

said rule was given. And this holds especially for such rules as are expressed in very short and general words.*" He further says, "For it is common for a rule or law to be so worded, as that one may perceive that the lawgiver has supposed or taken for granted, that the people to whom it was given did already know and understand some things which were previous to the apprehending of his meaning: so that it was needless to express them " This is certainly the proper course to adopt in the case before us. The rule given by our Blessed Lord is in very general terms, and, therefore, in order to understand it, we must enquire into the previous circumstances which very likely enabled the Apostles to understand all that was not verbally expressed.

But I know that many will say the mode is expressed in the word "baptize." Well, if that be so, we shall more certainly learn that fact by our purposed enquiry. The ceremony of baptizing was certainly not new to the Apostles; some of them had been St. John's disciples, and had therefore been baptized by him; much more was baptism no new thing among all the people of the Jews. So that if the mode be expressed in the word "baptize," we shall certainly see that mode whenever we read of baptizing in the New Testament.

In thus endeavouring to know the minds of the Apostles regarding the mode of baptism, which they had learned by experience and observation, we will first examine what we are told of the Baptism of our Lord. I know it is asserted, without any fear of contradiction, that our Blessed Lord was immersed in the river Jordan, and on this assumption, which needs to be proved, we find that Christians are exhorted and required thus to follow the example of their Saviour. Now, even if it *could* be so well proved that our Lord was immersed, it does not follow that we are to be immersed, as the alone mode of Christian Baptism. Our Lord came to fulfil all righteousness—the rites and ordinances of the Jewish Church—by obedience thereto, not of necessity to enforce their continuance by His example. But if Jesus Himself has set us an example in His Baptism as regards the mode—that we must be immersed as He was immersed—are there not other circumstances connected with His Baptism which must equally be required to be followed? St. Luke tells us that at His Baptism our Lord "began to be about thirty years of age." (iii., 23). Hence, if we are to follow His example touching our baptism, I would think we should be baptized when being about "thirty years of age," and hence that any persons under that age-limit were not old enough for the rite, while any who had passed that time of life were to be rejected as being too old to follow our Lord's example. Yet, again, I think it is more than probable that our Lord was

* "The History of Infant Baptism," vol. I, p. 1.