

SPRINKLING,  
THE  
ONLY MODE OF BAPTISM  
MADE KNOWN IN THE SCRIPTURES;  
AND  
THE SCRIPTURE WARRANT  
FOR  
INFANT BAPTISM.

BY  
ABSALOM PETERS, D. D.



ALBANY:  
PUBLISHED BY E. H. PEASE & CO.  
1848.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1848,  
BY ABSALOM PETERS,  
in the Clerk's Office for the District of Massachusetts,

J. MUNSELL, PRINTER,  
ALBANY.

## DEDICATION.

---

To the First and Second Congregational Churches in Williamstown and to the Faculty and Students of Williams College — the very general expression of whose favorable opinion of the substance of the following treatise, as recently presented in the pulpits of these churches, has induced him to prepare it for publication — this little volume is most affectionately and respectfully dedicated, with every feeling of interest, and of Christian fellowship,

By their Friend and Servant,

In the Ministry of the Gospel,

A. PETERS.

*Williamstown, Mass., June, 1848.*

## A WORD TO THE READER.

---

IN preparing this work, it has been my object to furnish a book adapted to be read and understood by our church members generally; at once so small, that any one may afford to purchase it — so brief, as not to be wearisome — and so arranged as to present the subjects discussed, in their proper order, and with clearness, to the mind of the reader. It is designed as a candid, direct and intelligible exposition of the Scripture Doctrine of Christian Baptism, in respect to its *nature, mode* and *subjects*.

Such a work may appear to some to have been uncalled for. Scores of books and pamphlets have been published, on Baptism, some of them of great ability; and much learning has been expended on the subject. But the controversy respecting the *mode* of baptism has been thrown into no little confusion by false issues in argument, and by a range of learned discussion, often, the tendency of which has been to bewilder the inquirer after truth, while the confidence with which immersionists are accustomed to claim the

express sanction of scripture, has led many to doubt, whether, after all, the Baptists may not be the nearest right, if they would only give up their close communion.

It seemed important, therefore, to disembarass the simple teachings of the Bible from the incumbering arguments which have been so generally urged in its aid, and to arm the common mind in our churches for the defence of the scriptural mode of baptism, practiced by all Protestants, excepting a single denomination. We have accordingly made the Bible its own interpreter.

The arguments adduced in this treatise are almost wholly scriptural and didactic, with as little to do with controversy, as the nature of the subject and a proper defence of the truth has seemed to allow.

Similar principles have been adopted in the argument for Infant Baptism.

Should this undertaking meet the favor which it humbly craves, and serve to strengthen the faith of such as already adopt substantially the positions here defended — confirm the wavering, convince the doubting, or guide the honest inquirer to the truth, on the much controverted subjects here discussed — it will fulfil the hopes and answer the prayers of

THE AUTHOR.

## A COMMENDATORY RESOLUTION.

---

While preparing for publication, I took occasion to present the argument contained in Part I, at a meeting of the "Berkshire Association," who have kindly furnished the following expression of favor, viz:

"The Rev. Dr. PETERS preached the Associational Sermon, from Matt. 28 : 19, and after criticism, the following preamble and resolution were unanimously passed:

"The Association having listened with great interest to the argument of Dr. Peters on the *Mode of Baptism*, and deeming his views original and important, and a 'short method' of settling this question; therefore

"*Resolved*, That Dr. Peters be requested to publish his views on this subject, in such form as he shall judge best.

"A true copy from the minutes,

"Attest, J. JAY DANA, *Scribe.*"

*Sessions of the Berkshire Association, }  
Great Barrington, June 6, 1848. }*

# CONTENTS.

---

## PART I.

SPRINKLING THE ONLY MODE OF BAPTISM MADE  
KNOWN IN THE SCRIPTURES.

### SECTION I.

General remarks on the institution of baptism, as  
a Christian Sacrament, and the controversy re-  
specting it, - - - - - 13

### SECTION II.

The controversy stated—Meaning of *baptizo*, as  
used to designate the Christian ordinance of  
baptism—The Greek plow, - - - 20

### SECTION III.

Scripture illustrations of the meaning of the word  
*baptism*, independent of the mode of its ad-  
ministration, and of sprinkling, as the only  
mode of baptism made known in the Bible, 36

## SECTION IV.

The nature and design of John's baptism, and of the baptism of our Saviour by John, - -	51
--	----

## SECTION V.

All the questions on the mode of baptism re- duced to one—The water applied to the per- son, and not the person to the water, -	59
---	----

## SECTION VI.

The mode of John's baptism, - - -	68
-----------------------------------	----

## SECTION VII.

Prophecies intimating the mode of Christian bap- tism—The baptism of the Spirit, - -	78
---	----

## SECTION VIII.

Historical illustrations of the mode of baptism, as it was administered by the apostles—The Greek particles translated <i>into</i> and <i>out of</i> , -	84
1. The baptism of three thousand on the day of Pentecost, - - - - -	84
2. The baptism of the Eunuch and of Christ,	89

## SECTION IX.

Historical illustrations of the mode of baptism, as administered by the apostles— <i>Continued</i> ,	99
3. The baptism of the apostle Paul, - -	99
4. The baptism of Cornelius and his friends,	99

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 5. The baptism of Lydia and her household,  | 101 |
| 6. The case of the jailer and his family, - | 102 |
| 7. Two other instances, - - - -             | 105 |

## SECTION X.

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| Recapitulation—Figurative expressions concern-<br>ing baptism—Conclusion of the argument, | 107 |
|---|-----|

## SECTION XI.

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| Origin of the mode of baptism by immersion—<br>The Bible does not make the mode essential,<br>yet important—A concession—The great error<br>of the Baptists, - - - - | 114 |
|--|-----|

## PART II.

## THE SCRIPTURE WARRANT FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

## SECTION I.

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| The meaning of our Saviour's command, (Matt.<br>28: 19,) in respect to the subjects of baptism—<br>Proselyte baptism, - - - - | 131 |
|---|-----|

## SECTION II.

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| In all the covenants of God with men, children<br>are included with their parents. - - | 140 |
|--|-----|

## SECTION III.

The Church the same under the Jewish and Christian dispensations, - - - -	144
--	-----

## SECTION IV.

Baptism the substitute for circumcision, -	149
--	-----

## SECTION V,

The example and practice of the apostles in re- spect to Infant Baptism, - - - -	162
---	-----

## SECTION VI.

Testimony of early Christians, and of history— Origin of the Baptist denomination—Conclud- ing remarks, - - - - -	168
---	-----

## PART I.

### SPRINKLING THE ONLY MODE OF BAPTISM MADE KNOWN IN THE SCRIPTURES.\*

---

#### SECTION I.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE INSTITUTION OF BAPTISM,  
AS A CHRISTIAN SACRAMENT, AND THE CONTRO-  
VERSY RESPECTING IT.

The last command of our Saviour to his disciples was addressed to them, after his re-

\* I use the word *sprinkling*, in preference to *aspersion*, *affusion*, or *pouring*, because it is a more familiar word, in common parlance, and is used in scripture, to express the mode of baptism, as it is generally practised. It is also a better translation of the Greek word  $\rhoαντισ\omega$  (*rantizo*) in the Septuagint, and as used by the Apostle (Heb. 9: 13) in reference to the “divers washings” (*baptisms*) prescribed under the law. I wish it to be understood, however, that I mean by this word any application of water to the subject of baptism, in larger or smaller quantities, according to the original signification of *rantizo*, which is to *pour all over*; to *wet*; to *besprinkle*.

surrection, when having finished his personal ministry on earth, he was about to ascend his throne. The occasion was solemn and memorable. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; Go ye therefore and teach all nations, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" (Mat. 28: 16-20.) This command is recorded by another Evangelist in different words: "And he said unto them, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED, SHALL BE SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT, SHALL BE DAMNED.*" (Mark 16: 15, 16.)

These passages contain the only recorded institution of Christian baptism. The disciples, it is true, had before this *baptized*. But there is no proof that they had done so in the form which

is here prescribed, and no evidence that the Saviour had before required baptism to be performed in the use of these words. In his last command, therefore, as recorded in the above passages, is contained the whole of our direct authority, from Christ himself, for the administration of this ordinance. Here Christian baptism was instituted. This is our only Divine warrant to baptize "*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"

This command, to baptize, no doubt, has a definite meaning—a meaning which was understood by those to whom it was primarily addressed, and which ought to be understood by us. And yet it is expressed in the fewest words possible. It is accompanied with no commentary, no explanation of the words. It means, just what the words meant, *then and there*. And the very brevity of the expressions, and the incidental manner, in which the duty is inculcated in the command, indicate that there must have been, present to the minds of the apostles, circumstances and considerations which rendered the words perfectly intelligible to them. They accordingly received the command, asking no

explanations, and went forth in obedience to it, and administered baptism to their disciples.

It should also be remarked, that the administration of this ordinance, in the time of the apostles, being a matter of visible practice, the *mode* of it was of course seen and understood by those who received it. It seems indeed to have been understood alike by the primitive disciples. Hence we hear of no dispute or division among them concerning it. They either agreed in a particular mode, which they understood to be embraced in the meaning of the command, or they regarded the *spirit* of the institution as *alone essential*, and felt at liberty to vary the *mode* to meet circumstances and occasions. Accordingly there was no need of any explanation, to them, of the *mode* of the ordinance. The visible practice of the thing, which they called baptism, explained itself, in this respect.

But there have come dark ages over the church and the world. Scarcely had the apostles been laid in their graves, when a fancy began to prevail, that there was a cleansing power in water baptism. The strange notion of "*baptismal regeneration*" was early imbibed by professing

Christians, and a mode of baptism was no doubt adopted, to imply and perpetuate that idea. Forms and ceremonies were soon introduced from heathen worship, and monstrous abuses were practised, which continue to the present day, both in the Romish and Greek churches. The spirit of the institution was buried and lost under the accumulation of its borrowed accompaniments. The leaders of the Protestant Reformation, therefore, have found it necessary to go back to the Bible, to recover the original meaning of this and other ordinances of the gospel.

For reasons, however, which I have already intimated, the import of the Saviour's brief command on this subject, is not so readily apprehended by us as by the primitive disciples. The single word βαπτίζω, (*baptizo*,) which defines the ordinance, is not, with us, vernacular, and we are far removed from the usages of those times in our personal experience. We labor, therefore, under some disadvantages in our endeavors to ascertain the precise truth, as to the original mode of this ordinance. Yet the institution, in its primitive purity, is deemed so im-

portant, that learning and ignorance, simple piety and sectarian zeal have all been deeply and perseveringly engaged in its investigation.

The sad result is a controversy, wide-spread among evangelical Christians, as to the *mode* in which we are required to fulfil this last command of our Saviour. And what is still more sad, principles have been adopted by some parties, which have divided the church, and broken her visible communion.

In such a state of things, if there be any key to the discovery of the root of this evil, any principle which may promise to restore the body of the faithful to its primitive unity, surely every conscientious Christian will rejoice to find it. At least every one rightly affected on this subject, will see to it, that he is not himself, through ignorance of the Saviour's command, a schismatic, or an occasion of divisions among the people of God.

In what *mode*, then, did the apostles understand that they were to obey the command of Christ, to *baptize*? To answer this question satisfactorily, we must place ourselves, as far as possible, in their circumstances, and look out

upon the truths and usages, which must have controlled their perception of the meaning of the words and things embraced in this command.

## SECTION II.

THE CONTROVERSY STATED—MEANING OF THE WORD  
βαπτίζω (BAPTIZO,) AND ITS DERIVATIVES, AS  
USED TO DESIGNATE THE CHRISTIAN ORDINANCE  
OF BAPTISM.

Our Baptist brethren maintain strenuously that the primary classical meaning of the word βαπτίζω (*baptizo*,) is to *immerse* or *dip*, and that this meaning of the word and its derivatives, used to designate the ordinance of baptism, must control the mode of its administration. On this ground, principally, they contend that *immersion, and nothing else is baptism.\** I say,

\*The proportion of the Christian world, who practice immersion or *submersion*, is very small. Of the sixty or seventy millions of Protestants of all denominations in the world, probably not a *fiftieth* part have been baptized in this way. Dr. Kurtz, of the Lutheran Church, says, “probably not *one-sixtieth* part practice submersion.” All the rest administer baptism by *aspersion* or *sprinkling*.

I mention this fact rather as a matter of information,

on this ground *principally*, because, though many other topics of argument are put forth in their writings, I think it will be made apparent, in than as an argument; and since our Baptist brethren sometimes claim the practice of the Greek church in favor of their mode of baptism, it may be proper here to remark, that the Greek church maintain that *trine immersion*—plunging three times—is absolutely necessary. After these immersions, they *sprinkle* the subject with water. They cannot be claimed, therefore, as the exclusive supporters of either mode, while the Roman Catholic church, whose example is quite as worthy of imitation, practice only sprinkling, so far as water is used. But these are both idolatrous churches, whose practices have no authority with us.

I may add, that even among Protestants, who practice immersion, the "*Tunkers*"—*Dippers*, usually called *Dunkards*—insist on an entire *triple* immersion, by a *forward* motion of the body, while Alexander Campbell, the leader of the *Campbellites*, a somewhat numerous sect in our Western States, judges this mode to be nugatory, inasmuch as it does not, in his opinion, resemble the *burial* of Christ. "We must dip," he says, "only once, and the motion must be *backwards*." But while these conflicting opinions exist among the advocates of immersion, there is no dispute among those who practice sprinkling, as to the precise mode of its performance.—See *Kurtz on Baptism*, p. 158, &c.

the course of our discussion, that they are of little weight in comparison with this. This is regarded as the main point by our Baptist brethren themselves. It is, indeed, the only ground, on which I can conceive that a candid *scholar* would be willing to take the exclusive position assumed by the "close communion Baptists."

But the argument, on this ground, in favor of immersion, derives all its strength from a mistaken assumption that *it is in point*, when, in fact it has little or nothing to do with the subject. *Learned* men, on the Baptist side of this controversy, may have thus been led, by their familiarity with the Greek classics, to take up a false issue to which they have applied their philology, in a manner very satisfactory to themselves, while *prejudiced* men have felt it incumbent on them so to interpret the scripture expressions relating to baptism, as to make them conform to the imperious demands of this philological argument. But this argument, as I have said—and will now proceed to show—has little or nothing to do with the subject.

The question in dispute can never be settled by proving the meaning of the word βαπτίζω,

(baptizo) in ancient *heathen* Greek, though it is easy to show, and has been abundantly proved by our best philologists, that the argument is not wholly with the Baptists, even on that score. The word means to *tinge, to dye, to smear, &c.*, as well as to *immerse*. The Editor of Calmet's Dictionary quotes some *eighty* examples, taken in part from the ancient fathers and classical writers, but mostly from the Bible, in every one of which the word in question implies less than *submersion*, and in most of them, no more than *sprinkling, moistening, pouring, or staining*. But I leave that argument as wholly irrelevant to the precise point of difference between us and our Baptist brethren.

The true question is: what was, and is, the meaning of the word *baptizo*, as used in the New Testament, to designate the religious ordinance of baptism? Suppose we admit—as we do not—all that the Baptists claim, as to the meaning of *baptizo*, or βαπτισμος (baptism) in *heathen* Greek. If it meant there *immersion, and nothing else*, still that could not govern its meaning as used by Christ and his apostles to designate an action

which was utterly unknown to the Greeks of all preceding ages.

Let it be remembered that the Greek language had never been used to express any of the ideas of revealed religion, until the Jews were conquered by the Greeks some three hundred years before Christ.\* Until after that time the idea of a religious ordinance, or ceremony, called baptism, had never entered the mind of a Greek. The Greek language was as destitute of any such idea, as was the language of the Sandwich Islanders before they were instructed by our missionaries. All the ideas of the language, relating to religion, were *heathen* ideas. Hence the whole system of the gospel was “to the Greeks foolishness.” (1 Cor. 1: 23.) But the Jews, who had before this spoken the Hebrew language, and had the Old Testament scriptures in the Hebrew—which was understood by no other nation—being now in subjection to the Greeks, found it necessary to learn the Greek

\*The Jews submitted to the dominion of the Greeks under Alexander the Great, who died in the year 323 before Christ. After this the intercourse of the Jews with the Greeks was necessarily intimate.

language. And before the birth of the Saviour, they translated their own scriptures into Greek.\* But in expressing the truths of revealed religion in their new language, they were obliged to give to many of its words a new meaning.

The word πνευμα (*pneuma, spirit*) for instance, in the most ancient Greek, meant *wind*, or *breath*, and nothing further. But in adapting this word to express the ideas of revealed religion, the sacred writers use it to signify *spirit*, as the *spirit* of man, and the *Spirit* of God.

\* The translation here referred to is that known as the *Septuagint*, which Josephus and others say, was made under the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who died 247 years before Christ; and it is generally admitted that that translation existed before our Saviour's time, and is quoted by him. It is conceded also that the Greek language was generally spoken in Palestine in the time of Christ, though the Hebrew was also in use among all the Jews. (See *Hug's art. on "The Greek Language in Palestine," Bib. Repos.* 1831, p. 530, &c.) The Latin language was also now spoken in Palestine; for before this time—146 years B. C.—the Romans had conquered both the Greeks and Hebrews. Hence the superscription on the cross of Christ was written "in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew," that all the people might understand it.—(Luke 23: 38.)

The word ἄγγελος (*angelos, angel,*) in heather Greek, signified simply a *messenger, a person by whom news is conveyed*; and the idea of a *spiritual messenger* from God, called *angelos*, was unknown to the Greek language. But the sacred writers appropriate this word almost exclusively to the expression of this idea. It means, in the Bible, what it did not mean in ancient Greek, a *spiritual messenger and servant of God*.

The Baptists, then, if they would be consistent with themselves, in claiming a literal translation of *baptizo*, according to its *heathen* or secular meaning, must do the same in respect to the words *pneuma* and *angelos*. But if they do this, they must read the passage, John 3 : 5, “Except a man be born of water and of *the wind*, [the Spirit] he can not enter into the kingdom of God;” and, John 3 : 6, “That which is born of *the wind* is *wind*!” And they must make the sacred writer declare, Acts 23 : 8, that the Saducees say, “there is no resurrection, neither *messenger* nor *wind*!” The same absurdity would occur from the carrying out of this principle in respect to many other Greek words, used

in the New Testament, to express the peculiar ideas of revealed religion.\*

So Christ and his apostles, who were of Jewish lineage, and were familiar with all religious ideas, as expressed in the Hebrew language of their own scriptures, when they applied the word *baptizo* to express a religious ordinance, gave to the word a *new shade of meaning*, conformed to the *thing* which it was now intended to express. But the idea of this thing had never entered the mind of a *heathen* Greek, and until now had

\* Let it be observed, we do not affirm that the New Testament writers always use the words above referred to in their religious sense. When they speak of ordinary things in the Greek language, they give to its words the meanings which they had in common use, before they were appropriated to the expression of religious ideas. So our Saviour, in the same conversation in which he used *pneuma* to signify *spirit*, made use of the same word in its primitive sense (John 3 : 8,) "The wind" (*pneuma*) "bloweth where it listeth." The word *baptizo* is also often used in Scripture in its primitive sense. The principle which we assert is, that it always has a peculiar meaning, unknown to the ancient Greeks, when used to express the rite of baptism.

been unknown to the Greek language. It is preposterous, therefore, to determine the precise mode of this ordinance from the primary or previous meaning of the Greek word used to express it. The meaning of an *old word*, when it is used as the name of a *new thing*, must conform to the *thing*, and not the thing to the *name*.

“No principle is more universally admitted by all sound philologists, than that to establish the original and primitive meaning of a word, is not at all decisive in respect to its subsequent usage. It often aids only as giving a clue, by which to trace the progress of the imagination, or the association of ideas in leading the mind from meaning to meaning, on some ground of relative similitude, or connexion of cause and effect. So the verb, *to spring*, denotes an act, and gives rise to a noun denoting an act. A perception of similitude transfers the word to the *issuing* of water from a fountain, to the motion of a watch-*spring*, and to the *springing* of plants in the *spring* of the year. Yet who does not feel, that to be able to trace such a process of thought, is far from proving that, when a man in one case says, I made a *spring* over the ditch, in another,

I broke the *spring* of my watch, in another, I drank from a *spring*, and in another, I prefer *spring* to winter, he means in each case the same thing by the word *spring*? And who, in using these words, always resorts to the original idea of the verb?" (*Pres. Beecher in Bib. Repos.* 1841.)

"It is true," says Campbell (Prelim. Dis. I., Part 2,) "that as the New Testament is written in Greek, it must be of consequence that we be able to enter critically into the ordinary import of the words of that tongue." "But from what has been observed, it is evident, that though in several cases this knowledge may be eminently useful, *it will not suffice*; nay, in many cases, it will be of little or no significancy." "Classical use, both in Greek and in Latin, is not only, in this study, *sometimes unavailable, but* MAY OFTEN MISLEAD. *The sacred use and the classical are* OFTEN VERY DIFFERENT."

In the Biblical Repository, for April, 1841, Professor Robinson says, "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 em-*

*ployed by native Greeks.* After the disuse of the ancient Hebrew in Palestine, and the irruption of Western conquerors, the Jews adopted the Greek language from necessity; partly as a conquered people, and partly from intercourse of life and commerce, in colonies, in cities, founded like Alexandria, and others, which were peopled with throngs of Jews.” “When to this we add, that they spoke in Greek *on the things of the true God, and the relations of mankind to Jehovah and to a Saviour—subjects to which no native Greek had ever applied his beautiful language*, it will be obvious that an APPEAL MERELY TO CLASSIC GREEK AND ITS PHILOLOGY WILL NOT SUFFICE FOR THE INTERPRETER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. *The Jewish-Greek must be studied almost as an independent dialect, &c.*”

And the Rev. Dr. E. Hall, of Connecticut, to whose able work on baptism, I acknowledge myself especially indebted for the suggestion of the main argument of this treatise—remarks as follows: “The sole intent of all this discussion about the classic use and the New Testament use, is to show that the word baptize in the New Testament *may have left its primary classic sig-*

nification, and have received a GENERIC, SACRED use, equivalent to WASHING or PURIFYING, without the least reference to the mode in which that "washing of water" is performed. Whether this be the fact or not, is to be learned not from the Greek classics, but from the New Testament itself. As to this matter of fact, Mark and Luke and Paul are better witnesses concerning what they themselves understood by the word baptize, than Xenophon, Aristotle, or than even that Hebrew of Hebrews, the Jewish Josephus, when he is using the word in the sense of the Greek classics, with no reference to its use as applied to a religious ordinance." He, therefore, who undertakes to prove the nature or mode of Christian baptism from the previous meaning of the name, now used to designate it, argues inconclusively.

The word *arotron*, (*αροτρον*,) for instance, in ancient Greek, signifies a *plow*. But the plow used by the Greeks, and designated by this name, was a *straight stick of timber*, some six or eight feet long, sharpened at one end, with a clevis at a suitable distance from the sharpened point, by which it was drawn, while it was steered by a

man at the other end of the stick. The plow used in Greece, at the present day, I am told, is of this description. It is known in the history of mechanics, as the *old Roman plow*.

Now suppose the Greeks should invade and conquer us, as they did the Jews of Palestine, and should make it necessary for us, as it was for them, to learn the Greek language, and to call our implements of agriculture, and other things, by Greek names. And suppose, in our new language, we should call our plow *arotron*. Does not every one perceive, that the word *arotron*, thus applied, has a new meaning, conformed to the thing which it is now used to designate? Does it still mean, with us, *a straight stick*, because that was its primary meaning in classical Greek? We know it does not. We look at the *plow* in daily use among ourselves, with its colter, and share, and handles, and other admirable contrivances, and when we call it *arotron*, we mean just what this thing, the modern plow, really is. Thus the word, in our use of it to express an existing thing, loses its primitive meaning. It no longer means, with us, *a straight stick*, but a veritable *Yankee plow*.

It needs no great learning to see the point of this statement. It is open to the common sense of plain men, for whom I have designed it. I wish the reader to be done with the embarrassment he may have felt from much of the classical learning, which has been displayed on the primitive meaning of βαπτίζω (*baptizo*) and βαπτω (*bapto*), which is a still more primitive word, and of course, still further removed, if possible, from the religious idea expressed by *baptizo*, in the New Testament. All this learning is misapplied. It serves only to darken counsel by words without knowledge, because it has really no bearing whatever on the subject of *Christian baptism*.\* *Arotron* as used by us, in the case which I have supposed, would mean the *plow* in common use among ourselves, and how absurd

\* This, I am aware is a strong expression. I do not mean to affirm that there was no reason for the selection of *baptizo* to denote Christian baptism, rather than any other Greek word. There is an analogy between its primitive meaning and its religious meaning; and that was a good reason for its selection. But since it has been appropriated to this specific use, we are to learn its new meaning, not from that analogy, but from the thing which it now signifies.

would it appear to the common sense of the generations that shall come after us, if some one should rise up a hundred years hence, and undertake to prove, with a great parade of learning, that the plow called by us *arotron*, was certainly a *straight stick, and nothing else*, because that is the meaning of the word *arotron*, in all the Greek classics! And this I think the reader will see is a fair illustration of the fallacy of the argument derived from the ancient classical meaning of *baptizo*, to prove that *immersion* is certainly the only *baptism*. The argument is wide of the point at issue, and is of no practical importance, because it has no bearing upon the question in dispute.

The foregoing illustration also suggests the only way in which we may hope to come to the truth on this subject. It is to consider *historically the thing*, which our Saviour requires, in his command to his disciples under the name of *baptism*. The *scriptural* meaning of this word, when applied to the religious ordinance in question, is what we wish to understand. We do not ask, therefore, what *bapto* and *baptizo* meant, in their secular use, before they were applied to

express a religious idea of any sort. Nor do we ask what a heathen Greek—before he had ever seen the thing here called *baptism*—would have *imagined* the Saviour to mean by this word? Nor, again, do we ask what is the meaning of this word, when used in a merely secular sense, with no reference to the religious rite of baptism, even in the New Testament? Neither of these inquiries reaches the point in debate. The true question relates wholly to the meaning of the word as used by the Saviour himself, and as understood by his disciples, in reference to the Christian baptism and analogous rites; and this can be ascertained only from the history of *the things, the religious observances*, to which it is applied in the sacred writings. This history was familiar to Christ and his apostles. It was contained in their own scriptures, and was a part of their daily experience. It must, therefore, have furnished the elements of the meaning which *they* attached to the word *baptizo*, when they used it to designate a religious ordinance which they both commanded and observed.

### SECTION III.

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTISM (*βαπτισμὸς*) INDEPENDENT OF THE MODE OF ITS ADMINISTRATION, AND OF SPRINKLING AS THE ONLY MODE OF BAPTISM MADE KNOWN IN THE BIBLE.

There were various ritual or prescribed observances under the law of Moses, in which both water and blood were used as emblems of purification or cleansing; which the apostle denominates (Heb. 9: 10,) “*divers washings.*” In the original it is *διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς* (*divers baptisms.*)

The reader should here possess himself of definite impressions, as to the true nature of these Jewish *purifications* or *baptisms*. They were not literal or actual washings of the body, which were prescribed in these rites, but only *symbolical* cleansings. They were external ceremonies or observances, in which water or blood was applied to persons and things, as a *symbol*, *emblem*, or *sign* of their purification, as consecrated to God and accepted by him. There was no neces-

sity, therefore, that the water, or purifying element, should be used in a sufficient quantity to accomplish an *actual* washing. Any quantity, applied in any mode, might serve as a symbol of cleansing, just as the smallest quantities of bread and wine, broken and poured out, in whatever mode, are appropriate symbols of the broken body and shed blood of Christ, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

This is a principle well settled in the scriptures, as acceptable to God in the worship which he requires of men. A purification thus professed and symbolized is a part of the scripture language of worship, a *seal* of covenant engagements and promises. So among the Jews, when the body of a murdered man had been found, and the murderer had eluded discovery, the elders of the city nearest to the place where the body was found, were required to wash their *hands*—not their whole bodies—over a slain heifer, as a public pledge or protestation of their entire innocence in this matter. (Deut. 21 : 1-9.) And David says, (Ps. 26 : 6,) “I will wash my hands in innocency.” Here the washing of the hands was intended as an emblem of the innocency of

the whole man. So Pilate "took water and washed his hands, saying I am innocent of the blood of this just person." (Mat. 28: 24.) And our Saviour said to Peter, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, and is clean every whit." (John 13: 10.)

The true meaning, therefore, of the "divers baptisms" under the law, and of Christian baptism—the main idea, the thing commanded—is *purification* or *consecration*. This is the thing signified by the external symbol; and the mode of applying the symbol is comparatively unimportant. This is especially the case in Christian baptism. Hence no particular mode is prescribed in our Saviour's command to his disciples to *baptize*; and the only thing upon which the mind can fasten, in this command, as of divine obligation, is the thing signified by the word *baptize*, which is to *purify*, or to *consecrate*, by the application of water in some mode. And not only is no precise mode of applying the symbol prescribed in the command, but no mode is spoken of afterwards, as binding, or as commanded. The *thing* called *baptism*, or *purification*, is commanded, but nothing said of the mode;

and I maintain that the mode is not indicated by the names *baptism* and *purification*. These names are used to designate the *thing itself*, which is *symbolical cleansing*, or *consecration*. And these names, in this respect, are synonymous. They mean the same thing. Both in the New Testament and in the writings of the Christian fathers, they are used interchangeably, the one for the other.\*

An example of this is found, Luke 11: 38-41. We are here told that a certain Pharisee invited the Saviour to dine with him; "and he went in and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not washed (εβαπτισθη, *ebaptisthe*, *baptized*,) before dinner." And the Lord said unto him, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean (καθαριζετε, *katharizete*, *purify*) the outside of the cup and the platter," &c. "But rather give alms," \* \* \* \* "and behold all things are *clean* (καθαρα, *kathara*, *pure*) unto you." Now the subject of the Pharisee's wonder was the fact of the Saviour's not *bap-*

\* President Beecher in his articles in the *Am. Bib. Repos.*, 1840-1, has furnished ample proof of the correctness of this statement.

*tizing* before dinner. But the Saviour, in shaping his reply to meet the point of the Pharisee's objection, addresses him on the practice of *purifying* the outward man, and of being over-exact in mere legal or superstitious distinctions between *clean* and *unclean* things, in a ceremonial sense, and advances the principle elsewhere expressed, that "to the pure"—morally—"all things are pure." Does not the obvious and natural force of this whole passage go to show, that *baptizo* is here used in the sense of *katharizo*, to purify?

There was an occurrence also, recorded John 3: 25, 26, which shows conclusively, that the simple idea, at this time attached to *baptism*, was that of *purifying* or *cleansing*. "Then there arose a question, between some of John's disciples and the Jews, about *purifying* (*καθαρισμοῦ, katharismou.*) And they came to John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, the same *baptizeth*, and all men come to him." The subject of dispute here was evidently the Jewish rite of *purifying*, which these Jews had heard that Jesus was practising—"though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples," (John 4: 2,)

and, to settle this question “about *purifying*,” they appeal to John on the subject of *baptism*, showing plainly that they considered *baptism*, as performed by John and by Christ’s disciples, the same thing as the Jewish rite of *purification*, and that they used the words *baptizo* and *katharizo*, to *purify*, indifferently, the one for the other, when they spoke of these ordinances.

Yet *purify*, in our language, would not be a perfect translation of *baptizo*, because *purify*, with us, has no exclusively sacred meaning; and we have no word that has such a meaning, in respect to this ordinance, excepting *baptize*. This is the word which is more frequently used, than *purify*, in the Greek of the New Testament, to denote this ordinance. Thus it had acquired, as we have seen, a peculiar meaning, appropriate to the thing which it was now used to signify. And there was no word in any other language, excepting the Hebrew, which did signify this thing. Hence when the Bible came to be translated into Latin, this word *baptizo* was simply transferred, not translated, because it was the only word in existence, excepting *purify*, which had been commonly used to denote the Christian sacrament of

*baptism*. There were words in Latin, which signified *immerse* and *submerge*, but these did not properly define the ordinance. It was not *immersion*, but *baptism*, in the sense of symbolical *purification*. So in translating the Bible into Latin, (see the *Vulgate*,) the learned men of the fourth century did not employ *immergo* or *submergo*, but the Greek word *baptizo*. And this was done at a time when, if baptism was not commonly administered by *immersion*, yet *immersion* was certainly practised in connection with it. But *immersion*, as a mode, did not express the meaning of baptism, because many things that were *immersed*, were not *baptized*.

For the same reason, when the Bible was translated into English, the word *baptize* was simply *transferred*. To have used the word *plunge*, or *immerse*, or *sprinkle*, or *pour*, or *purify*, would have been a false translation of *baptizo*, because none of these words would define the religious ordinance in question. They mean any kind of plunging, &c., and have no appropriate sacred sense. But *baptism*, as yet, had no meaning in the English language. It was not an English word. But in the Greek

of the New Testament, and in the Latin translation of the Bible, it had been long appropriated as the *name* of the Christian sacrament referred to. The transfer of this word *baptism* into the English Bible was only calling the thing by its right name. It had no other name in any language, and this name having been adopted in our Bible, and used in all religious writings to denote that peculiar thing called baptism, has become naturalized as its name in our language. It means the Christian sacrament of *baptism*, and nothing else. And we have no other word in the language which expresses this meaning.

The word *baptism*, therefore, in its sacred use to signify symbolical *purification*, conveys no idea as to the mode of *purifying*. Much less does it define a particular mode. Yet there was a *mode* of performing this rite. If the thing itself was done, it was of course done in some *mode*. And there may have been different modes adopted at different times. But it is not improbable that both prescription and usage had led to some degree of *uniformity* in the *mode*. If, therefore, we can learn what was the common *mode of purifying* among the Jews, we may

reasonably infer that the same or a similar mode was practised by John and by the disciples of Christ, in *baptizing*.

Let us recur then to the remark with which this Section was introduced, viz., that there were various ritual or prescribed observances, under the law of Moses, in which both water and blood were used as emblems of purification or cleansing. And the "water-pots" and other preparations for these observances were in common use, in our Saviour's time. So, at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, we read, (John 2 : 6,) that "there were set there six water-pots of stone after the manner of the *purifying* of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece." These things were all familiar to Christ and his disciples, long before Christian baptism was instituted, and when they spoke of them in the Greek language, they called them *purifyings*, or *baptisms*. So, (Heb. 9: 10,) the apostle speaks of the Jewish ritual service as standing "in meats, and drinks, and *divers washings*," (*baptisms*.) Then, going on to compare the Jewish dispensation with that of Christ, to show the glory of the

latter, the apostle refers to one of these *divers baptisms*, and shows us what he means.

The case to which he refers is that described (Num. 19: 17, 18,) as follows: “And for an unclean person, they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of *purification for sin*, and *running water* shall be put thereto *in a vessel*; And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and *sprinkle* it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave.” Now it is this *sprinkling*, which the apostle refers to, as one of the *divers baptisms*, which were practised among the Jews, and says, (Heb. 9: 13, 14,) “If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, *sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the *purifying* of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, &c. purge your conscience from dead works?”

It is clear, from these expressions, that *sprinkling*, in the mind of the apostle, was a mode of *baptism*. It was a baptism too, which was emblematic of *purification*, the very thing that baptism signifies under the gospel, according to the

different ideas of *purification* in the two dispensations, the one of the flesh, the other of the spirit. And the *sprinkling* was here performed in a summary way, with a bunch of hyssop, which they dipped in the fluid and *sprinkled* it upon the people in groups, as they stood. This hyssop was a small herb, probably resembling moss. It is spoken of (1 Kings 4: 33,) where it is called “the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.” This they used alone, or mixed it with wool, as a kind of sponge, for the purpose of retaining water. And the sprinkling with this was a *baptism*, in the scripture meaning of *baptizo*. It is here called a *baptism* by the apostle.

He proceeds to speak of a similar *baptism* performed by Moses, when he dedicated the first testament, and says, (Heb. 9: 19,) “When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and *sprinkled* both the book and all the people. The reference here is to Exod. 24: 5–8. How grand and solemn was the occasion, when Moses thus dedicated the covenant! There were at that time six hundred thousand men

capable of bearing arms in Israel. The people must have numbered two or three millions. Yet they were all *baptized* with water mingled with blood, and *sprinkled* upon them from a bunch of hyssop and wool, as an emblem of their religious purification before God.

Now it is in vain to say that these were Jewish ordinances which were done away in Christ, and therefore prove nothing. They do prove the very thing for which I bring them forward. They prove that *sprinkling*, in the mind of the apostle, so far as the meaning of the word is concerned, was a mode of *baptism*.

Another of these *divers baptisms* is described, Num. 8: 7. In purifying the Levites and setting them apart to their office, Moses says: "Thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them; *Sprinkle* water of purifying upon them," &c. The leper was in like manner to be cleansed by *sprinkling*. (Levit. 14 : 7.)

*Sprinkling*, then, among the Jews, was the emblem of *cleansing* or *purification*. But Christ and his apostles were born in the Jewish church, and were familiar with this idea so often exemplified in the daily services to which they were

accustomed. So, when speaking of the spiritual cleansing produced by the blood of Christ, Paul calls it "the blood of *sprinkling*.." (Heb. 12: 24,) and Peter calls it the "*sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. 1 : 2.)

Now Christian baptism was instituted as an emblem of this same internal spiritual cleansing, of which both Paul and Peter speak above, as a *sprinkling*. This was the idea in their minds when they thought of the significancy of the ordinance of baptism. They never speak of it as an *immersion* in the blood of Christ, or an *immersion* in the Holy Ghost. They attached no such idea to the mode of purification external or internal, whether by blood, by water, or by spirit.

It is true indeed that the word, *tabal*, in the Hebrew scriptures, which is rendered by *baptizo* in Greek, occurs some fourteen times in the Old Testament, where it does not mean to *sprinkle*, but to *dip*, as to *dip* the finger in blood, (Lev. 4: 6,) to *dip* hyssop in water to sprinkle with, (Num. 19 : 18,) to *dip* a piece of bread in vinegar, (Ruth 2: 14,) to *dip* the feet in oil, (Deut. 33: 24,) &c. But in all these cases, the word

is used in reference to *things* and not to *persons*, and in no case is it used to denote *purification*. In all cases of the use of water or blood, in the Old Testament, as an emblem of *purification* in respect to persons, *sprinkling* is the word used. I do not doubt that in the bathings practised by the Jews, *immersions*, as a matter of fact, were common; but they were not enjoined in the law. Dr. E. Beecher, in his article on the “Import of βαπτισμῶν,” in the Bib. Repos., for 1840, after a thorough examination, does not hesitate to say, “It is perfectly plain, therefore, that, whatever was the practice of the Jews, no immersions of *persons* were enjoined, and the whole Mosaic ritual, as to *personal* ablution, could be fulfilled to the letter without a single immersion. The only immersions enjoined in the Mosaic law were immersions of *things*, as vessels, sacks, skins, &c., to which no reference is had in Heb. 9 : 10.”

These facts are important to be remembered; for the apostle (Heb. 9 : 10,) is not speaking of all the purifications or ablutions performed by the Jews, but only of those of *persons*, which he says, (v. 13,) “sanctified to the purification of

the *flesh*," and which, of course, had respect to the person of the worshipper.

Professor Stuart also, in his article on Baptism, (Bib. Repos., 1833,) says, " We find, then no example among all the Levitical washings, or ablutions, where *immersion of the person* is required." (Vol. 3, p. 341.)

From this fact, so fully attested, it must be inferred that *sprinkling*, so far as the mode is concerned, was the idea in the minds of Christ and his apostles in the institution of baptism, as an emblem of the *spiritual cleansing* of persons. Carrying this idea into practice, they would naturally adopt *sprinkling* as their mode of baptism. That they actually did baptize in this mode will appear still more probable from considerations yet to be introduced.

## SECTION IV.

### THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF JOHN'S BAPTISM, AND OF THE BAPTISM OF OUR SAVIOUR BY JOHN.

Having, in the preceding Section, referred to the baptism of John, I think it proper to remark here, that, besides the Jewish rites of purification, other baptisms somewhat peculiar had been introduced, and were well known to Christ and his disciples, before the institution of Christian baptism by our Saviour.

To say nothing here of the Jewish proselyte baptism,\* which I shall have occasion to consider more at large hereafter, the baptism of John had already been commenced and concluded. The nature of this baptism, therefore, should be considered, to show the prevalent use of the word, *baptizo*, at the time of our Saviour's last

\* Whatever may have been the mode of the Jewish proselyte baptism, it should be remembered that this baptism was a mere usage, which had grown up, and was not an institution of the Mosaic law. Nor is it named in the scriptures.

command to his disciples. I do not now allude to the *mode* of John's baptism, which will be discussed in its proper place. But it is important for the reader to have in his mind some accurate views of the distinctive character of this baptism.

Let it be understood, then, that John's baptism was not *Christian* baptism. John began to preach and baptize, six months before Christ entered upon his public ministry. His baptism, therefore, cannot be supposed to be Christian baptism, without involving the absurdity of supposing that the initiating ordinance of the Christian system existed six months previous to Christianity itself. And if this were so, it would prove that Christ did not institute Christian baptism, which is also absurd; for the law of Moses did not end in John, but in Christ. The legal dispensation, indeed, was in full force during all the time of John's ministry, and the personal ministry of Christ, and came to its close only in the death and resurrection of the Saviour, after which, as we have seen, Christian baptism was instituted.

Again, John baptized his disciples on profes-

sion of *repentance*. Christian baptism is properly administered to adults, only on the profession of *regeneration*. (Acts 19: 4; 2 : 38; Gal. 3: 27.) The faith which John required was faith in a Saviour yet to come; and this was the faith of all the Jews, who believed the prophecies of their own scriptures. So Paul declares, (Acts 19: 4) "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, *that they should believe on him, who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*" But John did not baptize in the name of Christ, nor in the name of the Holy Ghost. If he had, he would have given his disciples appropriate instruction, and certainly would have taught the people to know that he was not himself the Christ. Yet it is said, (Luke 3: 15,) "All men mused in their hearts, of John, whether *he* were the Christ or not." And after John had finished his ministry, having baptized a large proportion of the people of Judea, our Saviour propounded to his disciples, the following question, (Mat. 16: 13, 14,) "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art

John the Baptist: some Elias: and others, Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.”

Here was a degree of prevailing ignorance of Christ quite inconsistent with the supposition that John had baptized in his name. Indeed John himself appears not to have known the Saviour's person, until he had been several months baptizing “with the baptism of repentance.” Hence previous to the Saviour's baptism, he expressly declares, “I knew him not.” (John 1: 32-34.) And as to any recognition of the Holy Ghost in John's baptism, some whom he had baptized, themselves affirmed, (Acts 19: 2, 3,) “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” So Paul baptized them “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” paying no regard to their having been baptized by John. (Acts 19: 5.) This surely he would not have done, if the baptism of John had been Christian baptism.

It appears then that John's baptism was finished before the institution of Christian baptism, and that it was different in its design and in its distinctive character. It took place not under Christ, but under the *Jewish dispensation*.

That dispensation continued in full force until the death of Christ. Then the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the great sacrifice for sin was offered, and the typical sacrifices ceased. Then Christ blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, and took it out of the way, "nailing it to the cross." (Col. 2: 14.) Yet the baptism of John was not strictly a Jewish ordinance, but rather a Divine ordinance independent of Judaism. It was not of the law, but was a specific institution for a special purpose; and being peculiar in its design, it was of only temporary application. It was an ordinance for the time being, preparatory to the ministry of Christ. Like the preaching of John, and his ministry in general, it was to "prepare the way of the Lord;" and like the ordinances strictly Jewish, it was done away in Christ.

It may be remarked also here, that Christ himself, as well as his fore-runner, lived under the old dispensation, and was a strict observer of the institutions of Moses. He was "made under the law," and all that was done in the church, previous to the Saviour's death, belonged pro-

perly to that dispensation. So the baptism of the Saviour by John was not Christian baptism; that is, it was not the baptism which he himself afterwards instituted as a Christian sacrament. Nor was he baptized in his own name. His receiving baptism at the hands of John was evidently one of his acts of submission to the ordinances then existing in the church, whether strictly Jewish, or appropriate to the ministry of his forerunner. And so, when "John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" he said, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," that is, to fulfil every *ordinance*. (Mat. 3 : 14, 15.)

Nor did this baptism of Christ, by John, partake of the nature of John's baptism, as administered to others. It was not a baptism "unto repentance;" for Christ had no sin to repent of. It was not, as in the case of all others, preparatory to the reception of the Saviour; for he was himself the Saviour. But the rite here administered was peculiar and appropriate to its adorable subject.

Christ was now in his thirtieth year—the age

at which, by the appointment of God, the priests under the law were to undertake the duties of their office. He was a "high-priest," and was about to enter upon his public ministry. This baptism, in his case, was not—it could not have been a symbol of cleansing, but of priestly consecration. So Christ exercised the office of a priest during his personal ministry. It was in this character that he purged the temple; and when the chief priests and elders demanded of him, by what authority he did these things, he appealed to the baptism of John, for a vindication of his authority. (Mat. 21: 12, 23–27.) If the Jews had acknowledged the baptism of John to have been from heaven, he would doubtless have silenced them by saying, "It was by that baptism that I was consecrated to my priestly office;" for, among the Jews, what was done by an accredited prophet of the Lord, was both authoritative and irreversible.\*

\* Hibbard on Baptism, p. 4



## SECTION V.

ALL THE QUESTIONS ON THE MODE OF BAPTISM REDUCED TO ONE. THE WATER APPLIED TO THE PERSON, AND NOT THE PERSON TO THE WATER.

All the questions that have been raised, as to the *mode* of baptism, resolve themselves into this one: Is the water to be applied to the person, or is the person to be applied to the water? Shall the water be *poured* or *sprinkled* on the person, or must the person be *dipped* or *immersed* into the water? This is the question; and I maintain that the applying of the water to the person is the only mode of baptism, as a religious ordinance, made known in the scriptures. My position is that the Bible invariably teaches that in the administration of baptism to persons, both Jewish and Christian, the water was applied to the subject of the ordinance—the *person*. Some of the proofs of this will now be adduced.

### 1. *The Primary Idea of Purifying.*

The thing signified by baptism, both Jewish and Christian, as we have seen (Sec. III,) was purifying, or cleansing. But the primary idea of purifying, or cleansing, is the application of water to the person or thing purified or cleansed. So, in the examples already referred to, in the Old Testament, of ceremonial cleansings—which the apostle calls *baptisms*—the water was applied to the persons, and not the persons to the water. They were in every instance performed by *sprinkling*.

### 2. *Purifications of Things, as well as Persons.* *The Baptism of Cups, and Pots, and Brazen Vessels and Tables.*

But there were ceremonial purifications of *things*, as well as of *persons*, among the Jews, which Christ and his apostles were accustomed to speak of as *baptisms*. The evangelist Mark says, (7: 4,) of the Pharisees and all the Jews, “When they come from the market, except they *wash*, (*baptize*) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they

have received to hold, as the *washing* (*baptisms*) of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables." The word here translated *tables* is κλινων (*klinon*) and properly signifies *beds* or *couches*. It is so translated in the 30th verse of this chapter, and in eight other places where it occurs in the New Testament. They had no chairs, and these couches were a kind of sofa or divan, on which they were accustomed to sit, leaning on each other, according to the usual mode of sitting in those days.

Now the "cups, and pots, and brazen vessels," here spoken of, may possibly have been immersed all over in water. But this is by no means probable. They doubtless washed them in a common-sense way, by the application of water with the hand, or a cloth, holding them partly in the water, or over it, or they poured water on them, to suit their convenience. And to suppose that the *beds* or *couches* were *immersed*, would be preposterous, especially if we consider the superstition of the Jews, which led them to practice these purifications many times in a day. To have immersed their couches so often would have kept them constantly unfit for

use. Besides, these washings, or *baptisms*, were merely ceremonial, and we have already seen that such purifications or baptisms, in many cases, were performed by *sprinkling*.

So of the first part of this verse, (Mark 7: 4,) "Except they wash (*baptize*) they eat not." This *baptizing* was the simple washing of the hands with a little water drawn from the water-pots, and poured on them. This is abundantly proved by the custom still prevalent in those Eastern countries. It was a mere ceremonial washing, and the water-pots were not of sufficient dimensions to render immersion possible. They contained only "two or three firkins," that is about ten or twelve gallons, "apiece;" and they were made small at the top, like a common jar. Yet the washing of the hands with a little water drawn from these pots, and poured on them, was a *baptism*, that is, a *purification*, of the whole person from ceremonial defilement. Thus far it is plain that baptisms were performed by applying the water to the person, and not the person to the water.

3. *Figurative Allusions.* *Baptism "in the Cloud and in the Sea." The Salvation of Eight Souls in the Ark, likened to Baptism.*

This same idea is illustrated by what is said of baptism in reference to occurrences resembling the purifications of the Jews, but here the rite of purifying was not literally performed. Paul says, (1 Cor. 10 : 2,) that the Israelites "were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." What does this mean? The reference is to the passage of Israel out of Egypt, (Exod. 14 : 19, &c.) where it is most manifest that there was no immersion in water, but water was *poured* or *sprinkled* on them from the cloud. The record says, that the cloud "went from before their face and stood behind them." It doubtless passed over their heads, and in passing, it *rained* upon them, as Asaph declares, (Ps. 77 : 17,) probably referring to this very event, "The clouds poured out water." Perhaps, however, the baptism in the cloud did not occur at the same time with the baptism in the sea. Professor Stuart says—I know not on what authority—

“the cloud on this occasion was not a cloud of rain.”\* Admitting that it was not, still there was a cloud of rain that attended them on their journey. This fact is recognized in the song of Deborah, (Judges 5: 4,) “O Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchest out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, the heavens *dropped (distilled)*, the clouds also *dropped water.*” And the Psalmist declares, (Ps. 68: 7, 9,) “O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness,” &c., “thou, O God, *didst send a plentiful rain*, whereby thou didst *confirm* thine inheritance when it was weary.” And this illustrates the meaning of the expression, “were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud.” They were thus *confirmed*, when they *were weary*, in their allegiance to Moses, as their divinely constituted leader, and, as it were consecrated anew to the service of God, under the law. Their baptism, however, was by *sprinkling* and not by *immersion*.

But Paul says, they were *baptized*, not in the

\* Bib. Repos. 1833, p. 336.

cloud only but also in the *sea*, that is the Red-Sea, when they passed through it by the dividing of the waters. Here too there was no *immersion*, but they were baptized by *sprinkling*. We are told, (Exod. 14 : 22,) that “the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand and on their left.” They were not *immersed*, but the “strong east wind,” which divided the waters, no doubt produced a dashing of the spray, which *sprinkled* them. In no other way could they have been *baptized* by the waters of the sea, in the case here referred to. The *Egyptians*, who followed after them, “even all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen,” (Exod. 14 : 23,) were truly *immersed*; they were “*buried in immersion unto death*,” as our Baptist brethren are so fond of saying; “they sank as lead in the mighty waters.” (Exod. 15 : 10.) If, then, the apostle designed to represent baptism as *immersion*, why did he refer to the Israelites, who went over on dry land, and were only *sprinkled* by the spray of the sea? Why did he not speak of the Egyptians, who were *immersed* and drowned in it?

They were truly *baptized*, according to the primitive meaning claimed for the old heathen-Greek word *baptizo*.

Peter says, (1 Pet. 3: 20, 21,) “The long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water. 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 towards God—by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Baptism is here represented as a means of salvation, by, or through, “the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” It can be so, however, only to such as receive the thing signified by baptism, viz., the cleansing influence of the Spirit of God. All such, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, have a good hope of eternal life. And Peter here tells us that baptism as a means of salvation, was prefigured, not surely by the waters of the flood, but by the salvation of those in the ark, who “were saved by water.” But how were they saved by water? Certainly not by submersion. This was the very evil, from which the ark was the instrument of their deliverance.

All who were out of the ark perished. Submersion was as fatal to them, as it was to the Egyptians, who were buried in the Red Sea. But the ark and they that were in it were not *immersed* in the flood. They were borne aloft on the surface of the water, and the ark was *sprinkled* with the rain that fell from heaven, or with the dashing of the spray. This was the "figure, whereunto" Peter likens Christian baptism. It was a *sprinkling with water*, and the very idea of *immersion* is excluded.

## SECTION VI.

### THE MODE OF JOHN'S BAPTISM.

John baptized *with* water, not *into* water; that is, he applied the water to the subject, and not the subject to the water. So he declares, (John 1: 31,) “Therefore am I come baptizing *with* water.” And, (Mat. 3 : 11,) “I indeed baptize you *with* water, but he that cometh after me, &c., he shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost.” To evade the force of this expression, it has been contended by some Baptist writers, that the Greek particle ἐν (*en*,) here rendered *with*, ought to be translated *into*, which is perhaps the more common meaning of this particle. But the latter clause of the verse shows the impropriety of such a rendering here; for the baptism of the Holy Ghost is clearly an application of the Divine Spirit to the soul of the believer. It would be a plain perversion of the meaning of the passage to say, “he shall immerse you *into* the Holy Ghost.” So John says, “I indeed

baptize you *with* water," as Christ "shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost."

But if we were not so emphatically told, as we are in these passages, that John baptized *with* water, the impossibility of his having *immersed* the immense multitude that came to him, proves that he must have baptized them in some other way; and the proofs are strong and conclusive not only that he did not apply the persons to the water, but that he did apply the water to the persons by some mode of *sprinkling*.

Let the reader examine the subject of John's baptism as it is presented in the New Testament, and see if we are not justified in this statement. Matthew says, (3 : 5, 6,) "There went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan,\* confessing their sins." Mark says, (1 : 5,) "There went out to him all the land of

\* The expression *in Jordan*—ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ—is often quoted by Baptists to prove that John's baptism was by *immersion*. But if this proves *immersion* in the Jordan, a similar expression—Mark 1 : 4—proves *immersion in the wilderness*; for it is there said "John was baptizing *in the desert*—ἐν τῷ ἐρημῷ.

Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were *all* baptized of him." Luke says, (3: 21,) " And when *all the people* were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus himself, being baptized and praying, the heaven was opened," &c.

Now the population of the city and region here described, as might be proved by credible historical testimony, was probably not less than *six millions*. In the days of king David, a thousand years before Christ, there were in Israel and Judah, *one million and three hundred thousand* " valiant men that drew the sword." (2 Sam. 24: 9.) And this census was exclusive of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, and of all the people under twenty years old. Reckoning five persons to every warrior in Israel and Judah, which is a moderate estimate, the whole population at that time was more than *six millions*. And, notwithstanding the frequent wars of the Jews, by which multitudes were slain, there is, in their strong aversion to other nations, and their love of their own country, which confined them mostly to Palestine, much to render it probable that the population was not materially diminished in the time of our Saviour. The

testimony of Josephus confirms the probability that the population of the holy land was as large as in the days of David.

It is highly probable also, that a large proportion of this population were baptized by John. The representations of the three evangelists, which we have already quoted, show this. And then it should be considered that John was the predicted messenger sent to prepare the way of Christ. (Mat. 11 : 10.) He was sent, not to any party of the Jews, but to the whole Jewish nation. All parties went out to see and hear him. There seems to have been no great division concerning him, as there was concerning Christ. His career was brief and popular. Hence our Saviour testified of him to the Jews, (John 5 : 35,) "He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing, for a season, to rejoice in his light."

But, to be within bounds, respectable and learned writers, as Hibbard and Kurtz, have supposed, that John baptized only one-half of the people of Palestine, say *three millions*. Could he have done this by immersion?

Let it be considered that John's ministry con-

tinued only about nine months, when he was cast into prison by Herod the Tetrarch, and soon after beheaded, at the request of a dancing girl. He had been engaged in his ministry only about six months, when he baptized the Saviour, and continued about three months after that event. And it is easy to show that he could not have employed the whole of that time in baptizing.

Suppose then, that John baptized, say, *three millions* of people in nine months. Deduct *forty three sabbaths*, in which, according to the Jewish observance of the Sabbath, it was unlawful for him to baptize, and there are left, in all, *two hundred, and thirty-one days*, in which he was perhaps engaged in this service. Now if we suppose him to have stood in the water and baptized by *immersion*, six hours every day, he must have immersed *two thousand, one hundred and sixty-four* every hour, *thirty-six* every minute, and *more than one* every *two* seconds!

But the supposition that John baptized so large a proportion of the people as one-half is perhaps extravagant. The expressions of the evangelists referred to, do not prove that he baptized one-half, any more than that he bap-

tized the whole population. We are not authorized, therefore, to fix upon any particular proportion. These expressions, however, and the whole history of John's ministry are sufficient to show that the multitude whom he baptized was very great. If we suppose it to have been only one *twelfth part* of the population; still it was five hundred thousand, which would require him to baptize *three hundred and sixty-one every hour, and six every minute.*

For John, therefore, to have performed his baptisms by immersion, was plainly impossible. And it is in vain to say that he accomplished his ministry, in this thing, by miraculous power; for we are told, that when Christ was afterwards at the very place "where John at first baptized," "many resorted to him, and said, John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this man were true." (John 10: 41.)

It is clear then, that he could not have *immersed* all the people that came to him. Yet it is expressly said, that he *baptized them all.* It may be asked whether it was not equally impossible for John to baptize them, according to our mode, that is, by sprinkling them, one by one?

Our reply is, that it is not at all necessary to suppose that he baptized them singly. The Jewish law did not require this; and John made no innovation upon the Jewish rites. He simply employed the customary ceremony of purification, for the purposes of his own ministry. Hence the Jews found no fault whatever with his *mode* of baptism; and the only imaginable reason is, that he conformed to their own usage. He doubtless took a bunch of hyssop, and made it sufficiently large for his purpose, and dipped it in water, and *sprinkled* the people, as they came to him, in large numbers at a time. This, we have seen, was the Jewish mode of purification, which Paul calls *baptism*.

It is manifest, also, that the vast multitude that collected around John, went out to hear him *preach*. They had no thought of being *baptized*, until they were convicted, and applied for baptism on the spot. Hence we are told, (John 1: 25,) that the Pharisees asked him, "Why *baptizest* thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" They went out, of course, without any change of raiment. No one surely will suppose that they

were immersed, with their clothing on, in these circumstances, and there is no intimation that they were denuded for this purpose. If, then, we had not been so pointedly informed, as we are, that John baptized this immense multitude not *into* water, but *with* water, it would still be inconceivable that they were *immersed*.

But it is said (John 3: 23,) that "John was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was *much water* there." "Why was this?" say our Baptist brethren. "Why did John choose a place where there was *much water*, if he performed his baptisms by *sprinkling*?" This question would be of some importance, if it had been said that John was at Enon for the convenience of baptizing. But no such thing is intimated in scripture.

The circumstances were these: John had been baptizing "in Bethabara beyond Jordan," (John 1: 28.) All his earlier baptisms had been performed there. Why did he leave that broad river, and go to Enon? The Evangelist, according to our translation, says, it was "because there was *much water* there." But there was *more water* in the Jordan. If, then, he con-

sulted only the convenience of baptizing by immersion, there was no gain by his removal. Surely he was as well accommodated in this respect, on the banks of the Jordan, as he could have been at Enon.

But there was another reason for his removal, amply sufficient to account for his change of place. The Jordan is a turbid stream. The water of it is unfit for drink or culinary purposes, until it has stood several hours in vessels and settled. But the waters of Enon were pure rivulets or streams, flowing from a single fountain or spring. The place has been identified by modern travelers, and it is plainly seen to have furnished far better accommodations than the region of the Jordan, for the encampment and comfort of the thousands and tens of thousands that attended the ministry of John. And the geography of the place has thrown light upon the original expression, here translated *much water*. It is *πολλα υδατα*, (*polla hudata*,) which literally signifies, not *much water*, but *many waters or streams*. And the reason is now plain why John resorted thither. He was perpetually attended by the greatest multi-

tude that ever assembled around a human being for instruction. Had they no use for these *many waters* excepting for the ordinance of baptism? Were not these pure and healthful waters a great and almost indispensable convenience for drinking, and for culinary and other purposes? And did not their camels, and horses, and asses need water? Just such locations are selected by those who have experience in camp meetings in our own country. Pure and abundant springs, or streams of running water, are regarded as indispensable for the comfort of the people and their beasts of burthen, without the slightest reference to baptism in any mode. This passage, therefore, proves nothing as to the mode of John's baptism. It leaves us free to presume, that he baptized in Enon, as he did elsewhere, not *into* water, but *with* water. Doubtless he applied the water to the persons, and not the persons to the water.

## SECTION VII.

### PROPHECIES INTIMATING THE MODE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM—THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of the coming of Christ and of the joy to be occasioned by the gospel, (Isaiah 52: 7-12;) also, of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, and the success of his cause, (13-15.) “Many nations,” he predicted, were to be introduced into the Christian church. Now if we turn to the second chapter of Acts, we find, that a few days after the Saviour’s ascension, at the outpouring of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, “many nations,” by their representatives, were present to hear the apostles preach. Not less than nineteen or twenty different nations were represented; Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, &c. And three thousand of these representatives of “many nations,” were, “on the same day,” introduced into the Christian church by the initiatory rite of baptism. They were baptized; and this, I

suppose, was according to the prophecy. But how was the baptism administered? By turning back to the prophecy referred to, we find how it was to be administered; (Isaiah 52: 15,) "So shall he sprinkle many nations." This, it appears, was to take place at the very beginning of the promulgation of the gospel. Was the prophecy *then* fulfilled? If it was, then these nations received baptism by *sprinkling*, first the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, in spiritual influences, and secondly the sprinkling of water in external baptism. But if the prophecy was not then fulfilled, it remains to be fulfilled; and it is equally certain that, when the many nations referred to shall all be converted, they are to be received into the Christian church by *sprinkling*.

The word here rendered *sprinkle* has been very variously interpreted, and it is not certain that it should be regarded as indicating the mode of water baptism. Yet to sprinkle is its usual and proper meaning, and it is so translated in Lev. 4: 27; Isaiah 63: 3; 2 Kings 9: 33; and in numerous other passages in the Old Testament. If, however, it is rightly rendered *sprinkle* here,

it no doubt had a primary reference to the influences of the Holy Spirit, which were to follow the sufferings of the Messiah, of which Christian baptism is the emblem. So the Syriac version renders it, "Thus shall he *purify*—cleanse or make expiation for—many nations." The allusion is probably to the Levitical rite of sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice, or to the custom of sprinkling with water, as emblematical of cleansing or purity. If used in the former sense, it means that the Redeemer would make expiation for sin, and that his blood of purifying would be sprinkled on the nations. If used in the latter sense, as is most probable, then it means that he would purify them, as unclean persons under the law were purified, by the sprinkling of water. In either case, its signification is substantially the same; that is, that Christ would purify or cleanse many nations from their sins, and make them holy; and this is the very thing which was to be symbolized by water baptism. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that there is an allusion in this passage to the rite of baptism itself, as well as to

the spiritual blessings of the gospel, which it represents.\*

Again, there are several prophecies which speak of the conversion of the Jews to Christianity; and Paul asserts (Rom. 11: 17,) that they shall be grafted into their own Olive tree, (the true church,) from which they were broken off for their unbelief. Now when this shall occur, they will of course receive Christian baptism. But in what mode is their baptism to be administered? The prophet Ezekiel speaks largely on the restoration and conversion of the Jews; let him answer: (Ez. 36: 24–26,) “For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries,” &c., “*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.*” If there is any thing taught in this passage concerning the mode of Christian baptism, *sprinkling* is the mode.

It must be admitted, also, that the scriptures represent the baptism of the Spirit and the baptism with water as analogous. The one is the

\* See Barnes on Isaiah; also Cook & Towne on Baptism, p. 128.

sign or emblem of the other. "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 and with fire." (Matt. 3: 11.) Now the baptism of the Spirit is always, in scripture, represented as the application of the Spirit to the believer, and not the believer to the Spirit. In Acts 1: 5, the Saviour is represented as having said to his disciples, "Ye shall be baptized *with* the Holy Ghost not many days hence." And Peter says, (Acts 2: 16, 17,) that the scenes of the day of Pentecost were in fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out* my Spirit *upon* all flesh." In Isaiah (44: 3,) it is said, "I will *pour* my Spirit *upon* thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring." And (Acts 11: 15,) Peter says, in describing the effects of his preaching at the house of Cornelius, "The Holy Ghost *fell on* them, as on us at the beginning." Similar expressions are used in Isaiah 32: 15; 52: 15; Ezek. 39: 29, and many other passages, where the Spirit is represented as poured out *upon* the people, falling *on* them,

and descending or distilling as the dew and the rain, and as showers that water the earth; to resemble which, in water baptism, pouring or *sprinkling*, and not *immersion*, is manifestly the proper mode.

## SECTION VIII.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE MODE OF BAPTISM, AS IT WAS ADMINISTERED BY THE APOSTLES. THE GREEK PARTICLES TRANSLATED *INTO* AND *OUT OF*.

We come now to matters of fact and history, as to the mode in which the apostles actually did administer Christian baptism, in obedience to the Saviour's last command.

### 1. *The Baptism of Three Thousand on the Day of Pentecost.*

The first account of the administration of baptism, after the ascension of the Saviour, is that recorded, (Acts 2: 41,) where it is said, "They that gladly received his word, were *baptized*; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." We have already noticed the prophecy of Isaiah, (52: 15,) in fulfilment of which we suppose the three thousand baptized on the day of Pentecost, must have been received into the Christian church by *sprinkling*. But setting aside this prophecy al-

together, and considering the events of the day of Pentecost historically, we are led to the same conclusion.

The apostles had no place for the *immersion* of such a multitude as were then baptized. The Jordan was sixteen or eighteen miles distant; and at that season of the year, (June,) the brook Kidron was nearly or quite dry.\* And if it was not dry, a common sewer poured all the filth of the northern portion of the city into it, rendering it wholly unfit to be used as a place of *immersion*. Where, then, could the apostles have baptized the three thousand converts by *immersion*? These baptisms appear to have been performed on the spot, as well as on "the same day" of their conversion. Where was the water for their *immersion*? There was no river nor brook to which they could resort in so short a time, and there were only two public pools or bathing places in Jerusalem, Bethesda and Siloam. The latter was at the foot of Mount

\* This brook flowed along the east side of the city, was at best but a turbid and unimportant stream, and was always dry in summer. *Jahn* informs us, its channel is dry except in winter."—*Jahn*, § 19, p. 20.

Moriah, three-quarters of a mile distant from where the apostles were assembled; and we have no account of their marching off to it, with the thousands that heard them.

Bethesda was near at hand on the north-east of the Temple, but it was used daily for the cleansing of sacrifices, and the blood and offals of the sacrifices and temple were washed into it, which, some have imagined, may have imparted to the water its healing virtue. At least it must have been unfit for a place of immersion. It was also in the hands of the priests, the avowed and mortal enemies of Christ and his disciples. They ridiculed the transactions of the day, and said, "these men are full of new wine." *They* surely would not have willingly given up the pool of Bethesda to the apostles, to be used as a place of Christian baptism. It is probable, also, that both Siloam and Bethesda were of insufficient dimensions to allow the eleven apostles to use them at the same time for the purpose of immersion.

The implacable opposition of the priests, and of the Jews in general, must also have prevented their making use of the washing lavers of the

temple for this purpose. Nor can it be supposed that they were admitted to the bathing places in private houses for immersion in such vast numbers. For, besides the inconvenience and improbability of this, on many accounts, these bathing places were only to be found in the houses of the rich and honorable, very few of whom, at that time, were disposed to befriend the cause of Christ. Where, then, we ask again, could the apostles have immersed the three thousand on the day of Pentecost?

But the difficulties of supposing that the converts on that day were all *immersed*, are still greater, if we consider that, after the close of Peter's sermon, there were but about five hours of the day remaining. Yet the account states that they were added to the church "the same day." But to have immersed them all in five hours, each of the apostles must have immersed more than fifty persons every hour, and more than five persons every six minutes! This, I need not say, would have been impossible. But if the apostles performed the rite of baptism by *sprinkling*, according to the prevalent mode of purifying among the Jews, the three thousand

were baptized in five hours with comparative ease.

It is said indeed, that the seventy disciples (Luke 10: 1,) might have aided on this occasion, and thus rendered possible the baptism of three thousand by *immersion*, in the time specified. But it is nowhere said in scripture that the seventy were commissioned to baptize. It is certain that they were not with the apostles at the time they received the Saviour's last command. Only the eleven were then present. (Mat. 28: 16.) And the account of the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2:) gives us to understand very explicitly, that the seventy, if they were present at all, were there only as spectators, taking no prominent part in the meeting. It says that "Peter, standing up with the *eleven*, lifted up his voice." Why are not the *seventy* mentioned, if they also took part in the services? The truth is, there is no evidence or intimation, that they were there; much less that they took part in the baptism of the three thousand. Nor is there any degree of probability, that any others were authorized to take part in the administration of these baptisms. Only ten days had intervened since the apostles

had received their own commission from the Saviour; and we have no account of their having ordained any person to the work of the ministry during that time. On the contrary, we are assured that the Saviour had commanded them to suspend the exercise of all their apostolic functions, until the descent of the Holy Ghost, which took place on the day of Pentecost. (Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 7, 8.) The difficulties, therefore, in the way of *immersion*, on this occasion, remain insurmountable, and all the probabilities are in favor of the conclusion, that the three thousand were baptized by *sprinkling*.

The next account of the administration of this ordinance, in the time of the apostles, is the baptism of Simon and many others, both men and women, by Philip the Evangelist, in Samaria. But there are no circumstances here which indicate the mode. It is simply said, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 8: 12, 13, 16.)

## 2. *The Baptism of the Eunuch and of Christ.*

The next occurrence of baptism was that of the Eunuch. (Acts 8: 38, 39.) "And he com-

manded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both *into* the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up *out of* the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the Eunuch saw him no more." There is one other passage, where a similar expression occurs; (Mat. 3: 16.) "And Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway"—that is immediately—" *out of* the water."

It would be out of place here to go into a criticism of the Greek particles here rendered *into* and *out of*. They might with equal propriety be rendered *to* and *from*. They therefore teach us nothing as to the mode of baptism. They do not govern the meaning of the word *baptizo*, which is used in connexion with them, in these passages, but are themselves governed by the meaning which we attach to *baptizo*, independent of them. If, for instance, I believe, from other evidence, that Christ and the Eunuch were baptized by *immersion*, I should say that they went *into* the water and came up *out of* it. If I believe they were baptized by sprinkling, I should say *to* and *from* instead of *into* and *out of*,

unless I supposed that they stood in the water, which in those days of *sandals*, is perhaps quite probable. These particles, therefore, are of no use in settling the question, because their proper translation into English depends on the sense of the words they are used in connection with.

To show how the translation of these particles must vary according to the sense of the subject, take the following examples, where the word  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  (*eis*), here rendered *into*, is used. (Acts 26: 14,) “And when we were all fallen ( $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) *to* the earth,” not *into*, &c. (John 11: 38,) “Jesus therefore cometh ( $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) *to* the tomb” of Lazarus, not *into* the tomb. And (John 20: 4, 5,) “The other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first ( $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) *to* the sepulchre. And he stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not ( $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) *in*.” Now if  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  necessarily means *into*, we ought to read the passage thus; “the other disciple came first *into* the sepulchre,” etc., “yet went he *not into*” it, which would be absurd and contradictory. So in a multitude of other instances, the translations of these little words vary with the sense of the connexion in which they are found. Carson, one of the most

learned and yet one of the most strenuous of the Baptists, says in respect to Mat. 3: 16, "I admit that the proper translation of  $\alpha\pi\omicron$  (*apo*) is *from*, not *out of*, and that it would have its meaning fully verified, if they had only *gone down to the edge of the water*. (p. 200.) After all that has been said, therefore, as to the force of these words, *into* and *out of*, they prove nothing in respect to the mode of baptism, and we are left just where we were, to learn historically what was the fact as to the mode of these baptisms.

As to the baptism of Christ *in*, or *at* the Jordan, it was performed by John, and we have said enough of John's baptism to show the strongest probability that it was administered by *sprinkling*. There is no reason to doubt that in its mode, it was in entire accordance with the Jewish mode of purifying. It may be added that the Jews, when they baptized themselves in a running stream, as they often did, were accustomed to kneel down in it, and with their hands throw the water back over their heads, and thus *sprinkle* themselves. They do this still, as we are told by travellers. Here then is going down *into* the water, and coming

up *out of* the water, without *immersion*. And to this day, Jewish pilgrims are often seen to go down to the Jordan, where Christ was baptized, and while they kneel down in or by the river, the administrator takes up a little water, and baptizes them by applying it to their persons.\* Thus they are baptized *with* water, not *into* water. Christ was probably baptized in this way, according to the Jewish usage, and went up straightway *out of*, or *from* the water. If he kneeled or stood in the river, he went *into* the water and came *out of* it. If he kneeled by the side of the river, he went only *to* the water and came *from* it. But the baptism of Christ, though performed by John, probably in the ordinary mode of his baptism, did not, as we have said, (Sec. IV.) partake of the nature and design of John's baptism, as administered to others. It was a consecration to his priesthood; and the law (Ex. 29: 4,) required the following purification to be performed in such cases. "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water." In Numbers 8: 7, we

\*"Rabbah Taken": by R. W. Landis, p. 39.

are told how this washing was to be performed. "Thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them; *sprinkle* water of purifying upon them." Here then is another evidence, in addition to the general mode of John's baptism, that Jesus was baptized by *sprinkling*.

In the case of the Eunuch, the circumstances are equally and perhaps still more conclusive, in favor of sprinkling as the mode of his baptism. Philip was in Samaria, and the angel of the Lord directed him to "go towards the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." It was on the road in the desert, that he met the Eunuch, who was a Jew of Ethiopia, and had been up to Jerusalem to worship. He was now returning, and having the Jewish scriptures with him, he was reading, as he sat in his chariot, in the prophecy of Isaiah.\* And the place where he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth." Now turn to Isaiah 53: 7, and you find the very passage which the

\* Acts 8: 28. *Esaias* is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew name *Isaiah*.

Eunuch was reading. It is a part of the prophet's description of the Saviour. But the Eunuch understood it not. And so he said to Philip, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other man?" And Philip "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." He explained the prophecy. "And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water; and the Eunuch said, see here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

Now what was it which led the Eunuch to think of being baptized just at this time? It was the preaching of Philip, opening to him the scriptures which he had been reading. And it is remarkable that just in that connexion, and only seven verses before, (Isaiah 52: 15,) is the prophecy, on which I have already remarked, as having been signally fulfilled on the day of Pentecost; "*So shall he sprinkle many nations.*" This, no doubt, Philip had explained to him. So far, therefore, as the mode is concerned, it was *sprinkling*, and not *immersion*, which was in the mind of the Eunuch, when he asked for baptism. And, Jew, as he was, and accustomed to this mode of purification, what else could he

have expected, or hoped, but to be baptized in this way? And the place and the circumstances indicate that he was thus baptized.

The account says that they came to *some* water. The Greek word here translated *certain*, is *τι* (*ti*), which does not indicate, as the English reader might imagine, a *well-known* fountain of water. It means simply *some* or *any* water, and has sometimes the sense of a diminutive. So here it might be rendered, with strict propriety, "they came to a *little* water;" and the Eunuch exclaimed, with evident emotion, when he saw it, *Behold water!* This is the literal translation of the original, *Behold water!* He does not say how much water. Nothing is said about a river. It was a desert, as we have seen, and the Eunuch was doubtless surprised and pleased to come upon any water in such a place. Indeed it was in this vicinity, in the valley of Gerar, in which the city of Gaza stood, that Abraham and Isaac were obliged to dig wells to get water for their flocks; and "the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours." (Gen. 26 : 20.) It was not far from this place that Philip baptized the Eunuch; and

the water was probably one of those "springs in the desert," of which we read, (Gen. 26: 19.) Such a spring, boiling out of the ground, was not likely to afford a convenient place of immersion, and all the probabilities are against the supposition that the Eunuch was thus baptized.

The presumption, then, that there was a river in the desert, in which the Eunuch was immersed, is all a fancy. There is no intimation of any such thing. And the confidence placed in the English expressions *into* and *out of*, to prove that he must have been immersed, is without foundation. Besides, if these expressions prove any thing, they prove too much for our opponents. For the account says, "They went down *both into* the water, *both Philip and the Eunuch*, and he baptized him," thus showing that their going into the water was an action wholly distinct from the baptism. If they went *into* the water at all, they were *in* the water before the baptism was performed. Their going into the water, then, was no baptism. If it was, then Philip was baptized as much as the Eunuch. Thus all the circumstances of this baptism, which has been so much relied on and so often quoted in

confirmation of the views of immersionists, are found to support the opposite doctrine, and render it highly probable, if not certain, that the Eunuch was baptized by *sprinkling*.

## SECTION IX.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE MODE OF BAPTISM, AS ADMINISTERED BY THE APOSTLES — CONTINUED.

### 3. *The Baptism of the Apostle Paul.*

The baptism of Saul, (Paul) also, which is the next that occurs in the sacred history, (Acts 9: 18 and 22: 16,) sustains the same conclusion, as to the mode of baptism practiced by the apostles. The account says, that he was simply required to stand up, there where he was, and “he arose and was baptized.” The ordinance, as it appears, was performed on the spot where he stood, probably by water drawn from some “water-pot of stone,” which stood there in the house, where he had been three days fasting. There is no intimation and no probability that he was plunged into water.

### 4. *The Baptism of Cornelius and his Friends.*

In the case of Cornelius and his neighbors in Cesarea, (Acts 10: 47,) we are told that Peter

preached at his house, and “many” were present to hear him. And it appears that they were all converted. “The Holy Ghost fell on them.” Now to signify this falling of the Holy Ghost on them, our Baptist brethren say, they must have been *immersed into* water. But Peter intimates no such thing. He does not appear to see any water there; and so he says, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?” In plain English phrase, “Will some one be kind enough to bring in some water, that these may be baptized?” Surely no Baptist minister would say, on such an occasion, “Can any man forbid water?” &c. If immersion had been the mode, Peter would have said, as a Baptist would now say, “Can any man forbid us to go out to the river or pond, that these may be *immersed*?” But Peter said just what any Congregational, or Presbyterian, or Methodist minister, in the same circumstances, might say, with the strictest propriety. The language here used, therefore, implies that the baptism was performed by the application of water to the persons, and not the persons to the water.

### 5. *The Baptism of Lydia and her Household.*

The case of Lydia and her household, (Acts 16: 13–15,) is also in point. The apostles were met by the side of a river, near the city of Philippi, where they were accustomed to resort for prayer, when Lydia attended to the things which were spoken of Paul, and was *baptized*. She was away from her house, and probably had no change of raiment with her, and yet she “was *baptized* and her household.” There was a river there, it is true, in which they might have been immersed, if that had been the mode of baptism practiced by the apostles, but there was no other preparation for such a baptism. Surely the fact that they were “by a river side,” does not prove that they baptized by immersion, especially when we are told that they went there, not for the convenience of baptizing, but because it was a place “where prayer was wont to be made.” This and the other circumstances indicate that though Lydia and her household may have been baptized *with* the water of the river, the ordinance was probably performed in the usual way, by *sprinkling*.

### 6. *The Case of the Jailer and his Family.*

The baptism of the jailer and his family, (Acts 16: 33, 34,) is still more conclusive in illustration of the mode of baptism practiced by the apostles. All the circumstances detailed in this account, plainly show that immersion was wholly out of the question. Paul and Silas were prisoners, whom the jailer had been solemnly charged to "keep safely;" and for this purpose, and in faithfulness to his charge, he had "thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks." Suddenly, "at midnight," there was an earthquake, which shook the foundations of the prison, threw open the doors and loosed the bands of the prisoners. The jailer awoke in the greatest consternation and alarm. He was overwhelmed with the thought that the occurrence would be his ruin. So strong were his feelings of obligation to *keep safely* those who had been committed to his charge, that when he saw the prison doors all open, and supposed the prisoners were fled, "he drew out his sword and would have killed himself." It is not possible, therefore, to suppose, as some Baptists have im-

agined, that the jailer went out in the night, with the prisoners, to be baptized of them. It would have been a breach of his fidelity, an unjustifiable hazarding of the escape of the prisoners, which might have forfeited his life to the laws. And you see how sensitive he was on this point.

Nor was this necessary. The jailer, it appears, by some means, had water at hand for the washing of their stripes. A little of the same water would serve them for the purpose of his baptism. And more than all this, Paul himself virtually affirms that they did not go out during the night. As soon as the morning came, the magistrates sent to the jailer to "let those men go." But Paul said, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out." Surely, this refusal, so indicative of conscious integrity and uprightness, would have been made with a poor grace indeed, and without the least propriety, if the apostles had already been out during the night "*privily*," in search of a river or pond, in which to immerse the keeper of the prison and his family. We

must therefore take this account just as it stands in the Bible, and believe that the jailer "took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes," there in the jail, where they were, "and was baptized, he and all his straightway."

But it is said that he "brought them out;" that is, as I understand it, he brought them out from "the inner prison," into which he had thrust them for special safety. So, when he is said to have "brought them into his house," it was only into another apartment of the same building, where he could more conveniently "set meat before them." This, however, was after he had "washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his." All this was done in the prison proper, before he "brought them into his house." They then returned to the prison and remained there, under charge of the keeper, until the next day, when, after Paul's refusal to go out, the magistrates "came and besought them, and brought them out."

The jailer "and all his," therefore, were baptized in the prison. And there is not the slightest proof that they were plunged into water there, but strong presumptive evidence that this

would have been impracticable. There is no intimation of the presence of a bath, suited to the performance of immersion; and a jail, in those days of cruelty, was far less likely to be furnished with such accommodations, than the dwellings of luxury and wealth. Indeed, there is no probability that these persons could have been *immersed* in the prison, at that dead hour of the night; but every circumstance to indicate that water was brought in and applied to them by *sprinkling*.

#### 7. *Two other Instances.*

There are only two other instances of baptism performed by the apostles, as mentioned in the history of their acts. The first is that of the baptism of a number of the Corinthians by Paul, (Acts 18: 7, 8.) The second is that of Paul's baptizing certain disciples at Ephesus, who had been before baptized unto John's baptism, (Acts 19: 1-5.) But there are no circumstances, in these cases, which indicate the mode of administration.\* We are left, therefore, to infer that

\* Where were all these disciples, when they were thus met, and instructed, and baptized by Paul?

these baptisms were performed in the way so strongly indicated in all the other cases, as the only mode in which baptism was administered by the apostles.

Were they certainly near to some pond or creek? "If so, how singular it is, that converts, in these and other cases, could not be found, unless, by a remarkable coincidence, a large body of water was near! If all the ponds and creeks which exist in the imagination, of immersionists who interpret the Acts of the Apostles, had really watered Judea, then, it may be proved by calculation, that there was water enough to have turned the whole land into a sea."—*Kurtz*, p. 238.

## SECTION X.

RECAPITULATION. FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL BAPTISM. CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT.

We have now considered the Divine warrant for baptism, the meaning of the word *baptize*, and of the Greek particles, translated *into* and *out of*, in connection with it. We have illustrated the meaning of this word by the Jewish ordinances and usages, which the apostles call *baptisms*; have showed that the very idea of cleansing or purifying by water, by blood or by Spirit, is the application of the purifying agent or element to the person, and not the person to the element; have considered John's baptism *with* water, and those prophecies which are supposed to intimate, however obscurely, the mode of Christian baptism; and we have taken up and considered, in their order, all the instances of baptism described in the New Testament, as performed by the apostles. And I trust, it is now plainly seen by the candid reader, that there is nothing to be

found either in the meaning of the words used to designate baptism, or in the circumstances attending its administration, to favor the idea of *immersion*, as the mode of baptism, practiced by the apostles. On the other hand, both the words and the circumstances, respecting this subject, do greatly favor the mode of *sprinkling*; so much so indeed, as to constitute demonstrative proof that this is the only mode of baptism, as a religious ordinance, made known to us in the Scriptures. It is the only mode prescribed.

There are other passages, in the epistles, where water baptism is spoken of, but nothing said to indicate the mode. There is a passage, however, (1 Cor. 15: 29,) which may have a bearing on this subject. "Else what shall they do, who are baptized *for*," or *over*, ( $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho$ ) "the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" The signification of this passage is somewhat obscure. "Tertullian, Theophilact and Epiphanius inform us that it was the custom of the Marcionites and Corinthians, if a catechumen died before his baptism, to baptize some other in his stead, as the apostle here seems to intimate. And as the early Christians regarded with much veneration the

graves of martyrs, and occasionally held assemblies on the spot, it is supposed, that in these vicarious baptisms, the rite was performed *over* their graves. This would be the obvious meaning of the apostle, if the word, ὑπερ, in this passage signifies *over*, as it certainly often does in Greek writers. But could the baptisms *over* the graves of martyrs be performed by immersion? Were their graves dug at the bottoms of rivers?"

—*Schmucker's Pop. Theol.*, p. 222.

There are also expressions concerning *spiritual* baptism, which, though they have really no bearing on the subject, have been strangely and strenuously pressed into this controversy concerning the *mode*.

Paul says, (Rom. 6: 3, 4,) "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." And in Colossians, (2: 12,) similar expressions occur, "buried with him in baptism," etc.

Most Baptist writers insist on it that these

passages have reference to the mode of water baptism,\* and are intended to represent it as resembling the burial and resurrection of Christ. But there are several considerations which show that there is no allusion, in these passages, to the mode of water baptism. The resurrection spoken of is plainly spiritual. It is to "newness of life." Consequently being "buried" with Christ must be spiritual. It is simply being "dead to sin," that, as the apostle himself explains it, we might not "live any longer therein;" and there is no more allusion to the mode of external baptism in these expressions, than there is in the figures of *planting* and *crucifixion*, which the apostle uses in the same connexion, to illustrate his meaning. And really there is no resemblance between the mode of baptism by immersion and the interment of the dead.

Dead bodies are not *plunged* into the earth.

\* There are some exceptions to this statement. Dr. Judson, the Baptist missionary, and Robinson, the Baptist historian, both admit that these passages are misapplied when used as evidence of the mode of baptism.

Nor is the mode of burying the dead alike among all nations. The Romans in Paul's time, used to burn the body. Some nations hang it up till the flesh decays, and others deposite it in a vault. So Christ was not *buried*, but laid in a tomb, hewn out of a rock, probably above ground. It is impossible, therefore, that the apostle could have had reference to the mode of baptism. He was speaking only of spiritual baptism, by which we become partakers of Christ's death, or the benefits of it. So he says in another place, without any reference to external baptism, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Besides other objections to explaining Col. 2: 12, as teaching immersion, there is one on the very face of the text, which is insuperable. The person who is plunged in water *rises* by the muscular strength of the man who plunges him, or at least by physical power. But Paul here says, "Ye are *risen* with him, (Christ) *through the faith of the operation of God.*" And can it be that this means simply a resurrection from the water of baptism, which our Baptist brethren without the least propriety, or scripture warrant, denominate a watery grave?"

The water of baptism is not a grave, nor the emblem of a grave. In the Jewish ceremonies, which the apostle calls baptisms, it was always an emblem, or symbol of *purification*, never of *death* or *interment*. So Christian baptism is a symbol of moral purity, of being cleansed from sin, and renovated by the influences of the Holy Spirit. It signifies that we are both dead and risen, at the same time; dead to sin, but alive unto holiness. Such is the signification of the figures here used by the apostle. They have nothing to do with the place of dead men's bones, with physical decomposition or natural corruption, but signify the very opposite of all these—moral purity and spiritual life. “For he that is dead, [by ‘baptism into death,'] is freed from sin.” (Rom. 6: 7.)

What then shall we say to these *things*? For in conducting this argument, we have been concerned, not with the Greek classics, nor with human imaginings and the authority of names, but with *things* and *facts*, as they are presented in the book of God. We have examined all the important passages in the New Testament, which have a bearing upon the point at issue, and in

none of them have we discovered any thing to favor immersion, as the scriptural mode of Christian baptism; not even a word, or incidental remark, much less a *fact* that so much as *seems* to require immersion. On the contrary the teachings of the Bible preponderate overwhelmingly on the side of baptism by *sprinkling*, and force upon us the belief that this was the mode in which baptism was administered by the apostles, in obedience to the Saviour's command.

## SECTION XI.

ORIGIN OF THE MODE OF BAPTISM BY IMMERSION.  
THE BIBLE DOES NOT MAKE THE MODE ESSENTIAL.  
YET IT IS IMPORTANT. A CONCESSION. THE  
GRAND ERROR OF THE BAPTISTS.

How then, it may be asked, did the practice of baptism by immersion come into use among the early Christian churches? For there is evidence sufficient to show that, as early as the second century, immersion was generally practiced, though it was not then claimed by any as the exclusive mode. Sprinkling never ceased to be held as valid baptism, and immersion, though practiced in the early ages, was never made an indispensable condition of communion by any sect, until the rise of the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century. Cyprian, who was constituted Bishop of Carthage, in 248, speaking of some who were baptized by sprinkling, quotes Ezek. 36:25, in justification of the practice, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," and then adds, "Hence it appears that

sprinkling is of equal validity with the salutary bath." Origen and Tertullian both lived within one hundred years of the apostolic age. They too testify to the practice and validity of baptism by affusion or sprinkling, and recommend it in cases, where, on account of sickness or other causes, immersion was inconvenient or dangerous. The same may be said of Clemens Alexandrinus and Ireneus, the first of whom lived within fifty years of the apostles, and the latter was born about the time of the decease of the venerable and beloved John.\* But if the validity of baptism by sprinkling was still acknowledged, how came the practice of the rite in this form to be so generally given up in the early centuries, and immersion to be substituted in its place?

On this subject I remark that it is impossible to trace all the steps of the rapid changes which so soon resulted in the ruinous corruptions of the Romish church. Even in the apostles' days, there sprang up crude opinions and extravagant practices, in the bosom of the church. The Lord's Supper was so perverted by the church

\* See authorities quoted by Prof. Stuart, *Bib. Repos.*, 1833.

in Corinth, that the apostle sharply rebukes them (1 Cor. 11:) for their surfeiting and drunkenness. And so prone were they to abuse the institutions of the gospel, that in the first chapter of the same epistle, Paul gives utterance to this strange declaration: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I baptized in mine own name."

But in the second and third centuries we find the state of things far more deplorable. Not only had the simple scriptural mode of baptism become changed, but monstrous abuses of it were introduced, as exorcism, unction, the giving of salt and milk to the candidate, clothing him in a snow-white robe, and crowning him with evergreen. It was in these ages that the imagination became prevalent, that there was a saving virtue in the very water of baptism. It was therefore concluded that the more water the better, and that it should be applied to the whole body, that the regeneration might be complete.

Our Baptist brethren are fond of claiming this history of the early practice of Christians, as wholly in their favor. But if they take it as authority in respect to *immersion*, they ought to

take the other things that I have named along with it. For while it is abundantly proved that immersion was now generally practiced, it is no less certain that it was the general practice equally early to immerse both infants and adults, males and females, in a state of entire nudity, because it was feared that their garments might prevent the water from reaching every part of the body, and thus the regeneration would be imperfect. "There is no historical fact," says Robinson, a Baptist historian, "There is no historical fact better authenticated than this."

It was in this way, as history would seem to indicate, that baptism by immersion came into use. It did not originate in the supposed fact, that the early Christian fathers understood the word *baptizo* to mean *immerse*. It has been amply proved, that the simple idea which they attached to the word *baptism*, was that of *purification*, and so they used these words, (baptize and purify,) indifferently, the one for the other, without any regard to the mode of purification. This mode of baptism, therefore, was introduced, not from any supposed scripture authority, as to the *mode*, but from fanciful interpretations of

certain passages, and from other considerations connected with their ideas of what the ordinance, in this form, might be adapted to signify. Three causes are assigned by Pres. Beecher, which are sufficient to account for the early practice of immersion: 1. Oriental usages and the habits of warmer regions. 2. A false interpretation of Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 2: 12; and 3. A very early habit of ascribing peculiar virtue to external forms.\*

Baptism by immersion, then, sprang up in the midst of other changes, which had no warrant in scripture, and some of which were monstrous corruptions of the original institutions of Christianity. Such is the tendency of even converted men, when they leave their hold on the Bible, and yield themselves up to the impulses and vain imaginings of the times in which they live, rapidly to fall into error and irregularity, and to become the originators of *measures*, and *modes*, and *usages*, which ever after disturb the order and mar the glory of Christ's house. For when once introduced, these *modes* and *usages* are apt

\* Am. Bib. Repos., 1841.

to be held with a tenacity proportioned to the weakness of the evidence by which they are attempted to be justified.

But I turn away from this scene of human error and confusion. THE BIBLE, and NOTHING BUT THE BIBLE, is the creed of Protestants; and here it is that we find our Divine warrant for baptism, and that, too, as we think, in the mode in which it is practiced among ourselves. Yet I readily concede that we have not, in the Bible, an explicit command enjoining this *mode* of baptism, to the exclusion of other *modes*. The obligation of baptism with water, in some form, to be administered with solemnity and decency, and in the use of the prescribed words, is enjoined by a "Thus saith the Lord." But the precise mode of applying the water was no doubt designedly left undefined, and we are at liberty, within the bounds of decency and order, to vary the mode, as occasions may require; but we are by no means at liberty to break the communion of the church, on the ground of any difference of opinion or of practice, in respect to the mere external form of administering a Christian sacrament.

We admit, indeed, that even *immersion*, though supported by no scripture authority, and though the grounds of its being preferred, as a mode of baptism, be erroneous interpretations of scripture, and false reasonings, may yet be so administered and received, as to be an *allowable* mode. Yet it is not the scriptural mode; and if we are asked to regard immersion as *essential* to baptism, and to administer or receive it under that condition, in the fear of God we must not submit to it. They who make this demand, bind that which Christ has left free; and we ought to “give place by subjection, no, not for an hour,” (Gal. 2: 5,) but to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. We impose no such bond upon our brethren as a condition of communion, even though the mode which we practice is amply proved to be the mode of the apostles. Yet the *mode* of baptism is not *baptism*, and we have no right to impose it as such. It is the *thing*, and not the *form*, which is commanded.

Just so it is with the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. We are simply commanded to take bread, &c. But as to the precise mode of doing

this, we are not particularly instructed. And as to apostolic usage, in this case, both we and our Baptist brethren know full well, that in many things we have departed from the mode in which the apostles observed this sacrament. They met in the *night* for this purpose; not on the Lord's day, but on *Thursday*; not in a house of public worship, but in an *upper chamber of a private dwelling*; they used *unleavened bread and the pure juice of the grape*, and received the supper, not standing, nor sitting, nor kneeling, but in a *recumbent posture, half sitting and half lying*.\*

No intelligent Christian will maintain, that a strict adherence to all these particulars is necessary to the valid administration of the Lord's Supper. There is not a branch of Christ's church on earth, in which all these particulars are observed. By common consent, all Christians, Baptists as well as others, concede that these things are not essential, and that the practice of even the apostles does not bind us to them. Surely, then, our Baptist brethren ought to aban-

\* See Miller on Baptism.

don the ground they have assumed as to baptism, or else to take the same position in respect to the other sacrament.

But it is in vain for any one to contend that the mode of applying the water in baptism is explicitly defined in scripture. Certainly we have said enough to show, that if any mode can claim a Divine warrant, it is that which we practice. Sprinkling certainly was very definitely prescribed in the Old Testament, as the mode, and the only mode, of performing the rite which "sanctified to the purifying of the flesh." And this, as we have seen, (Sec. III.) was a baptism. It was a baptism, too, in common use in the time of our Saviour and his apostles; and, inwoven as it was, in their daily thoughts and conversation, it must have been embraced, with more or less distinctness in the meaning of our Saviour's command, when he instituted the ordinance of Christian baptism. Yet, as a *mode*, it is only *implied* in this command, and not *explicitly enjoined*. And there is room, perhaps, for some honest differences of opinion respecting it. Such differences, as a matter of fact, do exist among learned and pious men, and ought to be

treated with candor and forbearance, however much they are to be deplored.

The *mode* of baptism, therefore, is not essential. There may be in this, as in other things, "diversities of administration, but the same spirit." Sprinkling, to my own mind, and I trust now, to the mind of the reader, is the most scriptural. It appears, indeed, to be the only mode any where prescribed or made known in the scriptures, and the only mode illustrated in the practice of John the Baptist and the apostles. It is also more appropriate to the spiritual blessings intended to be represented by baptism, and better adapted, than any other mode, to the designed universal spread of the Christian religion in all climates, and among all the nations.

I may add the fact, that our Baptist brethren constantly complain of the common translation of the Bible, for retaining the words *baptize* and *baptism*, untranslated. They claim that these words ought to be rendered *immerse* and *immersion*. They were actually so directed to be read in one of the first issues of the New Testament prepared for circulation by the Baptist Bible Society; and this

principle is carried out in all the translations circulated by that society in heathen languages. They eschew the very words, *baptize* and *baptism* in all their translations. I name this fact as a *concession*, perfectly satisfactory, on the part of our Baptist brethren, that they do not regard our present translation of the Bible—retaining the above words to designate the ordinance in question—as justifying or even favoring *immersion*, as its proper mode.

*We*, then, are the *Baptists*, and *they* the *Immersionists*. *We* claim the very words of the original scriptures as furnishing the only accurate designation of the sacrament under consideration. *They* substitute another word, because it indicates a particular mode, which the original word, *baptize*, as it is used by Christ and his apostles, confessedly does not indicate. Surely *we* are the *Baptists*; and if either party, in this dispute, has a right to demand, from all others, conformity to its own views, it is the party which plants itself on the meaning of the original language of scripture, as used and understood by inspired men, and by the Saviour himself. Yet *we* claim no such conformity from our brethren,

as the condition of our free and open communion.

With us, baptism is “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh;” (1 Pet. 3: 21.) Nor does it consist in any precise and exclusive mode of applying water, as a symbol of the baptism of the Spirit. But it is “the answer of a good conscience towards God,” by any application of water in this symbolical way.

The mode of baptism, then, we repeat, is not essential. It is not of the essence of Christianity, which stands not, as the Jewish ritual service did, “in meats and drinks and diverse baptisms,” not in outward forms and modes of worship, but “in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.”

Yet if we regard the spirit as well as the letter of our Saviour’s command, the very *mode* of baptism, though not essential, is still important. We ought surely to practice that mode which best accords with the spirit of the Christian dispensation, and see to it that we impose no unnecessary burdens upon the followers of Christ;

“which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the purifying of the flesh,” (Col. 2: 23.)

We ought also to adopt the mode which is found in experience to be practicable, in all climates, and in all the circumstances of human beings, to whom we are commanded to preach the gospel, every one of whom, in sickness or in health, is required to *believe and be baptized*. It must be admitted that there are certain conditions in which baptism by immersion could not be practiced without the greatest danger to health and to life.\* And the Son of man is not come to

\* If immersion were the only baptism, then God would require of *all believers* what *some believers* are unable to perform. Persons in delicate health, or converted in sickness, and near to death, could not, on that supposition, profess Christ before men, in the only appointed way; and the inhabitants of high latitudes where winter is perpetual, would be excluded from baptism almost of necessity, to say nothing of the difficulties and embarrassments which often attend the administration of this ordinance by immersion, even in milder climates.

The following, which I take from a little work, en-

destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9: 56.)

Finally, it is especially important that we should entertain right principles on this subject,

titled "*Immersion not Christian Baptism*," first published in the "*New England Puritan*," may stand in the place of a thousand similar facts.

"A young man was propounded for admission to one of our churches. But he had been educated to regard immersion as the only mode of baptism. Nearly all his relatives were of that belief. The question was naturally proposed, why he should leave the sect in which he had received all his early impressions, and join a pædobaptist church? He simply replied, "*My mother believed in immersion; therefore I do not.*" On being questioned in respect to this strange reason, he responded to the clergyman who raised the question, and said, 'You knew my mother—do you believe she was a Christian?' 'I do not question her piety,' was the reply; 'I believe she is now in heaven.' 'Well, sir,' said the young man, 'years before my mother's death, she hoped she was a Christian. She desired to profess Christ before men, to join the people of God, and meet the Saviour at his table. She was in feeble health. Her physician told her that immersion would cost her her life. But her physician was not a friend to immersion, and it was thought that his views might influence his judgment. A phy-

and not make that essential, in respect to which Christ has left us free. The grand error of our Baptist brethren, after all, is this: not that they prefer one mode to another; nor that they have adopted the most impracticable and onerous of all modes, which, on that account, they call the "*cross of Christ,*" when, in fact, it is only a cross of their own making; nor that they practice a mode for which there is no direct authority in the scriptures—but it is that they make the MODE THE ESSENTIAL THING IN BAPTISM, without which they recognize no one as having made a credible profession of religion, or as entitled to the privileges of the visible church. They ac-

sician was sent for whose views of baptism harmonized with my mother's. His opinion was expressed in these words: '*If you go into the water, you must die.*' This settled the case. To profess and obey Christ was impossible, as immersion alone was baptism to my mother. And thus, for a long and dark period, she walked alone, till God called her to his table above. I do not believe that such a mode belongs to the gospel, and I choose to unite myself to a church in which the feeble, the decrepid, the infirm, the sick and the dying, if their hearts are right, may find access below to the fold of Christ.'"

cordingly exclude from their communion the great body of the faithful among men, and stand aloof from the family of believers, who equally with themselves, though in a different mode, have been *baptized* “ IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.” *We* have not so learned Christ.



## PART II.

### THE SCRIPTURE WARRANT FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

---

#### SECTION I.

THE MEANING OF OUR SAVIOUR'S COMMAND, (MATT. 28: 19,) IN RESPECT TO THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM—PROSELYTE BAPTISM.

Our Baptist brethren contend that the conditions of baptism, as inculcated in the New Testament, are such that it cannot be lawfully administered to any but to adult believers. On the other hand, the great mass of professing Christians have in all ages maintained, and do now hold, that believers are entitled to this ordinance both for themselves *and their children*.\*

\*Of the 3,000,000, who profess religion in the United States, more than *three-quarters* consider infant baptism as valid. In Scotland, *nineteen-twentieths* of the people practice infant baptism, and, of all the religious denominations of England and Wales, *thirteen-four-*

The doctrine of *Infant Baptism*, then, is the subject of our present discussion. This, I think is taught in our Saviour's last command, considered in connexion with the inspired history of the church, and other circumstances, which must have controlled its meaning in the minds of the apostles. If it is thus taught, it has its foundation in the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself, being the chief corner-stone; and I may hope, by the blessing of God, so to present the grounds on which this doctrine rests, as to correct the views of many who have doubts on the subject, and to confirm the faith of others in those covenant relations, by which it is made the duty of believing parents to dedicate their chil-

*teenths* do the same. It is also practiced almost universally in all the other Protestant churches of Europe, and by the Waldenses, the Armenians, and the Syrian Christians, and the whole of the Roman and Greek churches.

We are right then, in saying, that the great mass of professing Christians do now hold, that believers are entitled to this ordinance both for themselves and their children. And they claim scripture authority for this belief. On what grounds, and with how much reason, we have yet to consider.

dren to God in baptism, and the right of ministers to administer this ordinance to the infant offspring of believers.

It will not be doubted that the last command of our Saviour is applicable to all regularly constituted ministers of the gospel in all ages. Hence the promise appended to it; "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 20.)

The command, then, to those who preach the gospel, is to TEACH all nations. The word here rendered *teach*, properly signifies to *disciple*, or to *proselyte*. This is admitted. The ablest scholars bear harmonious testimony to this signification of the word. The meaning of the command, therefore, as it was understood by the apostles, is that all those who should be converted under their ministry, all whom they should *disciple* or *proselyte*, to the faith of the gospel, were to be baptized. And this meaning of the word *proselyte* or *disciple*, as it was then commonly used, must have guided their perception of the meaning of the command.

The matter of *proselyting* persons from the world, to the faith of the true church, was by no

means new, in the time of our Saviour. Nor was it peculiar to the Christian dispensation. It was a matter of frequent occurrence, and was familiar to Christ and his disciples in the Jewish church. Persons of other nations, by conquest or otherwise, were often added to the Jewish community, and were admitted to the privileges of the Hebrew church on profession of their faith. But, as the Jews considered the Gentiles *unclean* and *impure*, it was natural for them, when such persons were converted to their faith, to insist on their being ceremonially *purified*, by the application of water. Hence such *proselytes* were not only subjected to the Jewish rite of circumcision, but the custom had sprung up of also *baptizing* them. And this custom had become universal in such cases.

The baptism of proselytes is not any where commanded in the Old Testament. Nor is it possible to determine at what time the custom was introduced. But there is probable evidence that, long before the coming of Christ, it was common among the Jews to baptize their converts from the Gentiles. And the rite of baptism in these cases was coextensive with that of

circumcision. As the children of these converts were required to be circumcised, so it was the uniform custom to subject them to baptism also.\*

\* As our Baptist brethren have labored hard to raise doubts as to the prevalence of the Jewish proselyte baptism previous to the time of Christ, it may be proper to refer to a few of the testimonies on which it rests, as a historical fact.

Maimonides, a Jew and the great interpreter of the Jewish law, says, "Israel was admitted into covenant by three things, viz.: by circumcision, *baptism* and sacrifice. Baptism was in the wilderness before the giving of the law." Again, he says, "Abundance of proselytes were made in the days of David and Solomon before private men; and the great Sanhedrim was full of care about this business; for they would not cast them out of the church, because they were baptized. And again, "Whenever any heathen will take the yoke of the law upon him, circumcision, *baptism* and a voluntary oblation are required. \* \* \* That was a common axiom, no man is a proselyte until he be circumcised and *baptized*."

Calnet, in his Dictionary (Art. Proselytes,) says, "The Jews require three things to a complete proselyte; *baptism*, circumcision and sacrifice; but for women only baptism and sacrifice."

Dr. Wall says of proselytes to the Jewish religion, "They were all *baptized*, males and females, adults

The baptism of children, then, as is highly probable, was common among the Jews, when the Saviour's command was given, and had been for a long time. It was just as much a matter of course to baptize the children of the proselytes to Judaism as it was to baptize the proselytes themselves. This was known to our Saviour and his disciples, and to all among the Jews, as the prevalent custom, a custom too

and *infants*. This was their *constant practice*, from the time of Moses to that of our Saviour, and from that period to the present day." But the testimonies are too numerous to be quoted or even referred to in this note. See *Kurtz on Baptism*, and other works, in which this historical fact appears to be satisfactorily proved.

Professor Stuart thinks the probabilities against the practice of proselyte baptism in the time of our Saviour. He admits however that "the impression has become widely extended in the Christian church, that such was the fact," and that a majority of the older writers have adopted the opinion of Selden, Lightfoot, Dantz, Buxtorf, Schoothgen, Wetstein and others, that the baptism of proselytes was common when John the Baptist made his appearance as a public teacher." (Bib. Repos., Vol. 3, pp. 342, 355.)

which is continued to the present day in all Jewish synagogues.

These were the circumstances in which our Saviour commanded his disciples to *proselyte* and *baptize* all nations. Who then were to be the subjects of this baptism? Was it intended to be restricted to adults only? Why then did not the Saviour prohibit the baptism of infants, when he gave this general command? And in the absence of any restriction, must not the disciples have understood him to mean the baptism, which both he and they had been accustomed to observe among the Jews, viz.: *the baptism of children with their parents*? They knew of no other law of baptism, in the case of proselytes to a new form of religion, but that which required its administration both to the proselyte and his children. Such a thing as a believing parent presenting himself for baptism, and withholding his children, had not been heard of, excepting, perhaps, in the case of John's baptism, in which it is not known that children were embraced.

John's baptism, however, was peculiar and temporary. It was simply a preparatory rite, of

short continuance. It was not administered in the name of Christ, and some whom John had baptized, we are told, had “not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost” (Acts 19: 2.) It is certain also that the baptism of John had not become a custom. It was administered only by himself. And, besides, it had nothing to do with the reception of new *proselytes* or *disciples*, into the church. It was the baptism of repentance, administered to the back-slidden Jews indiscriminately, to prepare them for the reception of the Redeemer. But our Saviour was now directing his disciples concerning a baptism to be administered to such as they should actually *proselyte* to the true faith; and the language made use of proves, with sufficient clearness, that the thought in his mind must have been that of the Jewish *proselyte baptism*, which, as we have seen, was then universally practiced. This baptism was, of course, familiar to the minds of the disciples; and when they were commanded to *disciple* and to *baptize*, how could they understand the Saviour to mean any thing else than this baptism?

In these circumstances, it is plain, that, in-

stead of needing an express command to authorize them to baptize the children of those who should be converted under their ministry, the disciples would have needed an express prohibition, to prevent their so doing, had it been the Saviour's design to restrict their baptism to adults. But no such prohibition was given, or even intimated.

I am thus led to the conclusion, that our Saviour's command in the circumstances in which it was given, inculcates the doctrine of *infant baptism*. It must have been so understood by those to whom it was addressed. It must also have been intended by the Saviour to be so understood; and in view of the prevalent usage of the time in which it was spoken, I can not understand it otherwise.

But there are other considerations, yet to be stated, which show conclusively, that our Saviour and his apostles designed to teach the doctrine of Infant Baptism, and that baptism, as a standing ordinance, a sacrament of the Christian church, should be administered to the children of believers, as well as to believers themselves.

## SECTION II.

IN ALL THE COVENANTS OF GOD WITH MEN, CHILDREN  
ARE INCLUDED WITH THEIR PARENTS.

Every believer, by making a public profession of religion, enters formally into covenant with God. By his conversion he has become a child of God, a willing subject of his government, and now by a public profession, he recognizes this relation of submission, dependence, love and obedience, and pledges himself to its duties and obligations. He is thus formally in covenant with God.

Now, as to the meaning and purport of such a covenant, I have to remark, (and I wish this point to be well considered,) that in all the forms in which God ever invited or required men to enter into a covenant of obedience to himself, previous to the time of Christ and the Christian dispensation, *children were included with their parents*. It was so in God's covenant with Adam; and thus, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed

upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Rom. 5: 12.) Whatever mystery may be involved in this transaction, nothing can be plainer than the fact, that, as children of Adam, we and all mankind are even now experiencing the consequences of this covenant obligation of our common parent to God, whose law he disobeyed. And whatever disputes may have arisen, as to the grounds and reasons of our sufferings in consequence of Adam’s sin, the fact is one of experience, as well as of revelation. It is admitted by all, and all are involved in it, infants as well as adults.

The children of Noah were also embraced in the covenant, which God made with him. “Moved with fear, he prepared an ark to the saving of his *house*.” (Heb. 11: 7.) “With thee,” said God, “will I establish my covenant: and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy *sons*, and thy wife, and thy son’s wives with thee.” (Gen. 6: 18.) And God dealt favorably with the children of Lot, for their father’s sake. (Gen. 19.)

In the case of Abraham, this covenant relation of children with their parents is still more explicitly declared. “And I will establish my

covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." (Gen. 17: 7.) So the sign and seal of the covenant was required to be administered to his children, as well as to himself. And the children of every Jewish parent were to be circumcised, as the condition of his own interest in the covenant. (Gen. 17: 12, 13.)

But if God, in all his covenant dealings with men, for four thousand years before the coming of Christ, had invariably included children with their parents—if, in maintaining this principle, he had even suffered the whole human race to be involved in ruin, in consequence of Adam's sin—then, is it not reasonable to conclude that there is something in the very nature of the relation of parents and children, which renders such covenant engagements, as God required in those early ages, proper and even necessary? Is not the child so dependent on the parent for the influences which guide and mould his character, that they cannot be separated in their moral responsibilities? Must not the parent be, in a great measure, responsible for the character of

the child, especially during the periods of infancy and childhood? Was it likely then, nay, was it possible, that God, in the new form of his covenant with believers, under the Christian dispensation, should have sundered the connexion between parents and their children? This, I think, is not for a moment to be admitted. But there are other conclusive proofs, that Christ, in the new dispensation of his grace, did not intend to interrupt or destroy this long acknowledged relation.

### SECTION III.

#### THE CHURCH THE SAME UNDER THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS.

The covenant which God made with Abraham, including children with their parents, was, as we have seen, “*an everlasting covenant.*” It has never been abolished, and never can be. It is declared in passages already referred to, and in other places in the Old Testament, to have been with Abraham and his seed, “for an everlasting covenant,” and is spoken of in the New Testament as to exist “for ever.” (Luke 1: 55.) Paul declares that “the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, can not disannul [it] that it should make the promise of none effect,” and that, as a “covenant of promise,” it was “confirmed of God in Christ.” (Gal. 3: 17.) And believers under the gospel are spoken of as children of this covenant with Abraham. They are also denominated “children of Abraham,” and “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise; (Gal. 3: 7, 29,) and Abra-

ham is called "the father of us all." (Rom. 4: 16.)

Now it is apparent from such declarations as these, that the covenant made with Abraham is God's covenant with the church in all ages. It was not abolished by the coming of Christ, but was confirmed in him, and remains essentially the same under the Jewish and Christian dispensations. But if the covenant of the church is the same, then it is essentially the same church under both dispensations. The church is constituted by its covenant with God, and if its covenant remains unchanged, the church is the same. Hence the church, under both dispensations, is represented as the same in numerous passages of scripture.

The ancient predictions of the conversion of the Gentiles, and of the prosperity and glory of the church under the gospel, do not indicate that a new church was then to be established in the earth. Such an idea does not seem to have entered the minds of the prophets. On the contrary, they uniformly represent that the Zion of the Old Testament, the church at that time existing in Israel, was to be enlarged and beautified with

new light and glory by the coming of the Redeemer. Their language and their imagery all indicate this. It was to the church of his own times, that Isaiah gave the following encouragement: "Arise, shine; for *thy* light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon *thee*." "And the Gentiles shall come to *thy* light, and kings to the brightness of *thy* rising. Lift up *thine* eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to *thee*: *thy* sons shall come from far, and *thy* daughters shall be nursed at thy side." (Isaiah 60: 1, 3, 4, &c. See also Isaiah 49: 19-21.) And so of the prophecies of the Old Testament generally. They evidently contemplate, not a new church under the gospel, but new glory and blessings to the church or the house of Israel.

The same idea is fully carried out in the New Testament. Christ and his apostles do not claim for the church under the gospel, an origin and constitution distinct from that of the former dispensation. On the contrary, they claim for it an identity with the church of the patriarchs and prophets. Christ declares that "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down

with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." And this he explains to be the same kingdom, from which "the children of the kingdom," the Jews, for their unfaithfulness, should "be cast out." (Mat. 8: 11, 12.) And again he says, that "the kingdom of God shall be taken from [them] and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Mat. 21: 43.) Still it is the same church, though enlarged and beautified. It is taken from the Jews, who had long abused its privileges, and is given to the Gentiles.

In perfect accordance with these statements and predictions, Paul represents the Gentile believers as grafted into the same olive-tree, from which the Jews, for their unbelief were broken off, and to which he says, "they also," that is the Jews, "if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again." What is this *olive-tree*, if it be not the true church in covenant with God, whether composed of Jews or Gentiles? Therefore, "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." (Rom. 11; 17, 18, 23.)

Now, in view of these representations, nothing can be more certain, than that the visible church of God, under both dispensations, is substantially the same body. The religion of the Old Testament, then, is not distinct from that of the New, as if it were another system. The one is but the filling up of the imperfect outline which was drawn in the other, and the true church, in all ages, is essentially the same. It has held essentially the same doctrines, enjoyed the same spiritual promises, though with different degrees of light, has been constituted upon the same covenant, and professed the same religion.

## SECTION IV.

### BAPTISM THE SUBSTITUTE FOR CIRCUMCISION.

I am now prepared to show that—the covenant and the church remaining the same—the *sign and seal of the covenant*, though changed in its form, *retains* all its original significancy and propriety, in its application both to believers and their children. Under the ancient dispensation of the covenant, there was an instituted external observance, or rite, prerequisite to a regular standing in the visible church. That instituted rite was circumcision, which was administered to both believers and their children. Under the new dispensation of the *same covenant*, *with the same church*, circumcision has been discontinued and abolished. But there is another observance, instituted by our Saviour, more simple and convenient and better suited, than the bloody rite of circumcision, to the free spirit and more “easy yoke” of the gospel. Yet it holds the same relation to the covenant. It is, as circumcision was, prerequisite to a regular stand-

ing in the visible church. This new observance or rite, is *baptism*, which, as a matter of fact, and by our Saviour's command, occupies the same place, in respect to faith and profession, that circumcision occupied under the law. The one, therefore, in these respects, is a substitute for the other; and if that which is done away was applied to the children of believers, why should not that which has taken its place be so applied?

The covenant is the same now as then, and the natural relation of children to their parents, under the covenant, the same. No change has been produced in these respects by the gospel. Parents have the same authority now as formerly, the same power of influence, and the same obligation rests on them, and is rather enforced than enfeebled, to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6: 4.) And children sustain the same relation of dependence now as formerly, and are as susceptible of moulding influences from their parents. Why then should not the rite, prerequisite to a regular standing in the church, be administered to the children of believers now, as

well as under the former dispensation? Surely the fact that its form has been changed and mitigated, can not justify us in withholding it, so long as its significancy and propriety remain the same. No one pretends that it has been forbidden; and in the absence of all prohibition, I can imagine no reason why it should be discontinued in respect to children, while it is administered to adults.

Circumcision was both a *sign* and a *seal* of the faith of those under the old dispensation, who entered into covenant with God. Abraham, says Paul, (Rom. 4: 11,) “received the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised.” Here circumcision was a *sign*. It represented the circumcision of the heart, or regeneration. For “circumcision,” says Paul, again, (Rom. 2: 29,) “is of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.” It was also a *seal*. It confirmed “the righteousness of the faith which he had,” or his acceptance of the conditions of the covenant of grace,

as a *sealed* instrument confirms the engagements of a contract.

So baptism is both a *sign* and a *seal*. As a *sign*, it represents the washing of regeneration, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost. As a *seal*, it is, on the part of those who receive it, a confirmation of their covenant engagements to God, while it assures them, that, if their hearts and lives are conformed to its sacred import, their faith, like that of Abraham, is imputed to them for righteousness.

There are numerous other passages, which show that baptism, under the gospel, takes the place of circumcision under the law, and that its significancy is the same. "Beware of the circumcision," says Paul, (Phil. 3: 2, 3,) that is, beware of those persons who lay great stress on the right of circumcision, "for we," that is, we who have been baptized, "are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit." Again, he says to the Colossians, (Col. 2: 11, 12,) "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." The meaning is, in other

words, that *having been baptized, spiritually, "ye are" thereby "circumcised" spiritually, that is, with the "circumcision made without hands," &c.*

I have already remarked, (Part I., Sec. X.,) that both the circumcision and baptism here spoken of, are plainly spiritual, and that, therefore, the expression "*buried with him in baptism,*" can have no reference whatever to the *mode* of baptism. But if circumcision and baptism, in their spiritual import, are the same—as they are here seen to be—and the one was instituted in the church as a *sealing* ordinance, on the removal of the other, what is this but the substitution of the one for the other? But it is objected, that in numerous instances, from the beginning of John's ministry to the death of Christ, the same persons were both circumcised and baptized, and that Paul circumcised Timothy, after he had been baptized. (Acts 16: 3.) It is asked, how can one of these ordinances be considered as substituted for the other, when both were practised at the same time?

I answer, that the covenant of grace was not perfected in Christ, until his own blood, "the

blood of the everlasting covenant," was shed. It was perfected in his own death; and so after his resurrection, he opened its full import to the apostles, and then, for the first time, commissioned them to go and publish it to all nations. Baptism, therefore, could not have been made the sign and seal of the perfected covenant until now. Accordingly we find that it was just at this time, and not before, that our Lord formally instituted the sacrament of baptism.

Before this, during the ministry of John and of Christ, the church was in a state of transition from the former to the new dispensation. It is not surprising, therefore, that there was some mingling of ordinances, and some approach in the form and import of the rites of the old dispensation to those of the new. But they were not yet the permanent institutions of the gospel. So the baptism of John was only preparatory to the rite of Christian baptism. It was administered on profession of repentance and faith in the speedy appearance of him, who was to baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." And the baptisms performed by the disciples of Christ, while he was yet with them, were administered

to those Jews that believed on him, as the Messiah, all of whom, like the apostles themselves, waited for a fuller manifestation of his character and offices. Both John's baptism and that of the disciples, previous to the resurrection, looked for something yet to come, and were not that baptism, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," which was instituted by our Saviour, after his resurrection, as a standing sacrament in the Christian church. This, I think, sufficiently accounts for the continuance of circumcision among the converted Jews, who were baptized during the Saviour's personal ministry.

As to the circumcision of Timothy by Paul, it was evidently done to avoid the opposition and reproaches of the Jews. It was a mere measure of expediency to open the way for greater usefulness, in accordance with Paul's uniform and avowed principle of conduct. (1 Cor. 9: 20.) "And unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews." But in such cases, circumcision was not administered as a sealing ordinance, but only as a mark of national distinction. Nor did it interfere with the

established institutions of the gospel. Otherwise Paul would have resisted it, as he did on another occasion, when certain Judaizing teachers undertook to impose circumcision on the Gentile converts, "To whom," he says, "we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour." (Gal. 2: 1-5. See Acts 15: 1, 28, 29; and 21: 23-26.)

It thus appears that when the ancient *sign* and *seal* of the covenant which God made with his people, for an everlasting covenant, was abolished, another ordinance was instituted *in the same church, under the same covenant, of precisely the same import, and for the same purpose, viz., as a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith.* And we ask in vain for a reason why the latter should not be applied to the children of believers, as the former certainly was. I say, we ask in vain, for it is in vain to say, as is often said, that, since infants have not faith, it can not be proper to apply to them the *sign and seal of faith.*

This objection lies with equal weight against infant circumcision. But we know that circumcision was administered to infants eight days old, by the command of God. If the one is im-

proper, on this account, the other was, and God is in fault for having required it. Moreover, if faith is a prerequisite to baptism, it is also a prerequisite to salvation. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16: 16.) If then you deny baptism to infants, on the ground that they are incapable of exercising *faith*, you ought also, for the same reason, to deny the possibility of their *salvation*, for faith and salvation are as indissolubly linked together in the scriptures, as are faith and baptism. If you admit that children are *saved*, when they die in infancy, without the exercise of an intelligent faith, then surely their lack of faith can not consistently be urged to debar them from the privilege of baptism. And if you say, they have faith, which is known to God, though not manifested to us, and that this is the ground of their salvation, then they have the very thing that you claim as prerequisite to their baptism, and your objection destroys itself.

Again, it is sometimes asked, What good can baptism do to an unconscious infant? So it was asked, in respect to the Jews, "What profit is

there of circumcision?" Paul answered, "*Much every way,*" and then added, "For what if some"—who had been circumcised—"did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." (Rom. 3: 1-3.) And again he says, "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." (Rom. 2: 25.)

So the advantages of infant baptism are many and great. It is a sign of interesting truths, and a seal of inestimable blessings. Christ will honor his own institution; and when he suffers little children thus to be brought unto him, it is, that he may bless them. Their right of membership in the visible church is thus recognized and ratified, and they are introduced to the special care and instruction of the church. And though we can not define all the blessings which the Saviour bestows, in answer to the prayers of his people, upon children, thus in covenant with himself, who can estimate their value? All objections of this sort are equally futile. They

savor of being wise above what is written, and lead to endless difficulties and absurdities.

I may add, that it is perilous thus to reject an ordinance of God, and throw off its authority from ourselves, merely because, from the mode of our education, or our habits of thinking on these subjects, we do not at once see the grounds of its propriety. It is enough, if God has required it, though the reasons may not all be apparent to us. And surely, so far as the principle of this ordinance is concerned, if God has honored it in any case, as he certainly did in the case of infant circumcision, we should beware that we do not treat it lightly, nor reject it without a Divine warrant to do so. But no such warrant is to be found. On the contrary, the New Testament is full of proof that the sign and seal of Abraham's faith, though changed in its form, still retains its significancy, and is to be administered to us and to our children, so long as we "walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." (Rom. 4: 12.)

Yet there is a large class of professing Christians, in modern times, who reject the doctrine

of infant baptism, and whose conscientious scruples we are bound to respect. They ask for what can not be given, a text of scripture expressly enjoining the baptism of children. Our reply is, that this demand is unreasonable. The doctrine in question is so well sustained by such considerations as I have now stated, that an express command is unnecessary.

Moreover, if no obligation can be imposed, without an express command, why do those who raise this objection attend public worship, from sabbath to sabbath, as a thing of religious obligation? Why do they observe the first instead of the seventh day of the week as the sabbath? Why do they administer the Lord's supper to females? Why do they pray with their children and families, or teach them to read? There is not in all the scriptures a text expressly enjoining these duties. Yet who doubts that they are duties? Who that embraces the Bible, as the rule of his faith, does not joyfully yield himself to the practice of these duties, as matters of Divine requirement, and of religious obligation? So the dedication of our children to God in baptism may be a duty,

though no single text can be found, which, in so many words, commands it. That it is a duty, there are still other proofs yet to be considered.

## SECTION V.

### THE EXAMPLE AND PRACTICE OF THE APOSTLES IN RESPECT TO INFANT BAPTISM.

In addition to the strong proof of the identity of the church under both dispensations, the perpetuity of the covenant, and the fact that baptism takes the place of circumcision, we have still further corroborative evidence in favor of our belief, from apostolic example and practice.

Christ and his apostles taught and practiced much as we might expect, on the supposition that they intended to authorize the baptism of children, as well as adult believers, and just as we should not expect, on the contrary supposition. They were themselves of the Jewish church, by birth and education. They knew that, in that church, children were connected with their parents in their covenant relations to God; that they early received the sign of the everlasting covenant; and that, in the case of proselytes, the children were baptized with their parents. And most of those to whom they min-

istered in the beginning of the gospel, were also familiar with these Jewish usages.

What, then, might have been expected of Christ and his apostles, on the supposition that they intended to put an end to this practice of infant baptism? Not silence, in respect to it, surely! On the contrary, they would have lost no opportunity of insisting, that the ancient covenant relation of children and parents was now abolished, and ought no longer to be recognized in the rites and sacraments of the church. But they neither said nor intimated any such thing in a single instance.

But what would be expected of Christ and his apostles, on the supposition that they intended to recognize the established covenant relation of parents and children, in the church, as perpetual? What would they be likely to say about the seal of the covenant? Surely it would not be necessary to enjoin it in the case of the children of proselytes; for this would be to enjoin expressly what was universally practiced in such cases. But they would be likely often to allude to the covenant relation of parents and children to God, as a thing known and recog

nized, and to speak of its duties and drop expressions which implied them. They would be likely also often to baptize households, when those at the head of them made profession of their faith, and occasionally to speak of these occurrences in a cursory manner, indicating no doubt that the nature and form of these transactions would be generally understood on their bare announcement of them, without explanation. And this we find is just the course which they did pursue.

The Saviour applauded the practice of bringing infants to receive his blessing, and said, "Forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mark 10: 14.) Again, he speaks of little children as being received in his name, or as belonging to him. (Mark 9: 37, 42.) Peter taught believing parents that the promise was to them and their children. (Acts 2: 39.) Paul affirms that "the blessing of Abraham has come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ." (Gal. 3: 14.) On another occasion he denominates the children of believing parents "holy;" that is, *consecrated*. (1 Cor. 7: 14.) The whole expression of the apostle is as follows, (1 Cor. 7:

14): "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*;" that is, *holy in an ecclesiastical sense*; in other words, they are entitled to baptism, as the children of believers, dedicated or consecrated to God.

This passage indicates two things; first, that no children but those of believers are entitled to baptism. This was the case in respect to circumcision under the law. It was administered only to the children or wards of those who professed the true religion. All others were excluded as *unclean*. So Christian baptism is to be administered to none but the children of professors of the true faith. But we are here taught, secondly, that, if either of the parents is a believer and a professor of religion, their children are entitled to baptism, on account of the faith and profession of the believing parent, though the other remain yet an unbeliever. "Now," says the apostle, their children "are holy." In accordance with this, Peter declares (Acts 2: 39,) that the promise is to "as many" [and their children,] "as the Lord our God shall call."

Now obedience to this call of God implies a profession of faith; hence baptism belongs only to those who profess the religion of the gospel, and their children, or such as are under their care and influence by guardianship or adoption.

Paul also repeatedly baptized *households*, or families, on the profession of the faith of their parents, or of those who had charge of them. Lydia gave heed to the gospel, and she and her *household*\* were baptized. (Acts 16: 15.) The jailer believed, and he and *all his* were baptized straightway. (Acts 16: 33.) Paul also baptized the household of Stephanus. (1 Cor. 1: 16.)

Another consideration, which has an important bearing on the force of this argument is, that a great number of *Jewish* parents were converted under the ministry of Christ and his

\* The editor of Calmet's Dictionary gives no less than *fifty* examples in proof of the fact, that οἶκος, (*oikos*,) here rendered *household*, when used in application to persons, denotes a family of children including children of all ages, and assures us, that as many as *three hundred* instances have been examined, and have proved perfectly satisfactory. See *Cal. p.* 155, and *Kurtz, p.* 94.

apostles. These were all “zealous of the law;” and yet we never hear of their complaining that their children were deprived of their interest in the covenant, by the institutions and usages of the gospel, or that they failed to receive the seal of that covenant. Could this have been the case, if baptism had not been administered in the place of circumcision, to the children of those converts? Yet not a word of complaint is heard from them on any such account. It is morally certain, therefore, that in respect to covenant relations and privileges, according to a well-known prophecy of Jeremiah, “their children were as aforetime.” (Jer. 30: 20.)

## SECTION VI.

TESTIMONY OF EARLY CHRISTIANS AND OF HISTORY.  
ORIGIN OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION. CON-  
CLUDING REMARKS.

The earliest of the Christian fathers, also, after the apostolic age, considered baptism as standing in the place of circumcision. Several of them have spoken expressly on the subject, making it certain that infant baptism was practiced in their times, and was claimed to be of apostolic origin and authority.

The old Syriac version of the New Testament, the date of which is assigned, by Walton and others, to the *first century* of the Christian era, substitutes the word *children* for οἶκος, "household" and "all his," in the passages already referred to; and so, in that very early version, the reading is, "Lydia and her *children*," the jailer "and his *children*," &c. This is at once a correct translation of the original, and a valuable testimony, as to the understanding of these passages in the very region where the apostles

labored; and being given while some of them were yet alive, it ought to be conclusive on this subject.

So also *Ireneus*, who was born about the close of the first century, says, “Infants and little ones, and children, and youth, and the aged, *are regenerated to God*”—*renascuntur in Deum*. It is plain that this expression refers to baptism, for he afterwards quotes Matt. 28: 19, and says, in relation to it, “Our Lord gave to his disciples this commission of *regenerating*,” that is, of *baptizing*.

*Justin Martyr*, also, who lived in the first half century after the death of the apostle John, says that “Infants are washed with water in the name of the Father and Son and Spirit.” And *Origen*, who lived within a hundred years of the apostolic age, a man of great learning and extensive acquaintance with the churches of his time, says, “Little children are baptized agreeably to the usage of the church; who received it from the apostles, that this ordinance should be administered to infants.” The testimony of others is equally explicit.

But if this is so, and it was understood in the

times nearest the apostles, that baptism stood in the place of circumcision, and was to be administered to infants, by apostolic authority, then the question about baptizing the children of believers ought to be at an end.

There is, indeed, no evidence that the right of the children of believers to receive baptism was ever denied in the earlier ages of the church. Tertullian, it is true, adopted the strange notion that baptism was accompanied with the remission of all past sins; and that sins committed after baptism were peculiarly dangerous. He therefore advised that the baptism of infants who were likely to live, should be delayed, that it might be administered at a later period of life, and thus cancel a greater multitude of sins. Yet he recognizes the existence and prevalence of infant baptism in his time, (the third century,) and recommends it in all cases where the infant is not likely to survive.

Others of the Christian fathers often allude to this subject and give abundant testimony to the universality of the practice, and the prevalent belief that it was handed down from the apostles. Augustine and Pelagius, in the fourth

century, both learned men, in their long and violent disputes about original sin, affirm and defend their belief of the doctrine of infant baptism. Pelagius says, "Men slander me, as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants." And again, "*I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants.*"\* And Augustine repeatedly recognizes the same, and urges it upon his opponent, as a reason why he should also admit original sin, and the necessity of the regeneration of infants, which it is the design of baptism to signify and represent.

Our best historians, as *Milner* and *Wall*, who have investigated this subject thoroughly, assure us that they can find no account of any body of professing Christians, who denied baptism to infants, until about the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in the *thirteenth* century. Then there arose a small sect among the *Waldenses*, who maintained that infants ought not to be baptized, because they considered them incapable of salvation. The great mass of the *Waldenses* still held the doctrine of infant baptism and

\* *Wall's Hist, of Infant Bap., Vol. 1.*

practiced it. But this small sect, the followers of *Peter de Bruis*, broke off from the main body of that renowned church, and held that, as infants were incapable of salvation, the applying to them of the sacramental seal is an absurdity. Surely our Baptist brethren, knowing their creed, will not wish these people to be considered their predecessors.

Where then shall we look, in history, for the modern Baptist doctrines on this subject? It is incontestibly proved that baptism was administered to the children of believers during the apostolic age, and that it continued to be administered, in all subsequent ages, by the great body of the church, for more than *fifteen hundred years*. For the *Petrobrusians*\* were a very small sect, and, as we have seen, they did not reject infant baptism on the grounds now urged

\* These *Petrobrusians*, says Dr. Miller, “were a very small fraction of the great Waldensian body, probably not more than a thirtieth or fortieth part of the whole. The great mass of the denomination, as such, declare, in their Confession of Faith, and in various public documents, that they held, and that their fathers before them, for many generations, always held, to infant baptism.”—*Miller on Baptism*.

by our Baptist brethren ; and the very first body of people, in the whole Christian world, who did reject it on these grounds were a fanatical sect, called *Anabaptists*,\* who arose in Germany in 1522.† Here, properly speaking, commenced the Baptist denomination. Here the communion of the church was first sundered on the ground of baptism. The Anabaptists produced the separation, which has since been maintained and extended, as if it were a doctrine of godliness. They have since been called *Antipedobaptists*, in distinction from all other denominations of Christians, who are called *Pedobaptists*, because they baptize children.

All the boasting, therefore, of our Baptist brethren, about tracing the origin of their denomination to John the Baptist, and to the day of

\* The word Anabaptist is derived from *ανα*, (*anew*) and *βαπτιστης*, (*Baptist*), and was applied to the sect referred to, because they held, as the close-communion Baptists now hold, that persons baptized in infancy ought to be *baptized anew*, on their becoming believers.

† It does not appear that there was any congregation of Anabaptists in England, until about 1640. See *Tomlin's Elements*, and *Kurtz on Baptism*.

Pentecost, is mere declamation. Neither scripture nor history furnishes the slightest evidence in support of such a claim. The fact is susceptible of the clearest proof, that *they are a modern sect*. This, however, would be no objection, and no ground of reproach, if their positions were true, and supported by the word of God. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8: 20.)

I would not urge, therefore, with too much confidence, the authority of history and of universal practice in the church, since the age of the apostles. I admit that, in all the ages since the Saviour's own time, there have been errors mingled with truth, in the church, almost everywhere. And in respect to matters of mere human authority and usage, the Baptists have as good a right to their opinions, as we have to ours. But I think, the evidence of both scripture and history, which we have now considered, of the departure of the close-communication Baptists from the faith and practice of the apostles on this subject, warns both them and us to "see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and

walk therein, that we may find rest to our souls"—rest in the everlasting covenant of God with his people.

By the terms of that covenant, every believing parent is bound to dedicate his children to God in baptism, as the *sign* and *seal* of his faith. And it is at our peril and the peril of our children, that we neglect it. The promise is only to "them that love him and keep his commandments." This is one of his commandments; and surely the blessing of Abraham may be expected to come upon us, in all the fulness of the gospel, if we walk in the steps of his faith, "who is the father of us all," and let there be "no schism in the body." "For by one Spirit, are we all *baptized* into one body." (1 Cor. 12: 13, 25.) This is *spiritual baptism*, of which every one, who is truly regenerated, is a partaker. If, therefore, we accompany our *external baptism*, with pledges, which bind us to *division* and *separation* from the great mass of our brethren of the like precious faith, and that too on questions of mere "doubtful disputation," as the Baptist arguments on the *mode* and *subjects* of baptism certainly are, instead of binding ourselves, in the recep-

tion of this ordinance, to *union* and *communion* with all the faithful in Christ Jesus, we give to our baptism a meaning, which it has not in the scriptures. It is there intended to represent that spiritual influence, by which “we are all *baptized* into one body,” “the body of Christ,” the church universal. (1 Cor. 12: 27.) For “there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, [spiritual,] one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph. 4: 4, 5, 6.)

Let the reader understand, that the “one baptism,” here spoken of, is spiritual. It is that by which, if he is truly regenerated, he is “*baptized into one body*” with all others who are regenerated; and God has not only given him no right, but expressly forbids him, to affix to the external *sign* and *seal* of his spiritual baptism, voluntary pledges to a single branch of “the body of Christ,” which bind him to abstain from communion with all the other branches or members. If he makes a worthy profession of religion, he professes to be a member “in particular” of the whole body of Christ, and is not at liberty, by

the conditions of his baptism, either as to the mode or the time of its administration, to say to any of the other members, "I have no need of you." But he is bound to receive them as brethren, in all acts of communion and fellowship. "And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name," says the Saviour, "receiveth me." (Matt. 18: 5.)

## APPENDIX ;

### CONCERNING THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

---

The following is from the learned work more than once referred to in the preceding treatise, entitled, "*Apostolic Baptism: Facts and Evidences on the Subjects and Mode of Christian Baptism; by C TAYLOR, Editor of Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible.*"

Before we can discuss a theological subject, we must clear away those perversions in which *industrious ignorance* and criminal presumption involve it. The principal of these on the present topic is the following proposition—"Christian Baptism is neither more nor less than an *immersion* of the whole body in water, solemnly performed in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

I answer—the bad *Latin* term, *Immersion*, is a very convenient cover for a very delusive proposition; especially when used in an unlimited, unfixed, or unqualified sense. \* \* \* \*

A man is *immersed* who stands on his toes or up to his knees in water; he also is *immersed*, Baptists say, over whose head the water flows. If the term then be so indeterminate, it were chasing an *ignis fatuus* to follow it, when facts are in question; it eludes the test of Scripture, reason, and common sense.

Instead therefore, of bewildering ourselves in attempting to trace the strict use of a *word* notoriously uncertain in its application and import, let us examine

the *thing* it should represent. Instead of poring over *bad* Latin, let us endeavor to apply *good* English. Translate the term into our mother tongue. To put under water the whole body, is to *plunge* it.—Now mark the proposition:—“Christian Baptism is neither more nor less than *plunging* the whole body, in the name, &c.” This affords a precise idea, that may easily be examined. Does the original Greek word *baptize*, wherever it occurs in Scripture, denote *plunging*?—Let us try this by applying the term to the leading passages.

Βαπτω.—In the New Testament the verb *bapto* occurs thrice:—

Luke xvi. 24.—Send Lazarus that he may *dip* the tip of his finger;—that he may **PLUNGE** the TIP of his finger.

John xiii. 20.—He to whom I shall give a sop when I have *dipped* it;—a sop when I have **PLUNGED** it.

Rev. xix. 13.—His name is called the Word of God:—he was clothed in a vesture *dipped* in blood;—clothed in a vesture **PLUNGED** in blood.

Εμβαπτω.—The compound verb *embapto* is used three times:—

Matthew xxvi. 23.—He that *dippeth* his hand with me in the dish;—he that **PLUNGETH** his hand with me in the dish.

Mark xiv. 20.—One of the twelve that *dippeth* with me in the dish;—one of the twelve that **PLUNGETH** with me in the dish.

John xiii. 26.—He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have *dipped* it; and when he had *dipped* the sop;—he it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have **PLUNGED** it; and when he had **PLUNGED** the sop.

Now, does language tolerate the expression “to *plunge* the *tip* of a finger?” does Christianity tolerate the notion of our Lord Jesus “wearing a garment *plunged* in blood?” does common decency tolerate the *plunging* of two hands in the same dish at the same time?

Βαπτισμος.—The noun *baptismos* occurs four times:

Mark vii. 4, 8. The *washing* of cups and pots, and of brazen vessels, and tables;—the **PLUNGING** of cups and pots, and of brazen vessels, and tables.

Heb. vi. 2.—The foundation of the doctrine of *baptisms*;—doctrine of **PLUNGINGS**.

Heb. ix. 10.—Services, in meats and drinks, and divers *washings*;—divers **PLUNGINGS**.

These passages imply very different modes of performing that action which the sacred writer calls *baptism*; and their order is favorable to the eliciting of conclusive evidence from their connection and tenor.

Whoever has seen cups and pots washed at a pump, may judge whether *they* were necessarily *plunged*. Whoever considers what cumbersome pieces of furniture these *tables* were—*fifteen* or *twenty* feet long, by *four* feet broad, and about *four* feet high—may judge whether they were *plunged*, after every meal taken upon them. Why does the sacred writer describe the doctrine of *baptisms*, in the plural, as one of the foundations of Christianity, if there were only *one* mode of *baptism*, that by *plunging*? The same writer says expressly, that under the law there were *divers kinds of baptisms*:—and from the law itself, we know that by far the greater part of them were not *plungings*: the word therefore cannot possibly be restricted to that import.

If then the word *baptism* be not restricted in Scripture to that import, but is used in senses distinct from that of *plunging*, in reference to *things*, let us examine its import in reference to *persons*. What think you of the *baptism* by the Holy Ghost? This was not a metaphorical or figurative baptism. It was a real and indisputable subject of the senses seen by John the Baptist, by the Apostles, in company of the hundred and twenty, as is generally thought, and by Peter with his brethren, in the instance of Cornelius; and not less conspicuous than at the Jordan. It was the subject of John Baptist's repeated prediction; Mat. iii. 11;

Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16: "He shall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghost." It was also the subject of our Lord's repeated prediction; Luke xxiv. 49: "I send the promise of my Father upon you—ye shall be endued with power *from on high*." Acts i. 5: "Ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence."—Acts ii. 2: "And suddenly there *came from heaven* and APPEARED *unto them* cloven tongues, like as of fire and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The same occurred in the case of Cornelius: Acts x. 44; for Peter says, "the Holy Ghost FELL ON them, *as on us at the beginning*." Acts xi. xv: 8: "God....gave them the Holy Ghost, *even as he did unto us*, and put no difference between them and us, purifying their hearts by faith."

Two words are employed to express this similitude; one of which,  $\omega\sigma\pi\epsilon\rho$ , denotes a strict and exact similitude, likeness, or conformity.

The manner in which this *baptism* was conferred or administered was not only distinct from *plunging*, but it was absolutely INCONSISTENT with that action—*Plunging* was an IMPOSSIBILITY in the administration of this *baptism*.

It is proper to adduce those *synonymous words* which the sacred Spirit has graciously thought fit to employ, for the purpose of fixing the sense of that word which is the immediate subject of investigation. We waive all reference to critics and commentators, however numerous, and however positive. We depend on the New Testament alone—on those writers, under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who were his instruments in explaining spiritual things by spiritual words.

This test is a sort of *experimentum crucis* to false propositions. It has detected many. Let us try it in the case before us.

Luke xxiv. 49.—Shall *send* the Holy Ghost—FROM ON HIGH.

I saw the Spirit DESCENDING FROM HEAVEN like a dove, and it *abode* upon him; John i. 32.

This is what was spoken—I will POUR OUT of my Spirit; Acts ii. 2.

Jesus having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, has SHED FORTH this which ye now see and hear; Acts ii. 35.

Suddenly there *came from heaven*, and APPEARED UNTO THEM cloven tongues; Acts ii. 2, 17.

That they might receive the Holy Ghost; for as yet he was FALLEN upon none of them; Acts viii. 16.

Ananias put his hands on Paul, that he might be *filled* with the Holy Ghost; Acts ix. 17.

God ANOINTED Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost; Acts x. 38.

Acts x. 44.—The Holy Ghost FELL on all.

Acts xi. 15.—The Holy Ghost FELL on them, even as on us at the beginning.

Acts x. 45.—They of the circumcision were astonished, because on the Gentiles was POURED OUT the Holy Ghost.

Acts xv. 8.—*Giving* them the Holy Ghost, even as unto us.

Titus iii. 6.—The Holy Ghost; which he SHED on us abundantly.

1 Peter i. 12.—The Holy Ghost *sent down* from heaven.

Eph. i. 13.—*Sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise.

These passages give us as synonymous with *baptize*: *Sending down*; *Coming*; *Giving*; *Falling*; *Shedding*; *Pouring*; *Sitting or Abiding*; *Anointing*; *Filling*; and *Sealing*.

In all these synonymous words, there is not *one* that raises the idea of *plunging*, or even approaches to it. Yet they all refer to *baptism*. “The Apostles shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost,” is the prediction; the Holy Ghost was POURED OUT upon them, is the accomplishment. Even Paul who was then absent speaks of the Holy Ghost as being SHED on him

doubtless at his baptism; Acts ix. 17. Perhaps, however, the instance of our Lord is the most complete, of *baptism* by the Holy Ghost; and in that we have the very height of certainty, there was no *plunging*, nor any thing like it: although almost all the synonyms meet in his person;—as DESCENDING, COMING, FILLING, ANOINTING, SITTING OR ABIDING and SEALING.

We are now advanced to the question, “Did *baptism* by water resemble *baptism* by the Holy Ghost?—and in what?” That there must have been *some* resemblance is certain; and the resemblance must have been *striking*; for the Apostle Peter, seeing the Holy Ghost *poured out* on the company at Cornelius’s, immediately recollected an allusion to John’s *baptism* by water. The Lord said, “John baptized with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost.” If there were no resemblance between the two *baptisms*, how came the Apostle’s memory to be refreshed with what he saw? How came he to lay a stress on his recollection, thus raised to exercise? This made so strong an impression on his mind, that he adverts to it a long while afterwards. Act xv. 8. If it be asked what he *did* see? I answer, he saw the *pouring down* of the Holy Ghost; for this is the *term expressly used in the history*.

Try both these irreconcilable propositions by the substitution of their synonyms. “John *plunges* you in water; but ye shall be PLUNGED in the Holy Ghost.” Shocking abuse of language, and principle! Try the other: “The Holy Ghost shall be POURED upon you, *shed* upon you, *fall* upon you, &c.; as John *pours* water, *sheds* water, *lets fall* water &c., upon you.” What is there offensive in this? What is there contrary to fact? What to decency? What to the analogy of faith? What to the analogy of grammar and language? Even that seemingly inappropriate term, *anointing*, preserves the action though it changes the fluid.