

BAPTISMAL IMMERSION NOT OF GOD.

ARGUMENTS PRO AND CON.

[“MESSENGER,” July 28, 1875.]

THE VOICE OF HISTORY ON BAPTISM.

It is curious to observe how various and contradictory are many of the arguments taken up by the advocates of Infant Baptism. The bold affirmations of some obscure Pedobaptists as to what history says on the subject, fade away into thin air, when men who ought to know, and do know, speak. We have one just at hand, an account of which comes to us in the last No. of the *N. Y. Examiner & Chronicle*. It is, as follows, under the title

STUDYING HISTORY TO SOME PURPOSE.

The Professor of Church History in the Bangor (Me.) Theological Seminary (Congregationalist) must be a man who is more thoroughly imbued with the historic spirit than many who teach in theological seminaries. He has the sense to see that his function is to report, not make history, and the candor to report what he finds. And it appears that his finding is to the effect that “the apostles and all the church until four or five hundred years ago understood by baptism immersion, and never sprinkled anybody except the sick.” Such, at least, was the substance of what was recited by students at the last Annual Examination, and was not called in question by Professor Paine. But the Rev. A. L. Park, of Gardiner, was stirred up to write as follows to the *Christian Mirror* :—

At the anniversary of our Theological Seminary at Bangor, a few days since, the class under examination in Church History gave some answers which struck me as extremely remarkable. The questions of the Professor and replies of the students were substantially as follows :

Q.—What was the apostolic and primitive mode of baptism ?

A.—By immersion.

Q.—Under what circumstances only was sprinkling allowed ?

A.—In case of sickness.

Q.—When was the practice of sprinkling or pouring generally introduced ?

A.—Not until the fourteenth century.

Q.—For what reason was the change adopted ?

A.—As Christianity advanced and spread in colder latitudes, the severity of the climate made it impracticable to immerse.

The Professor of Church History approved the answers, which faithfully represented his teachings, and none of the clergymen present seemed to call these statements in question. Yet if such are the facts, the Baptists are historically correct, and we as a denomination are wrong, both in our literature and our practice. Our Publishing Society has issued a good deal of chaff about the broad interpretation of *baptizo*, and the impossibility of immersing thousands of people in a single day in Jerusalem, and all other familiar argu-