

And even to-day I do not know that any body of Christians denies the fitness or the validity of Baptism by immersion ; but with the one exception of the Baptists, they deny that immersion is the *only valid mode*.

Much is made of the Eastern Church as always practising immersion, which is true ; but not the whole truth. Under certain conditions pouring is practised by that Church. The Eastern Church practises clinical or sick-bed baptism, which can only be performed by pouring or sprinkling. And it is no answer to this fact to say that it results from the belief that baptism is necessary in some sense to salvation ; and, therefore, rather than that any one should die unbaptized they had to adopt a convenient mode to administer baptism in such cases. It might well be objected to this that on the ground that baptism is in no sense necessary to salvation the Baptists insist on the one mode of immersion which makes it necessary for many who are not in health to be denied baptism. And this latter doctrine and practice is decidedly the newer in the world. But a few instances will place this matter beyond doubt.

Eusebius tells us that about the close of the first century, about the time of the death of the Apostle S. John, one "Basilides was baptized in prison by some brethren, and the next day after receiving the seal, he was beheaded."\* We can hardly suppose facilities would be afforded by those in authority to enable him to be baptized by immersion, and thus aid in the very thing for which he was imprisoned, when they would not even allow him the common necessities of life.

Again, about A. D. 120, Novatian was baptized *by affusion as he lay sick on his bed*. This was not noted as anyway unusual at the time ; but having afterwards been admitted to the priesthood, and attempting to supplant Cornelius, the Bishop of Rome, it was objected against Novatian that his ordination to the priesthood had been at least irregular, "because it was not lawful for any one baptized in bed in time of sickness, as he had been, to be admitted to any office of clergy.†

In the latter part of the fourth century, and only 280 years from the Apostolic times, St. Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, praising those who seek baptism in health, instead of putting it off till the hour of sickness and danger, remarks, "Although the same gift of grace is bestowed on you, and on those who are initiated at the close of life, your free choice and preparation are different ; for *they* receive it in their *bed*, *you* in the *bosom of the Church*, the common mother of all ; . . . . *they* in a lethargy of fever,

\* Hodges' "Baptism tested by Scripture," p. 35.

† Hodges' "Baptism tested by Scripture," p. 350.