

We are now prepared to conclude with Dr. C. Hodge, Volume III., page 526 (slightly condensed), "In the classics, in the Septuagint, in the Apocryphal writings of the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and in the writings of the Greek fathers, the word *baptizo* is used with such latitude of meaning as to prove the assertion that the command to baptize is a command to immerse, to be utterly unauthorized and unreasonable."

THE ORIGIN OF IMMERSION FOR BAPTISM.

But if the validity of baptism in its Scriptural form by sprinkling was universally acknowledged by the Greek fathers, we enquire how came the Scriptural mode to be generally abandoned in the early centuries, and immersion to be substituted for it. The origin of dipping for baptism is not difficult to trace. Even in the apostles' days there was a disposition on the part of many to depart from the simplicity of the Gospel. This was particularly the case with regard to the sacraments of the Church. The apostle sharply reproves the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11) for their abuse of the Lord's Supper. And in the first chapter of the same epistle he utters this strange and significant declaration, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, least any should say that I had baptized in my own name."

But in the second and third centuries we find the state of things far more deplorable. The disposition to ascribe peculiar virtue to external forms had gone on constantly increasing until, by-and-by, *nude* immersions, accompanied with exorcism, anointing, and every species of superstition, fairly ran riot in unseemly and scandalous practice. It was thought that there was a saving virtue in the very water baptism. Just as it was believed that the bread and wine after consecration became the real body and blood of Christ, so it was believed that the water of baptism after the invocation possessed the *real*