

her head also under the water, he departed and left her to the women." Now, if antiquity be plead as a proof that immersion was the really primitive mode of baptizing, it must be plead in favour of the gross and offensive circumstance of baptizing naked, which was considered of as much importance as the other; and then we may safely leave it for any one to say whether he really believes that the three thousand persons mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles were baptized naked? and when St. Paul baptized Lydia, she was put into the water naked by her women, and that the Apostle then hastened "to put her head under water also; using the form of baptism, and retired leaving her to the women" to take her away to dress? Immersion, with all its appendages, dipping three times, nakedness, unction, the eating of milk and honey, exorcism, &c., bears manifest marks of that disposition to improve upon God's ordinances, for which even the close of the second century was remarkable, and which laid the foundation of that general corruption which so speedily followed.

But we proceed to the New Testament itself, and deny that a single clear case of baptism by immersion can be produced from it.

The word itself, as it has been often shown, proves nothing. The verb, with its derivatives, signifies to dip the hand into a dish, Matt. xxvi. 23; to stain a vesture with blood, Rev. xix. 14; to wet the body with dew, Dan. iv. 33; to print or smear the face with colours; to stain the hand by pressing a substance; to be overwhelmed in the waters as a sunken ship; to be drowned by falling into water; to sink in the neuter sense; to immerse totally, to plunge up to the neck; to be immersed up to the middle; to be drunken with wine; to be dyed, tinged, and imbued; to wash by effusion of water; to pour water upon the hands or any other part of the body; to sprinkle. A word then of such large application affords as good proof for sprinkling, or partial dipping, or washing with water, as for immersion in it. The controversy on this accommodating word has been carried on to weariness; and if even the advocates of immersion could prove, what they have not been able to do, that plunging is the only primary meaning of the term, they would gain nothing, since, in Scripture, it is notoriously used to express other applications of water. The Jews had "divers baptisms" in their service; but these washings of the body in or with water were not immersions, and in some instances they were mere sprinklings. The Pharisees "baptized before they ate," but this baptizing was "the washing of hands," which in eastern countries is done by servants pouring water over them, and not by dipping: "Here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who poured water on the hands of Elijah," 2 Kings iii. 11; that is, who acted as his servant. In the same manner were washed, "Thou gavest me no water upon my feet," Luke vii. 44. Again the Pharisees are said to have held the "washing" or baptism of cups or pots, brazen vessels, and of tables; not certainly for the sake of cleanliness, (for all people held the washing or baptism of such utensils for this purpose,) but from superstitious notions of purification. Now, as "sprinkling" is prescribed in the law of Moses, and was familiar to the Jews, as the mode of purification from uncleanness, as in the case of the sprinkling of the water of separation, Num. xix. 19, it is for this reason much more probable that the baptism of these vessels was effected by sprinkling, than by either pouring or immersion. But that they were not immersed, at least not the whole of them, may be easily made to appear: and if "baptism," as to any of these utensils, does not signify immersion, the argument from the use of the word must be abandoned. Suppose, then, the pots, cups, and brazen vessels to have been baptized by immersion; the "beds" or couches used to recline upon at their meals, which they ate in an im-

cumbent posture, couches which were constructed for three or five persons each to lie down upon, must certainly have been exempted from the operation of a "baptism" dipping, which was probably practiced, like the "baptism of their hands, before every meal. The word is also used by the LXX., in Dan. iv. 33, where Nebuchadnezzar is said to have been wet with the dews of heaven, which was plainly effected, not by his immersion in dew, but by its descent upon him. Finally, it occurs in 1 Cor. x. 2, "And were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;" where also immersion is out of the case. The Israelites were not immersed in the sea, for they went through it, as on dry land; and they were not immersed in the cloud, which was above them. In this case, if the spray of the sea is referred to, or the descent of rain from the cloud, they were baptized by sprinkling, or at most by pouring; and that there is an allusion to the latter circumstance, is made almost certain by a passage in the song of Deborah, and other expressions in the Psalms, which speak of "rain," and the "pouring out of water," and "droppings" from the "cloud" which directed the march of the Jews in the wilderness. Whatever, therefore, the primary meaning of the verb "to baptize" may be, is a question of no importance on the one side or the other. Leaving the mode of administering baptism, as a religious rite, out of the question, it is used, generally, at least in the New Testament, not to express immersion in water, but for the act of pouring or sprinkling; and that baptism, when spoken of as a religious rite, is to be understood as administered by immersion, no satisfactory instance can be adduced.

The baptism of John is the first instance usually adduced in proof of this practice:—"The multitudes who went out to him were baptized of him in Jordan;" they were therefore immersed.

To say nothing here of the laborious, and apparently impossible task imposed upon John, of plunging the multitudes who flocked to him day by day, into the river; and the indecency of the whole proceeding when women were also concerned; it is plain that the principal object of the evangelist, in making this statement was to point out the place where John exercised his ministry and baptized, and not to describe the mode; if the latter is at all referred to, it must be acknowledged that this was incidental to the other design. Now it so happens that we have a passage which can only be fairly interpreted by referring to his mode of baptizing, as the first conclusive passage; a passage, too, which John himself uttered at the very time he was baptizing "in Jordan." "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I: he shall baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Our translators, in this passage, aware of the absurdity of translating the preposition *in*, have properly rendered it *with*; but the advocates of immersion do not stumble at trifles, and boldly rush into the absurdity of Campbell's translation, "I indeed baptize you *in* water, he will baptize you in the Holy Ghost and in fire." Unfortunately for his translation, we have not only the utter senselessness of the phrase baptized, plunge in the Holy Ghost, and plunged in fire to set against it: but also the very history of the completion of this prophetic declaration, and that not only as to the fact that Christ did indeed baptize his disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire, but also as to the mode in which this baptism was effected: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Thus the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire was a descent upon, and not an immersion into. With this too agree all the accounts of the baptism of the Holy Spirit: they are all from above, like the pouring out or shedding of water upon the head; nor is there any

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