

the inference the most natural is, they were baptized by aspersion, and this is the opinion of St. Thomas, who lived in a time when immersion was practised.

We also find the Apostles baptizing under circumstances which must compel us to draw the like inference. St. Paul baptized the jailor and his family in their own house, and at night, Acts xvi. v. 32. Cornelius and his family were baptized by St. Peter, in the house of Cornelius, Acts x. v. 46. The Disciples of Ephesus, after being baptized by St. Paul, immediately received the imposition of hands, which is the sacrament of confirmation; and no intimation is there given of any delay caused by dipping or immersion—Acts xix. v. 58.

The Baptism of Saul himself took place in the house of a private friend, by Ananias, who visited Saul, then blind—“He received his sight, and rising up, was baptized”—Acts ix. v. 18. On all these occasions, and in many others where we read of the rite of Baptism being conferred, the idea or notion of dipping or immersion, does not present itself from the circumstances. We cannot help, then, supposing that a different mode to that of immersion was practised by the Apostles, and consequently that immersion is not the essential mode of Baptism. Let us now see what has been the practice of the Christian Church in the ages, and whether it conferred the Baptismal rite by infusion and aspersion.

The Church is “the pillar and ground of truth,” as the Apostle says; it never can teach error.—When Christ commissioned his Apostles and their successors to baptize, he promised to them they should not err in administering that solemn rite; “I am with you,” he says, “all days, even to the end of the world.” Baptism was to be administered to the end of the world, as a rite necessary to cleanse the soul from original sin. The Apostles were to have successors to the end of time, conferring that rite for the “perfection of the saints,” hence the rite must continue to be administered in the Church as willed by Christ; and if we find the Church making use of infusion or aspersion, as well as dipping or immersion, we must conclude that Baptism, conferred in any of the former modes, is equally as valid as when conferred in the latter, as the three modes are sanctioned by the Church on the authority of Christ, who gave to her pastors the commission to “Baptize.”

Tertullian, a writer of the third century, exhorting adults to prepare for Baptism, asks, “For who will vouchsafe to you, so faithless a penitent, a single drop of any water—On penance, c. 6, p. 144. St. Cyrilian, in the middle of the third century, in his answer to Magnus, who asked him whether those who are baptized on their sick beds

should be regarded as legitimate Christians, says, “Thou hast inquired what I think of those who, in their infirmity and languor, obtain the grace of God, whether they are to be esteemed as legitimate Christians, because they have not been washed with water, but received it by infusion.” And towards the end of his answer, in which he wished Magnus to understand that the grace of God was conferred by infusion as well as immersion, he says—“In the sacraments of salvation, the *divine compendium* confers all on believers. Nor should any one be moved because he sees that the sick are sprinkled or receive infusion, when they receive the grace of the Lord, since the Holy Scripture, by the prophet Ezekiel, speaks and says—“I will sprinkle you with clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your idols, and I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you”—St. Cyp. Ep. lxxvi.

From these words of St. Cyprian, it is plain the validity of Baptism, conferred by infusion or aspersion was undisputed, and that the grace of pardon was equally obtained by Baptism, whether conferred by infusion, aspersion, or immersion. St. Chrysostom held the same opinion with Cyprian, and gives us to understand that grace is conferred by infusion or aspersion as well as immersion. In one of his instructions to the Catechumens, preparing for Baptism, he attributes the same efficacy to Baptism, when given to the sick, which must certainly be by infusion or aspersion, as when it is received in vigour and health “Although,” he says, “the same gifts of grace, are 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 on their beds, you in the church, the common manner of all,” &c. &c.—Catech. 1.

St. Augustin, extolling the effects of Baptism, says—“This purification would by no means be attributed to the liquid and transient element, were it not added, *in the word.*” This word of faith is powerful in the Church of God, that by means of her believing, offering, blessing, *tinging even in a slight degree, it cleanses the infant*—Aug. Tract. lxxx. in Jean.

St. Ambrose applies to Baptism the words of the Psalmist, wherein he speaks of purification by aspersion—“You took afterwards the white garment,” says he, addressing the Neophytes, “to indicate that, cast away the cloak of sin, and put on the spotless robes of innocence: whereof the Psalmist said—“Thou shalt sprinkle me with hysop, and I shall be cleansed; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. For he that is baptized seems to be cleansed: according to the law, since Moses sprinkled the blood of the lamb: according to the Gospel, because the