

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XII.—No. IV.

JANUARY, MDCCCLX.

ARTICLE I.

THE SYNOD OF DORT.

It is proposed in this article to give a brief account of the much abused Synod of Dort, its origin, doings and results. Our principal authorities are, not only Brandt, and other Arminian writers, but “Hales’ Golden Remains,” “Balcanqual’s Letters,” and, more than all, a “History of the Synod of Dort,” “drawn up and published by the authority and under the sanction of the States General, the Prince of Orange, and of the Synod itself, referring, in every part, to the public records of the transaction in question.”*

The Confession of Faith of the Low countries, commonly called the Belgic Confession, was published in the year 1563. It accords with the confessions of the other Reformed Churches, establishing the Presbyterian form of government, and embracing all those points of doctrine which have usually been denominated Calvinistic. It was confirmed by repeated Synods, and by repeated acts of the States. Other sects were

* This valuable work was translated from the Latin, by the late Rev. Thomas Scott, and is published by the Pres. Board of Publication.

ARTICLE II.

SYMBOLICAL IMPORT OF BAPTISM.

That baptism is a symbolical representation of some spiritual truth, from which it derives both its efficacy and its mode, none will deny. As it is the representation or picture of some spiritual object, when that object is clearly defined, it is easy to interpret the symbol. The spiritual signification of the ordinance, then, plainly determines its outward form, and in the absence of other proof must be the turning point of the whole question of the mode in which it should be administered. The advocates of immersion see this, and are making capital of it. A recent writer, whom we shall presently quote at length, has boldly asserted that, "the significancy of the rite requires immersion." We shall endeavor to demonstrate the contrary. A most cursory examination of the numerous treatises on this subject is sufficient to show that this point is not insisted upon by Pedo-Baptist writers, with that earnestness which its importance demands. To us it seems to be, in the present posture of things, the very citadel of the controversy. Determine the symbolical import of this rite, and the question of mode is settled. We need not be surprised, then, that the respective advocates of immersion, on the one hand, and of sprinkling or affusion on the other, differ so widely in their views on this very point. Pedo-Baptists make it chiefly the symbol of moral purification; Immersionists, on the other hand, maintain that its chief design is to shadow forth the burial and resurrection of Christ. Lest we be guilty of misrepresenting the views of those who conscientiously differ from us, we take the liberty of quoting a paragraph from a venerable writer, whose name it becomes us to pronounce with profound respect, both on account of his advanced years, and the high position which he occupies among his brethren, as a minister and theologian. Dr. Dagg, in his recent work on "Church

Order," which will, doubtless, become a standard in his denomination, speaking upon this subject, says:

"The faith which we profess in baptism is faith in Christ; and the ceremony significantly represents the great work of Christ, on which our faith relies for salvation. We confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in the heart that God has raised Him from the dead. His burial and resurrection are exhibited in Baptism, as His broken body and shed blood are exhibited in the Supper. In both ordinances our faith is directed to the sacrifice of Christ. Under the name of Sacraments, they have been considered outward signs of inward grace; and in this view of them, they signify the work of the Holy Spirit within us. But faith relies for acceptance with God, on the work of Christ. It is a perverted gospel which substitutes the work of the Spirit for the work of Christ, as the object of our faith; and it is a perverted baptism which represents the faith that we profess, as directed not to the work of Christ, the proper object of faith, but to the work of the Holy Ghost in our hearts." P. 38.

Here we perceive it is distinctly asserted, that "the ceremony represents the great work of Christ;" that "His burial and resurrection are exhibited in baptism;" and that "in both ordinances our faith is directed to the sacrifice of Christ." The allusion to the work of the Spirit, on the other hand, is very indistinct. The writer says that, "under the name of Sacraments they *have been considered* outward signs of inward grace, and in this view of them they signify the work of the Holy Spirit within us," but does not tell us *by whom* they have been thus considered, and leaves us, as we think, altogether in the dark as to his own opinion. That he attaches no importance to the interpretation, is evident from the fact, that he has nowhere in his book brought it prominently out, having only referred to it in few places, and that in very ambiguous terms. Be that as it may, it is clearly the teaching of this paragraph that baptism, in its symbolical character, refers principally and primarily to the burial and resurrection of Christ; and we may safely add, that this is the universally received opinion of all classes of Immersionists. No matter how widely soever they may differ upon other points in theology, so far as we know they are all agreed touching this matter. It is our present purpose to examine this interpreta-

tion, and see whether this theory, so generally received, and so boldly and zealously advocated and defended, has any foundation, either in reason or the Word of God.

It is highly important, as we enter the threshold of this controversy, that we have a clear idea of what a symbol is. In general terms, it is the "sign or representation of something moral from the figure or properties of natural things." It is derived from *συμβάλλω*, *to cast together* for the sake of comparison; and signifies, as Crabb says, "the thing cast or conceived in the mind, from its analogy to represent something else." It is more than an emblem and less than a type. It differs from the former, as it embodies the idea of design. Take away the idea of design from a symbol, and you have nothing but an emblem. On the other hand it differs from a type, as it teaches simply by analogy. The symbol is one thing, and the thing symbolized another. And the symbolization is founded, not on a similarity of nature, but on some general resemblance, by which one object may be used to represent another different from itself, and the name or description of the one to suggest the whole idea of the other. Whereas, "the typical," as Fairbairn expresses it, "is not properly a different or higher sense, but a different or higher application of the same sense." The type always looks forward, the symbol backwards. The one teaches truths not yet known, the other illustrates what is supposed to be known. These are what we conceive to be the strictly theological distinctions; of course, in common parlance, these terms have a much wider signification.

Two things, then, are absolutely essential to the existence of a symbol.

1. *Analogy.* The symbol is to be a picture or representation of the thing symbolized. Where there is no analogy there can be no picture, and consequently no symbol.

2. *Design.* There must be something more than bare resemblance. God must make the one thing the symbol of the other, or else it forfeits every claim to that appellation. Like the type, nothing is or can be a symbol, which God has not made so. If imagination is to be our only guide, the field of

types and symbols would soon become illimitable. Like the early fathers, we would be allegorizing everything.

Every just interpretation of this rite, then, must cover these two points. It must show the analogy between the meaning or sense of the symbol, and the truth intended to be taught; and it must also show that it was the intention and design of God, that the ordinance should thus be the symbol of what is supposed to be symbolized. The theory of Immersionists, in our humble judgment, meets neither of these views.

1. For in the first place there is no analogy between their mode and the thing they assert it represents. There is no resemblance whatever between the immersion of a man in a river or pool, and the burial of Christ in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The elements are different—the one is water, the other rock. The actors are different—the one is a private, the other an official person. The subjects are different—the one is a man, the other the Lord from heaven. Moreover, their condition is different—the one is alive, the other dead. The one is buried because he is dead, the other because alive. The one is plunged in water, the emblem of purification; the other is laid away in the grave, the emblem of putridity and all uncleanness. The one is raised up, and that immediately; the other raises himself, after the space of three days. Is it not a perversion of language to call this *contrast* analogy? The only idea common to both, is that of *surrounding*. As the water surrounds the believer, so the rock surrounded Christ. Daniel in the lion's den, and Paul and Silas shut up in prison in Philippi, seem to us to furnish just as good analogies.*

Here let it be observed, that the analogy of a symbol does not consist simply in the bare resemblance of the outward objects, but in their signification. In the supper, the analogy does not consist in the resemblance between the bread and the body of Christ, for there is none. Bread never would suggest His body, nor wine His blood. The resemblance consists in

* The analogy is still more broken in the original, for *θάπτω* signifies, not simply to inter, but to perform the whole funeral rite, whatever it may be, and refers to *burning* as well as *inhumation*.

the natural properties of the one and the spiritual properties of the other. Bread and wine nourish and strengthen the body. So the body and blood of Christ spiritually partaken of, do the same to the spirit. Now, what is the simple idea of immersion? What distinct notion does *plunging* carry with it? Does it signify anything that would ever suggest the burial of Christ? It does not—but, simply, the water suggests the idea of cleansing, and that suggests the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

2. But in the second place, even if there were an analogy, that of itself would not be sufficient to establish the symbolical character of the ceremony. There must also be *design* on the part of God. The only and main question then is, did God design baptism to be the symbol of the burial and resurrection of His Son? If so, where is the proof? "Positive institutions," we are told, can only be sustained by "positive precept." Where, then, is the positive precept? Put your finger, if you can, upon a single passage from Genesis to Revelation, where we are commanded to celebrate the burial of Christ, and we yield the point at once. But this cannot be done. The only foundation for the whole theory so prominently held forth, is the figurative language of the Apostle in Rom. 6: 4, and repeated, with a slight variation, in Col. 2: 12. Knowing that a symbol must be a picture of something, and that immersion is the picture of nothing, unless it be of a burial, to which it bears but the most distant resemblance, this simple expression, "buried in baptism," must be magnified into a command, and invested with the authority of a positive precept, or else there will exist no foundation for the theory to rest upon. But more about this expression hereafter.

That baptism never was designed to be the symbol of the burial and resurrection of Christ, will appear from the following considerations:

1. The Scriptures teach that each person of the Trinity has his respective part to perform in the scheme of redemption. The Father purposes and plans; the Son and Spirit execute. The Father elects, the Son redeems, and the Spirit sanctifies. As the Son and Spirit are the executors of the

Father's will, we naturally expect the execution to resolve itself into two parts, and such is the case: The work of the Son is distinct from the work of the Spirit, and the work of the Spirit is distinct from that of the Son. The work of the Son is to make atonement; the work of the Spirit is to apply that atonement. The fruit of the one is justification; the fruit of the other sanctification.

If the work of redemption resolves itself into two distinct branches, it seems natural to expect that they will, in some way, be represented to the eye. These two ideas were clearly set forth under the Old Dispensation. The altar and the laver stood side by side. The sacrifices typified Christ, the ablutions the cleansing by the Spirit. As the Old Dispensation was the shadow of the new, and has passed away, only because fulfilled, there must be something now to correspond with these things; the substance must have assumed the place of the shadow. As the work of redemption is completed, we no longer need types, but seals, and as that work is two-fold, we naturally expect two sacraments, and so we find them. Now, as the Eucharist unquestionably refers to the atonement of Christ, reason, if nothing else, would refer baptism to the work of the Spirit, which is to apply that atonement. If the one points to Christ as the anti-type of those ancient sacrifices, so the other must point to the Spirit's work as the anti-type of those ablutions, or else those ablutions will remain as a shadow, without the producing substance. If you refer baptism to Christ, then you will append two seals to His work, whereas that of the Spirit will be left without a seal. Is not the work of the Spirit just as important as that of the Son? Unless the Spirit applies the redemption purchased by Christ, it is wholly unavailing. Why then should the work of the Son have two seals, and that of the Spirit none? Is this not detracting from the magnitude and importance of His work? Again, we would ask, what is the use of two seals if they both point to the same thing? Is not one sufficient? Does it not cover the whole ground, and symbolize all that is necessary? Does not the death of a *Saviour* necessarily imply His resurrection?

And if you say that the ordinance conjointly represents the

burial of Christ, and the work of the Spirit, instead of removing the difficulties, you only increase them. It makes the rite symbolize things that are totally dissimilar, which is unwarrantable. Where there is no analogy there can be no symbol; so where there is a symbol, there must be analogy. If two things are symbolized, the symbol must not only be the picture of both, but the two must have some distant resemblance, at least, to each other. Now, to say nothing about the forced resemblance between immersion and laying a dead body in a niche in the wall of a rock, we would ask where is the analogy between it and the Spirit's work? and where is the analogy between the Spirit's work and the burial of Christ? From the very nature of the case, it is impossible that the ordinance should represent two things so totally unlike. It must be the sign of one or the other—it cannot be of both. Search the Scriptures, and you will not find a parallel. Where do you find another symbol that was designed to represent more than one thing, or that represents things so dissimilar? How different with the other sacrament. The bread symbolizes only the flesh, and the wine only the blood of Christ. But here the water is made to represent the grave of Christ, and, at the same time, the Holy Spirit. With the one hand it points to divinity, with the other to a loathsome tomb. We do not hesitate to say that the whole analogy of the Scriptures, and of nature, condemns the interpretation. With just as much propriety you might make the ceremonial washings, under the Old Dispensation, typical both of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit and the atonement of Christ.

2. Again, to see the unreasonableness and unscripturalness of this interpretation, we have only to consider the inconsistency it occasions, and the confusion it introduces.

All must admit that baptism was instituted and practised before the death of Christ. If, then, it be symbolical of His burial, it follows that He required His disciples to celebrate His burial before He was actually dead, or, rather, before they knew that He would be buried, and even before He had hinted to them that He would die for sin. Think you that He

would have given an ordinance of the nature of which its recipients were so profoundly ignorant? How could they have been buried with Him before He was buried? and how could they have risen with Him before He himself had risen?

Once more, all are agreed that baptism should precede the supper. Immersionists, especially, insist upon this point, making it the pre-requisite to communion. If baptism be symbolical of the burial of Christ, then we have the ordinance commemorative of His burial before that which commemorates his death, and we are actually required to celebrate His burial and resurrection, by way of preparation, for the celebration of his death. Was Christ buried before he was dead? Did He rise before He was crucified? Is this the planning and arrangement of an All-wise and reasonable Being, who has done all things well, and commanded us to imitate His example, and to do all things decently and *in order*. If so, then surely this is an exception to the rule. The whole universe stands as a living witness to proclaim the existence of law and order in all His counsels and plans. We see it in the firmament above; we find it in the earth beneath; we hear of it in the third heavens where God resides, and we are assured that the very disorder and confusion of the profoundest hell is not an exception to the rule. "Burial after death, all the world allows; but death after burial is unnatural and unscriptural."

But this is not all, burial implies death. So here are the two sacraments pointing to the very same thing, viz: the death of Christ. See how they harmonize. We must be baptized, in other words celebrate His death, burial and resurrection, by way of preparation, for the celebration of His death as set forth in the supper. The greater before the less; yea, we must do a certain thing to be prepared to do the very same thing—we must celebrate His death in order to be prepared to celebrate His death. Such are the inconsistencies and contradictions into which the interpretation must inevitably lead.

3. But these are not yet all the difficulties. Those who thus interpret this ordinance celebrate what never *actually* occurred, at least so far as burial is concerned. Christ never was "de-

finitively interred," as Taylor very conclusively shows.* His body was only temporarily laid upon a shelf, in Joseph's tomb, with a view to a more permanent sepulture. For, on the third day, the very morn of the resurrection, the hand of piety had carried sweet spices to anoint His body previous to final interment. His burial, according to the common acceptation of the term, was but partially completed. So the ordinance is made to represent that which in itself was unfinished and incomplete!

4. Suppose we admit the fact that Christ was definitively interred, what would be gained? A still greater difficulty presses the interpretation. There is no conceivable reason why *that* event should be celebrated in so formal a manner. The burial of Christ formed no essential part of the work of redemption. What has his burial to do with the forgiveness of sin? Suppose He had not been buried at all, would that have prevented its remission, or affected our hopes in the least? The work of redemption was completed when He expired upon the cross. If not, what did He mean when He cried, "It is finished?" He was buried, not because it had anything to do with our pardon, but that it might exhibit the certainty of His death, and secure witnesses to His resurrection. And He rose from the dead, because His work was done, and the law had no further claims upon Him; and, in so doing, has become a pledge to believers that they shall also rise. We are now forgiven, not because He was buried or rose again, but because He *died*—His *death* is the whole of the ransom price. Where it says, "He rose for our justification," it certainly does not mean that His resurrection is the ground of our justification, for that would contradict the whole tenor of the Scriptures; but simply that He rose to exhibit our justification especially at the last day. If these things formed an essential part of the atonement, it would be our imperative duty to preach salvation through the burial of Christ, and justification through His resurrection. If, then, His burial formed no part of the

* Apost. Bap. p. 180.

plan of salvation, and no part of the atonement, why should a most solemn ordinance be instituted for its symbolical representation? Why celebrate such a comparatively *unimportant* event in the most solemn manner imaginable, even in the name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost? It does seem to us that, with as much propriety, you might make baptism represent Christ walking upon the sea, or His ascension into heaven.

The author of the paragraph which we have quoted, unquestionably makes the burial and resurrection of Christ the main object of faith; for, says he, "the ceremony significantly represents the great work of Christ on which our faith relies for salvation." According to his own position, the ceremony represents the burial and resurrection of Christ. It follows, then, that the burial and resurrection of Christ is *the great work on which our faith relies for salvation*. We never before conceived that it was the design of this ordinance to exhibit the *object* of our faith, but our engrafting into Christ. The object of faith is one thing, and the symbolism of the rite quite another. The object of faith is Christ, whereas the symbolism represents that which engrafts into Him. But say, if you please, that this is the design of the ordinance—what, then? Why simply that, according to the above interpretation, the *burial* of Christ is the sole object of faith. If its design is to represent the object of our faith, it should represent the whole of it. It should present Christ in all of his offices as prophet, priest and king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation. Whereas, that theory which claims to be neither a "perverted Gospel," nor "perverted baptism," presents but a part, and the most unimportant part, too, of His work as the object of our faith. The writer must surely mean to include the death of Christ in His burial. But this involves difficulties already noticed. It introduces confusion, and makes the two sacraments refer to the same thing, thus destroying one of God's witnesses, making *three* in heaven and only *two* on earth. So the difficulty presses alike on both sides. The exclusion of the idea of death, on the one hand, will make the burial and resur-

rection of Christ the only object of faith, and the inclusion of it on the other will lead to the complete destruction of the order and harmony of the two sacraments.

5. But, after all, where is the authority for this theory of Immersionists? Christ has positively commanded us to baptize. In equally clear and emphatic language He has commanded us to exhibit His death—"This do in remembrance of me." But where has He commanded us to show forth His burial till He come? Without a positive command we would have no authority to celebrate His death; so, without a positive precept, we have no authority to celebrate His burial. Where, then, is the authority? Does it consist in the simple fact that He was buried? He was also born. Why not also celebrate His birth, an event far more important, and one, too, that was celebrated by the angelic choir? Does it consist in the figurative expression "buried with Him?" Then the expressions "crucified with Him," and "dead with Him," prove that we ought to celebrate His crucifixion and death. As the simple expression "buried in baptism" is the only foundation of the whole theory, it is important that we get a clear idea of its meaning without attempting a philological examination of this passage, which our commentators have already done for us. We remark that the expression carries with it, to the popular mind, two distinct ideas, which give it its outward show of plausibility, viz: A supposed burial of Christ in the water, and His burial in the tomb. Although the rite, as practised by the advocates of immersion, professes to obtain its mode from the second, it really obtains its plausibility from the first. In the administration of the ordinance, the multitude think not of the burial of Christ in Joseph's tomb, but of His supposed burial in the waters of the Jordan at His baptism. Take this away, and the mind has nothing to rest upon. The analogy between the believer's burial in the water and Christ's burial in the tomb, never enters the mind. Indeed, it is so obscure that it requires the aid of philosophical speculations to draw it out. Hence it is obvious that the common argument, based upon this text, must involve the fallacy termed by logicians, "*ambiguous middle*." The expression "buried with

Christ," is used in two different senses. In theory and argument it is applied to burial in the grave—in practice, to burial in the water.

It is perfectly obvious that the expression is either figurative or not. If simply figurative, it furnishes no adequate authority for a rite, for we want positive precept. If it be understood literally, it must mean one of three things: Either burial in the grave, or burial in the water, or both. It cannot mean the first, for we are not buried with Him in His grave. If you give it the second meaning, the argument will involve a "*petitio principii*," for it would amount simply to this, that as Christ was immersed, so ought we to be, and if you mean both, besides the difficulties already mentioned, you will make the baptism of Christ the type of His own burial, and the only connecting link between it and the baptism of believers, and this is true in practice. It is referred directly to His baptism, and indirectly, if at all, to His burial; and we need not be surprised at this, for the analogy is so obscure, that it really needs some kind of connecting link like this. The truth is, the expression is generally used without any clear idea.

6. Before closing this part of the argument, we would say a word about the baptism of the Old Dispensation. Of what was it symbolical? The Jews were, doubtless, well acquainted with the import of this rite. Scholars, generally, admit that it was an appendage to the Mosaic ritual, known as "Proselyte Baptism." One thing is certain, that the introduction of baptism in the New Dispensation caused no surprise. Indeed, the Jews seem to have expected it. John was asked why he baptised, if he was "neither Elias nor that prophet?" The question then comes up, what was the import of that baptism? As Christ was not yet revealed, it could not have referred to Him; and, as it was practised only upon Gentile converts, there can be no question that it was considered simply as the emblem of purification. Now, is it at all probable that the rite would have so changed its import as to be symbolical of purification under the Old Dispensation, and of the burial of Christ under the New?

But some may deny the existence of Proselyte baptism. Be it so. None can call in question the baptism of John. We

raise the same inquiry. Did the baptism of John symbolize the burial of Christ? We have never seen any such interpretation of the rite. That it was the symbol of purification is evident from the fact, that it was a baptism "unto repentance," and for "remission of sin," by way of preparation for the coming of Christ. If so, then the symbolical import remains unchanged, if the baptism of both dispensations be the same. It is altogether unreasonable to suppose that a rite would signify one thing under one dispensation, and something wholly different under another.

Here, then, we propose this dilemma for the consideration of Immersionists; either that John's baptism was not the Christian baptism, or else its symbolical import remains the same. If the import has been changed, the rite is not the same. If its import has not been changed, the rite signifies the same thing now as then. If it represents the burial of Christ now, it must have represented it then. Who is prepared for this conclusion? Is it possible for any one to believe that the baptism of John symbolized the burial of Christ? Where is the evidence? The sacraments of the New Dispensation are mnemonic, and not typical. Christ had not yet died, nor was His death to take place on the morrow, as was the case when the Supper was instituted. If it were intended to shadow forth the work of Christ, would it not represent the most important part of that work? Would it pass by His atonement and select His burial and resurrection as the most important? Would it represent His burial before His death—yea, when His death was not at all represented? We cannot believe it. If, then, baptism did not refer to the burial of Christ under the Old Dispensation, we have a broad foundation for the belief that it does not now. Thus, from the views presented, it is evident that we have abundant reason for rejecting the theory of Immersionists as both unreasonable and unscriptural.

What, then, is *the true symbolical import of baptism*? It is not our purpose to tell all that is included in this rite, nor all that it teaches. We are considering its *symbolical*, not *sacramental* character. There is a difference between a symbol and a sacrament. The one speaks to the eye, the other directly to

the reason. The object of the one is to illustrate some spiritual truth; the office of the other is to confirm the blessings and privileges of the covenant to which it is attached. The simple question, then, before us now is: What is the *main* spiritual truth or thing that this ordinance was designed to exhibit to the eye? An answer to this inquiry is found in the formula used in baptism. As we are baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and as the ordinance brings us into covenant relations with each person of the Trinity, it must symbolize that which actually engrafts us into Deity. This is effected, not through the burial of Christ, nor yet by His resurrection, but through the application of His atonement. It is the work of the Spirit to make that application. This He does by convincing us of sin, changing our heart, sprinkling it with atoning blood, working faith in us, engrafting us into Christ, and through Him into Deity, and by His continual operations drawing us closer and still closer into fellowship with the entire Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Unquestionably, then, the main intention of the ordinance is to represent the work of the Spirit, which is to unite us in a peculiar bond to the Triune God, by applying the redemption purchased by Christ; and, if we were required to answer in one word the question: What does water baptism symbolize? we would say emphatically, the baptism of the Spirit. The main idea is that of moral cleansing; and the analogy consists in this, that as water cleanses the body, so the Spirit cleanses the soul from the guilt and stain of sin, by washing it in the blood of Christ, and renewing it in the image of God. Hence we find the two associated together. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit." "I indeed have baptized you with water, but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Paul teaches the same when he says: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." When Ananias said unto Saul, arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, he meant either that baptism would remove his sins, or else represented that which would wash them away. We will not be long in deciding which. When the Apostle says: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified," he clearly teaches that sanctification is the

result of washing. It is unnecessary to say, that it is the work of the Spirit to wash and to sanctify. In such expressions as "the washing of regeneration," "washing of water by the word," "having our bodies washed," and the like, we perceive a clear allusion to that inner, spiritual washing, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. In confirmation of this view, we remark, that water throughout the entire Jewish ceremonial, without a single exception, is the emblem of purification. Would it not, then, be most astonishing that, that which has invariably been made, not only by the common consent of mankind in all ages, but also by Divine law, the symbol of purification, should, under the new dispensation—a dispensation more spiritual, and consequently more pure and holy—be made, not in figurative language merely, but in a most solemn ordinance, the symbol of the grave, of all others the place of rottenness and all uncleanness? The two great ideas of the Old Dispensation, around which all the others clustered, were atonement and purification. The former is exhibited in the supper. Would it not be astonishing that the second should now be entirely lost sight of, or that of a burial substituted in its place? If water was typical of the Spirit's influences in olden times, is there any conceivable reason why it should not be symbolical of the same now? In addition to all this, there is a fitness and suitableness in the symbol, a beauty, simplicity and completeness about the whole arrangement, which at once commend it to our judgment, and stamp upon it the seal of divinity.

We would not be misunderstood. Although we say that the ordinance symbolizes the work of the Spirit, still we hold that it also refers to the work of Christ, inasmuch as His work is included in that of the Spirit, as the main idea is that of moral cleansing; and as this is effected through the application of the blood of Christ, as well as the regenerating influences of the Spirit, and as both of these are included in the work of the Spirit, the whole may, with propriety, be thus generically expressed. Here is the distinction we would draw: As a sacrament, the ordinance points to the Spirit and the Son; as a symbol, it looks to the Spirit; as a sacrament, it signifies

and seals our regeneration, and engrafting into Christ, and through Him into the Godhead; as a symbol, it represents to the eye that through which our regeneration and engrafting into Christ, are effected, viz: Spirit baptism. This view seems to us to be simple and natural; and while it refers the ordinance to the work of both Spirit and Son, it nevertheless makes it emphatically the seal of the work of the Spirit—one of the Father's executors. See the opposite theory. We refer the ordinance to the work of Christ through that of the Spirit, which is perfectly natural and in order, as the one is included in the other. In the other theory it is referred principally and primarily to the burial of Christ, and afterward to the work of the Spirit, which is unnatural and forced, as these things are totally dissimilar, and in no way connected together.*

The only question that now demands our consideration, is whether this sacrament is evidence of the Spirit's operations on the individual, or of the necessity of His operations? In other words, is it the symbol of His office or of His work, of what He does in general, or of what He has actually done in any particular instance? We take it as simply the symbolical representation of His work in general, irrespective of the subject. As the supper represents to the eye the death of Christ, so this represents the cleansing of the Spirit. Both these ordinances are wholly objective, and faith appropriates. Where there is no faith, there will be no personal benefit. It does not follow that because a man eats he apprehends Christ or is baptized, that he is inwardly cleansed. The symbol is one thing, and the seal another. The one represents, the other confirms. The one can exist without, the other must always be accompanied with, faith. It is not the object of the symbol to exhibit the faith of the subject, but the thing signified, and this may be done without faith. The supper exhibits the death of Christ, though the communicant may have no faith; so baptism, when regularly administered, will be baptism, though the candidate

* Van Mastricht calls Baptism the Sacrament of regeneration, and the Lord's Supper the Sacrament of nutrition; the one, therefore, not to be repeated, the other to be frequently celebrated by the believer. Theol. p. 815, et. seq. So Turretine III, p. 322.

be not spiritually cleansed. The validity of the ordinance is not necessarily dependent upon the absolute qualification of the candidate. Hence there is no necessity to re-baptize. On the other hand, adopt the view that it symbolizes the *fact* of the Spirit's operations in the heart, that it actually seals what it signifies, and you at once throw uncertainty around the whole matter. Multitudes are regenerated after baptism, and many not at all. The result will be, that a large proportion of professing Christians have never been baptized. The idea that the validity of the ordinance depends, unconditionally, upon the spiritual qualification of the subject, will either lead, on the one hand, to the dogma of baptismal regeneration, or else cast us into a sea of perplexity and doubt.

The question might be asked, how is it with infants—they have not this appropriating faith? We answer, that they are under a somewhat different dispensation. They are saved differently from adults. They are saved by the “election of grace,” and not “through faith.” They are elected unto eternal life, irrespective of faith. As they are saved differently, the ordinance has a somewhat different application to them. It signifies one thing to the parent, and quite another to the child; and here is the source of misconception on the subject. Circumcision did not mean the same thing to Abraham as to Isaac. To Abraham it was the “seal of the righteousness of faith.” To Isaac, it was simply the seal of God's Covenant with Abraham, until he grew up and exercised faith for himself, then it became the seal of the righteousness of his own faith. It only shadowed forth what his father possessed, and what was required of him. As the seal of God's Covenant, it was only a symbol, until he had faith, then it became the seal of faith. Precisely analogous to this is the baptism of infants. The ordinance remains to them as the symbol of regeneration and engrafting into Christ, until they possess these things; then it becomes the seal of their own faith. There is no more necessity for personal faith in the one case than the other. Thus the assumed position covers the whole ground.

From the views presented we deduce the following corollaries:

1. As to the *mode of baptism*. If the ordinance be intended

to be symbolical of Spirit baptism, it must be a pictorial representation of the same. Draw, then, in your mind the picture of a man in water immersing another, and who would ever be reminded of the descent of the Holy Spirit? Now, draw a picture of the Pede-Baptist mode, and see if it does not at once suggest the other. For the spirit is everywhere represented as being "*poured out,*" and "*descending upon.*" Moreover, if it be symbolical of moral cleansing, it must exhibit to the eye the manner of that cleansing. This is effected through the blood of Christ, which is *sprinkled* upon the heart by the Holy Ghost. Is this idea exhibited in immersion? How natural is our view. As in the one sacrament, the breaking of bread represents the breaking of Christ's body, and the pouring out of wine the shedding of His blood, so in the other, the sprinkling of water represents the sprinkling of His cleansing blood upon the heart by the Spirit. If our particular phraseology be objected to, and the ordinance be referred directly and equally to the work of the Spirit and Son, the conclusion is the same, for the Spirit is always represented as being "*poured out,*" and the blood of Christ as being "*sprinkled upon.*" Indeed, in all the ceremonial cleansings, which were all typical of spiritual cleansing, the element, whether oil, water or blood, was always poured or sprinkled upon; and in no case was the subject immersed in the element. Here, then, is our conclusion. If baptism be a symbolical representation of the Spirit's work, immersion cannot be the Scriptural mode; and if, on the other hand, immersion be the mode, the ordinance cannot have any reference to the Spirit's work, for it enters essentially into the very idea of a symbol that it teaches by analogy.

2. As to the *subjects*, we have seen that baptism is not only a *symbol*, but also a *seal*. As a seal it points to a covenant, and is to be applied to all that are in that covenant. There is both an outer and inner, an ecclesiastical and individual covenant, as in the case of Abraham and Isaac. We can only apply the seal to the one, the Spirit applies it to the other. The only question, therefore, as to the subjects is, who are included in this outer ecclesiastical covenant? We answer: Believers and their children, "the promise is unto you and your chil-

dren." "I will be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee." These, then, are clearly the proper subjects of baptism.

3. If it be the intention of the ordinance to exhibit the work of the Spirit which is to cleanse and to engraft us into Deity, then to refer it to the burial of Christ is to pervert its intention, and the question comes up, how far we may thus pervert its intention without completely destroying its validity? We express no opinion; but simply submit it as a serious question, whether the rite as administered by Immersionists, considering the irregularity on the one hand, and perversion on the other, does not become a "New Sacrament," as Dr. Breckinridge terms it, and, as such, ought we to regard it as valid?



ARTICLE III.

MOSES, AND HIS DISPENSATION.

Moses was sent of God to reveal to His Church no new doctrines, to institute no new rites, nor ordinances, nor covenants, nor to alter the constitution of the Church, either in its officers or members; nor did he deliver any moral or ceremonial law which, in substance, was not previously known; nor was his dispensation, in any sense, so purely legal and condemnatory as to exclude both the exhibition and offer of salvation in the Gospel. His work was the collection, arrangement, enlargement and perfection, of all relating to the church that went before, beginning with the fall and ending with his mission. He used the matter already existing and prepared to his hand, and only added new material thereto in the process of arranging, enlarging and perfecting it, until Christ should come. We have therefore to inquire what he found ready to his hand, and what in the fulfilment of his mission he added thereto?

When he came, the people of God were separated from the world, and were existing as *one Body, both ecclesiastically and civilly; a church, and a nation.* What did he find ready to his hand with the people of God as *a church?* They were separated from the world, and constituted a church in Abra-