

CHAPTER V.

SCRIPTURE NARRATIVES OF BAPTISM. ALLUSIONS TO BAPTISM. THE GREEK CHURCH. VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

WITH the advantages derived from the preceding investigations, for a correct understanding of the meaning of the term baptism in the idiom of the New Testament writers, let us now briefly contemplate the circumstances associated with the administration of the initiatory rite in the sacred narratives. We might with the utmost propriety, object to include the baptism of John in this examination, since the material and essential difference between it and Christian baptism, is admitted by some of our most distinguished opponents ;* but well knowing that they would not only demur to this mode of procedure, but exultantly interpret it, as an admission that John's baptism was performed by *plunging*, we shall obviate all difficulty, by giving it our earliest consideration.

The whole weight of the arguments which our Baptist brethren rest on the circumstances of the Baptismal ceremony, as practised by the forerunner of the Messiah, and the apostles, depends upon the meaning of Greek prepositions ΕΙΣ, ΑΠΟ, ΕΚ, and ΕΝ, and on the remark John iii: 23 that John was baptizing in Enon, because there was much water there. Before we direct our attention to those most unequivocal particles (which of course indisputably fix the precise import of every word with which they are associated) let us just look for a moment at our English translation, and see how triumphantly it bears Mr. Crawley out in the following declaration. He says with overwhelming positiveness, " It is impossible to read the above passages [namely, those which relate to the baptisms performed by John, and that of the eunuch by Philip] without feeling assured, that the ceremony which was performed in the river Jordan; to perform which the parties interested went

* Hall's Essen. Dif.