

Time will not permit us to dwell long on these passages usually urged in proof of immersion. The case of our Savior's baptism by John, Mat. III. 13-12 and that of the Eunuch by Philip, Act VIII, we shall pass over as we do not wish to hang our argument on the debateable signification of a Greek proposition. We must however say one word on Romans VI. 4. "Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism unto Death, &c." This is the great stronghold of the advocates of immersion. Nevertheless it so happens that there is in the passage in question, no earthly reference to water baptism whatever. The thing spoken of is spiritual baptism beyond dispute. If this be not correct, we shall at least expect our opponents to examine the two verses which follow the one just named, and to take special note of the expressions "planted" and "crucified"—These as all admit, refer to the same thing, as does the expression "buried" in the fourth verse. If so, it will require more than ordinary ingenuity to explain in what way the three expressions "buried," "planted" "crucified," are severally and collectively indicative of carnal baptism in water—We can easily perceive the appropriateness of the figurative language used by St. Paul, when we associate with several verses, a spiritual construction.

Baptism was, moreover designed for every Country and clime to the end of the world; but, there are places where immersion would be a physical impossibility as in the deserts of Arabia; and, there are places, on the other hand, where this mode of administering the ordinance would induce instantaneous death to the subject—according to this, "His yoke" would cease to "be easy" and his "burden" to "be light"—An aged sinner has been brought to Christ in the furnace of his last affliction, but, before he goes hence, he desires to assume the badge of Christian discipleship. The feebleness of a fast ebbing life forbids its administration by immersion. In this case, the opponents of sprinkling readily enough admit the validity of the mode which they generally condemn. If baptism by sprinkling be valid in one case, then why not in all?

While we do not dogmatically assert that immersion was never in use in the Church, we do emphatically maintain that there are on the record of Scripture, instances, in which this could not have been the mode of Administration. For example, the baptism of Paul by Ananias in the house, and the baptism of the Philippian jailor in the prison at the midnight hour, could not possibly have been accomplished by immersion.

The conclusion of the whole matter then, seems to be this, that Christian baptism is instituted as a symbol of the effusion of the Spirit of God upon the soul in regeneration and the cleansing of its sins by the blood of Christ, and that the mode in which it is administered, whether by pouring sprinkling or immersion, is nowhere exhibited in Scripture as a matter of serious importance.

If not, is it not strange that an undue measure of prominence should have been assigned to this subject by man, that so much exuberance of feeling and honest zeal should have been called into exercise over a question which really cannot profit? Unquestionably this is a device of Satan to draw souls off from the Cross, to plant the thorns of jealousy and all uncharitableness, of contention and self-righteousness among the membership