that looks like an intention to express immersion.

The Baptists seem to triumph over this as a clear and decisive case in their favor; and Dr. Carson says, “Mark 1: 9, then, itself decides the controversy. It is *into* the Jordan; and nothing but into the Jordan it can be. . . . There is not in Europe, there never was in existence, a great scholar, who would deny that Jesus Christ was immersed in the Jordan.”

Strong as is this argument favoring our Savior's immersion, it is, nevertheless, vulnerable at several points. Against the boasted infallibility of the above argument, there are a few passages in scripture where *εἰς* (*eis*) occurs in the same grammatical construction as in Mark 1: 9, that do not

admit of the sense *in* or *into*; such as John 11: 32: “She fell down *at* his feet [*εἰς τὸν πόδας αὐτοῦ*, *eis tous podas autou*].” Here the sense of *in* or *into* is impossible. In John 20: 4, 5, it is said, “One came *to* the sepulcher [*εἰς τὸ μνῆμεῖον*, *eis to mnemeion*], yet went he *not in*,” and in the Revised Version the phrase *εἰς τὸ μνῆμεῖον*, is rendered “*toward the tomb*.” Here it is expressly stated in the text that the motion was not *into*, but *toward*, or *to the margin of* the tomb.

Now, when certain rules of syntax admit of exceptions in examples of like construction, who can tell whether or not Mark 1: 9 may not also be one of the exceptions, and may, perhaps, mean that Jesus was baptized *at Jordan*, without implying that he was *in the water*? This rendering would not be inconsistent with *ἀπὸ ὑδατος* (*apo udatos*), “went up straightway *from the water*,” since *ἀπὸ* (*apo*) is usually translated *from*, not *out of*. Dr. Carson, in his work on baptism, p. 126, himself says, “I admit, the proper translation of *ἀπὸ* is *from*, and not *out of*. . . . I perfectly agree with Mr. Ewing, that *ἀπὸ* would have its meaning fully verified, if they had only gone down to the edge of the water.” But his argument is, “If baptism had not been immersion, there could be no adequate cause alleged for going to the river”;

but this logic can easily be counterpoised by another; namely, if going to the *river* is a reason for immersion on account of the “much water,” then *not going to the river* on many other occasions of baptism, is also a reason for sprinkling or pouring on account of little water. One argument neutralizes the other. Says Dr. Robert Wilson, “Out of nine or ten localities specified in the New Testament, as the scenes of the administration of baptism, only two, *Ænon* and *Jordan*, possessed a liberal supply of water. Much water is the exception; little water is the rule.” It is doubtful whether Dr. Wilson’s statement as to the quantity of water in Palestine can be verified; but the mentioning or not mentioning of water and its quantity, can furnish only a feeble argument on mode of baptism, since without formal statement, it is understood by all that *water* is always necessary to ritual Christian baptism (though its *quantity* be a matter of dispute), no matter whether or not any water is mentioned in the sacred narrative.

Besides, in the beginning of the Christian Church, the apostles had no houses in which to preach and baptize; where else could they preach and baptize but in the open air and beside streams of water?

All that the scripture affirms concerning the mode of Christ's baptism is, that he went *eis* (*eis*), AT, TO, or INTO, the river; and came up straight-way *apo* (*apo*), OUT OF, or FROM, the water. Anything different from this inspired statement is imaginary—taking from, or adding to, the sacred word. The original allows the following latitude of meaning, and no more: He was either in the water, or beside the water. If in the water, we do not have the least shadow of information how deep in, whether he was put under the water *in toto*, or stood at the river's margin, or within the stream, and had water poured or sprinkled over him. With this information given by Mark, we must rest satisfied. Our curiosity to know for certain in what particular way Christ was baptized, can never be gratified. And, surely, this is a matter of small moment. If it had any importance whatever in our concern, or in the economy of grace, or the role of Christian duty, the Lord undoubtedly would have revealed it, and not left us to grope in the dark and guess at what he deemed cardinal in our salvation.

To be consistent, we dare not fix the meaning of *eis* (*eis*), except from the connection in which it is used, and the circumstances of which are sufficiently known to warrant a certain meaning out

of the many meanings assignable to it. If we take the position that *eis* always and necessarily means into, then Jesus came *into* Jerusalem when he was as far off as Bethphage and the Mount of Olives (Matt. 21: 1); then Peter went *into* the sea, when he was commanded to go only *to* the sea (Matt. 17: 27). If, on the other hand, *eis* always and necessarily means *at* or *near*, then the sinner will be cast *at* or *near* hell, and not *into* it (Matt. 5: 29); then men put new wine *at* or *near* old bottles, not *into* them (Matt. 9: 17); and then Noah entered *beside* or *at* the ark, instead of *into* it (Matt. 24: 38). To limit *eis* to only *one* meaning, would involve us in endless absurdities.

Art furnishes us with many fanciful representations of Christ's baptism. In a fresco in the Crypt of St. Lucina, the oldest part of the Roman catacomb of St. Callistus, is a picture whose antiquity is generally assigned, by leading authorities, to a date prior to the close of the second century. Christ is unclothed, stepping up from the water, which reaches a little above the knees, and his hand clasped by another clad in a tunic, and standing on a bank, or shore. In the air above, hovers a dove with a leaf in its mouth. In the church in Cosmedin, at Ravenna, is preserved a Mosaic, which was erected in the year A. D. 401.

It represents our Savior standing on the margin of the Jordan, partially in the water, and John, standing on a rock projecting from the bank, and from a shell in his right hand, pouring water on the Redeemer's head.

Forming the center piece of the dome of an Arian baptistry, at Ravenna, which was built and decorated in 454 after Christ, we have another mosaic representation of the baptism of Jesus. As in the former, he is standing partially in the water, and John, from a rock above, is pouring out water on his head. In the church on the Via Ostiensis, at Rome, was a picture on a plate of brass, partly engraved and partly in relief. In this picture, Christ is not even in the water, but standing near the stream, while John, with a shell, is pouring water on his head.

All such ideal creations are unreliable. They may have been suggested to artists by unfaithful translations of the scripture narrative, or false historical representations, like the horns of Michael Angelo's Moses, which were suggested by Jerome's erroneous translation of the words descriptive of Moses' countenance when he came down from the flaming mount. In Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint, Moses' face was called *cornua*, radiant or rayed, which Jerome incorrectly rendered *cornuta*,

meaning horned. A similar instance occurs in Heb. 3: 4. "He had horns coming out of his hand," is rendered correctly by Noyes, "Rays stream forth from his hand," it being common in Arabic to call the first rays of the rising sun horns, as a poetic expression for beams or rays of light. Accordingly, Angelo represents a couple of horns arising, strangely enough, out of Moses' forehead. The same error is presented in many of the old paintings, which portray the great Jewish legislator with fans of light spreading outward and upward from the brow. We need not wonder how and why so many unscriptural notions of the manner of Christ's baptism have gained currency in different ages, and among different people. History, poetry, and art, in their most brilliant triumphs of achievements, often pervert the simple truth. A lie, says an old proverb, will go round the world while Truth is pulling his boots on. The same is true of a mistake; and when once it gets possession of the world, it seems to have a perennial life. Jerome could never have imagined that that false translation would guide every artist's brush and every sculptor's chisel until the end of time.

The modern searcher after truth must brush away the tinsel of art and the dust of centuries,

and come to the original fount, the pure uncorrupted document of inspiration. Doing this candidly and with unbiased faith, we do not see how a doctrine of mode can be successfully established from the evangelists' description of Christ's baptism. Looking to our great Example for an example of the mode in which he received the ordinance, we look in vain.

But even if the actual mode of his personal baptism could be ascertained, it could be of little benefit to us, since we could not be expected to follow him in his mode, any more than we are following his example in delaying baptism till the thirtieth year, keeping the passover, fasting forty days and forty nights after baptism. He received the rite in a different name, and for a different purpose, than we do.¹ Our obligation to baptize rests upon the commission of Christ to his apostles after the resurrection, and not upon his example at Jordan.

Example C.

BAPTISM OF THREE THOUSAND ON THE DAY OF
PENTECOST.

This for many years has been a noted battlefield for controversy between the enemies and

1. See Part I., Chap. V., pp. 16, 17, 18.

friends of immersion. The longer the discussion continues, the more difficult becomes the solution. Every new effort made on either side is a deviation from the original question, so that of late the point at issue has been shifted, and the dispute of the present day is not so much about the immersion or non-immersion of the three thousand, but whether this was an occasion of real *spiritual* baptism, or of ritual *water* baptism. If it were evident that this was an example of the former kind, the heated controversy about its mode, the supply of water in and about Jerusalem, and the absurdity of dipping so great a number must at once stop as being of no practical interest.

Dr. James W. Dale and Dr. William Hamilton, two of the latest and most reliable authors on baptism, interpret verses 38–41 of the second chapter of Acts, to mean the moral regeneration and spiritual baptism by the Holy Ghost of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, without having any reference to symbolic water baptism.

The following are considerations in their favor:

1. The New Testament speaks of two kinds of baptism—ritual and spiritual.
2. The spiritual baptism was foretold by John the Baptist: “I indeed baptize you *with water* unto repentance. . . . He shall baptize you *with*

the Holy Ghost, and with fire"; and also Joel: "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy . . . and on my servants and my handmaids I will pour out my Spirit . . . and whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." As this was the first sermon preached under Christianity, Peter, no doubt, had these promises in mind as being fulfilled, when he said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise [the pouring out of the Holy Ghost] is unto you, and to your children."

3. The word "baptize," in verses 38 and 41 of Acts, chapter 2, has no mention of water connected with it, and may be used in the same sense as in verse 5, chapter 1.

4. We have no account that all the converts to Christianity in the primitive Church received ritual baptism. "Much people was added unto the Lord"—"daily" those who were being saved, not by ritual, but saving baptism of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. At least, we are not informed in scripture whether those who were spiritually baptized on the day of Pentecost also

received its emblematic representation in the form of water baptism.

But if Dr. Dale's interpretation of Acts 2: 38, 41, excluding the water symbol from the Pentecostal baptism spoken of by Peter, could never be established, we still would be unable to decide in what mode the ritual water baptism of the three thousand was administered.

The most successful attempt toward modalism in this example, like that of the first example, has been made by the Pedobaptists in favor of aspersion or of affusion, by endeavoring to elaborate on the impracticability and impossibility of immersing so many in a few hours. They argue:

1. The time for the performance of the ceremony was very short. Peter commenced his sermon the third hour in the day—9:00 A. M. He must have preached, at least, about one hour; for in addition to what is recorded of his sermon, it is stated that “he exhorted and testified with *many other words.*” Many preliminaries, such as arrangements for baptism, clothing, etc., might require about four hours of preparation. Then he commenced to baptize at 1:00 P. M., the day closing at 6:00 P. M. In five hours, then, twelve apostles had to immerse three thousand persons, which would allow each apostle a little over a

minute's time to baptize one person. The conclusion from such calculations is, that the apostles had no physical strength sufficient to immerse so large a number in so short a time.

To all this it may be answered: *First*, that there is no evidence that these converts were *all* baptized in *one* day. *Second*, if all were baptized in one day, there is no evidence that the apostles were not assisted by the seventy, or the one hundred and twenty disciples already belonging to the infant Church. If the twelve apostles had the right to bestow apostolic authority upon Matthias, they also could invest their followers with the right of assisting them in the manual labor of baptizing. *Third*, if the apostles were not thus assisted, though somewhat burdensome, it would by no means have been impossible for them to accomplish the work. History has recorded many parallel instances of as great, and even greater, rapidity of baptizing. It is well known that Chrysostom immersed about three thousand on the 16th of April, A. D. 404, though twice interrupted. Bishop Remigus immersed Clovis and three thousand of his subjects, aided by his presbyters. Mr. John Fox informs us that Austin, the monk, baptized and christened ten thousand Saxons, or Anglos, in the West River that is

called Swale beside York, on a Christmas day. It is said that Francis Xavier baptized fifteen thousand in one day. If it be objected to the fairness of these examples from early history, on the ground that we do not know whether these baptisms were immersions, inasmuch as the ancients and Church of Rome did not always impose immersion, we can produce modern examples from the Baptist missions where multitudes were *immersed* at the rate of one a minute, and among experts, in even less time. Dr. Downie, of the Telugu Baptist Mission, says that it took six persons nine hours to baptize two thousand two hundred and twenty-two, and only two were baptizing at a time, they being relieved, when tired, by others. Elder Joseph Knapp immersed sixty in Kenka Lake in twenty-eight minutes, without undue haste. A little practical knowledge of immersing will convince any one that the great baptism on the day of Pentecost, if done by immersion, would not be so difficult a task as many inexperienced and unobserving writers would imagine. "There is hardly an able-bodied Baptist minister in the country who would not be only too willing to be one of twelve to immerse three thousand almost any afternoon." The attempt, then, of proving that three thousand could not have been immersed in one day is a failure.

2. The Pedobaptists again argue that *scarcity* of water in and about Jerusalem, would have been one of the greatest obstacles to immersion. It is said that Jerusalem was a mountain city, with no living stream, or natural sheet of standing water, within fifteen miles of its location, sufficient to immerse a man. They speak of the pool of *Bethesda*, or Bethsaida and Bethzatha, as in the margin of the Revised Version, as a deep, oblong excavation, about seventy-five feet deep, a receptacle for filth from the drainage of sheep washing, blood of sacrifices, and offal from the cleansing of the temple, rendering it, therefore, impracticable and unfit for immersing.¹ They say that outside the city water was very scarce. The brook *Kedron* was dry nine months in a year, and especially in the months of May and June, sometime during which the baptism of the three thousand occurred. The pool of *Siloam* is described as a feeble, irregular stream from under the wall of the city, and pouring into a deep, oblong pit, about nineteen feet deep. The upper and lower pools of *Gihon*, and the pool of *Hezekiah*, were some distance

1. Suffice to say, as discrediting the authenticity of this description, that not all travelers and explorers agree in identifying the location of this pool, and in their descriptions of it; and as to its fitness for bathing purposes, we have the testimony of sacred Scripture in John 5: 1-7, that persons were in the habit of stepping or being carried into the pool of Bethesda for the cure of various diseases.

from the city, and all dry, except in the rainy seasons; and that *Solomon's pools* were about twelve miles from the city, and the Jordan even sixteen or eighteen miles distant. The anti-immersionists cannot find sufficient water in or near the city in which any person could swim, and therefore conclude, from the scarcity and impurity of its supply, that baptismal immersion would be out of the question.

This historical parade about the “scarcity” of water in Jerusalem in the times of the apostles, is an empty *ignis fatuus*, resulting from presumptive ignorance, or dogmatic prejudice. If there ever was a place on the face of the earth about which there need be no question concerning the supply of water and conveniences of its use for immersion, in the apostolic age, that place was Jerusalem. History is abounding in testimony that ancient Jerusalem was abundantly supplied with water. Eusebius, of the fourth century, quotes a writer earlier than himself as saying, “The whole city flowed with water, so that even the gardens were irrigated of these flowing waters out of the city.” Tacitus, of the fourth century, refers to Jerusalem as “a fountain of perennial water, mountains hollowed out underneath; also, fish pools and cisterns, rain water being pre-

served." Canon Williams, a Church of England clergyman, long a resident and a careful student of the Holy City, says, "There is a singular agreement among all authors, sacred and profane, on this fact, that the Holy City had an abundance of water within its circuit, while the neighborhood was scarcely supplied, or rather altogether arid." Dr. Trail, another clergyman of the Church of England, and an editor of the works of Josephus, says of Jerusalem, that "perhaps upon no city of the ancient world had greater cost been bestowed, or more skill shown in securing for it an unfailing supply of water." The modern researches of Dr. Barclay and Captain Wilson, and others, have shown the ruins of cisterns and pools and aqueducts in and about Jerusalem, which justify the claims of its wonderful supply of water in the days of old. Every traveler in the East can testify that the Orientals are in the habit of bathing in and drinking from the same pools and streams, and the inspired writer tells us how persons were in the habit of washing in the pool of Siloam.

The protest against the immersion of the three thousand, on the plea of the "shortness of time" and "scarcity of water," then, should forever cease.

The result of our finding, then, is that a correct

understanding of the time, place, and circumstances of the baptism of the three thousand, will convince any one that immersion would not have been absurd or impossible. But this is no more an argument in favor of immersion than it is in favor of affusion or aspersion. It only presents the true nature of the case, that, in reality, there existed no obstruction in the way of practicing either mode, but leaves the apostles free and unembarrassed to exercise their own pleasure or convictions in this respect. We have not the least authority from scripture interpretation, sacred or prof^e history, for the support of any theory of modalism derived from the baptism of the three thousand. *All we know is, that they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, either ritually or spiritually.*

If convenience rather than conscientious *theory* were the test of mode, we can see a reason for sprinkling. Dr. William Hamilton cites the following example of baptism in the Sandwich Islands, showing how easily a large number can be baptized in a short time: "In the afternoon of the first Sunday of July, 1838, one thousand seven hundred and five men, women, and children were baptized, and two thousand four hundred communicants sat down at the table of the Lord.

The great crowd of people at the morning service had been dismissed. Down through the middle aisle of the house are seated, first, the original members of the Church, perhaps fifty in number. The missionary then calls upon the head-man of each village to bring forward his people. With note-book in hand, he carefully selects the converts who have been previously accepted. They have been for many weeks at the station, for instruction and examination. The multitude of candidates are then seated upon the earthen floor, in close rows, with space enough between for one to walk. There is prayer and singing; and lest any should trust in the external rite, an explanation, made many times before, is given anew of the baptism they are now to receive. Then with a basin of water in his hand, the pastor, rapidly and reverently, passes back and forth along the silent rows, and every head receives the sealing ordinance. When all have been thus touched, he advances to the front, and, raising his hand, pronounces the hallowed words, ‘I baptize you all into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.’ How impressive! How simple! How easy for one missionary, in this way, to baptize nearly two thousand people in an afternoon.”

Example D.

BAPTISM OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH.

It is said in Acts 8: 38, 39, “And he [Philip] commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into [*εἰς*, *eis*, *to* or *into*] the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up [*ἐκ*, *ek*] *out of* the water,” etc.

Here we have a construction almost like that in “Example B,” where Christ’s baptism is treated. Instead of the one phrase in “Example B,” “was baptized in or into Jordan,” we have here two acts expressed: First, going down *εἰς* (*eis*), to, or into, the water; and second, the baptizing of the eunuch by Philip. Again, instead of using the word *ἀπὸ* (*apo*), *out of*, or *from*, in expressing Christ’s act of departure from the scene of baptism, we have here another word, *ἐκ* (*ek*), which usually, but not always, means *out of*, to tell us how the eunuch departed from the place of his baptism.

Dr. Carson, p. 130, says, “This is the distinction between *ἀπὸ* and *ἐκ*. The former denotes the point of departure in whatever part of the object that point is found; the latter *always* supposes that the point of departure is *within* the object.” But Dr. Carson so often uses that sweeping word

“*always*,” when he should modestly substitute *usually* or *sometimes*. It is easy to point out exceptions to his infallible, universal “*always*.” See Acts 12: 7, where it is said that the chains fell (*ἐκ, ek*) *off from* (surely not *out of*) Peter’s hands; and in Acts 28: 3, 4, we read that a viper came out of the fire, and fastened on Paul’s hand, “and when the barbarians saw the beast (*ἐκ, ek*) *on* his hand,” etc. (not *out of* his hand).

But if we allow that *ek* in this case means *out of*, as expressing a point of departure *within* the water, we have not thereby proved a case of *immersion*. Many of us have gone down into the middle of a body of water, and come up *out of* its very midst without diving, or going down *under* the water. If, according to Baptists, the prepositions *εἰς* (*eis*) and *ἐκ* (*ek*), as well as *βαπτίζω* (*baptizo*), both signify *immersion*, then the eunuch was baptized *twice*, for both went down (*εἰς*) into the water, “AND he baptized [immersed] him”; or if *εἰς* (*eis*) and *ἐκ* (*ek*), independent of *baptizo*, signify *immerse*, then Philip, the baptizer, was also immersed, for “they went down both [*εἰς*] *into* the water, both Philip and the eunuch,” and they (Philip and the eunuch) came (*ἐκ*) *up out of* the water. The going in and the coming out apply to both.

What incongruities arise from a strained effort to force a meaning out of a scripture passage, which is not at all inherent or apparent in the language used! Let us stop sweating over the useless task of making easy things appear hard. We can easily prove that the eunuch was baptized with water; but what a stupendous, yea, super-human, undertaking to prove that he was baptized by immersion, or affusion, or aspersion! He evidently was baptized in this, that, or the other mode; but WHICH? That is the question—the unsolved and unsolvable mystery.

Example E.

SAUL'S BAPTISM.

This example is often used in support of sprinkling, because he was afflicted with blindness, and there is no mention of going to any water; but after receiving his sight, he immediately “arose [if not denoting, arose from his *bed*, is, *stood up* and made himself ready], and was baptized” (Acts 9: 18).

This may not have been a case of ritual water baptism. Neither in this place, where Luke describes the original transaction, nor in chapter 22, verse 16, where Paul himself rehearses the same matter, is there any mention of Ananias or any

one else baptizing him. In both cases the verb *baptizo* is in the middle voice, implying that Saul *baptized himself*; or, in a reflective sense, let thyself be baptized; that is, while praying he received the anointing of the Holy Ghost, was cleansed of his sins, and therefore was, perhaps, only *spiritually* baptized, as were the other disciples upon their conversion on the day of Pentecost.

But on the supposition of a ritual baptism, it is, at least, a useless waste of time and study to discuss the mode of Saul's baptism. As well might we try to decide whether he sat, or stood, or lay, during his blindness at Damascus, what the thorn in his flesh was, or whether he was a bachelor or a father during all his natural life-time.

Example F.

BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS AND HIS FRIENDS.

The next instance of baptism recorded in the New Testament, is an account of its first introduction among the Gentiles; namely, Cornelius, a devout man, and his kinsmen and friends assembled with them at Cæsarea to hear the preaching of Peter. These evidently received the real spiritual baptism, as well as its sign by water; for Peter, in Acts 11: 15, 16, compares it to the

Spirit's baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us *at the beginning*. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." In the first account of this transaction in Acts 10: 47, Luke plainly intimates that this small assembly also received water baptism *after* the Holy Ghost had fallen on them; for Peter said, "Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

But what about the mode? Is there any way of striking a vein of information, in this example, that will lead to the discovery of *how* Cornelius and his friends were baptized with water? All we know is that Peter "*commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord*." We do not even know if the command was ever carried out, or if they ever were ritually baptized; and if so, we know not *when*, or *where*, or *how*. Inspiration does not say a word upon these mooted questions. If they were baptized immediately and in Cornelius' house, the inference (not proof) might be that they were sprinkled; if they went out to some stream in order to fulfill Peter's command,

the inference (not proof) might be that they were immersed. If we could know the *place*, we could not know the *mode*. Any one, upon a moment's reflection, can see what kind of a conclusion can be obtained by building one hypothesis upon another.

Other Miscellaneous Examples.

The other cases of baptism in the New Testament may be grouped together, as nearly all alike in the circumstances that bear upon the question of mode, and admitting of arguments which are common to them all. The examples are:

1. The Samaritans who, upon the preaching of Philip, "were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8: 12, 16).
2. Lydia and her household. It is simply affirmed of her that "she was baptized, and her household" (Acts 16: 15).
3. The jailer at Philippi, after his sudden conversion, and the preaching of Paul in his house, "was baptized, he and all his, straight-way" (Acts 16: 33).
4. "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18: 8).
5. John's disciples at Ephesus, learning that

their first baptism was invalid, “were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19: 5).

6. Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas (I. Cor. 1: 14, 16).

It is proper to observe:

1. That these, probably, were all symbolical water baptisms. The subjects of the first example were ritually baptized upon a profession of their faith. “When they believed,” etc., “they were baptized,” and before the Holy Ghost was “fallen upon” them. In the second case, Paul was preaching unto the women assembled by the *river side*, in which assembly Lydia of Thyatira, in Asia, a Jewish proselyte, was an auditor, and, no doubt, was immediately baptized at the river which flowed by the *proseucha*, after yielding her heart unto the Lord. In the third example, the jailer first *washed* the stripes of Paul and Silas, which act may have suggested to both Paul and the converted jailer, the ordinance of that other *spiritual washing* of regeneration, as symbolized by water baptism. Like the eunuch, he might have said, “See, water! what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Crispus and the Corinthians all first exercised saving faith in Christ, and then were baptized. The professing disciples at Ephesus had received John’s baptism into repentance,

but had not yet heard of a Holy Ghost. Then "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," and after the laying on of hands, the Holy Ghost came upon them. As this baptism preceded the affusion of the Holy Spirit, it must have been ritual. Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas are affirmed to have been baptized by Paul, which mention of human instrumentality alone is enough to prove its ceremonial character.

2. The historical circumstances of these ceremonial baptisms, so far as recorded in scripture, give us no more insight into the vexed question of mode than any of the former examples already considered. The quantity of water used in administering these ordinances is a matter of dispute, and a fruitless controversy in ecclesiastical ceremony.

3. As the word *baptizo* (the only term expressive of Christian baptism) has no fixed modal signification, we can obtain no information on mode from this source.

We have now reviewed the New Testament examples of baptism, usually cited and claimed as evident illustrations of some particular mode of baptizing, and found them all neutral upon the question of mode; and, therefore, we assert that the true position is expressed in our second

sub-proposition: MODALISM CANNOT BE PROVED FROM ANY SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLE OF THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

It is impossible for us to know in what manner the New Testament Christians were baptized. A happy reticence pervades the scripture narrative, and such uncertainty is thrown around every inspired description of baptism, as defies the most diligent effort of investigation to settle. What, now, shall we do with our perplexity? If scriptural history has nothing to say about mode; if the many attempted interpretations and inferences of the language of inspiration used are unreliable speculations; if the word baptize is ambiguous in respect to mode, where shall we go to for a "sure word of testimony"? Who will tell us how the primitive Christians, spoken of in the Bible, were baptized, or what is the only mode of baptizing *now*? Let us have enough intellectual humility and candor to say, "I DO NOT KNOW."

CHAPTER IV.

PRECEPTS AND TEACHINGS ON MODE EXAMINED.

Sub-Proposition III.

MODALISM CANNOT BE PROVED BY ANY PRECEPT OR TEACHING OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

There is no Bible precept, positive or moral, direct or indirect, that enjoins any particular mode of baptism. If there were, it would be of greater authority than the meaning of the word used to designate it ($\betaαπτίζω$), or any clearly authenticated scriptural example on record, or both combined. Nothing can outweigh a precept, or the force of a scriptural injunction. Whenever we discover a "thus saith the Lord," all logomachy and illustration must pass for naught. If scripture anywhere teaches that mode is essential in baptism, the controversy is forever at an end. Nothing can bind the conscience that is not commanded nor forbidden by the word of God. Nothing is obligatory which God has not enjoined. The scripture is our rule of faith. Whatever our formula, the Bible is the test—the court to which it must always and finally be brought. This applies to

creeds, catechisms, and standards of every description. Hence, if modalism is not a doctrine of the Bible, but a doctrine of men, no ecclesiastical body has a right to impose it on any man. It is as much a duty to resist this non-biblical notion of mode as it is to refuse the worship of the Virgin Mary, or the dicta of the so-called infallible Pope.

Modalism manifests a tendency toward Romanism by enjoining a practice which is not at all taught in our received canon of inspiration, or by regarding some man, or class of men, as infallible interpreters of the Scriptures, who are to dictate to the Church what she is to believe and practice. There is no more scriptural authority for modalism in baptism, than there is for the supremacy of the bishop of Rome, the perpetuity of the apostleship, propitiatory sacrifice of the mass, immaculate conception of the Virgin, transubstantiation, purgatory, or any other tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. We are to "prove all things" (I. Thess. 5: 21), not by private judgment, but by the Word. The Scriptures are not of "private interpretation" (II. Peter 1: 20), when left without the interpretation of the Spirit who gave it.

It is said that every man has a pope in his

own bosom to lord over God's heritage; but whenever men's opinions become laws to bind the conscience of others, are they usurping the inalienable rights of their brethren. In matters of indifference, duty is a question of private judgment. If, then, none of the passages usually quoted in favor of this or that mode can be legitimately used in such an application, we have a right to use *any* mode that may appear the most convenient or desirable, asking no questions for conscience's sake.

There is, of course, no precept that plainly or directly enjoins any mode of baptism; but as several passages of sacred writ are understood by many to refer indirectly or inferentially to modalism, we will review them separately.

1. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Revised Version: "Which also after a true likeness [*margin, in the antitype*] doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation [*margin, or inquiry or appeal*] of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I. Peter 3: 21).

Upon this scripture, Baptists say, "They who were in the ark were deeply immersed." The person who can see immersion in the antitype, namely, the floating ark in the days of the flood, has an extra faculty of perceiving which the generality of men do not possess. The ark which contained Noah and his family surely was not immersed in the water for one moment, but was borne up on the water, and sprinkled with the falling rain. The above passage is designed to teach the *significance* of Christian baptism, without any reference to *mode*. In the saving of Noah, two things interposed by contraposition—*water*, and *the ark*; the first, an instrument of destruction; the second, an instrument of safety; similar to the waters of the Red Sea, which threatened the destruction of the Israelites; and the dividing asunder, as a work of their deliverance. After such a likeness doth Christian baptism now save us. The water, as an emblem of the destructive power of sin, applied to us in the name of our great Deliverer, is a sign that we have passed from *death unto life*, as the baptism of the flood transferred Noah from the old world of iniquity to the new and renovated earth, from the companionship of the wicked to communion with God. Christ came "by water and blood" (I. John

5: 6), as well as by the cross—all emblems of destruction and death. But it is only as the cross of Christ is associated with his resurrection, as the blood is contrasted with the life, so likewise was it through the water of the drowning flood, necessitating the building of the ark of God, that salvation was obtained for Noah. It is not the sign, but the thing signified, that saves us. On this passage, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown say, “The antitypical water; namely, baptism saves you also, not of itself, nor the mere material water, but the spiritual thing conjoined with it, repentance and faith, of which it is the sign and seal.”

Again, the Jewish baptisms were lustrations for the purifying of the flesh; but Christian baptism, says Peter, is not limited to this efficacy, “(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

This interpretation of the passage is patent from the context, and from the analogy of the figure used to indicate the saving of Noah, and the import of Christian baptism. But he who goes out of the way to seek in this passage a mode of baptism, will not find it, though he search with tears and with a lighted candle.

2. "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" (R. V., Rom. 6: 3, 4). Also, the passage, "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (R. V., Col. 2: 12).

These passages from Romans and Colossians, by being misunderstood, have done more to create the doctrine of immersion than any other texts found in the New Testament. From the expressions, "baptized into his death," "buried with him through baptism," it is inferred that we are to be buried with Christ by baptism into *water*. If in these words, "buried with him through baptism into death," we are to understand a literal water burial, why not also understand a literal, physical death? Besides, an analogy between immersion and the death and burial of Christ would be unfortunately fatal; for Christ remained "*three days*" in the grave, and such an interval of water immersion would be equal to drowning—a literal death, as well as a literal water burial. Christ

died on the cross; but crucifixion and immersion are not similar.

Again, the word “bury” can suggest no uniform mode; for some nations bury by placing the dead body in a grotto, either a natural excavation or a bed hewn in the rocks, some by covering them up in the ground, some by burning, embalming, hanging on a tree, and among the Indians, by placing it on a platform above the ground. How can such diversity of burials be used to teach all people the uniform mode of immersion?

“Bury,” in these passages, is synonymous with Dr. Dale’s definition of *baptizo*, as indicating complete effect, without any reference to the manner in which the effect is brought about, so that “bury,” in this connection, can no more be made to imply mode than the word baptize can. It is also supposed by some that this “baptism” spoken of is spiritual instead of ritual, since water is nowhere mentioned in the texts. Be it real or symbolic, one thing is certainly clear, that “buried with him,” etc., does not refer to the *mode* of ritual baptism, but is evidently used as a figure of the import or significance of Christian baptism.

What, then, are we to understand by the language, “having been buried with him through baptism”? As a figure, it is beautifully illustra-

tive of the Christian's change from sin unto righteousness, of which Christian baptism is also a sign. Paul, the author of this passage, often compares his spiritual birth to the sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He speaks of sin as "the old man," and of righteousness as "the new man" (Eph. 4: 22, 24). Hence, he says, "I am crucified *with Christ*."

1. As He suffered in the days of His passion, so I suffered in spirit during three days of my penitence, in blindness, and conviction, and prayer, and bitter tears, until in the agony of my soul, I cried out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

2. As Christ suffered until he was *dead*, so I nailed the body of my sin to the cross, and kept crucifying it until it was dead throughout every fiber of the carnal nature. Hence, he says, "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his *death*?"

3. As Christ's crucified body, after death, was buried in a grave, so I not only "killed the body of sin," but laid it deeply in the grave of a pardoned and forgotten past, rolled upon it a big stone of eternal loathing for sin, sealed it with a firm resolve that it shall never more arise, and set about it a guard of watchfulness and prayer, "lest

sin revive and I perish." I am crucified, dead, "buried with him," "baptized into his death."

4. As Christ arose from the grave with a changed, resurrected, spiritualized body, saying, "Behold, I live," so I have emerged from the *debris* of my death and the grave, "*a new creature in Christ Jesus.*" Hence, Paul says of the regenerate Christian: "Ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been *buried with him in baptism*, wherein ye were also raised with him through *faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead*" (R. V., Col. 2: 11, 12). "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" (R. V., Rom. 6: 4). Can anything be more expressive of the new birth?

There is a passage in I. Cor. 15: 29 which, after receiving a multitude of conflicting interpretations, is nevertheless difficult to solve satisfactorily: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"¹ Alford

1. See an article on "Baptism for the Dead," in *American Church Review* (Episcopal), October, 1884, by Rev. Arthur Little.

thinks there is in this passage an allusion to a practice at Corinth of baptizing a living person *in behalf* of a friend who died unbaptized, which Paul used as an argument *ad hominem*, without sanctioning its practice. We have no record, however, that such a practice ever existed in Corinth, but we know that it now prevails among the disciples of Joseph Smith. This Mormon prophet claimed to have solved two perplexing passages,—I. Peter 3: 19 and I. Cor. 15: 29,—and upon them built a doctrine of second probation after death, so that all men who died without hearing his gospel in this life, might, in the region beyond the grave as “spirits in prison,” avail themselves of final salvation through repentance, and faith, and baptism; and as baptism cannot be administered to the departed, Mormonism allows one in the flesh to act as proxy for the penitent and believing spirit, by receiving baptism in his behalf. This is the one “baptized for the dead.” But all scripture teaching is against such interpretation of this obscure passage.

The most probable sense of the passage is that given by Bengel, in his “Gnomon”: “For they are baptized *for the dead* who receive baptism and profess Christianity at that time, when they have set death before their eyes, who are likely every

moment to be added to the general mass of the dead, either on account of the decrepitude of age, or disease, or pestilence, or by martyrdom." It is known that many in the ancient Church put off baptism till near death, and that many primitive Christians, on account of their profession of faith, were daily exposed to peril and martyrdom. Hence, they often were baptized with death staring them in the face.

Now, Paul's argument is, that as baptism was not only a symbol of death unto sin, but also of a resurrection after death, what shall the baptized do, if in the future the dead rise not, but sleep eternally, without an awakening or resurrection? Would not all their hopes be disappointed, their faith vain? For every Christian who was baptized and died in the faith of Christ, also died in the faith of the resurrection. There could be no reward, then, either for the future or the past, if they denied a resurrection.

If "baptized for the dead" has no reference here to *moral* death, it evidently is used in antithesis to a literal *resurrection*, which is also adumbrated in baptism, as well as a *moral* resurrection is taught in Colossians 2: 12. We are baptized in a realization of the new life in Christ, and the anticipation of an immortality vouch-

safed to every one that believeth, who “though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

But while immersion corresponds with the idea of a burying and rising, and may find *a mode* in this analogy of the import of baptism, it can, by no means, find in it *the mode* for all analogies contained in the idea of this ordinance.

Of Paul, and all truly converted people, it may be said, as it was of Christ in the Apostolic Creed, “Suffered under Pontius Pilate [sin]; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day [conversion] he rose.” All this is symbolized in the ordinance of Christian baptism. But to explain the figurative language of Paul in Rom. 6: 3, 4 and Col. 2: 12, as a proof of an unvariable mode of immersion, is not only untenable, but perverse of its plain and true meaning.

3. “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you” (Ezek. 36: 25). “So shall he sprinkle many nations” (Isa. 52: 15; also, Psa. 51: 7; Heb. 9: 13; 10: 22).

Passages like the above are often quoted as proof-texts in favor of the sprinkling method, because this mode is so often spoken of as representing the spiritual benefits signified by baptism.

As baptism is a sign of the purification from sin, and as the Spirit's influence is compared to rain and the dew which falls on the mown grass, it is supposed that the term sprinkling, in the above texts, has special and intentional reference to Christian baptism in the mode of aspersion.

It is admitted that under the Jewish ceremonial law, the purifying of the flesh was performed by sprinkling ashes and water upon the vessels and persons to be cleansed; that the blood sacrifices for sin were expressed by sprinkling; and that in the New Testament the application of the blood of Christ is expressed by the same word. (I. Peter 1: 2 and Heb. 12: 24.) But it should be remembered that theocratical purifications, having the same general import, were effected, also, by language plainly expressing immersion and affusion. The Jews were formally absolved from the taint of uncleanness by ablutions, both of the person and of the defiled garments. *Washing* and *bathing* are well known to have been the mode of many of their purifications.

But there is no logical ground for making any mode of purifying, whether used in a literal or figurative sense, the equivalent to an injunction to employ such mode in the ordinance of Christian baptism. As in “burial” and “resurrection,”

we have a likeness to immersion, so in “sprinkling,” we can see a beautiful analogy between the spiritual and the ritual purifying; but we are looking, not for analogies, but for precepts that make any one particular mode of analogy binding. One mode is about as expressive of the import of baptism as the other. We can combine all the ideas peculiar to its meaning, but not all its *modi operandi*, and therefore one way of observing its ceremony is as good as another.

4. “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring” (Isa. 44: 3). “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit” (Joel 2: 28, 29).

These passages are figurative representations of spiritual baptism received from Jewish ablutions, and do not have any reference to Christian baptism in the mode of pouring. Isaiah, no doubt, had in mind the time when God will satisfy those who hunger and thirst after righteousness with living water, and the *abundant* influence of the

Holy Spirit, which, like “floods,” will be poured out upon men.

Joel is prophesying of the Spirit’s manifestation in the times of the Messiah, when it should abound as in a suspended cloud, and pour its showers upon the sheep of his fold, the Church, which was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2: 17 ff.) The sanctifying influence of the Spirit is often expressed by the *anointing of oil* and the *pouring* of water. Kings and priests were “anointed.” Thus it is seen that Jewish purifications, as well as the renovating influence of the Holy Spirit, were performed in the various modes of sprinkling, pouring, and dipping.

Many other passages are brought into the field of discussion on the question of mode, such as, “Washing of regeneration” (Titus 3: 5), “Except ye be born of water and the Spirit” (John 3: 5), “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4: 5), etc.; but nowhere is a plain, undisputed, unequivocal precept to be found upon the subject. These referred to under our third sub-proposition are supposed to imply mode inferentially, and, therefore, are inconclusive upon the point we are discussing. We therefore conclude that MODALISM CANNOT BE PROVED BY ANY PRECEPT OR TEACHING OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

We have about completed the circle of our discussion on “Mode of Baptism.” The triplet of the foregoing sub-proposition forms the complement of our argument, and are the constituents of our main proposition.

Finally, we feel sure that, when we go to the sacred Scriptures to learn the true mode of baptism; when we, unprejudiced, seek for some instruction upon the debated question; when we examine any or all the baptisms recorded in the Bible; and when we investigate the word baptize in its history and use, we can learn nothing definite, nothing that will warrant us to formulate or adopt a doctrine of uniform mode, to the exclusion of all other modes, and make it binding upon others. When several modes are possible, and no election, or even preference, made of either by the Holy Spirit, we are at liberty to choose according to our own understanding or convenience, and are to accord to every other person the same liberty of conscience. No controversy has been more prolonged, or more evenly balanced by counter-arguments from both sides of the question, than that of modal baptism; because no other creed receives so little support from the sacred Scriptures; and it were time that combatants would retire from the contest, and engage in some more fruitful field of labor.

Our attack has been upon a poorly constructed doctrine—a conclusion built upon three feeble pillars of support; namely, that modalism is implied in the word baptize, that it can be shown in the recorded baptisms of the New Testament, and that it is enjoined in the sacred Scriptures. These three premises we claim to be erroneous, and void of any proof, and therefore are not to be accepted until some better proof be advanced than has hitherto been brought into the field of discussion. This triangular view of the subject covers the arena of controversy. Modern research and discovery have developed nothing new in favor of modalism, but much against it; and adherence to its dogmatism may continue, but argumentative support must and will decline.

Our main proposition, that **SCRIPTURE NOWHERE TEACHES, EITHER BY PHRASEOLOGY, EXAMPLE, OR PRECEPT, THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE MODE OF BAPTISM,** must stand as the only true position on mode of baptism. It is rather a focal concentration of the elements of destruction, which, when applied as an explosive to the foundation of modalism, will shatter and wreck the whole structure of its theory.

The nature of our attitude toward modal baptism is one of negation and protest. The burden of our discussion is a disproving of what we claim

to be an unscriptural dogma; and by applying to it the principles of destructive criticism, we have *proved* that it cannot be proved; and, therefore, leave the subject of mode, where it always was, a matter of voluntary selection in actual practice, as being most *in harmony with the Scriptures*; and for this reason we have defended, as thoroughly scriptural, an article of confession, which says in respect to baptism, “The manner [or mode] of which ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual.”

This is a rule which should be unanimously and universally accepted by the Christian Church, until some one can show us, by unanswerable scriptural argument, that there is only one manner of baptizing the nations. All such efforts thus far have been failures, and all hypotheses laid down, and principles assumed in its favor, are full of uncertainties, fallacies, and fancies.

“Don’t tell me of your *doubts*,” says Goethe, “tell me rather *what you know is true*.”

“Learn well to know how much need not be known;
Our needful knowledge, like our needful food,
Unhedged, lies open in life’s common field.”

—Young, in *Night Thoughts*.

CHAPTER V.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS UPON MODE.

An historical development of the mode of baptism is in harmony with the scriptural development.

However differently people may interpret the Bible, and practice their convictions derived therefrom, as touching the mode of baptism, we know that, from the days of the apostles to the present time, no *strictly* uniform mode was ever adopted or practiced by the Church universal. It seems that Christian teachers always differed, and always will differ, in opinion upon this subject.

We admit that immersion, according to the most eminent historical authority, was the usual and prevalent mode in the ancient Church; but by no means was it universally and unexceptionably practiced.

Neander, in his "History of the Christian Church," vol. I., p. 310, says, "In respect to the form of baptism, it was in conformity with the original institution and the original import of

the symbol, performed by immersion, as a sign of entire baptism into the Holy Spirit, of being entirely penetrated by the same. It was only with the sick, where the necessity required it, that any exception was made; in this case baptism was administered by affusion or sprinkling."

Mr. William Hall, who wrote against the Baptist the best historical vindication of infant baptism, says in his history, vol. II., p. 297, that in the ancient Church the "general and ordinary way was to baptize by immersion, or dipping the person, whether it were an infant or grown man or woman, into water."

Dean Stanley, who is an advocate of sprinkling, in "Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church," p. 117, also testifies that for centuries the usual mode was immersion, sprinkling being resorted to only as exceptional, almost monstrous, cases; while Wharton B. Marriott says:¹ "Triple immersion, that is, thrice dipping the head while standing in the water, was the all but universal rule of the Church in early times. Of this, we find proof in Africa, in Palestine, in Egypt, in Antioch, in Constantinople, and in Cappadocia. For the Roman usage, Tertullian indirectly witnesses in the second century; St. Jerome in the

1. "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," vol. I., p. 161.

fourth; Leo the Great in the fifth; and Pope Pelagius and St. Gregory the Great in the sixth. Lastly, the apostolic canons, so-called, alike in Greek, the Coptic, and the Latin versions, give special injunctions as to this observance, saying that any bishop or presbyter should be deposed who violated this rule."

Prof. Bapheidos, in his "Church History," recently published in Europe, describes the ancient mode as a "threefold immersion (submersion) and emersion, or descent into and ascent from the water," and restricts aspersion to "cases of sickness."

Many such statements might be cited from Church historians, all of which testify to the use of both modes, giving, however, to immersion a pre-eminent preference.

Trine immersion and emersion was not only the general practice of the ancient Church, but at present prevails in all the Eastern churches, and in the State Church of Russia, while sprinkling prevails in the Western churches. The Byzantine Empire absolutely repudiates and ignores every other mode except immersion as essentially invalid, while the Church of England still requires all, except unhealthy subjects of baptism, to be dipped in water.

Dr. Washburn, of Robert College, Constantinople, stated recently, in a letter to Dr. Philip Schaff, of New York, that “the orthodox authorities here declare that no Oriental Church, not under Roman Catholic or Protestant influence, knows any other baptism than trine immersion. When hard pressed, they add ‘*except in cases of necessity*,’ but I could not get them to acknowledge any other necessity than *lack of water*.¹” There is not wanting evidence that the mode of administering the ordinance throughout the East is by immersion, or, at least, by trine affusion over the head, while the catechumen is seated or stands in water up to the elbows. All the Syrian forms prescribe or assume trine immersion and emersion; exceptional cases exist, but only in rare instances, of scarcity of water or ill-health of the subject.

History, then, makes clear this fact, *that in the early Church immersion was the RULE, while pouring or sprinkling was the EXCEPTION.*

Occasionally do we read from the Christian fathers, incidentally recorded, such remarks as, “A little before he suffered, he baptized one of his executors with a *pitcher of water*.¹” Clinic¹ baptism was evidently a matter of frequent occur-

1. κλινικός, *klinikos*, bed-ridden, from κλίνη, *kline*, couch; κλίνειν, *klinein*, to recline. Hence, clinic baptisms are baptisms of subjects upon a sick bed.

rence in the early Church. The Emperor Constantine was baptized by Eusebius, of Nicodemia, lying in his bed, clothed in white. About sixty or seventy years after the apostles, a Jew, while traveling with Christians, fell sick, and desired baptism. Not having water, they sprinkled him three times with sand, of which Dr. Pond says, that his case was reported to the bishop, who decided that the man was baptized, if only he had water poured on him again.

In Routh's "Reliquiae Sacrae," vol. III., p. 48, occurs a passage from Nicephorus: "So that he, expecting to die, asked to receive water (*i. e.*, baptism); and he baptized him upon his couch upon which he lay." Clement of Alexandria says, "This is the custom of the Jews to baptize upon the couch"; and Hilarius says, on I. Tim. 12: 13, "There are not wanting almost daily sick persons who are to be baptized."

But a change took place. After the thirteenth century, under the influence of Thomas Aquinas, the practice of mode became almost reversed. The exception became the rule, and the rule became the exception. Immersion fell into disuse, and sprinkling took its place.

In the second prayer book of King Edward VI. (1552), permission is given, for the first time in

Great Britain, to substitute pouring, if the god-father or godmother testify that the child is weak. Presently, the sprinkling mode gained pre-eminence by the authority of Calvin, who taught that mode was a matter of no importance, and by the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643–1652), which decided, by a close vote of twenty-five to twenty-four, in favor of sprinkling, as more proper than immersion.

It was not until the seventeenth century that the English Baptists first declared immersion essential.¹ Formerly, they allowed other modes of administering the sacrament.

John Smyth, the founder of Arminian Baptists, baptized himself, and then his followers, by affusion.

“Barclay, as quoted by Dexter, p. 318 sq., says that the practice of immersion ‘seems to have been introduced into England [i. e., among the Baptists] 12 September, 1633.’ This was then called ‘a new baptism’ by the Baptists; ‘a new crotchet’ by their opponents. Featly, in his *Dippers Dipt* (1645, p. 187, quoted by Dexter, l. c.), criticises the *Anabaptist confession* of 1644 as ‘wholly soured with the new leaven’ of immersion.”²

1. See Schaff’s “Creed of Christianity,” vol. III., p. 741.

2. Schaff’s “The Oldest Church Manual,” p. 54.

This, then, is a well authenticated conclusion, that for the first thirteen centuries baptism was usually administered by single or trine immersion, but with a large margin for freedom as to the mode of its applications; afterwards affusion or pouring, which was at first the exceptional mode, came gradually into general use in all the Protestant churches, while immersion became the exceptional practice, except among Baptists, who, during the seventeenth century, returned to immersion. But we have a yet stronger historical evidence in favor of liberalism, in the testimony of the recently discovered manuscript by Bishop Philotheos Bryennios, in the library of the Most Holy Sepulcher, in Phanar, of Constantinople.

This document, popularly known as "*The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles*," is one of the rarest treasures of ancient Christian literature, and is especially valuable for the additional light it throws upon the custom that prevailed concerning the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism in the post-apostolic age. After some years of the most learned and critical scrutiny, the evidence of its genuineness and antiquity has become overwhelming, and there is now no difference of opinion among the large majority of scholars in England, Germany, France, and America respect-

ing the authenticity and age of this *Didache*. It was probably written by some Jewish Christian, in Egypt, and dates back, probably, as far as the end of the first century, and no later than the middle of the second; and is, therefore, the oldest extant Church manuscript known at the present day.

This manuscript is the first testimony, in point of time, for the validity of all modes, and contains the first allusion in Church literature of a lawful departure from the original and usual mode of baptism. In the seventh chapter of the *Didache* is recorded the following:

“And concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: Having first said all these things (concerning the Way of Life and the Way of Death), baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living water. But if thou have not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou canst not in cold, in warm. But if thou have not either, pour out water thrice upon the head into the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.”¹

The candidate was to be baptized in “living water”; that is, water as of a river, stream, lake, well, or fountain. If living water could not be

1. Translation by Dr. I. H. Hall.

found, then into “other water”; first choice is to be “cold” water in pools or cisterns; second choice, as in the absence of cold, in “warm” water, in private baths in the house, as in cases of invalids or inclemency of the climate. But if water enough for this could not be had, then it was sufficient to pour water over the head three times.

This latter alternative does not enjoin something else than baptism in the way of a substitute for baptism, as the Baptists interpret it. The sense is not, “Baptize where you can; where you cannot, pour water three times on the head as the next best thing to baptism”; but the evident interpretation is, “Baptize by immersion where you can; baptize by affusion where you cannot.” This last method is called baptism, as well as the ordinary mode, without contrast; for it is immediately after mentioning this mode by affusion that the document proceeds, “Before baptism, let the baptizer and the baptized fast,” implying that both modes are *one* baptism. The words, “But if thou have not either, pour out water thrice upon the head,” is a substitute for the *general mode* of the sacrament, and not a substitute for the *sacrament itself*.

The Baptists may triumphantly point to this

most ancient document for a proof of immersion as the ruling mode, and rejoice in its absence of any allusion to infant baptism; but they must, upon the clear testimony of so genuine a witness alone, abandon their long cherished theory, that immersion was the *only* mode practiced in the ancient Church.

Prof. R. D. Hitchcock, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, regards the baptism in the *Didache* as all by affusion, the candidate standing ankle deep in the water, when it could be obtained, as is represented in the catacomb of St. Callistus, and as in the Syrian mode down to the present day. This, however, is assuming unwarranted license of interpretation. The text of the "teaching" does not define the ordinary method of baptism, but only describes the exceptional affusion in case of a lack of water.

There is an almost unanimous assent that the established mode mentioned in Chapter VII., of manuscript, was immersion; but there is much difference of opinion as to whether this was *single* or *trine* immersion. Though "thrice" is only mentioned in connection with pouring, it is a question whether or not it should be understood or supplied in the normal form of immersion, since we learn from other historical sources that

often baptism consisted of a triple immersion and emersion. The question is of little importance, for the number of plunges, like the kind of mode, is a privilege founded on individual preference, and not on Divine authority. The *Didache* interests us only as a faithful historical record of the thought and practice of the ancient Church. It does not claim apostolic and inspired authority, and is, therefore, subordinate to the testimony of the sacred Scriptures.

The service which this document renders in the polemics of baptism, consists in the newly discovered testimony, that at the end of the first century, there was no rigid uniformity in regard to *mode* of baptism, and no scruples about the validity of aspersion; and there is abundant historical evidence, that the ordinary practice of the early Church in the subsequent centuries, was in harmony with what this chapter of the “teaching” expresses; namely, submersion, *cæteris paribus*, as the regular and established mode in the recorded symbolism of this ordinance, but also sanctions affusion as equally valid in the absence of a sufficient supply of water.

The first case of pouring on record is that of Novatian, in the early part of the third century, who received it on a sick bed, at the very point of

death. Cyprian, in his epistle to Magnus, written about A. D. 250, which, until the discovery of the Bryennios manuscript, was considered the oldest historic record of the use of affusion, argues, at great length, the question, whether clinic baptism by pouring was valid, and finally concluded that it was allowable, in case of necessity, on the ground of right intention. Cyprian seems to have known no other baptism than complete immersion, and had never heard of the "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles." The Bryennios manuscript and the Cyprian epistle, the two most ancient documents, then, both sanction affusion, not as the ordinary, but as the exceptional, mode during the first and third centuries, and give no support to the theory of a rigidly uniform mode of baptism.

"From this fact (viz., liberty of practice) we may reason (a fortiori) that the same freedom existed already in the apostolic age. It cannot be supposed that the twelve apostles were less liberal than the writer of the *Didache*, who wrote, as it were, in their name."¹

But even if it were evident that in the primitive or any subsequent period of the Church, any certain mode had been considered essential, and,

1. Dr. Schaff's "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," p. 34.

therefore, uniformly practiced, would that be anything in favor of such a mode as binding, unless enjoined especially by the sacred Scriptures?

Doctrine, in the hands of fallible men, often becomes corrupt, so that we must look to the Bible, and not to history, for a true testimony.

There is abundant evidence that to the ordinary mode of immersion, the early Church added many ceremonies and efficacies not warranted anywhere in the Scriptures. They attached to it a regenerating influence. They consecrated the water, and connected exorcism with the rite; then added trine immersion and emersion, in reference to the trinity; putting salt on the tongue; blowing upon the face; anointing the eyes, ears, and mouth with spittle; marking with the sign of the cross; clothing in a white robe, and anointing with oil. Yea, more, from their conception of regeneration as being the "putting off the old man," they actually stripped all candidates for baptism of all clothing, men, women, and children, and baptized them in a nude state, though in separate departments of the baptisteries. Dr. Miller, in commenting upon the indecency of such scenes, says, "We have the same evidence (to-wit, from history) in favor of immersing divested of all clothing, that we have for immersion at all." No doubt,

these early fathers, like many modern theorists, based their custom upon some unfounded scriptural interpretation and inference, until they ran into extremes by actually turning a holy ordinance into a demoralizing spectacle. Whatever may have been the standard usages of various ages of the Church, we must always go back to the divine Word to correct our theory, and to learn what should be the true doctrine of our faith.

The evidence afforded by the Bryennios manuscript does not decide the question of mode, but it does settle the question, "Was there a *uniform* mode in the apostolic Church?" It will never do to repudiate this ancient testimony, and fall back on the meaning of the word *baptizo*. It is rather a question of the meaning of this New Testament word.

Another corroborative testimony in favor of liberalism, or non-uniformity of mode, is found in CHRISTIAN ART. Various representations of baptism, extending from the second to the seventh century, are found in the Roman catacombs, which indicate immersions, total or partial, and affusions.

These baptismal pictures, as Dr. Schaff says, "can only exhibit the beginning or the end of the act, not the entire process"; and from the repre-

sentation of a momentary glimpse, we are left to supply, by evident inference, the rest of the transaction.

On the walls of the crypt of Lucina, the oldest part of the catacomb of St. Callistus, is a picture, assigned to a date prior to the close of the second century, in which a man, in a nude state, is stepping up from the water, with his hands joined to the hand extended him by another man, who, clad in a tunic, stands on a bank or shore. This seems to indicate the closing scene of an immersion, otherwise standing in the water would be without meaning, and the nakedness a superfluous indecency.

A Mosaic in Ravenna, referred to about A. D. 450, is supposed to represent the baptism of Christ, who stands in the Jordan, with the water up to his waist, while John, from a rock projecting from the bank, pours water upon the head of Christ from a shell which he holds in his right hand, while a dove descends directly upon Him. This is no reliable authority of the mode of Christ's baptism, but it is useful as a representation of the Christians' *notion* of his baptism, drawn, no doubt, from a custom of their day, and erroneously making it the criterion of what they believed to have been the custom in Christ's day.

This indicates that affusion was practiced in the fifth century.

Another picture in the catacomb of St. Callistus is that of a boy standing in water a little above ankle depth, and surrounded by sprays of water, as in a shower bath, which is thrown profusely around the body and above the head. A man, in a sitting posture, at one end of the picture, is drawing a fish from the water. This was virtually an immersion. De Rossi calls it a "slight immersion" (*poca immersione*), while Garrucci speaks of the boy as "entirely immersed in a *cloud* of water." The *fish* was a favorite symbol of Christ on the ancient tombs, and was used as a convenient epigrammatic confession, and naturally became associated with the water of baptism; and so Tertullian (De Bapt., Chap. I.) says, "But we little fishes, after the example of our Fish, Jesus Christ, are born in water." The drawing out of a fish from the water, as represented in this picture of baptism, is in harmony with the epitaph on the recently discovered tomb of Abericus, found by Mr. Ramsey, in Asia Minor:

"At every place the Fish, exceeding great
And clean, drawn from the fountain."

These three pictures of baptism are representative of all the others in ancient Christian art on

this subject, and they suffice to reveal the Christian spirit and practice in the first five or six centuries; namely, that the Christian consciousness and primitive tradition admitted liberty in respect to mode; and it is not likely that their interpretation of the rite of baptism was a misunderstanding or willful misinterpretation of the apostolic teaching. At least, the testimony of the catacombs concurs with the testimony of the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" on the doctrine of Christian liberty, a right of variation in mode.

From a study of history and art, we must conclude, then, that the ordinary practice in the early Church was essentially what the *Didache* indicates, namely, immersion, but that it was not the *only* recognized mode. We fully accept the following teaching of Garrucci, in "Teorica" (op. cit. 1: 27, 28): "Most ancient and especially established was the rite of immersing the person in the water, and three times the head also, while the ministrant pronounced the three names; it is not, however, to be believed that baptism never took place otherwise, because when, for the occasion, either the amount of water requisite for immersion or the capacity of the vessel was insufficient, or when the condition of the catechu-

men was such that it would have been dangerous for him to be entirely plunged in the waters, or for some other weighty motive, there was a substitution of the baptism spoken of as that of infusion or aspersion, by pouring or sprinkling the water on the head of him who was receiving baptism, while he stood either within the vessel, which did not suffice to admit him wholly, or outside of this, and upon the dry ground."

We do not claim that the *Didache* and catacombs decide the question as to the actual mode practiced by the apostles, but their combined testimony is strongly against the supposition of a uniform mode in the apostolic and post-apostolic Church. We have no doubt that submersion was practiced from the beginning, and may continue to be observed until the end of time. We can say the same of aspersion and affusion. *And the more men examine the inspired record, and consult history and art, and receive new light from recent discoveries, the more charitable will they be in according to every man the right of choice in the practice of his mode, and the more pronounced will they be in condemning a rigid yoke of modalism.*

Since it must be patent to every unbiased student of scripture and ecclesiastical history that God is no respecter or dictator of mode, every

man may, hence, become his own judge and oracle, consult his own convenience, and gratify his own preference in the manner of exercising the sacrament of baptism.

Of all the modes, immersion is the least adapted to *universality*. In many cases it would be utterly impossible. We have already spoken of the baptizing of the sick in the early Church; but we must remember that there are now, nearly every day, subjects for baptism whose immersion would be dangerous, if not fatal. A large portion of our race are afflicted with lingering and chronic diseases, which, for months and years, render them incapable of being immersed. Often the situation renders immersion inconvenient for want of sufficient water, or a suitable place, or a mild season of the year; and at best, upon many persons, especially females, the fear of the plunge has an undevotional tendency by agitating the spirit, which, together with the care required to render the act decent, often utterly incapacitates the subject for the exercise of proper thoughts and affections.

Besides, there is a large proportion of the earth's population that inhabit polar and frozen regions, north of our own latitude, where water, unless very deep, is generally frozen to the bottom. Says

Woodbridge, in his "Universal Geography," page 145, "In Greenland, Lapland, and the coldest countries of this region, brandy and mercury freeze during winter. . . . The inhabitants of Siberia stop the openings of their houses with ice, and use it instead of glass. The air when breathed seems to pierce, and even rend, the lungs. The cup often freezes to the lips if it be touched in drinking. . . . Trees and beams of houses are split by the frosts, and rocks are rent with a noise like that of fire-arms." The gospel is to be carried to all these frigid regions, but we see how ill-adapted to such people would be one of its ordinances, if immersion were essential to the validity of gospel baptism.

"While other Protestant sects of Europe have extended their lines far north into Norway, Lapland, and Greenland, the Baptists have prudently kept themselves mostly confined within Germany, the southern part of Poland, and some of the northern states of Austria. The Baptists have sent out their missionaries to India, Africa, and among the aborigines of North America; but we have never seen the experiment of a Baptist Church rising up in Labrador, Liberia, Greenland, or Central Russia."¹

The Doctrine of Christian Baptism.

PART IV.

THE ETHICS OF BAPTISM.

THE ETHICS OF BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

DUTY OF OBSERVING THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

Every follower of Christ should be baptized at his earliest opportunity. No professing Christian is justifiable for a willful neglect of a duty so plain and imperative.

In almost every congregation of our denomination are found Christians in church-fellowship (sometimes, not a few), who for years, habitually, live in an unbaptized state, which is a state of open rebellion to the will of God. The United Brethren Church, in her protest against extreme ritualism, may have become too lax in a due estimate and enforcement of the ritual ordinances of God's house, and, perhaps, emphasized too strongly the value of spasmodic efforts, for periodic tides of revival fluxes, at the expense of a faithful and conscientious observance of the standing rites and duties of the Church, which marks the Christian life as uniform and blameless.

In our preaching and teaching, unlike Peter, many of us have thundered out the word "repent," but whispered, or forgotten entirely, the words, "and be baptized," or in some way made an impression, that the latter part of Peter's utterance scarcely merits the weight of an injunction. The highest type of Christian experience upon record is that of Zechariah and Elizabeth of old, who "*walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*"

The many members of our communion who are derelict in this duty, namely, baptism, reflect unfavorably upon the ministry of our Church, who in the past must have been delinquent in the proper presentation of this matter to their people. A preacher's neglect in declaring any one of the counsels of God, is seen in his hearer's utter disregard of that counsel. Where a pastor ignores or depreciates the sacrament of baptism by his habitual silence in reference to it, the people will have little conscience upon the subject, and feel self-acquitted, while they, ignorantly, or rather for the want of better scriptural instruction from their spiritual adviser, continue to live in a state which brings them under the daily displeasure and condemnation of God. We do not teach that a Christian who has never been baptized

cannot be saved,—no more than a man who once sinned cannot be saved by subsequent repentance and acceptance of the free offers of grace,—but according to the unchangeable terms which require obedience as the only condition of salvation, we do assert that no Christian who lives and dies unbaptized, after repeated opportunities for understanding and obeying Christ's command, can be saved, *unless he first repents of this sin of a grievous omission, and God graciously forgives him for willfully neglecting so simple and solemn a duty.*

Ministers who are solemnly commissioned to *preach* and to *baptize* (Matt. 28: 19), must not regard the latter half of this charge of our ascended Lord as a useless appendage, the mandate of which is to be observed or ignored *ad libitum*; and conceive that their work is done when they have *discipled* the people. They are also to *baptize* all whom they convert to discipleship; and until they have done this, their high commission is desecrated, their mission unfinished, and their duty renounced.

Our obligation rests upon the following considerations:

1. The *nature* of Christian baptism as discussed in Chapter VI., Part I. If its design is to publicly attest our faith in Christ, and accept God's

method in our salvation, then such attestation or testimony becomes a Christian duty.

This appears evident from the fact that baptism is of the nature of a *covenant*. With Abraham of old, God entered into covenant by passing, as a flaming fire, between the dissevered pieces of a slaughtered victim. Now, no more figuratively, but really, through the rent veil and sundered flesh of a Redeemer's body, God calls his saints to make with him a covenant by baptism. This covenant is most solemn in its nature.

When two men enter into a contract, the terms upon which each agrees to perform his part of the engagement are clearly stated and defined in a properly executed and legal form, and then *signed* by the contracting parties as a most solemn pledge of fidelity. Neither benefactor nor beneficiary is bound or entitled to any provisions in the treaty until both names are legally affixed to the prepared instrument. In a much graver sense, God has devised and prepared, at infinite cost, a general contract, offering to save each child of Adam's race upon certain stipulated terms, which depend on each man's personal and individual acceptance or rejection. This covenant of promise, which has remained unchanged since the days of Abraham, states man's part of the obli-

gation in the compact, upon the performance of which God promises him eternal salvation. On Calvary, He *signed* and *sealed* the document with His blood, and the stamp of His atoning oblation; and now, God asks every believer, individually, to subscribe to his purchased plan of redemption. Christian, have you, formally and publicly, signed *your name* to this covenant? Or, do you consider it no obligation for you to indorse God's scheme of salvation by the visible sign of your autograph, according to the manner ordained by God? It will not avail for you to say, "I can promise and render obedience to God without the ceremony of a formal pledge." As well say, "I can pay my debts without giving my creditor a legal voucher." You may be honest, but you are a nullifier of the law, and set at naught the legal ordinances recommended by the government which protects you. Christian baptism is heaven's ordained act, by which we openly and legally subscribe to God's terms of salvation, and thereby pledge our fidelity to him; and God, in this same transaction, renews his promises in the sweet assurance of his personal testimony with the individual believer, to save him forever if faithful to the covenant pledge. The moment we violate our baptismal vows, we forfeit all our claim to salvation in the stipulated covenant, and release God from his promises.

God, then, having provided for our salvation from sin, in a covenant of redemption, and enjoined all who would accept his offers of grace to give their assent by subscribing to his covenant of blessing, in a form which he instituted for this very purpose, namely, baptism, is a man excusable for refusing to comply with God's request, and to perform his part of setting his seal and signature to the covenant through baptism? Christians who are not baptized have never accepted God's covenant of grace, nor vowed their fidelity to it *in God's appointed way*. If God in his conversion has testified by the Spirit to the performance of his part of the covenant, that divine testimony finds no *legal* acknowledgment on his part until he is baptized.

Another inducement deduced from the nature of baptism, is the *honor* of a high privilege which it confers upon us. Baptism is an act of initiation into the visible organized Church of Christ. Hence, he that is not ceremonially baptized is not a member of his visible organization. This is foregoing an honorable distinction. Is there a higher token of honor than that of wearing the badge of a disciple of Christ, and to be marked as belonging to him and not to the world? A foreigner who wishes to become a citizen of this

country is required to take the oath of allegiance. The President of the United States, after his election, takes the oath of his office, not because it gives him a right to the office, or confers any qualification, but because it is necessary to bestow official recognition and authority. No individual is recognized by God as a citizen or servant in his visible Church, until he takes the affidavit of baptism, which inaugurates him into all the honorable prerogatives and distinctions of his commonwealth on earth. It confers no character, but is the official badge of our heavenly citizenship.

Again, it is a *means of grace*, which brings its proffered blessings, and when received in faith, all the blessings and benefits which it signifies are vouchsafed to the believer. Paul says we put on Christ in baptism. (Gal. 3: 27.) We also put on fervent *prayer* as we pass through the solemnities of the ordinance, and often, like the Master, receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit in the very act and moment when the water is administered, whereby God witnesses that he is well pleased with us. “Jesus also being baptized, and *praying*, the heaven was opened” (Luke 3: 21). The answer to that prayer came instantly, for the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him, and a voice came from heaven,

which said, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." In the exercise of this means of grace, God's spiritual sons and daughters are baptized under a cloud of heavenly benedictions.

Baptism, then, is not only a blessing, a privilege, an honor, or a dictate of gratitude and loyalty, but a duty, the neglect of which is a harmful mistake, and an open sin of which no Christian should be guilty.

2. Our obligation to observe the sacrament appears from another fact. Baptism is a mode of *confession*. We thereby publish to the world that we believe in the efficacy of the atoning blood of Christ, and proclaim that, henceforth, we will obey and follow him. Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10: 32, 33). And Paul says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath 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. 10:9, 10). To which John adds, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son

of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (I. John 4: 15). Confession, whether by word or act, makes no man a Christian; but it is a visible, public declaration that he *is* a Christian. If the confession has no virtue to save a man, it has virtue in glorifying God before the world through our public testimony, just as letting our light shine before men, instead of hiding it under a bushel, as another sort of open confession, brings glory to God.

This mode of confessing Christ, to which is attached a promise and a blessing, is not only a proclaiming of our faith in Christ, but becomes a *duty*, which cannot be omitted without sustaining moral loss and suffering condemnation. A refusal to confess Christ in baptism is virtually a denial of Christ. A Christian who ignores this Bible duty, denies his loyalty and allegiance to Christ by discarding one of the most sacred and solemn forms of confessing him before men.

3. This duty, again, is set forth by the *example of Christ and his apostles*, who baptized, and were baptized, in order "to fulfill all righteousness."

If we wish to be "followers of Christ," why not follow him in this example? He has given us an example that we should do as he has done. This example, unlike many others, is not of an

optional character, but is made especially obligatory by express command, and therefore we are bound to obey; and to know our duty here and to spurn it, is equivalent to refusing to be a “follower of Christ.”

If the divine Master considered baptism needful to the fulfilling of “*all* righteousness,” how much more needful for the disciple, if he would meet all the demands of his righteousness, that he should not be found wanting in this one thing needful. To offend in one duty, makes us guilty of the whole law. The progressive Christian, who aims at roundness and completeness of moral character, should see to it that no niche in the arch of his righteousness is left unoccupied. Want of baptism, is an empty nook in close proximity to the keystone of fundamental righteousness.

The apostles must have felt the imperative duty of their commission, or they would not have gone about everywhere preaching and baptizing in the name of Jesus. They all urged upon their converts baptism as the first duty to be performed after conversion. Peter said, “Repent and be baptized,” in advance of their reception of the truth, and afterward, the multitudes who gladly received the word were immediately baptized.

Philip, in Samaria, did not consider his work complete until all who believed were baptized, both men and women; and he baptized the "man of Ethiopia" immediately upon his profession of faith. As soon as Cornelius was converted, he was baptized. Ananias was sent to Paul to baptize him before he should leave the house of his second birth; and Paul himself, as soon as the jailer in Philippi professed faith, baptized him and his straightway. The manner in which they administered this sacrament, indicates that they regarded baptism as second in importance to regeneration.

This rite, instituted by Christ, has continued in the Church through all ages, and has so permeated the human conscience that it will never be abandoned by the Church militant on earth. The importance attached to the sacrament by the apostles, however, has declined among many sects of Christendom; for in many Churches to-day, ministers are not as faithful in urging and administering water baptism to their converts *immediately* after conversion as were the ministers of the primitive Church.

No Christian can be blameless and guiltless before God who regards the example of Christ and his apostles in baptizing as unworthy of imitation in our day.

4. But a much higher, indeed the highest, source of obligation is found in the express *command* of Christ to his apostles after his resurrection, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

A few centuries ago, Robert Barclay, the eminent Quaker, contended that this was a command to baptize *spiritually*, and hence the Society of Friends have come to regard *water* baptism as a sad perversion of Christ’s teaching, and consider its practice as a carnal ordinance, out of harmony with the true spirit of Christianity.

But even later writers like Dr. James W. Dale, who are not in sympathy with Quakerism, are disposed to put a spiritual interpretation upon Christ’s command to baptize the disciplined nations. All such interpretations are mischievous. They darken counsel, without wisdom, and pervert what seems to be the plain meaning of Christ’s words.

Christ never commissioned any of his disciples to do what was reserved as his sole prerogative. John declared, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, . . . *he* shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*.” True, he gave the disciples power to heal diseases, and do many wonderful

works, but never to regenerate the soul, or baptize it with the Holy Ghost. When proselyte baptism by *water* was well known to the disciples as administered by mortal men, but baptism by the spirit as the work of God only, how could they understand Christ to mean by his command to baptize, the bestowing upon the nations that believed the gift of the Holy Ghost? And they *did not* so understand him, for they went forth to baptize *with water*; and no one has yet disputed their right to do so upon the authority of their Master's command in this particular exercise of their apostolic functions.

Our obligation and authority to baptize and be baptized rests *chiefly* upon this command of Christ; and if water baptism is not therein enjoined, we have no valid foundation for our faith and practice, and the Church, for the past eighteen hundred years, has been under a delusion, teaching error for truth and transgressing the command of God by her tradition. But we have every reason for believing that the Church *has* received her charter for ritual Christian baptism in this great commission of Christ, delivered to his apostles.

Again, it would be vain to excuse our neglect of this duty on the plea, that although the meaning of Christ's command is obvious, yet we can

see no *reason* for such a ceremonial display of our religious experience. This is an attempt to walk by *sight* rather than by *faith*, whereas Jesus says, “What I do now, thou knowest not, but shalt hereafter.” We are not always able to understand the wisdom and design of a divine precept, but our inability to see or give a reason does not argue that, therefore, no reason for it exists.

If we could see no reason for, but rather against, the observance of the ceremony of baptism; if we had not a single argument in its favor, and could conceive of no possible benefit conferred upon us by such an institution, the bare fact that it was *commanded* by the Author of our faith, would alone be enough to silence all scruples and answer all objections. Christ’s precepts are supreme and above controversy. When he speaks let men be quick to hear, slow to speak. It is his province to command, ours to obey, even though we do not understand. The author of this command said, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” The “*whatsoever*” includes the intelligible as well as the unintelligible biddings of our Lord; and childlike faith in the unintelligible commands is the *test* of our obedience. But for this, Abraham, “the friend of God,” could not have obeyed the Lord’s command to offer up Isaac,

for the thing required seemed unreasonable and contradictory. Confiding love is a necessary preparation for a dutiful submission to God's will and a readiness to do his biddings.

All religious duty may be summed up under two heads—*godly fear, and obedience*. This was Solomon's conclusion of the whole matter when he said, “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12: 13). Baptism is one of his prominent commandments, and if conscience were silent, Christ who is above conscience, does require us to obey; for “*to obey* is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity” (I. Sam. 15: 22, 23).

But the force of our duty is emphasized by the contemplation of some facts which are necessary deductions from this command.

(1.) Christ's commands are evidently an expression of his *will*, and not to do his commands is not to do his will. But this is all the more important because it was his *parting counsel*. This is what gives special sacredness to the Lord's Supper, since it is a grateful and solemn remembrance of a duty enjoined at the last meeting with his disciples before crucifixion, as a memorial of his

vicarious suffering. His forty days on earth after his resurrection were devoted to instructions pertaining to his Church; and before his final departure he made known his last will and testament, in the words of his solemn commission, to the disciples assembled at Galilee. It surely is no small thing to disregard this last will of our ascended Lord.

(2.) Another deduction from these considerations is that obedience to Christ's command and will is an expression of our *love* for him. "If ye love me keep my commandments," says the Master; and the disciple, whom he especially loved, said, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (I. John 5: 3). Obedience is peculiarly connected with the principle of love, indeed is a proof of our attachment to the Savior. Our Lord, before he laid upon Peter the duty of feeding his flock, three times repeated the test question: "Lovest thou me?" If any follower of Christ can honestly respond, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee," he will not hesitate to do his commandments; and his commandment is that you be baptized. "*If ye LOVE me*" be baptized; if *not* your neglect will testify your want of love for the Master.

5. Again, *conscience* pleads for obedience to this command of Jesus.

Peter, in speaking of the significance of baptism, says it is “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer [or questioning] of a good conscience toward God” (I. Peter 3: 21.)

Conscience is our arbitrator in every moral litigation. This judge of our moral tribunal will pass sentence of condemnation upon every willful violation of law or neglect of known duty.

The word rendered “answer” in above text, has the idea of *contract by conference*. “The word seems to denote the promise made in baptism. St. Luke uses the word *ἐπερωτᾶν* (*eperotan*) for questioning, where he speaks of the child Jesus as being found in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. The word appears to comprehend, as referred to baptism, the mutual questions and answers which make up the process of teaching, on the one side, and the stipulation on the other.”¹

In the covenant which God made with many for our salvation, he entered into a most solemn engagement, for the faithfulness of which he has pledged his most sacred honor, to save us from everlasting destruction, upon terms of our repent-

1. Bengel’s “Gnomon,” *in loco*.

ance, faith, and continued obedience; and, as an outward, visible token of this engagement, he appointed water baptism as a *seal* on his part, and as a *sign* on our part, and commanded that it be observed by all who would follow the Lord in sincerity and truth. Can the conscientious Christian, who desires to obey the whole counsel of God, omit this command of his Master, which is made to signify such obligations, and not be accused by his conscience? Conscience asks, "Can you truly *love* God as long as you are willfully neglecting this command? Are you doing his *will* while you continue to disobey him in this particular? Can you be happy in your disobedience? Will you refuse to confess Christ in baptism? Will you decline to engage in this visible covenant of grace?" The "better angel of your nature" must respond, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Every Christian who submits to a candid examination of his conscience, will receive this verdict. "Baptism satisfies a good conscience." We do not say that baptism is essential to salvation, but it is essential to a good conscience, and our way to heaven is rendered easy through a good conscience.

INDEX.

- ABLUTION, 33, 157-164.
Abrahamic Church, her rite of initiation, 59.
Abraham's sign of circumcision, 51.
Adult baptism of persons raised in Christian families, no record of, in New Testament, 92.
Adults, baptism of, 65.
Ænon, baptism at, 46.
Agios, meaning of, in Scripture, 84.
Agora, the, of the Jews, 158.
Agrigentum, lake near, 138.
Ainsworth, 132.
Ambrose, 29.
 his use of the word *baptizo*, 180.
 on infant baptism, 99.
Anabaptist and Pedobaptist writers, controversy of, 69.
Analogy between immersion and death and burial of Christ unfortunate, 232, 233.
Anti-Baptists on John's baptism, 194 ff.
Antonius, Marcus, quoted, 141.
Apo, force of, in New Testament Greek, 218.
Apocrypha, meaning of *baptizo* in, 176.
Apostles, no evidence that they received Christian baptism, 45, 46.
 baptized converts immediately after conversion, 276, 277.
Arian baptistry at Ravenna, 205.
Aristotle, his sense of *oikos*, 96.
 quoted, 148.
Art, furnishes fanciful representations of Christ's baptism, 204.
 Christian, on mode, 258.
Ashes, blood, or water, the symbolizing element in ritual baptism, 33.
Athanasius, his "Philosophical Banquet," quoted, 140.
 his use of *baptizo*, 181.
Augustine on infant baptism, 100, 101.
Austin's skill in immersing, 211.

- BAPHEIDOS, Prof. "Church History," quoted, 247.
- Baptism, spiritual or real, 27.
in the Old Testament, 27, 28.
in the New Testament, 28, 29.
"of fire" explained, 28, 29.
cited, 54.
ritual, 32.
proselyte, 35.
of John, 36.
of Christ, 41.
Christian, 45.
authorized after Christ's resurrection, 46.
at *Aenon*, unknown in its nature, 46.
subjects of, 65.
mode of, 121.
by John, 191.
Christ's, 198.
the three thousand on day of Pentecost, 207.
the Ethiopian eunuch, 218.
Saul's, 220.
Cornelius and his friends, 221.
miscellaneous examples, 223.
additional remarks on, 245.
precepts on, 227.
the ethics of, 267.
by deputation, 197.
for the dead, 235-238.
by sand, 249.
in a nude state, 257.
a solemn covenant, 270.
a means of grace, 273.
a mode of confession, 274.
- Baptismal covenant, the, 49, 50.
- Baptismal regeneration, 257.
scripture used in support of this doctrine, 54.
unjustly charged upon the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church, 57.
believed in by many of the Church fathers, 53, 178.
taught by the Church of Rome and by Mormonism, 53.
as taught by Tertullian, 98.
disproved, 103.

Baptismos, known in the days of Homer, 23.

used by Pindar, 23.

used by Aristotle and Plato, 23.

of heathen and non-religious origin, 24.

occurs four times in the New Testament, 187.

Baptisms, the doctrine of, 23.

how used by ancient writers, 25.

how defined by Dr. Dale, 25, 26.

ceremonial, excessive in the times of Christ, 35.

water, 36.

family, 94-96.

Baptists, position on infant baptism, 69.

their fundamental argument for immersion, 131.

on John's baptism, 192 ff.

Bible Union translation of *baptizo* in Mark 10:38, 166.

excluded from the polar regions, 264.

Baptizo, 131.

admits of various meanings, 135 ff, 189.

in classic literature, 135.

1. To dip, 135.
2. To dye or tinge, 136.
3. To wash or be wave-beaten, 136.
4. To sink, 138.
5. To immerse, 138.
6. To bury, 139.
7. To immerse partly, 139.
8. To drown, 140.
9. To make drunk, 140.
10. To stupefy, 140.
11. To overpower or overwhelm, 141.
12. To sprinkle, 141.

in sacred literature, 156.

in the New Testament, 157.

1. To wash, 157 ff.
2. To endure or suffer, 165 ff.
3. To initiate, 168 ff.

in the Old Testament, 171.

1. To wet or moisten, 171.
2. To dip, to plunge, to immerse, 171 ff.
3. To terrify, 174 ff.

in Apocrypha, 176.

- Judith 12:7; Ecclesiasticus 34:25, 176.
in patristic literature, 177.
as used by Basil, 179.
 Cyril of Alexandria, 179.
 Jerome, 179.
 Ambrose, 180.
 Justin Martyr, 180.
 Tertullian, 180.
 Origen, 180.
 Athanasius, 181.
 Eusebius, 181.
 Didymus of Alexandria, 181.
 Clement of Alexandria, 181.
its use in the various versions of the Bible, 182.
explanation by eminent theologians, 183.
transition of meaning from secular to sacred, 148.
difficulty of giving it a univocal meaning, 143, 144.
as defined by Dr. James W. Dale and William Hamilton, 145.
its most recent definition, 147, 155, 179.
occurs twenty-six times in New Testament, 187.
always used in New Testament in speaking of Christian baptism, 188.
Bapto, as defined by Hesychius, 132, 133.
 its primary meaning, 135.
 its secondary meaning, 136.
Barclay, Dr., his testimony of abundance of water in ancient Jerusalem, 215.
 quoted, 250.
Barclay, Robert, the Quaker, his view of Christ's command to baptize, 278.
Basil, his use of *baptizo*, 179.
Bathing, 158 ff.
 ancient, by use of *lota*, 177.
 Smith's description of, 177.
Bath-kol, the, 43.
Baxter, Richard, favored infant baptism, 71.
Belshazzar's feast, 171.
Bengel, quoted, 236, 283.
Bethesda, the pool of, 213.
Blood, water, or ashes, the symbolizing element in ritual baptism, 33.
Bloomfield, 108.
"Born of water" explained, 54.
Brahmans, 139.

- Bretschneider, 132.
"Bury," the word, can suggest no uniform mode, 233.
CALVIN, 108.
 the originator of sprinkling in Great Britain, 250.
Campbell, Dr. A., 137, 142, 143.
Carson, Alexander, on infant baptism, 69.
 his rendering of I. Corinthians 7:14, 85.
 his estimate of the lexicographers, 132.
 his law of interpretation for the meaning of a word, 134.
 his resort to classic literature for meaning of the word *baptizo*, 134.
 his sweeping assertions on *baptizo*, 131, 135, 142, 148, 149, 150, 161, 179.
 his statement for determining the meaning of a word in the use of language, 189.
 his way of explaining difficulties, 162, 163, 169.
 his theory asserted by the writings of the Church fathers, 179-182.
 his triumph in the case of Christ's baptism, 200.
Cassius, Dion, quoted, 138.
Ceremonial baptisms excessive in the time of Christ, 35.
Ceremonial cleansing, 33.
 deeper significance of, taught by Christ, 34.
 mode of, 176, 239.
Ceremonial initiation into the Church distinguished from the real initiation, 60.
Ceremonies and efficacies connected with baptism in the early Church, unwarranted by Scripture, 257.
Ceremony, symbolic of spiritual baptism, 32.
 tendency to unduly exalt, 48.
Challenge of the learned Cox, 132.
Chapin's "Primitive Church," quoted, 132.
Chatan, 79.
Child consecration, benefit of, 105.
Children, their relation to "kingdom of heaven," 72, 73.
 were members of the ancient Jewish Church, 78.
 can be excluded from Church only by precept, 82.
 whose, are proper subjects for baptism? 115, 116.
Christ's baptism, 41.
 distinct from all others, 41, 42.
 nature of, 43, 111, 112.
 in art, 204.
Christ himself never baptized, 45.
 circumcised on the eighth day, 92.

- Christian art on mode, 258.
 Christian adults, baptism of, 65.
 Christian practice, a necessary qualification for baptism, 66.
 Christian ritual baptism, as a sign and pledge, 51.
 not the *thing signified*, as in Romish and Mormon sense, 53.
 nature of, as expressed in the various symbols of the Protestant
 Churches, 56-59.
 primary import of, 59.
 secondary import of, 59.
 has come in the place of circumcision, 86, 87.
 why called Christian, 45.
 its nature and design defined, 47.
 Christian virtue expressed by the Greek word *arete*, 152.
 Chrysostom's skill in immersing, 211.
 Church, the, founded on the covenant with Abraham, 75, 76.
 Church commission on revision of confession of faith and constitution, 121.
 Church, difference between *a* and *the*, 61.
 Church fathers, their use of the word *baptizo*, 177 ff.
 their testimonies on infant baptism, 97-100.
 Church of Christ, the visible and invisible, 59, 60.
 Church of England, her twenty-seventh article on baptism, 56.
 Church of Rome, the, her doctrine of baptismal regeneration, 53.
 Church of the United Brethren in Christ, her mode of baptism, 121.
 Circumcision, appointed in Abraham's time, 51.
 necessary to become a member of the theocracy, 78.
 a civil and religious badge, 79.
 spiritual, 80.
 superseded by baptism, 86, 87.
 effected by Christ's command, 93.
 settled by the council at Jerusalem, 93, 94.
 of Timothy, a prudential act, 94.
 called a baptism by Martyr, 180.
 Circumcised infants not admitted to the Passover, 103.
 Clark, Adam, his testimony on meaning of the word *baptizo*, 184.
 Classic literature, Carson's source of investigation for the meaning of
 baptizo, 134.
 Clement of Alexandria, his use of *baptizo*, 181.
 on clinic baptism, 249.
 Clinic baptism, 248.
 Codex Vaticanus, 158.
 Colossians 2: 12 explained, 232.

- Command* of Christ, the, makes baptism a duty, 278.
Commentary on Romans by Origen, 99.
Commission of Christ to the apostles, force of, 88-90.
 spiritual interpretation of, by Barclay and Dale, 278.
Conant, T. J., his rendering of the word *baptizo*, 131.
 cited, 142.
Confession, baptism a mode of, 274.
Confession of faith of United Brethren Church, stated, 121.
 proved to be correct, 244.
Conscience, liberty of, in mode of baptism, 128.
 makes baptism a duty, 283.
Constantine's baptism, 99, 249.
Contents, table of, 13.
Controversy on mode of baptism, 122-128.
Corinthians, I., 15: 29 explained, 235.
Cornelius and his friends, baptism of, 221.
Couches, washing of, 162.
Council at Carthage, 99.
 at Jerusalem to settle the circumcision controversy, 93, 94.
Covenant of baptism, the, stated, 49, 50.
Covenant relation of children to the Church, 72.
Covenant, Mosaic and Abrahamic distinguished, 82.
 with Abraham, "everlasting," 83.
 baptism, a, 270.
Cox, 132, 133.
"Cup" of suffering, 166.
Cyril of Alexandria, his use of *baptizo*, 179.
Crypt of St. Lucina, 204.
DALE, James W., his definition of baptism, 25.
 his definition of *baptizo*, 145.
 quoted, 146, 147.
 as applied and used by the Church fathers, 179.
 his view of the baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, 208.
 his view of Christ's command to baptize, 278.
David, 28.
Day, Henry N., "Art of Discourse," quoted, 129.
Dead, baptism for the, 235-238.
De Baptismo of Tertullian, 98.
Definition of *baptizo*, the most recent, 145-148.
Definition, univocal, of *baptizo* impossible, 189.

- Deputation, baptism by, 45.
De Rossi, 260.
Dexter on immersion, 250.
Dick, John, his testimony on *baptizo*, 185.
Didache, the recently discovered, 252.
Didymus of Alexandria, his use of *baptizo*, 181.
Discussion of the word *baptizo*, 131.
Discussion of the examples of baptism in New Testament, 190.
 John's, 191-198.
 Jesus', 198-207.
 the three thousand on day of Pentecost, 207-218.
 the Ethiopian eunuch, 218-220.
 Saul's, 220.
 Cornelius and his friends, 221.
 miscellaneous examples, 223-225.
Dispute between John's disciples and the Jews concerning purifying, 34.
"Divers washings," 160.
Doctrine of baptisms, the, 23.
Doddridge, Philip, 108.
 favored infant baptism, 71.
Donnegan, 132.
Dove, the, at Christ's baptism, 43.
Downie, Dr., 212.
"Dry baptism, a," so called by Carson, 169.
Dunbar, 132.
Dutch, Danish, and Swedish versions of *baptizo*, 183.
Duty of observing the sacrament of baptism, 267.
ECCLESIASTICAL identity of the Jewish and the Christian Churches, 77, 78.
Edwards, Dr., quoted, 163, 164.
Eis, force of, in New Testament Greek, 200, 201, 203, 204, 218, 219.
Ek, force of, in New Testament Greek, 218, 219.
En, force of, in New Testament Greek, 199.
Estimates, various, of time during which John baptized, 195.
Ethics, the, of baptism, 267.
Ethiopian eunuch, baptism of, 218.
Eusebius, his use of *baptizo*, 181.
 his testimony of the abundance of water in ancient Jerusalem, 214.
Evanus, 24.
Ewing, G., 132.
 quoted, 144.
Example of Christ and his apostles, 275.

Examples of baptism recorded in New Testament, 190.

John's, 191.

Jesus', 198.

the three thousand on day of Pentecost, 207.

the Ethiopian eunuch, 218.

Saul's, 220.

Cornelius and his friends, 221.

and others, 223.

Examples of new meaning given to words of classic Greek, 152-154.

Exposition of the "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," 252-255.

Ezekiel 36:25 explained, 238.

FAITH, a qualification for adult baptism, 65.

unnecessary for infant baptism, 106, 107.

Family baptism, 94-96.

Farrow, F. W., "Life of Christ," quoted, 109, 110.

Featly, quoted, 250.

Fidus, his idea of infant baptism, 99, 100.

Figurative explanation of John's baptism, 196.

Fish, the, as a symbol of Christ, 260.

Formula of baptism, the, 46.

Fox, John, 211.

Fuller, Richard, his definition of *baptizo*, 131, 132, 142, 143.

Fundamental doctrine of Christianity, a knowledge of, necessary for baptism, 66.

GALE, Dr., 136.

Gains, baptism of, 224.

Garrucci, quoted, 260, 261.

Gases, his definition of *baptizo*, 133.

Gedaliah, 140, 141.

Gentiles, first introduction of baptism among the, 221.

Gihon, proof of, 213.

Gill's, Dr., rendering of I. Corinthians 7:14, 85.

God's visible sign of stipulation, 51.

God's will expressed in his commands, 281.

Goethe, quoted, 244.

Great Britain, change of mode in, 249, 250.

Greek language of the New Testament, 150.

Greenfield, 132.

Groves, 132.

- HALICARNASSUS, Dionysius, 142.
Hall, Dr. Edwin, on meaning of Christ's commission, 89, 90.
 "Law of Baptism," quoted, 155.
Hall, William, quoted, 246.
Hall, I. H., his translation of the "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," 252.
Halley, Dr., quoted, 165.
Hamilton, William, his definition of *baptizo*, 145.
 his view of the baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, 208.
 quoted, 149, 169, 172, 173, 216.
Heidelberg Catechism on baptism, 57.
Heliod, quoted, 141.
Hellenistic Greek of the New Testament, 150.
Henderson, Dr., quoted, 183.
Hendricus, 132.
Hesychius, the oldest native Greek lexicographer, 132.
Hezekiah, pool of, 213.
Hibbard's estimate of the number baptized by John, 195.
Hibbard, "Christian Baptism," quoted, 264.
Hilarius on clinic baptism, 249.
Hilary, 29.
Hill, Geo., his testimony on *baptizo*, 186.
Historical development, an, of mode, 245.
History of mode of baptism in the ancient Church, 245-247.
Hitchcock, R. D., on the "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," 254.
Hodge, A. A., "Outlines of Systematic Theology," quoted, 111, 151.
 his testimony on *baptizo*, 187.
Hodge, Charles, quoted, 48.
 his testimony on *baptizo*, 186.
Homer, 148.
Honor conferred by baptism, 272.
Horn's "Introduction to the Scriptures," quoted, 108.
Household baptism, 94-96.
Howe, John, favored infant baptism, 71.
Hybrida lingua, 151.
IMMERSE, the Hebrew word for, 172.
Immersion, the only mode in Mormonism, 53.
 Dr. Carson's sweeping proposition on, 131, 135.
 Christ's baptism, a strong evidence of, 198.
 based on Romans 6:3, 4, and Colossians 2:12, by Baptists, 232 ff.
 the prevalent, but not universal, mode in the ancient Church, 245 ff.

- trine, in ancient and modern Churches, 247.
in the early Church, the rule, pouring and sprinkling, the exception, 248.
declared essential first in the seventeenth century by the English Baptists, 250.
testimony of the " Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," 254.
reversed after the thirteenth century, 249.
in a nude state, 257.
least adapted to universality of practice, 263.
not adapted to the polar regions, 264.
Infant and adult membership distinguished, 111.
Infant baptism, only for children of Christian parents, 115, 116.
testimonies concerning, by the Church fathers, 97.
denounced by Baptists, 69, 70.
in the New Testament, 94-96.
objections to, answered, 103-117.
taught not by precept, but by induction, 71, 72.
not to be derided, 104, 105.
not a useless device, 114.
Infant children of Christian parents subjects for baptism, 69.
Infants were members of the Jewish Church, 78.
Initiation into the Church, difference between the real and the ceremonial, 59, 60.
into the visible Church, 272.
Instrument of grace, baptism not an, 47-55.
Introduction by Bishop J. Weaver, 7.
Irenaeus on infant baptism, 98, 99, 101.
Isagoge on infant baptism, 186.
Isaiah 44:3 explained, 240.
also 52:15 explained, 238.
Isaiah's baptism of terror, 174.
Ishmael, 141.
JAILER, the, baptism of, 95, 223.
Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary, quoted, 42, 168, 231.
Jerome, his use of *baptizo*, 179.
Jesus, mode of his baptism, 198.
Jewish Church, ritualism of the, in time of Christ, 48.
Joel 2:28, 29, explained, 240.
John's disciples at Ephesus, baptism of, 223, 224.
John's ritual baptism, 36.
his titular name, 36.

- nature of his baptism, 37.
a mediation between the Old and New Testament theocracy, 39.
difference between, and Christian baptism, 39, 40.
mode of, 191 ff.
may have been received by the early disciples, 46.
- Josephus, quoted, 138, 140, 141.
- Joshua, 25.
- Juda Ben Tema, 110.
- "Judaic Baptism," Dale, quoted, 25, 26.
- Judith's baptism of washing, 176.
- Julian, the emperor, 141.
- KEDRON**, the brook, 218.
- Knapp, Joseph, his skill in immersing, 212.
- Knox, John, favored infant baptism, 71.
- Kühnöl, 108.
- LANGUAGE** of the New Testament and classic Greek different, 150.
- Laxity** in the observance of baptism, 267.
- Lexicographers and Dr. Carson, 132.
- Lexicons no sure guide for the study of words, 134.
- Libanius, 24, 141.
- Liberty of conscience in mode of baptism, 128, 262, 263.
- Liddell and Scott, 132.
- Lightfoot, Dr., quoted, 88.
- Literal explanation of John's baptism, 196.
- Literature, general, a better guide than lexicons in the study of the meaning of any particular word, 134.
- Lord's Supper, the, its Greek derivation, 152.
- Lota, used in bathing, 177.
- Love to God expressed by obedience to his commands, 282.
- Lucian, 140.
- Lucina, Crypt of, 259.
- Luther, Martin, favored infant baptism, 71.
his translation of *baptizo*, 182.
- Lycophron, "Cassandra," quoted, 139.
- Lydia and her household, baptism of, 94, 223.
- MAIMONIDES** on proselyte baptism, 88.
- Marriott, Wharton B., "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," quoted, 246.
- Martyr, Justin, on infant baptism, 97.
his use of *baptizo*, 180.

- Martyrdom called a baptism, 181.
Means of grace, baptism a, 47, 55, 56, 273.
Methodist Episcopal Church on baptism, 57.
Michael Angelo's Moses, a false representation, 205.
Mikra, 110.
Miller, Dr., his comment on nude baptism, 257.
Ministers neglecting to enforce the duty of baptism, 268, 277.
Miscellaneous examples of baptism in New Testament, 223.
Mishna, 110.
Modal baptism, burden of proof lies with its advocates, 129.
Modalism not sustained by the word *baptizo*, 131.
 - not sustained by Scripture examples, 190.
 - not sustained by precepts and teachings of Bible, 227.
 - not sustained by the two most ancient manuscripts, 256.
 - not sustained by the *Didache*, 251.
 - not sustained by Christian art, 258.
 - a tendency toward Romanism, 228.

Mode of baptism, the, 121.
 - extent of controversy on, 123.
 - no justifiable reason for this controversy, 124-128.
 - main proposition on, 128.
 - uncertain, in John's ministry, 191-198.
 - of Christ, 198-207.
 - of the three thousand, 207-218.
 - of the Ethiopian eunuch, 218-220.
 - of Saul, 220, 221.
 - of Cornelius and his friends, 221-223.
 - the Samaritans, Lydia, the jailer, Crispus, John's disciples at Ephesus, Crispus and Gains, 223-225.
 - precepts and teachings of Bible on, 227.
 - concluding remarks on, 244.
 - historical testimonies on, in the ancient Church, 245-247.
 - vote on, by Westminister divines, 250.
 - the "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles" on, 251.

NAAMAN's baptism in Jordan, 171-174.
Nature of Christian baptism, we learn our duty from, 269.
Neander's "History of the Christian Church," quoted, 245.
Nebuchadnezzar's baptism, 171.
New Testament baptisms, 190.
New Testament Church and Old Testament Church one and the same, 75.
New Testament Greek, 150.

- New Testament, various meanings of *baptizo* in, 156 ff.
Nicodemus's perplexity concerning John 3:5-54.
Noah, sign given him by God, 51.
Non-essentials, the, 121-128.
Nude baptism in ancient Church, 257.
Nullification of infant church-membership not found in Scriptures, 82.
OBEDIENCE to inexplicable commands a duty, 280.
Obedience an expression of love to God, 282.
 life of, necessary for baptism, 66.
Objections to infant baptism considered, 103-117.
 (First, 103; second, 105; third, 106; fourth, 107; fifth, 111; sixth, 112;
 seventh, 114.)
Officiating clergymen must demand pledges in baptizing infants, 116.
Oikos and *oikia*, difference of, 95, 96.
Old Testament and New Testament Church the same, 75.
Old Testament, various meanings of *baptizo* in, 170.
Ordinance of initiation changed from circumcision to baptism, 86.
Ordinances of baptism and circumcision, why Christ received both, 92.
Oriental Church, mode of baptism in, 247, 248.
Origen on infant baptism, 99, 101.
Origen, his use of *baptizo*, 180.
Origin of Christian ritual baptism, 45.
Owen, Dr., his testimony on *baptizo*, 184.
PARACLETE, the, spiritual operations of, 27, 28.
Parkhurst, 132.
Passor, 132.
Patrick, 108.
Patristic literature, use of the word *baptizo* in, 177.
Paul appealed to on controverted subjects of non-essentials, 122.
Payson, Dr., favored infant baptism, 71.
Pedobaptist and anabaptist writers, controversy of, 69.
Pedobaptists' explanation of the baptism of the three thousand, 210.
Pelagius on infant baptism, 100.
Pentecost, the three thousand baptized on day of, 46, 55.
Pentecostal baptism, 29.
 minor, 30.
Peshito, the, 145.
Peter, I., 3:21 explained, 229.
Philology of the word *baptizo*, 131 ff.
Philoteus, Bryennios, bishop, 251.

- Pindar, 148.
 his use of *baptismos*, 23.
- Pitts, quoted, 159.
- Plato, quoted, 140, 141.
- Plutarch, 136, 141.
- Polybius, a Greek historian, quoted, 139.
- Poole, 108.
- Pope, W. B., his testimony on *baptizo*, 187.
- Porphyry, a Greek philosopher, quoted, 139.
- Position on infant baptism, our, 71.
- Pouring, the first case of, on record, 255.
 inferred from Isa. 44:3, and John 2:28, 29. 240.
- Precept, a, necessary to exclude children from Church, 82.
- Precepts and teachings on mode examined, 227.
- Preface, 5.
- Prerequisites for Christian baptism, 46, 47.
- Protestant Episcopal Church unjustly charged with baptismal regeneration, 57.
- Proposition, main, on mode, 128.
 conclusion of, 242.
- Propositions, the Sub-, stated, 130.
- Proselyte baptism, 35.
 Maimonides on, 88.
- Prosencha, 224.
- Protovangelium, the, 76.
- Purification, 33.
 dispute between John's disciples and the Jews concerning, 34.
- QUALIFICATIONS for adult baptism, 65, 66.
- RAMSEY, his recent discovery in Asia Minor, 260.
- Ravenna, mosaic in, 259.
- Recommendation, 11.
- Re-baptism, unnecessary, 112, 113.
 of converts from the Roman Catholic Church, an open question, 113.
- Regeneration must precede baptism, 55.
- Regeneration, baptismal, scripture used in proof of this doctrine, 54.
 "born of water" explained, 54.
 taught by Tertullian, 98.
 disproved, 103.
 in the early Church, 257.
 among many of the Church fathers, 53, 178.
 taught by Mormonism and Church of Rome, 53.

- Remarks, additional, on mode, 245.
Remigus, his skill in immersing, 211.
Repentance signified by John's baptism, 37.
Rice, Dr., 143.
Ridgley's "Divinity," quoted, 106.
Ritual baptism, 32.
 discarded by the quakers, 278.
Robinson, quoted, 159.
Robinson, Prof. E., quoted, 150.
Robinson, Dr., "Biblical Researches," quoted, 159.
Robinson, Dr. John, his testimony on *baptizo*, 184.
Romanism no worse than modalism, 228.
Romans 6:3, 4, explained, 232.
Roman catacombs representing various modes of baptism, 258.
SACRED literature, various meanings of *baptizo* in, 156.
Samaritans, the, baptism of, 223.
Samuel anointing David, 28.
Saul, spirit departing from, 28.
Saul of Tarsus, his baptism, 220.
Scapula, 132.
Scarcity of water in ancient Jerusalem disproved, 213-215.
Schaff, Dr., "History of the Apostolic Church," quoted, 158.
 "Creed of Christianity," quoted, 250.
 "The Oldest Church Manual," quoted, 250.
 "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," quoted, 256.
Schlensner, 132.
Scott, Thomas, his testimony on *baptizo*, 183, 184.
Scripture use in favor of modalism considered, 229 ff.
Seal, baptism when a, 51.
Second probation taught by Joseph Smith, 236.
Septuagint Version, 170, 171.
Seven different meanings of the word *baptizo* in Scripture, 175.
Seventeenth century the epoch in modern immersion, 250, 251.
Siculus, Diodorus, quoted, 141.
Sign, baptism when a, 51.
Siloam, the pool of, 213, 215.
Simon Magus, 47.
Smith, Wm., his description of ancient bathing, 177.
Smith, Joseph, his peculiar doctrine of baptism for the dead, 236.
Smith, John, the founder of Armenian Baptists, 250.
Society of Friends, the, discard water-baptism, 278.

- Socrates, 140.
Solomon's pools, 214.
Spiritual, or real, baptism, 27, 208-210, 220, 221.
Spiritual baptism a prerequisite for Christian baptism, 46.
Spiritual circumcision, 80.
Sponsors, 117.
Sprinkling, in Ezek. 36: 25, and Isa. 52: 15. 238.
Sprinkling and pouring the exception, and immersion the rule, in the early Church, 248.
reversed after the thirteenth century, 249.
Stackhouse's "History of the Holy Bible, quoted, 108.
Stanley, Dean, his testimony on mode, 246.
St. Callistus, catacomb of, 260.
Stephanas, household of, baptism of, 224.
Stephanus, 132.
Stockius, 132.
Strabo, quoted, 138, 139.
Styx, the fabulous river of Hades, 139.
Sub-proposition I., on mode discussed, 131.
Sub-proposition II., on mode discussed, 190.
Sub-proposition III., on mode discussed, 227.
Subjects of baptism, the, 65.
Sufferings spoken of as a "cup," 166-168.
Suidas, 132.
his definition of *baptizo*, 133.
Sybilline oracles, quotations from, 137.
Symbol, a, defined, 48, 49.
Symbolic ceremony of spiritual baptism, 32.
Syriac version of Acts 16: 33. 95.
Syriac version of *baptizo*, 183.
TACITUS, his testimony of the abundance of water in ancient Jerusalem, 214.
Talmud, the, on proselyte baptism, 88.
Tatius, Achilles, quoted, 141.
" Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," the, 251 ff.
Tears, baptism of, 181.
Telugu Baptist Mission, the, 212.
Tertullian on infant baptism, 98.
his use of *baptizo*, 180.
Testimony of Church fathers on infant baptism, 97.
Testimonies, historical, on mode in ancient Church, 245.

- Theocracy, circumcision necessary to membership, 78.
 Theologians, eminent, their testimonies on *baptizo*, 183 ff.
 Theseus, 136.
 Thorn's estimate of the number baptized by John, 195.
 Three thousand, the baptism of, 207 ff.
 was it real or ritual? 208-210.
 Tiber, the, 138.
 Timon, the man-hater, 140.
 Timothy's circumcision a prudential conciliation, 94.
 Titus refused circumcision by Paul, 94.
 Tracy, Dr., his testimony on *baptizo*, 184, 185.
 Trail, Dr., his testimony of the abundance of water in ancient Jerusalem, 214.
 Transition of meaning of *baptizo* from secular to sacred, 148 ff.
 Transition age, from childhood to manhood, 109.
 from circumcision to baptism, 112.
 Translation, an incorrect, influence on art, 205, 206.
 Transmission of inherited depravity upon our offspring, 115.
 Trine immersion, 247, 257,
 in the *Didache*, 254.
- UNIFORM** mode of baptism, a, never adopted or practiced in the history of the Christian Church, 245.
 tends to Romanism, 228.
 disproved by the "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," 251.
 disproved by the various meanings of *baptizo*, 131.
 disproved by Bible examples of baptism, 190.
 disproved by the teachings of scripture, 227.
 disproved by Church history, 245.
 disproved by Christian art, 258.
- United Brethren Church, the, on mode of baptism, 121.
 her laxity in enforcing the sacrament of baptism, 267.
 Universality of immersion impossible, 263, 264.
- VIA OSTIENSIS** at Rome, 205.
 Vicarious faith, 107.
 Vote on mode of baptism by Westminister Assembly, 250.
 Vulgate, the, leaves *baptizo* untranslated, 183.
- WAHL**, 132.
 Washburn, Dr., his testimony on mode of baptism in Oriental Church, 248.
 Washing, the Hebrew word for, 172.

- Washings among the Jews, 139, 157 ff, 158-160.
mode of, in Japan, 158.
“ Washings, divers,” 160.
Water, blood, or ashes, the symbolizing elements in ritual baptism, 33.
Water in ancient Jerusalem plenty, 214.
Water baptisms, 36.
Watson, Richard, on baptism, 58, 59.
his testimony on *baptizo*, 186.
Wesley, John, favored infant baptism, 71.
Westminister Confession on baptism, 58.
Westminister Assembly of divines vote on mode, 250.
Whose children are proper subjects for baptism? 115, 116.
Wilderness, the, where John baptized, 193.
Williams, Canon, his testimony of the abundance of water in ancient
Jerusalem, 215.
Wilson, Robert, quoted, 202.
Wilson, Captain, his testimony of the abundance of water in ancient
Jerusalem, 215.
Woodbridge's “ Universal Geography,” quoted, 264.
Woolsey's “ History of Baptism,” quoted, 105.
XAVIER, Francis, his skill in baptizing, 212.
Xenophon, 148.
YOUNG, “ Night Thoughts,” quoted, 244.
ZWINGLIAN sense of baptism too narrow, 48.

SCRIPTURE INDEX.

Genesis 1:1	50	Psalms 51:7.....	172
Genesis 7:2.....	84	Psalms 51:7.....	238
Genesis 8:20.....	84	Psalms 73:13.....	172
Genesis 15:6.....	145	Psalms 124:4, 5.....	166
Genesis 17:7.....	76	Proverbs 4:14, 15.....	49
Genesis 17:9-14.....	59	Proverbs 22:6.....	74
Genesis 17:14.....	60	Ecclesiastes 12:13.....	231
Genesis 18:4.....	172	Isaiah 1:16.....	172
Genesis 43:31.....	172	Isaiah 4:4.....	29
Exodus 4:24-27.....	105	Isaiah 4:4.....	172
Exodus 14:31.....	168	Isaiah 21:4.....	174
Exodus 18:25, 26.....	197	Isaiah 44:3.....	240
Exodus 28:38.....	84	Isaiah 52:15.....	238
Exodus 29:17.....	172	Isaiah 55:1.....	54
Exodus 30:17-21.....	33	Jeremiah 2:13.....	54
Exodus 31:3.....	27	Jeremiah 2:22.....	172
Leviticus 8:6.....	33	Jeremiah 4:14.....	172
Leviticus 10:16.....	85	Jeremiah 5:14.....	29
Leviticus 14:2-9.....	33	Ezekiel 36:25.....	54
Leviticus 17:30.....	85	Ezekiel 36:25.....	238
Numbers 8:6, 7.....	33	Ezekiel 39:25 ff.....	35
Numbers 11:17.....	28	Ezekiel 36:25, 26.....	180
Numbers 19:17-19.....	33	Daniel 4:33.....	171
Numbers 19:18.....	163	Daniel 5:1-6.....	174
Numbers 27:18.....	28	Joel 2:28, 29.....	260
Deuteronomy 21:1-9.....	34	Zechariah 13:1.....	35
Deuteronomy 29:10-12.....	81	Malachi 3:2.....	29
I. Samuel 8:1.....	197	Matthew 1:18.....	50
I. Samuel 15:22, 23.....	281	Matthew 3:11.....	28
I. Samuel 16:13.....	28	Matthew 3:11.....	39
II. Kings 5:14.....	171	Matthew 3:11.....	54
Psalms 26:6.....	33	Matthew 3:11.....	199
Psalms 29:10.....	179	Matthew 3:16.....	198

Matthew 3:5,6	192	Luke 11:38.....	163
Matthew 3:5,6	195	Luke 12:50.....	165
Matthew 5:29.....	204	Luke 19:30.....	4 ²
Matthew 9:17.....	204	Luke 24:5-7.....	50
Matthew 10:22.....	50	John 1:35-40	46
Matthew 10:32,33.....	274	John 2:6	159
Matthew 17:27.....	204	John 3:5	34
Matthew 20:21,22.....	181	John 3:5	54
Matthew 20:22.....	165	John 3:5	241
Matthew 21:1.....	204	John 3:16.....	50
Matthew 23:25.....	35	John 3:22,23.....	46
Matthew 24:38.....	204	John 3:23.....	192
Matthew 25:31-33.....	50	John 3:25	34
Matthew 25:46.....	50	John 4:1,2	45
Matthew 27:24.....	34	John 4:10	54
Matthew 28:19.....	45	John 7:37,38.....	54
Matthew 28:19.....	46	John 8:44	49
Matthew 28:19.....	51	John 11:32	201
Matthew 28:19.....	269	John 13:13	50
Mark 1:4.....	192	John 14:15,24.....	50
Mark 1:9.....	41	John 14:16,17,26.....	50
Mark 1:9.....	199	John 15:5	50
Mark 1:9.....	200	John 19:33	50
Mark 1:9.....	201	John 19:41	42
Mark 7:2,4	159	John 19:41,42	50
Mark 7:4.....	149	John 20:4,5.....	201
Mark 7:4.....	157	Acts 1:5	164
Mark 7:4.....	162	Acts 1:9,II	50
Mark 7:4.....	163	Acts 2:2-4	50
Mark 7:4.....	164	Acts 2:3	29
Mark 7:4,8	187	Acts 2:17 ff	241
Mark 10:38.....	165	Acts 2:38	46
Mark 19:38.....	166	Acts 2:38,41	210
Mark 15:15.....	50	Acts 2:46	96
Mark 15:25-28.....	50	Acts 2:47	77
Luke 2:4-7.....	50	Acts 5:42	96
Luke 2:42.....	108	Acts 7:38	77
Luke 3:21.....	273	Acts 8:9-23	47
Luke 11:38.....	157	Acts 8:12,16.....	223
Luke 11:38.....	159	Acts 8:38,39.....	218
Luke 11:38.....	162	Acts 9:18.....	219

Acts 10:47	222	I. Corinthians 1:16.....	94
Acts 11:15, 16.....	221	I. Corinthians 1:16.....	96
Acts 12:7	219	I. Corinthians 7:14.....	83
Acts 15:15.....	93	I. Corinthians 7:14.....	116
Acts 15:19	93	I. Corinthians 8:6.....	49
Acts 16:15.....	94	I. Corinthians 8:6.....	50
Acts 16:15.....	96	I. Corinthians 8:8.....	122
Acts 16:15.....	223	I. Corinthians 10:1, 2.....	168
Acts 16:33	95	I. Corinthians 10:1, 2.....	181
Acts 16:33	223	I. Corinthians 10:2.....	60
Acts 17:11	78	I. Corinthians 10:25.....	122
Acts 18:8	223	I. Corinthians 10:29.....	128
Acts 18:24-26	40	I. Corinthians 12:13.....	30
Acts 19:1-7	40	I. Corinthians 12:12, 13.....	50
Acts 19:2-5	37	I. Corinthians 15:29.....	235
Acts 19:4	38	I. Corinthians 15:29.....	236
Acts 19:5	60	I. Corinthians 15:42-44.....	50
Acts 19:5	224	II. Corinthians 6:14, 15.....	49
Acts 22:16	54	Galatians 3:7	76
Acts 26:10	84	Galatians 3:14	76
Acts 28:3, 4.....	219	Galatians 3:17	83
Romans 2:28, 29.....	60	Galatians 3:26-29	49
Romans 2:28, 29.....	80	Galatians 3:27	31
Romans 3:1.....	104	Galatians 3:27	273
Romans 3:3, 4.....	104	Galatians 3:29	77
Romans 4:9-12.....	60	Galatians 4.....	87
Romans 4:9-12.....	80	Galatians 4:4.....	92
Romans 4:11.....	87	Galatians 5:24.....	49
Romans 6:3, 4.....	238	Ephesians 2:14.....	77
Romans 6:3-11.....	49	Ephesians 4:5.....	241
Romans 6:3, 4.....	232	Ephesians 4:22, 24	234
Romans 6:4.....	235	Ephesians 4:27.....	49
Romans 8:13.....	49	Ephesians 5:11.....	49
Romans 10:9, 10.....	274	Philippians 3:3	60
Romans 12:2.....	49	Philippians 4:13	50
Romans 12:4, 5.....	50	Colossians 2:11, 12.....	80
Romans 14:3.....	122	Colossians 2:11, 12.....	87
Romans 14:5.....	122	Colossians 2:11, 12.....	235
Romans 15:25.....	84	Colossians 2:12	232
I. Corinthians 1:13.....	60	Colossians 2:12	237
I. Corinthians 1:14, 16.....	224	Colossians 2:12	238

Colossians 2:16	123	I. Peter 1:2	239
Colossians 3:11	94	I. Peter 3:19	236
I. Thessalonians 5:21	228	I. Peter 3:21	49
I. Timothy 3:4	96	I. Peter 3:21	229
I. Timothy 12:13	149	I. Peter 3:21	283
II. Timothy 4:1	50	II. Peter 1:20	228
Titus 3:5	54	I. John 2:1, 2	50
Titus 3:5	241	I. John 2:15, 16	49
Hebrews 3:4	206	I. John 3:8-10	49
Hebrews 6:2	23	¶ I. John 4:15	275
Hebrews 9:10	23	¶ I. John 5:3	282
Hebrews 9:10	33	¶ I. John 5:6	230
Hebrews 9:10	187	¶ I. John 5:6	231
Hebrews 9:10	160	Revelation 4:8	50
Hebrews 9:13	34	Revelation 21:6	54
Hebrews 9:13	176	Revelation 22:17	54
Hebrews 9:13	238		
Hebrews 10:12	50		
Hebrews 10:22	238		
James 4:7	49		
		APOCRYPHA.	
		Judith 12:7	176
		Ecclesiasticus 34:25	176



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