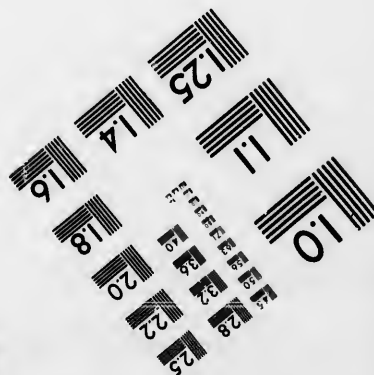
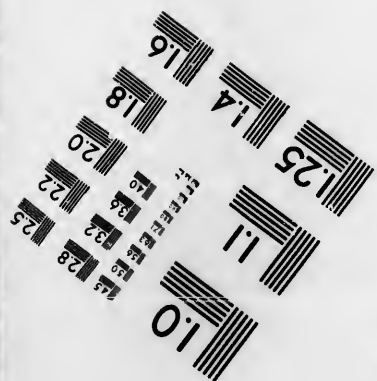
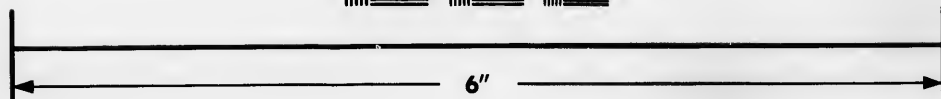
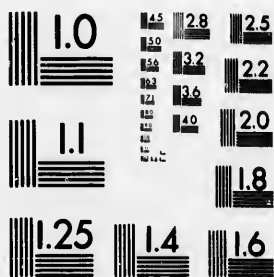


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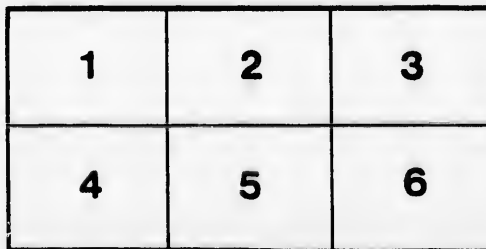
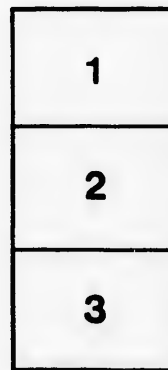
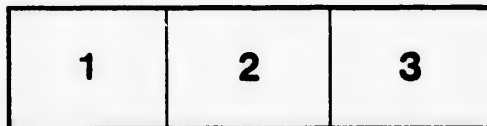
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*J. Davis Barnett*

Sermon First.

## INFANT BAPTISM SCRIPTURAL.

THE subjects to which, according to announcement, I am to direct your attention to-day, are of a somewhat controversial character. Many persons regard religious controversy as a great evil to be sedulously avoided. But it is not an evil in itself considered. In proof of this I need only mention the fact that much of the Word of God is controversial. The Epistles of Paul are striking examples of this. Moreover, we owe the prevalence of truth so far as it is now spread in the earth, very much to the effect of controversy. Error has fiercely contended with truth for every inch of ground it has gained. The glorious Reformation of the 16th century, was commenced and carried forward by controversy, and the error yet remaining in the church and in the world, is to be purged away in the salutary fires of free and candid discussion. But religious controversy should always be pursued in a Christian spirit. It is often made a bad use of, and then, bursting all restraints, it operates—not like the summer thunder-storm, clearing the atmosphere and diffusing refreshment, but like the impetuous and wild tornado, “strewing yonder sea with wrecks,” and spreading devastation and ruin. There ought to be no bitterness, misrepresentation, vituperation, or contempt. These are the weapons of Satan’s Kingdom, and not Christ’s.

In the present instance, I design no provocation of strife, no stirring up of ill-feeling, but a simple and kind, yet firm and decided exhibition of what I deem to be the truth, on the important, and much debated subject of Baptism. Permit me then to invite your attention to the following passage of Scripture:—

Matthew 28, 19. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

This verse is part of the commission given by our Lord

and Saviour to his apostles. They are commanded to "teach;" *i.e.*, (as in the margin,) to "disciple or christianize" "all nations, baptizing them," &c.

My present remarks will apply exclusively to the latter part of the text, viz. : the command to baptize.

I shall not stay to prove that Baptism is a divine institution, a standing ordinance of the Church of Christ; as it is not likely that any of my hearers doubt this fact.

It was doubtless intended as a symbol of internal or spiritual purification, water being commonly employed to cleanse the human body from defilement, and its application to the person in the name of the Triune Jehovah, being what is involved in the command to baptize. It therefore solemnly exhibits the cleansing of the soul from guilt, by the blood of Christ, and its renovation and sanctification by the Holy Spirit.

Yet Baptism neither communicates, insures, nor proves regeneration. It is not of saving efficacy. "It is an outward and visible *sign*" of something *inward* :

Christians are divided in opinion with respect to the *subjects* to whom this ordinance is to be administered. They are thoroughly agreed with regard to grown-up persons *not baptized in infancy*, that when they profess to believe in the Saviour, and seek a place in his church, they should be baptized. In their case the command is explicit, the duty clear.

But whether the offspring of believing parents are scripturally entitled to Baptism, is a much disputed question.—Those who maintain that the children of professing Christians are proper subjects of the ordinance, are called Pædo-baptists; while those who deny this position, and practise only adult or believer's baptism, call themselves, and are usually styled by others, "Baptists." The assumption of this name is intended to indicate that those alone who hold it baptize, or have been baptized, in a Scriptural manner.—Against this we decidedly protest. While admitting freely the learning, talent, piety, and usefulness of many who arrogate this exclusive title; and while granting them freely the

\* From two Greek words signifying 'infant' or 'child,' and 'baptism.'

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right to hold and advocate their own principles, we strongly object to their thus virtually asserting that the point is settled in their favour. We unhesitatingly avow our firm conviction, that it never has been so settled, and that it never will be. Our brethren who do not believe Infant Baptism to be a Bible doctrine and practice, should choose and employ some designation which does not imply a begging of the question at issue. We have no disposition to thrust "Anabaptist" upon them, since they regard it as an offensive epithet; but they should remember that "Baptist" is as unpleasant to others, as "Anabaptist" is to them. Let a name be adopted which characterizes their peculiarities, without ungenerously reflecting upon others. As the nature of our subject will compel some reference to our opponents, and some use of the name by which they are commonly known, we put in at the outset, this decided disclaimer against the inference involved in it. Believing firmly that the practice of Infant Baptism is scriptural, I shall proceed to notice—

- I. The direct arguments which support it; and
- II. The objections made against it.

#### I. DIRECT ARGUMENTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

1. I argue that children have a Scriptural right to this ordinance, because Baptism sustains the same relation to the Gospel dispensation, that Circumcision did to that of the Old Testament.

In proof of this; let me adduce the following train of thought:

1. A peculiar covenant relation existed between God and his ancient people, *as parents*.

2. This same covenant relation exists under the Christian dispensation:

3. Circumcision was the Divinely-appointed token of this covenant in Old Testament times.

4. Baptism has taken the place of Circumcision, as the token or seal of the same covenant under the Christian dispensation:

I will endeavour to establish these positions:



1. A peculiar covenant relation existed between God and his ancient people, as parents.

This is fully and plainly stated in the history of Abraham.

In Gen. 17 : 7, we are told that God entered into covenant with this distinguished patriarch. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

This covenant plainly comprehended *spiritual*, as well as temporal blessings. It is not promised that Abraham and his seed shall have the land of Canaan for a possession, but it is *added*, "I will be a God unto thee, and unto thy seed after thee." "I will be their God." When Christians exclaim with joyful exultation, as did the Psalmist, Ps. 48 : 14, "This God is our God for ever and ever," it is not a mere *earthly* interest in his love that gladdens their souls. The terms of the ancient covenant, and the manner in which it is frequently alluded to, clearly show that it embraced blessings of a spiritual nature.

This covenant was also *mutual*.

The obligation resting on Abraham in connexion with this solemn compact, is thus expressed: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect;" and Jehovah on his part, engages to be his God.

Further, this covenant embraced *his children*. His "seed" are particularly named; and to them, as we shall soon have occasion to observe, the seal of the covenant was applied, in token of their participation in its blessings.

This interesting relation was not limited to Abraham.—The same covenant was formally renewed with Isaac, Jacob and others. Indeed, we have frequent references to it, and traces of it throughout the Old Testament.

2. This same covenant relation between Christian parents and the Infinite God, exists under the gospel dispensation. Its blessings are just as accessible now, as in ancient times. This will plainly appear from the following considerations. When first made, the Divine declaration was, that it should be "an everlasting covenant;" and we have no account of its having been altered or annulled; nay, it is said to have been "*confirmed in Christ*." This is distinctly taught,

Gal. 3: 15-17. It is there said, that even in the case of a man's covenant, "Yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto." The Abrahamic covenant is said to have been thus "confirmed of God in Christ," and not at all affected by the giving of the law 430 years after. Hence it is still in full force, unchanged by the lapse of time. Nothing has occurred to make the original "promise of none effect." It may here be asked, are we not told, Heb. 8: 8, that God has made "a new covenant" with his people? I answer, this was not to displace the one made with Abraham, but the one made with the people of Israel when they were led out of the land of Egypt, Heb. 8: 9.—This new covenant was, in effect, a re-affirmation of that for whose perpetuity we are contending.

Moreover, it is positively stated in the New Testament, that this covenant is yet in existence. The following chapters are to the point, Rom. 4. and Gal. 3. Suffice it here to quote a verse from the last mentioned chapter, Gal. 3: 29. "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise;" i. e., if you are a believer in Christ, you are one of that promised seed of Abraham, to whom this covenant was given for "an everlasting covenant." So the sacred word affirms, and who shall gainsay it? Who dare do this? What Christian would *desire* to do so? (See also Rom. 15: 8.)

3. Circumcision was the Divinely-appointed token of the Abrahamic covenant in Old Testament times. See Gen. xvii. 11.

"It is," says a commentator on the place, "a sign, evidence, and assurance, both of the blessing promised by that God who appointed this ordinance, and of man's obligation to the duties required." Circumcision is called (Rom. iv. 11,) "a seal of the righteousness of faith." A seal is used to authenticate an instrument:—"to furnish an obligatory proof of the engagements of the sealer." Circumcision made every subject of it, "a debtor to do the whole law," (Gal. v. 3.) It brought him under a solemn obligation to serve God. It was a seal of spiritual blessings, pointing to "the righteousness of faith," and solemnly binding men to obey the Infinite Jehovah. It is repeatedly said to be emblem-

matical of the purification of the heart. (Deut. x. 16 ; Rom. ii. 28, 29.) It sealed all those blessings, temporal and spiritual, which were included in the promise made to Abraham. It was also the initiatory rite by which persons were admitted into the Old Testament Church, being invariably performed on all proselytes to Judaism, and their children.

4. Now, we affirm that Baptism occupies the same relation to the Gospel dispensation ; for the following reasons :

(1.) It is expressive of the same things. Is the following striking analogy either accidental or forced ?

1. Abraham gave himself up to God and promised to serve him, and God promised to protect and bless Abraham and his seed after him.

2. As a seal of this promise or covenant, Abraham was circumcised.

3. This circumcision was also a seal of Abraham's faith and purification of heart.

4. As Abraham's seed were included in the promise or covenant, he was commanded to apply the same seal to them, *i. e.*, to the males in his household.

5. This implied that they were included in the covenant, and needed the same faith and purification of heart which Abraham possessed.

6. That he was solemnly pledged to bring them up for God,—IN BAPTISM;—

1. Believing parents give themselves up to God, and promise to serve him, and God promises to be their God and the God of their children.

2. Their Baptism is a seal of this promise or covenant.

3. It is a token of their faith or purification of heart.

4. As their seed or children are included in the same promise or covenant, they of course apply the same seal to them.

5. Thus applied, it signifies that they need the same faith and purification of heart, which the parents believe they have.

6. That the parents are solemnly pledged to bring them up for God."

(2.) That baptism has succeeded circumcision as the seal

of the covenant, appears from the fact that it is the rite of initiation into the Christian Church, just as circumcision was into the Jewish Church. Can this position be questioned? If then, the ancient seal was applied not only to converts but to their children, what valid reason can be urged against Infant Baptism?

(3.) There were under the ancient economy two standing ordinances, the Passover and Circumcision. It is generally, if not universally admitted, that the Lord's Supper is substituted for the Passover, and yet some deny that the same is true of Baptism and Circumcision, though both are confessedly alike, at least so far as this,—that they are initiatory ordinances. A little reflection will convince any one that the ordinance of baptism agrees as well with circumcision in its nature and design, as the Lord's Supper does with the Passover, if not better. Would it not be singular indeed for them to resemble each other closely in every particular except one, and in that one, viz.: their application to children, be perfect opposites? Circumcision introduced into the Jewish church, and was administered to children; baptism introduces into the Christian church, but must be denied to children? Wherefore?

(4.) The following passage settles the point in question. (Col. ii. 11, 12.) "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism," &c. Now, whether from the scope of the passage, we conclude that the Apostle is speaking of the external ordinance, or of the inward work of purification to which the ordinance points, the argument from these verses is equally conclusive, showing that baptism is the Christian circumcision.

We conclude, therefore, that infants may now be baptized with as much propriety as they were anciently circumcised.

Perhaps it may be well here to advert to the most important objections commonly urged against the view of baptism which has just been presented.

1. It is said, "circumcision was a sign of carnal descent, a mark of national distinction, and a token of interest in those

temporal blessings which were promised to Abraham." Granted. But was this *all*? We have shown that all this and *much more* was included in the ancient covenant.

Where is the Scripture proof that the Abrahamic covenant was a charter of earthly blessings *only*?

2. Pengilly, a standard Baptist writer, says (p. 61) Pædobaptists make baptism, itself "a figure, a *type of a figure*" and regard it as "the end and fulfilment" of circumcision. But this is a great mistake. We agree with this author that baptism and circumcision are *both types or figures*, and so far from maintaining that baptism is the end or fulfilment of circumcision, *we deny it*. The fulfilment of circumcision in its spiritual bearing was regeneration, "the circumcision of the heart." This too is the fulfilment of baptism. All we affirm, is, what I have *proved*, viz.: that baptism sustains the same relation to the gospel dispensation that circumcision, did to the former dispensation.

3. It is objected that circumcision was only applied to males. To this I reply, a parent who dedicated his male children to God, did that as a token that his whole family belonged to God. So it was considered by Jehovah himself. See (Ezek. xvi. 8 compared with v. 20 of the same chapt.) In the first of these passages it is written, "I entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine." In the second, the following complaint is uttered, "thou hast taken *my sons and my daughters* whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed,"—"thou hast slain *my children*."—See also Deut. xxix. 10-12.—All were admitted into a covenant relative to God, though males only received the sign. It is well known that in the Jewish church, females held a very inferior and subordinate place. The gospel dispensation is more large and free.—Gal. iii. 28. "There is neither male nor female:"—all are "one in Christ Jesus." The gospel makes no distinction of sex, any more than of nation, in the enjoyment of its ordinances and privileges.

4. "No doctrine," says Pengilly, "can be more dangerous (because calculated to be fatally delusive,) than this, "That because persons are *born of pious parents*, they are therefore under some peculiar spiritual and advantageous

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distinction, on account of which they are entitled to sacred privileges, and do not need equally with others, the same converting grace and mercy, and the same atoning sacrifice." Now no such doctrine as that embodied in the latter part of this objection is held by us. We believe that the children of pious parents *do* "need the same converting grace and mercy, and the same atoning sacrifice," as others. But are there therefore no peculiar spiritual advantages connected with having pious parents? Surely there is such a thing as being "beloved for the fathers' sakes." Ro. xii 28. And God threatens to pour out his fury upon the families that call not upon his name, while he will bless those who keep his covenant. It is no small privilege to be the children of parents who have given themselves and their offspring to God. Such have a position of eminent distinction. Their parents have laid hold of the "everlasting covenant," and Jehovah is solemnly pledged to be a God to them and their children after them, which includes among other blessings that he will arrange his providence to bring about their conversion and usefulness, and that he will pour out his spirit for their regeneration and sanctification.

5. If it be asked, Why then are not all baptized children truly converted? I answer:

1. Many bring forward their children in Baptism who are not themselves Christians. Even where ministers require evidence of vital piety prior to infant baptism,—as all we think ought to do,—many who are not truly converted, being members of the church, will, of course observe its ordinances.

2. It is to be feared that few real Christians have a correct view of what is involved in embracing God's covenant for themselves and their children. They do not realize

"How large the promise, how divine  
To Abraham and his seed."

3. The salvation of the children of Christians, is conditioned, not only on Divine grace, but also on *parental fidelity*.

2. I argue from the text, and the circumstances under which it was spoken, that the baptism of infants is scriptural. They are not expressly excluded from the ordinance,

and had their exclusion been intended, it would have been commanded. True, they are not expressly *included*, but the silence of the Saviour is an argument for Infant Baptism, and not against it. For consider;

1. Those to whom this commission was given, were Jews, strongly attached to Jewish practices. They had been accustomed to see Gentiles and their households circumcised on their embracing Judaism. This had been Jewish practice for ages. Now they are commanded to go forth teaching, and applying another seal similar to the former one in nature and design. Had the Saviour said to his disciples, "Go, teach all nations, circumcising them," &c., how would they have understood him, and what would they have done? The terms of the commission put baptism in the place circumcision had formerly occupied, and as nations include young children, and Christ did not prohibit the extension of the rite to them; but left the matter *just as it stood before*, they would naturally understand that they were to do in baptizing just as had previously, and up to that time, been done in circumcising. When a parent embraced Christianity, they would baptize him and his family.

2. A statute must be repealed as explicitly as it was first published. There must be a definite countermand. But in this case there is none.

3. The Apostles would not drop such a practice of their own accord, in the absence of a command from Christ to that effect.

4. Had children been excluded, it is impossible but that some trace of dissatisfaction would be visible either in the Acts or the Epistles. We know how tenacious the early Christians were of everything Jewish. How they clung to the ceremonial law! Would there not have been commotions, and invidious comparisons between the law and the gospel, had children been shut out from baptism? The New Testament gives us no account of any difficulty having taken place, so that we may fairly conclude that children were admitted to this ordinance.

5. The language of Peter on the day of Pentecost, so far from intimating a repeal of infant privilege, rather asserts its permanence. Acts ii. 38, 39: "The promise is unto you,

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and to your children." How would his audience understand this, but as showing that under the new dispensation their children as well as themselves were to enjoy precious privileges;—in a word—that the covenant and the promise were unchanged.

6. There is nothing in the genius of the gospel to exclude children. Behold how the Saviour treats them. Mark x. 13-16. Some parents bring young children, (in Luke, "infants,") to Christ for his blessing. The disciples repel them, but their Lord encourages their approach. He takes them up in his arms, lays his hands on them, and blesses them. But it is objected, "he did not baptize them." True.

1. "Jesus himself did not baptize." See John iv. 2.

2. It is not unlikely that these children had been baptized already. Their parents were evidently believers in Jesus, or they would hardly have brought them to him for a blessing.

3. Even though these infants were not baptized either by Christ or his disciples, it would be no proof against the point we are contending for, because baptism was not yet formally instituted as a standing rite in the Christian Church.

This circumstance is introduced here to show, which it does conclusively, that the Saviour encouraged the dedicatory presentation of children to God,—that he manifested his condescending grace by taking them in his arms and blessing them, and that he exhibited the real nature of the gospel dispensation, by declaring, "of such is the Kingdom of heaven." To make this latter expression mean, "grown persons of childlike dispositions," is a pitiful evasion of the argument here furnished in favour of infant baptism. Our Lord might as well have said, "Suffer lambs or doves to come unto me, for persons of a lamb-like, or dove-like disposition belong to my kingdom."

7. "It may not be out of place to refer here to a passage in Paul's writings, which clearly shows how children are to be regarded under the present dispensation. I refer to 1st Cor. vi. 14. An attempt has been made by some to prove that Paul only asserts here, that these children



were *legitimate*. But "holy" means "set apart," "dedicated to God," and the meaning here plainly is, that though only one parent be a Christian, the children are not excluded from the blessing of the covenant on that account, since the unbelieving partner is "reputed as if sanctified," because of one flesh with the believer. No other interpretation seems so common sense and natural as this. From this passage we conclude, that the seal of the covenant can only be applied, with propriety, to the children of believers; and further, that if only one of the parents be a Christian, *that one* may claim the privilege.

3. I argue the propriety of Infant Baptism from the instances of family baptism recorded in the New Testament.

1. The case of Lydia and her family. Act; xvi, 14, 15. Observe, when the Lord opened *her* heart,—not the hearts of the whole family—when *she* believed, not when all her family believed—"she was baptized and her household," (literally, "family,") and she said, "If ye have judged *me* to be faithful," &c. Lydia became a Christian, and for this reason her family were baptized with her.

With regard to this family baptism, it is alleged by our opponents that all were believers. But this is not stated by the inspired historian. It is a mere conjecture. There is not a word about the faith of any besides Lydia. Moreover, the very point at issue is assumed in this supposition, that none but those who were personally believers were ever baptized by the Apostles.

It is also said that Lydia's household might have been servants. But which is more likely, that this "seller of purple" had a family of children, or that she had several servants? Besides the original word "*oikos*" here translated "household," forbids this supposition. This term properly means, "family," and is generally used to denote children exclusively. When other relatives or servants as well as children, or servants only are intended, another term "*oikoi'a*" is used. Thus, Phil. iv. 22, "Caesar's household" is mentioned. Here the word "*oikia*" is used pointing out domestics or servants.\* No reason can be given for the

\* In the account of the jailer's conversion, we have the distinction be-

opinion, that Lydia's household were servants, except that it harmonizes with exclusive adult or believer's baptism.

Pengilly says, after various conjectures, "but more satisfactory to the pious reader than ten thousand surmises, the question of the persons of Lydia's household may be answered with the greatest probability from the last verse of the chapter," Acts xvi. 40—"when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."

In this opinion there is assumed, without a shadow of proof, that Lydia either had no children, or that they were grown-up sons. It is also assumed, without the least proof, that there were no other cases of conversion at Philippi, except those of Lydia and the jailer, with their families.—Pengilly makes bold to affirm that no others were brought to Christ, up to the time of the release of Paul and Silas, besides those just mentioned. But I would ask, is this at all likely? We are told in the 18th verse, that "many days" elapsed between Lydia's conversion, and the imprisonment of Paul and Silas. We know with what rapidity the gospel was then spreading. Is it conceivable that during those "many days," none were led to believe in Christ? Is Philippi to be made an exception to the universal success which crowned the preaching of the cross, lest Infant Baptism should receive some countenance from what transpired there? If, as we think, there is good reason for believing that other converts *were* made in this city, they would naturally gather at the residence of Lydia, on the release of Paul and Silas. Lydia's house was their lodging-place, and having "seen the brethren" there, and "comforted them, they departed."\*

Between these two terms very clearly marked. In the 31st v., it is said—"thou shalt be saved and thy *house*," viz "oikos," family. In the next verse we are told, "they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his *house*" "oikia," household. These terms correspond very nearly with our English terms "house," and "household."

\* Two individuals of opposite sentiments discussing the Scripture passage referred to above; one affirmed that the brethren comforted were Lydia's household. "How do you prove it?" asked the other. "I cannot prove it," he replied; "but I *guess* they were." "But I *guess* they were not," said his opponent; "and *my guess is as good as yours.*"

But even granting, for the sake of the argument, Pengilly's gratuitous assumption, that no others were converted at Philippi, the 49th verse can be readily explained without resorting to conjecture. It can easily be shown from the chapter itself, that there were at least two other brethren in company with Paul and Silas. In the 3rd v. we are told that Paul would have Timotheus go forth with him. He had previously secured the company of Silas. See ch. xv. 40. And "they," i. e., Paul, Silas, and Timotheus, "went through the cities," by Mysia to Troas. At the last-named place, a vision appeared to Paul, in consequence of which, "immediately," (here the style of the narrative suddenly changes,) "we," I, Luke the writer of this book being added to the company, "endeavoured to go into Macedonia," and "we came with a straight course to Samothracia, the next day to Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi." The plural pronouns, "we" and "us," are used in the rest of the account. When the trouble occurred, Paul and Silas were "caught," their companions escaped, and remained at Lydia's house, where all had been lodging, until the release next day. Here, then, are brethren, to be seen and comforted, without making Lydia a present of a family of grown-up sons, or a housefull of men servants. Timotheus seems to have remained but a short time at Philippi, joining Paul and Silas at Berea shortly after.—(See next chap.) Luke stayed longer. His departure from Philippi is mentioned, Acts xx: 6.

Would not the natural conclusion formed by an unprejudiced reader of this narrative, be simply this, that Lydia had a family of children which was baptized with her when she professed her faith in Christ?

2. I adduce the case of the Jailer and his family, recorded in the same chapter, Acts xvi. 33, 34.

"He, and all his," are said to have been baptized "straightway." It is said, by our opponents, in this as in the preceding instance, "all the jailer's house believed in God." But here also, I ask, where is the proof of it? The expression in 34th v., "he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" is usually quoted as stating the faith of his family. But a mere glance at the original disproves the assertion.

The verb "rejoiced," is third person singular; the participle "believing," nominative, singular, masculine; and the phrase "with all his house," is, in the original, a single word, ("pano'ki,") an adverb qualifying the verb "rejoiced," and signifying "domestically," or, "in the midst of his family." The literal rendering of the passage would be, as every grammarian, whether Greek scholar or no, will at once perceive, "He, having believed in God, rejoiced in the midst of his family."\*

3. Paul acknowledges that he baptized the family of Stephanas.—See 1 Cor. i. : 16. To this instance of family baptism, it is objected (as usual) that they were all adults and believers. The following passage is quoted in support of this opinion, 1 Cor. xvi. 15. Here the household of Stephanas is commended for "addicting" itself to "the ministry of the saints." To this I answer:

1. In the first of these passages the original word is "oikos," (family, children,) and in the second, "oikia," household, suggesting the idea of relatives or domestics.—These two words are used by the sacred writers with great discrimination, as any one may find by consulting passages with a Greek concordance. So that it is most likely, if not absolutely certain, that the "oikos" of Stephanus, is not the same as his "oikia." The first passage records the baptism of his children, and the second the religious activity of his household.

2. Can no family be hospitable and benevolent, that has young children in it? This were a strange assertion, indeed.

3. The quotation from 1 Cor. xvi. 15, has occasioned much difficulty to commentators. The reference to the household of Stephanas is enclosed in a parenthesis, and reads very awkwardly as it now stands. Our Baptist

\* It is taking common readers at a disadvantage, thus to notice in argument, a defect in our translation. But if any person thinks the above criticism a mere subterfuge, let him go to some one who can read Greek, and ask whether it be so or not. Sometimes people say, "I take Scripture just as it reads;" and they will stick to the very letter of the translation, right or wrong, when it suits their cause.—Apply this principle to 2 Cor. 5: 21, and you will make the guilty rebels for whom Christ died, perfectly sinless, and render the passage absurd and false.

friends (many of them at least) suppose that the household of Stephanas consisted of active young men, fitted to take the lead in Church affairs. But this supposition makes the apostle command the whole Church at Corinth, which "came behind in no gift," together with Stephanas, their father, one of the bearers of the epistle, to "submit" themselves to these active and promising young Christians! It is most likely that the words here enclosed in a parenthesis, were originally written in the form of a marginal note, or appended to the close of the epistle. Refer for a moment to the passage in question, and judge whether the following be not a natural and simple rendering: Commencing at the 10th v. "Now, if Timotheus come," &c., read to the close of the 14th v. Then, "I beseech you, brethren," (omit the parenthetical words,) "that ye submit yourselves unto such;" (i.e., such as Timotheus and Apollus;) "and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." Ye know the house of Stephanus," &c., with the 17th and 18th verses. This proposed rendering frees the passage from all difficulty; but its adoption is not necessary to our argument, nor will its rejection at all weaken it.

Here, then, are three baptized families, for which God has been thanked that he had preserved sufficient proof that they were adults. But what does the supposed proof amount to? Mere conjecture,—nothing more.

A few additional observations seem necessary here.

1. In speaking of the baptism of families, the inspired writers use precisely the same term which elsewhere in Scripture plainly includes children. Can we separate the idea of children,—young children,—infants, from the phrases, "house of Israel," "house of Jacob," "house of Judah," "house of David?"—See Gen. xlv. 26, 27. The same term is used in the New Testament in reference to children, when Baptism is not referred to in connexion with it.—See 1 Tim. iii. 4.—v. 14. I ask, then, whom did the apostles baptize when they tell us they baptized "houses?"

2. In using "family" rather than any other word, they avoided ambiguity. Baptists tell us when extracts from early Ecclesiastical History are brought forward, that the term "infant" is very indefinite, being sometimes applied

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to those who have come to years of understanding. They say it may designate any age from 20 days to 20 years.— One writer enumerates 18 terms in various languages, used for “infant,” or “child,” and denies that they necessarily mean what they seem to do. Now, if the Apostles had said, “we baptized men, women, and infants,” this objection would have been started against the sacred narrative. But when they tell us they baptized *men, women, and their families*, they state what admits of no quibble.

3. The proportion these family baptisms bear to other instances of baptism mentioned, is a strong proof in favour of Infant Baptism. Three instances have been named. But several other families are mentioned in such a way that there can be little or no doubt they were baptized. The family of Cornelius (Acts x.) we know was baptized. The family of Crispus, (Acts xviii.8) “believed,” and was of course baptized, else what becomes of believer’s baptism? The family of Onesiphorus is mentioned, 2 Tim. i. 16. Those of Aristobulus and Narcissus, Rom. xvi. 10, 11, are said to be “in the Lord.” Doubtless all these families were baptized either on their own faith, or the faith of their parents. Four of them are *described* as baptized, and the baptism of the other four is clearly implied. Now take 8 families at a hazard any where; in a given street, or in their pews in a place of worship, and calculate chances as to their having young children in them. Pengilly says, “there are thousands, yea millions of families that have no infant children.” But our argument does not depend on mere infants at the breast, or in arms, but on *young children*. Another writer against Infant Baptism has made the astounding discovery, that there are as many families without young children as with them. Indeed! Are not these exceptions to the general rule? And were not these exceptions even more rare in ancient times, than now?

But look at the proportion in round figures. The number of persons baptized after Christ’s resurrection, mentioned by name in the book of Acts, is 28. Among these we have 4 baptized families, a proportion of one in seven. The whole number of converts named in the New Testament is 55. Out of these we have 8 families;—a proportion still of one in

seven. Now the brief memoranda of Apostolic labours, given us in the New Testament, are only a specimen of what was going on constantly. How many converts may be inferred from the whole history in the book of Acts? Ten thousand? Certainly not less. If then, we say the baptized families were as *one in ten*, this gives us 1,000 baptized families. How many converts may be inferred from the whole of the New Testament? One hundred thousand? This is not extravagant. This would give us 1,000 baptized families.

And yet we are called on to conclude that all the families mentioned or implied in the New Testament narrative were adult, or consisted only of believers; with no proof but the *opinion* of the opposers of Infant Baptism.— Shall we form this conclusion? Nay, verily!

4. "In the records of those churches that reject Infant Baptism, and more especially in the accounts transmitted by their missionaries, there is nothing analogous to the statements of the New Testament on this subject. It has indeed been said, that a minister from America, when in this country, gave oral testimony that some cases had occurred in his experience of baptizing households, where the family consisted only of grown-up persons, and had embraced the gospel nearly about the same time. When that minister puts his statement in writing, that the world may see it, and judge of it, we shall then know better the circumstances of the case. But what we say is, that none of them make statements, or can make statements like those we find in the New Testament. If a Baptist missionary were to write home, that about the middle of a certain night he had met with an individual, who, in consequence of something that had happened, was in great terror; that he had spoken the word to him, and to all who were in his house; that the individual then believed, and that he had baptized him, and all his straightway. If another were to write home that he had been speaking in a certain place to some women who resorted thither; and that there was a mistress of a household, whose heart the Lord opened; and that he had baptized her and her household, and that he judged her to be faithful; what would be the effect of such tidings as these

sent home to the Baptist churches? It would create instant confusion in the camp. It would excite a commotion in all their churches. It would instantly be said, these men are deserting their principles; they are baptizing believers and their children. I have no doubt, that if they could send home tidings exactly analogous to what is recorded in the Acts, they would be deserting their principles; but it would be to adopt better principles—those of the apostles."

5. "We find no instance whatever, of their baptizing, or making any reference to baptizing, those whose parents had been baptized when they were children. There must have been a large number of such living at the time of the New Testament being written. The history of the Acts of the Apostles comprises a space of thirty years. And up to the time of John's Epistles being written, there was a space of sixty years. What a vast number must there have been, in the course of that time, of persons who were infants at the time, or after the time, of their parents being baptized? Yet you never read of any of these grown-up children of believers coming forward to receive baptism. What is the plain inference from this? They must have been baptized when they were young. But take another view of it. Not only do we find no record of their being baptized; but we find no exhortation addressed to them, in any one of the Epistles, to come forward for baptism. In the Epistles of Paul, of Peter, of James, of John, and of Jude, we find exhortations addressed to all classes, to ministers, and private Christians;—to the rich, and to the poor; to masters, and servants; to men, and women;—to husbands, and wives;—to the married, and to widows;—to parents, and to children;—to old men, and old women;—to young men, and young women. But we never find one word to unbaptized children of believers. Surely if there had been such a class in existence, we should have found the apostles writing to them, and urging them to tread in the footsteps of their parents; and not only to believe, *but to be baptized*. Had there been any such class in existence at that time; and had any persons, like our modern Baptists, been living then they would have sent them their tracts; in which they say, "No one has a Scriptural warrant to expect salvation, if he



refuse to be baptized," (that is, to be dipped) "make haste, and delay not." The entire absence of any such language as this from the Epistles, is a proof that there were no unbaptized children of believers in those days, and that there were no such persons as our modern Baptists in existence then." \*

6. I argue that Infant Baptism is Scriptural, because it was practiced by the primitive church, immediately after the days of the Apostles.

Justin Martyr, born about four years after the death of the Apostle John, and who wrote when about forty years of age, says, "We have not received the carnal, but the spiritual circumcision. And it is enjoined upon all persons to receive it in the same way." He evidently means that baptism had taken the place of circumcision, and like that ancient rite, is to be applied to infants as well as adults. The same writer speaking of members of the church, mentions some who were "discipled to Christ from their infancy." There was no way of discipling from infancy except by baptism, and we have here an incidental but interesting comment on the apostolic commission.

Irenæus, born about the year 97, a disciple of Polycarp, who was himself a disciple of the Apostle John; says, "Christ came to save all who by him are regenerated unto God, infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and older persons." The ancient Fathers, as all admit, used frequently to express baptism by regeneration, it being the outward sign of it. Thus history assures us that infants were baptized, *within 80 years of the Apostles.*

Origen, born 185, tells us that, "Infants also, by the usage of the church are baptized." Now Origen was a man of learning, his ancestors were Christians, he had travelled extensively, and lived so near the days of the Apostles, that he must have been well acquainted with "the usage of the church." He adds in another part of his writings "the church has received a tradition from the Apostles, to apply baptism to little children." If the word "tradition," be

\* From an excellent Sermon on Baptism by Rev. J. Law, of Scotland.

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objected to, let the following passages be read and pondered: 2nd Thess. ii. 15; 2nd Tim. ii. 2. The word simply means "order," "injunction." It is sometimes said by our opponents, in allusion to this historical testimony, "you have nothing but *tradition* for infant baptism." But we have an unanswerable course of argument from Scripture, and *tradition* to confirm it.

Tertullian, who lived about the same time as Origen, wrote some arguments against Infant Baptism. He is the first opponent of the practice, of whom we have any account. From various considerations, he recommends the delay of baptism, but he does not urge against it that it is an *unscriptural and unheard of practice*. Now, the fact that he wrote against it, proves that it was a prevalent practice then. This was within 150 years of the planting of the early churches by the Apostles. Of course he could not have opposed what was not in existence. But why did he not say, "It is a novelty, a thing of yesterday, something unknown to the Apostles." Could he have said this, it would have settled the question at once. This one argument would have proved the battering-ram of destruction to infant baptism. But we have not a word of this sort. And while Tertullian was penning his sophistical reasonings against Infant Baptism, his contemporary Origen, as we have seen, was placing on record the fact, that it was "a usage of the church, enjoined by the Apostles." In Tertullian's scruples against baptizing infants, we have one of the first instances of departure from apostolic rule which at length thoroughly corrupted the Christian Church.

Cyprian, who lived about the same time as the two preceding Fathers, gives us an account of a council of sixty-six bishops or ministers who met at Carthage to discuss a question proposed by one of their number, viz.: "whether an infant might be baptized *before* it was eight days old?" They decided that it might. This council met only 153 years after the apostles, and there was no dispute among those assembled, as to the propriety of infant baptism, the question being, if, as in circumcision, it should be delayed until the eighth day after birth.

Augustine, who lived about 300 years after John's death, states that infant baptism "was not instituted by any coun-

til, but always has been in use." He adds, that, "he had never read or heard of any Christian, Catholic, or sectary, who held otherwise."

Pelagius, (author of Pelagianism,) had a controversy with this same Augustine, in which he is charged with virtually denying infant baptism. He thus meets the charge, "men slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants. I never heard of any, not even the most *impious heretic*, who denied baptism to infants."

In short, a writer\* who had thoroughly examined the history of infant baptism, gives the following as the result of his inquiries.

"First. During the first 400 years from the formation of the Christian Church, Tertullian only urged the delay of baptism to infants, and that only in some cases; and Gregory only delayed it, perhaps, to his own children. But neither any society of men, nor any individual, denied the lawfulness of baptizing infants.

"Secondly. In the next 700 years, there was not a society, nor an individual, who even pleaded for this delay; much less any who denied the right, or the duty of Infant Baptism.

Thirdly. In the year 1120, one sect of the Waldenses declared against the baptism of infants; because they supposed them incapable of salvation; but the main body of that people rejected the opinion as heretical; and the sect which held it soon came to nothing.†

\* Dr. Wall, from whose History of Infant Baptism, the above citations are given. Our Baptist friends cannot object to these testimonies from the Fathers, taken from Dr. Wall's work, for they quote with great satisfaction some concessions the Dr. makes on the subject of immersion, and refer to him as an authority not to be disputed.

† Pengilly, page 83, speaks as though all the Waldenses rejected Infant Baptism, and seems delighted with the idea that the Baptists can claim kindred with those noble spirits who were "the seed of the primitive and purer church." But the fact is, only a small sect of the Waldenses, the Petrobrussians, followers of Peter de Brius, did this. The Waldenses as a body always practised Infant Baptism. "The Rev. Mr. Burt, the moderator of the synod of the Waldenses, said to Mr. Dwight of Boston, a few years ago, "We present our children in baptism,—we bring our children to be baptized,—we have always baptized our infants, and have always baptized them by affusion." See "Household Baptism," page 107.

"Fourthly. The next appearance of this opinion was in the year 1522."

I leave these plain and indisputable testimonies to your impartial consideration, simply observing in the language of another, "it appears that Infant Baptism was practised by the whole Church from the 1st to the 16th century, with the exception of a few who held that infants were incapable of salvation, that each generation of Christians received this practice from its predecessor as a divine ordinance, and that the doctrine that adult believers alone are proper subjects of baptism, is an error of very recent date."

It is sometimes said Infant Baptism was not "generally practised till the end of the second century." Is not this next to saying "it was an Apostolic practice?" How could such a practice have become general, so soon, if it were not Apostolic? During the first two centuries, Christians were very much on their guard against heresies and innovations, and if Infant baptism had been attempted to be introduced then, as some of its opposers say it was, they would have risen *en masse* against it. It would certainly have made "no small stir." But according to the suppositions of Baptists, it must have come over the whole church, as sleep creeps over a tired and drowsy man!

II.—I will now answer, as briefly as possible,

#### THE OBJECTIONS URGED AGAINST INFANT BAPTISM.

Some of these have come up in connexion with the arguments which have been adduced, but there are others that must not be overlooked.

1. It has been said that our Lord was baptized by John, not when he was an infant, but when he was 30 years of age.

1. To this I answer: Our Saviour could not have been baptized by John when an infant; for John was at that time an infant himself, there being only about six months' difference in their ages.

2. If the period of Christ's baptism could prove anything as to age, it would show that all should be 30 years old before being baptized. But the truth is, that the Saviour's baptism, whatever view we take of it, is no proof against Infant Baptism, any more than Abraham's being circumcised

when 90 years old and 9, shut out his infant descendants from that rite.

2. It is urged, that there is no express command in Scripture for baptizing infants. "Show us," it is sometimes said contemptuously, "the Scripture command for sprinkling babies!" Now, it is true that there is no passage in the Bible in which the word "infants" occurs in connexion with Baptism; but families were baptized, and we have shown that the expressions used respecting them necessarily include infants. We have also shown that had this word been used, it would not have settled the question: the propriety of Infant Baptism would still have been disputed. I would here ask; are our opponents prepared to affirm that nothing is a duty, but what is stated to be such in so many words in Scripture? If so, see what follows. We gather our duty on many points, by inference; for example, we are nowhere expressly commanded to keep the first day of the week as the Sabbath—the duty is derived by plain inference. Again, women are nowhere stated to be under obligation to observe the Lord's Supper; parents are nowhere commanded to pray with their children, or to teach them to read. Are these, therefore, not duties? The truth is, whatever is plainly implied in Scripture, or fairly inferred from it, is *duty*.—Surely, our "positive-proof brethren" are very inconsistent to complain of fair deduction and inference, when they, as well as ourselves, act upon it. They do this, not only in the cases just mentioned, but in some of their leading principles as a denomination. In one of their most striking, and certainly most offensive peculiarities,—I mean *close communion*,—they act from inference alone. They have no express warrant from Scripture for this chilling and repulsive practice. They also derive their opinion on *the mode of Baptism*, from mere inference, as we shall see this evening.

3. It is objected that faith is essential to Baptism, and that, as infants cannot exercise faith, it is not right to baptize them. Our opponents dwell much on this point. They urge, that in the New Testament, believing and baptizing always go together; that exhortations to faith, and the mention of its exercise, precede the administration of the ordinance in all cases. Great stress is laid on the words,

"repent" and "believe," coming *before* 'be baptized.'—Applying this principle, viz., that what the Bible mentions first, must always come first, *John 3: 5.*, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit," would show that in every case, Baptism must precede Regeneration.

But we hold to, and practice "believer's baptism," as much as our Baptist friends. We believe that no adult ought to be baptized, except there be credible evidence of faith in Christ. We believe also, that none but the children of believing parents have a Scriptural right to Baptism. So that we, as well as *they*, require faith prior to Baptism.

But if infants may not be baptized because they cannot believe for themselves, a person might, by the same sort of reasoning, show conclusively, that they cannot be saved. For example; faith is essential to salvation: infants are incapable of faith: therefore, infants cannot be saved. This is Baptist logic exactly. Is it not plain, that in these passages, faith is required of those who are capable of it, prior alike to salvation and to baptism; while nothing is affirmed of the rest. And if infants may be saved, though incapable of faith, why may they not be baptized?

Just apply the sort of reasoning resorted to on this subject, to some other Scripture texts. Take an example from *2 Thess. 3: 10.* Here it is commanded, that "if any would not work, neither should he eat." Shall infants be starved because they cannot work? Is it not evident that such a mode of reasoning will not bear examination?

4. "It is further objected, that baptism is that of which infants are incapable. "Baptism is the fulfilling of righteousness: but infants can neither commit sin, nor fulfil righteousness. It is the answer of a good conscience: but infants can neither have a good nor a bad conscience. It implies, and is a sign of, dying unto sin, and living unto God: but infants can neither die unto sin, nor live unto God. It is a burial with Christ, and a rising with him through faith: but infants can neither be buried nor rise with Christ,—a putting on of Christ: but infants cannot put on Christ." Such is the account which Baptists give us; and if they mean, (as their words seem to imply,) that the external rite is

all that;—that the external ceremony of baptism is the fulfilling of righteousness, a burial with Christ, a putting on of Christ, and so on,—then their doctrine is mere Popery. But if they mean only, that baptism is an emblem of these things, and assures those who are real Christians that they shall have all these blessings;—then, I ask, why may not children have this emblem or pledge of blessedness bestowed on them?

5. "It has been said, every duty should be performed with understanding. But what understanding can a child have of its being baptized? Now, it is quite true that every duty should be performed with understanding. But the infant is not performing a duty at all. Who talks of an infant's duty in being baptized? We speak of the parent's duty, who brings his child to be baptized; and he ought to perform it with understanding.

6. "It has been said further, Religion is a personal and a voluntary thing. No man can answer for another. Every one must stand or fall for himself; and there must be no force in religion. Every one must choose for himself, and act with his own free-will in matters of religion. Now, it is true that religion is a personal thing, and that no one can answer for another. And therefore, we renounce the mummery of godfathers and godmothers answering for the infant, and making promises in its name, as wholly unscriptural and irrational. But this is not what a parent is called on to do, when he presents his child in baptism. He promises nothing for his child; but he resolves for himself, in humble dependence on divine grace, that he will bring up his child for God. The pious parent endeavours with his heart to give up his child to God; and engages, that as far as depends on him, his child shall be a disciple of Christ. And who is there, entitled to censure a parent for forming such resolutions, and coming under such engagements? When Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," what should we have thought if any one had said, Speak for yourself only; religion is a personal and a voluntary thing. Don't compel your family, say nothing about your house, till your family—your children, or grandchildren, are all grown up, and then let them speak for themselves. When Samuel's mother dedicated him to

the Lord, and said of her new-born infant,—“he shall be lent unto the Lord,—as long as he liveth, he shall be lent unto the Lord,”—would it have been proper to say to her, that she was all wrong;—that religion was a personal, and a voluntary thing,—that she ought not to have dedicated her child to God, but to wait till the child could choose for himself? \* Or, when we see parents at the present day, with their family around them, worshipping God,—the little children with serious aspect, and sweet voices, joining as they can; who would come in among them, and say, put away these children? Why do you call them to such an exercise as this? Religion is a personal, and voluntary thing. Wait till your children can judge for themselves, whether they ought to worship God or not; and then invite them to join with you. Would not a pious parent be right in saying, O do not separate between me and my children. Let us all go together, and all wear the badge of Christ's discipleship. I account it a great privilege to have had from my earliest days, the token of a disciple given to me; and because religion is with me a personal thing, and the choice of my heart, I seek to have the same token for my child. If he shall be removed from me in his infancy, I trust it will be to go to the company of the disciples in a better world; and if he shall be spared, I will try to bring him up for God, and trust that, ere long, he will shew that religion is in his own heart.”†

7. The alleged evil consequences of baptizing infants, are urged against our practice. A tract entitled, “The evil consequences of substituting infant sprinkling for believer's baptism,” is now being actively circulated by the Baptists. This tract asserts that Infant Baptism “is a part and pillar

\* Look at Abraham also. He is commended by God himself, thus: “I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him,” &c. Look, too, at an opposite case, that of Eli. He is stricken with sore affliction and sudden death for not using parental influence and authority aright. Assuredly, a parent is bound to use all means and influences from their earliest childhood to make his children christians. Does this interfere with their future voluntariness? Is this an infringement of their personal liberty? Ought we not to use every fond allurements, and every strong inducement in our power, for their salvation?

† Low's Ser.



of Popery,"—"mischievous and ruinous to the souls of men." It "is so generally, by whomsoever, or in what form soever it is practised." "Oil, spittle, incense, sponsors, the sign of the cross, &c., are mere details—they are but the leaves and branches of a poisonous tree; they may be all cut off, but so long as the tree is left standing, and its roots untouched, it will continue to spread desolation and death."

The above extracts are from the introductory part of the tract; the remainder is devoted to the exhibition of the two following evil consequences of Infant Baptism. "First, It teaches men to disobey God." Secondly, It corrupts the Gospel." It seems hardly necessary to stay to answer such barefaced assertions: they contain their own refutation. I would only say, that we join with our Baptist brethren in the severest reprehension of Baptismal Regeneration, and in the most determined opposition to it; but *we challenge proof of a single evil result from observing this ordinance with the views and in the manner for which we contend.* It is a gross and grievous wrong to make those who repudiate and shrink with horror from the idea of Baptismal Regeneration, responsible for the mischiefs it has done, and is still doing.—As well might we charge the Baptists with the evils resulting from Campbellism, or Mormonism. As well might the doctrine of atonement be decried, because Universalists pervert it to their ruin. As to teaching men to disobey God;—whether what has been said this morning has any such tendency, *judge ye.* As to our corrupting the Gospel, I would ask, is Baptism the gospel? Do we not preach as pure a gospel as the Baptists? Nay, are *they* not often dwelling more on an outward rite than its importance relatively to the gospel scheme as a whole, demands? Further, are not those *Christian* Churches where the deadly upas tree of Infant Baptism is planted, and nurtured with the greatest care, as much distinguished for spiritual life and vigour, as those which would pull it up by the roots?

8. It is said to be unscriptural. Another tract, having this title, is being put into the hands of young and old. Its attempt to prove the assertion with which it commences, is a signal failure. Towards the close, after calling Infant Baptism a "human invention," a "gross corruption of a

christian ordinance," "popery," &c., we are presented with the following specimen of christian charity. "As to a *dedication*, this notion is tacked to it, to make the other go down, as the Birmingham men make shillings, by whitening over a piece of base metal. In the midst of their abundant piety, they would be shocked at such a corruption of a christian ordinance, if it were not varnished over with the sanctity of a *dedication*! This is the garb which is made to hide the nakedness of a human invention, and to save the conscience from the guilt of having corrupted a Divine institution."— So then, Pædobaptists are a despicable gang of religious counterfeiters! Such assertions reflect no credit on those who make them, or sanction them by putting them into circulation. They weaken the cause they are intended to support; and though they may pass current with some little minds, thinking men will be disgusted at them. We ask to be met in a dignified, courteous manner. Truth does not need the help of any thing low and mean. Principles that require such modes of advocacy, will ere long be forsaken by all the wise and good.

9. "The variations of Infant Baptism" are urged against the practice. This is the title of another tract by means of which Baptists are endeavouring to enlighten the public mind. By "the variations of Infant Baptism," are meant, the differences of opinion on some minor points which prevail among Pædobaptists. But this is a weapon as destructive to the Baptists as it is to us. "They who live in glass houses, should not throw stones." How many variations prevail among them, as to the nature of John's Baptism, the validity of some of the arguments brought forward to support "believer's immersion;" and especially, how are they racked and torn asunder by difference of opinion on the Communion question! Scarcely a position is taken upon the subject of Baptism, by some of their writers, but it is denied by others. Is it consistent for *them* to employ an argument such as this? If it proves any thing against *our* cause, it proves just as much against *theirs*. It is true there are diversities of opinion among Pædobaptists, but all firmly hold and strongly contend for the scripturality and validity of Infant Baptism. Besides, on many important and funda-

mental doctrines, Christians are not agreed. Take, for instance, the doctrine of atonement, already mentioned. Differences of opinion exist as to its nature and extent, must it therefore be rejected altogether? A Bible truth or practice, is not rendered valueless because mixed up with the rubbish of error. Let us cast away the dross, but guard the gold.

10. It has been further objected, that an unconscious babe can derive no good from baptism. By this it is probably meant that, at the time of its administration, it produces no immediate beneficial effect. But it is a great mistake to suppose that the only use of this ordinance is at the moment of administration. An old divine well observes, that "a legacy may be of the greatest advantage to an individual, though that individual was but a child in the cradle when it was written and sealed." I have been surprised at the following statement in the Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel's new work on Baptism. "I can find no benefit whatever derived from Infant Baptism, by infants, their parents, the churches, or the world." But it ought to be remembered that the experience of Mr. N.\* up to the time of his secession from the Church of England, was gathered among those who held the dogma of Baptismal Regeneration, had sponsors, &c., who, in fact, made Baptism a *mere rite*. No wonder he could find no benefit from it there. Nor is it surprising that, recoiling from such superstitious dogmas, and silly mummeries, he has rejected the practice altogether. But in other communions, where the ordinance is observed in a scriptural manner, how many parents can testify that they have found it a stimulus to fidelity, and how many children can attest the salutary influence of the recollection, that in early infancy they were publicly given to God in Baptism.

Mr. Noel argues that infant baptism can do no good; because the parents, if christians, will do the same things on

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\* I cannot refrain (having mentioned the name of B. W. Noel,) from expressing my high respect and veneration for him. His ardent piety, lovely spirit, serene eloquence, and noble decision of character, entitle him to the esteem of all christians. Though opposing some of the principles he has recently espoused, I believe him to have acted from a high sense of duty. He has forfeited the sympathy and esteem of no independent, large-hearted christian, by becoming a Baptist.

behalf of their children that they promise to do in baptizing them, *without* attending to this ordinance. So I might say, with equal truth, adult baptism does no good whatever, *for the same reason*. But is Mr. N., or any one else, authorized thus to sit in judgment upon Divine institutions?

11. Finally, it is sometimes asked, "What is there acceptable to God, in the sprinkling of a screaming infant?" To this I answer:

1. Nothing, any more than there is in the immersion of a struggling, gasping, or fainting adult.

2. Screaming, struggling, gasping, and fainting, form no part of the ordinance.

3. The baptism of an infant, despite its screams, (when these occur,) is doubtless as acceptable to God, as the circumcision of an infant ever was.

4. What is there acceptable to God in this contemptuous way of speaking? Pædobaptists are conscientious; they are satisfied that it is scriptural to baptize their children.—They, therefore, do not merit contempt, though they often get it. Many of you will not soon forget the tone of ridicule in which the venerable Dr. McClay talked about "baby sprinkling," in the public services he held in this town not long since: It is not uncommon for Baptists to show this feeling by hurrying out of places of worship where they attend as occasional hearers, when they behold preparations for Infant-Baptism. All this is wrong: we ought to respect and honour the honest convictions of others, even if we cannot agree with them.

I close with two remarks.

1. If Infant Baptism be scriptural, persons ought to be aware how they renounce it. We say to all, *pause*, "*search the scriptures,*" weigh the matter thoroughly and INDEPENDENTLY, ere you do this. Let me urge this upon christian parents.\* Beware lest you reject a Divine institution.

\* I address *Christian parents* thus, because unconverted parents have another duty to perform, prior to their own Baptism, or the Baptism of their children. And here I must express my sorrow, that so many Pædobaptist ministers, with an ill-judged and unscriptural liberality, baptize the children of all applicants, irrespective of their religious character. How can those embrace God's covenant for their

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2. Let those who were baptized in their infancy, remember that in this ordinance, their parents solemnly gave them to God. Oh! adopt this consecration as your own; confirm what they did by making it your own act. "Yield yourselves to God." Without this, no outward form, whether observed in infancy or maturer age, will do you any good. "Ye must be born again."\*

children, who have never yet covenanted with him on their own behalf? How can those sincerely express their earnest wish that their children may be regenerated and saved, when they do not feel their own need of these blessings, but are showing their indifference on the subject of personal religion, by neglecting the "great salvation"?—How can a minister accept a promise that they will train up their children for God, from those who have no family altar, who are living "without God and without hope in the world," and whose whole influence is on the side of sin and Satan? I know it is often said, "to refuse will give offense." This however is not certain to occur. We may decline kindly, courteously, respectfully, and with such expressions of concern for the salvation of such parents and their offspring, and solemn counsels on the subject, as shall increase rather than lessen their esteem for us, and may with the blessing of God, do unspeakable good. But, if otherwise, duty is ours; results are God's.

\* I must here apologise for the meagre, skeleton-like form of some parts of the foregoing discourse. It took an hour and a half in the delivery, and I speak rapidly, so that a great deal of condensation became necessary in preparing it for the press. I may also add that some important points, not essential to the argument, such as the church-membership of children, &c. have been purposely omitted, for the sake of brevity.

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## Sermon Second.

# IMMERSION NOT THE SCRIPTURE MODE OF BAPTISM.

"And they went both down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him."—Acts viii. 38.

From this language, many individuals conclude that the Ethiopian Eunuch was baptized by being plunged overhead in water. A certain writer says;—"That we have here an example of immersion, is allowed by the most learned and candid of all denominations." This statement, however, is incorrect.

It is well known that many of those who administer baptism by pouring or sprinkling, are ready to admit that the Apostolic mode, at least in some instances, was by a complete plunging or immersion, but, from holding the mode to be of secondary importance, and from motives of convenience, prudence, and comfort, they adopt affusion. But whatever may be said of the *candour* of these parties, they are not to be extolled for their learning, information, or patient research on *this* subject. A cursory glance at the inspired narrative may lead to the impression that the Eunuch and others were plunged under water, but a careful examination of the facts, and a close consideration of the circumstances, will dissipate that impression.

At the very outset of my remarks, I will unhesitatingly make the avowal, that on the presentation of *clear proof* that *immersion* was the mode of Scripture Baptism, I will at once admit that it is the mode we ought now to adopt, and will not fail to show myself convinced by practising it. But, be it remembered, that I ask *clear proof*. Those who advocate this mode, lay great stress on "positive proof," and will be satisfied with nothing less. This alone, will avail to convince me that the Apostles plunged their converts,

If the whole question be, *which of two inferences is most probable*, after looking at Scripture statements, "positive proof" ground is forsaken.

How, then, does it appear that Philip baptized the eunuch? I answer by pouring or sprinkling, for the following reasons:

1. Their both going down into the water is no proof of immersion having taken place, nor is their both coming up out of it, proof of this. For if this proves the immersion of either, it proves the immersion of *both*, since both are included in the description. But it may be asked; why should they go *into* the water at all? I reply, we have no evidence that they did. We are not told that *either of them wet the sole of his foot*. No one is authorized to gather this from the Greek prepositions rendered "into," and "out of." The whole weight of *this* argument for the eunuch's being dipped, is laid on two little words, which are certainly innocent of saying that Philip plunged his convert, or even implying that he did so. "Eis," translated "into," is said by Schleusner, in his celebrated Lexicon of the Greek Testament, to have 26 different meanings, and "cek," translated "out of," 24. The translators of the New Testament have rendered the first by 36 different words in various places, and the second by 32. Now we maintain that the preposition, "eis," here translated "into," ought to have been given "to," or "unto," since our translators have thus rendered it in 538 *other places*;—and that "cek," here translated "out of," ought to be "from," since they have thus rendered it elsewhere no less than 186 *times*. An instance of each shall be given.

In John xi. 38, when Jesus came, "eis to mneion," "to the sepulchre of Lazarus," we know he did not enter *into* it, for Lazarus could not come forth until the stone was removed;—and in John vi. 23, where it is said, "ships came from Tiberias," "cek Tiberiados," we do not suppose they sailed "out of" the midst of the city, but that that was the place from which their voyage commenced. The preposition "cek," simply means *the point from which*, and "Eis," *the point to which*, a movement is made. In the case before us nothing more is intimated by the sacred historian than

that Philip and the eunuch went to the place where they saw water, and that after baptism they both left it. In this and other similar places, we are simply given to understand "that they went *to* the water, were baptized *with* the water, and then returned *from* the water."\* Let it be observed that we do not read of persons descending to the water, and ascending from it, except in cases of out-door baptisms. These expressions are natural in such instances, because running water was always found in channels lower than the adjoining land. But people baptized in cities, houses and villages where running streams are not found, are never said to go down to the water, or come up from it, enough water for baptizing them by affusion being always at hand.

2. It is very improbable that at the spot where this baptism took place, there was sufficient water to admit of plunging. Let it be remembered, that it was in "the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, *which is desert.*" They were travelling over a sandy waste, where water is generally very scarce. JEROME, who knew the spot well, calls it a small brook, such as we often cross in a common road;—"a clear proof that, in his time, (about 370,) it was not universally believed that the eunuch was dipped." The exclamation, "See! Water!" shows plainly that it was arrived at unexpectedly. It was probably a small rivulet,\* or fountain, for no lake, river, or stream large enough for immersion can be found there now, or be proved to have ever existed there.

3. Besides, (to use the language of another,) "is it likely that this black gentlemen, and he a eunuch, would shift his

\* A frivolous remark is sometimes made with respect to one of these prepositors. It is this, "if *eis* does not signify *into*, then, entering into heaven is only going to the gate of heaven; and entering into hell is only going to the gate of hell." But Pædobaptists never denied that *eis* sometimes signifies *into*. All we contend for is, that Baptists cannot prove such to be its precise meaning in this passage, and in other places where baptisms are recorded. No conclusive argument can be based upon it. Where heaven and hell are spoken of, the connexion, taken with other passages, settles the meaning plainly.

\* What are called "creeks" in this country, not unfrequently have to be dammed up, prior to an immersion, to make water enough for it,



clothes, in his open carriage, before Philip and his servants, or be dipped naked, or ride on his way rejoicing, dripping with water?" These considerations are conclusive against his having been dipped at all.

4. "But," say our opponents, it is written, "he baptized him, *i. e.*, if the word be translated, he immersed him."\* I would here remark, if the proof of the eunuch's immersion depends on the translation of the word "baptized," why is so much said about the prepositions, "into," and "out of," and why do our Baptist brethren proclaim, as they descend the banks of some stream, used by them for baptismal purposes, "they went down both into the water," &c. as though it were demonstration absolute that they were treading in the very footsteps of Philip and the Eunuch? Now I have already shown that no argument can be founded on the prepositions, and also that if "going down into," and "coming up out of," prove that one was plunged, they prove that both were. So that the whole argument now turns on the meaning of the word "baptized." Our Baptist friends say it means to dip, plunge, or immerse, and that this is its *only meaning*. This I do deny, and am prepared to disprove. But as this brings me at once into the thickest of the controversy, I shall proceed to the more formal discussion of the whole subject, by laying down as the proposition to be established, that *immersion is not the Scripture mode of Baptism*, and adducing in its support:

I.—That "to dip" is not the sole meaning of the verb "baptize." I need not tell you how positively the reverse of this statement is insisted on by our opponents. That "immerse" is the sole meaning of the Greek verb "baptizo;" and that dipping was the way in which the eunuch and others were baptized in the Apostolic age;—these are the two main pillars of the Baptist edifice, the Jachin and Boaz of the temple of immersion,—but truth, released like Samson of old from all the fetters that have bound its strong arms, grasps those pillars, and brings them to the ground.

There is nothing in this whole discussion at which I am more amazed, than the positive and dogmatical manner in

\* Pengilly.

which it is asserted that the word "baptize" means *only* "to dip." I most sincerely affirm that I regard my Baptist brethren with unfeigned affection as the children of God, and would not willingly drop a single expression indicative of a different feeling, or say a word purposely to give them pain. Yet I must avow the conviction that they assume ground too sweeping, too positive, and too unfair on this point.

It is generally admitted, that the primary meaning of this term in classic authors, is to plunge or dip, but who that is not a Baptist will venture to affirm that this is its *only* meaning? There is abundant proof that its *more common* signification is to *wash* or *wet* without respect to the mode in which it is performed. This is almost invariably its import when used in a religious sense being expressive of cleansing or purification. Many words are to be found in all languages which are commonly used in a different sense from the primary one. How absurd would it be to take the first meaning to a word in a dictionary, and contend that it has no other. *Andrew Fuller*, a celebrated Baptist minister, says, "I do not deny that the figurative sense of a term, may, in many cases, be of *equal*, and even of *superior* importance to the literal one." To take a word from the New Testament, *ecclesia*, "church." Its literal and primary meaning is a promiscuous assembly of any, and every sort of persons. But its common use in the New Testament, and by religious people, (the Baptists not excepted), is to denote a society of Christians, a widely different signification. Many other instances in point might be given.

That the word "baptize" does not always mean "immerse" or "dip," may be proved:—

1. By the following instances in which it occurs, where this rendering cannot possibly be given to it.

If we turn to Dan. iv. 33 : v. 25, we shall find two passages of this sort. Nebuchadnezzar's body is said to be "wet" in the original "*baptized*," "with the dew of heaven." But how was this done? Not by plunging, certainly. The proud monarch was not dipped into a reservoir of dew. It distilled upon him. We speak of the "*dew be-sprinkled grass*."

Assuredly, here are two places in which the word does not and cannot mean immersion.

Two examples have been quoted from the Apocrypha, which, though not inspired, is as good evidence of Greek usage as any part of the Bible. Judith (Jud. xii. 7) is said to have washed, literally "baptized" herself in the camp or by the camp, at a fount of water. This could not have been by immersion. For the language is *at* the fountain, "epites peges," *not in* it. Then the place, a fountain, or spring excludes the idea of her dipping herself. Added to this is the utter improbability of her *plunging herself* in or near a camp of 20,000 soldiers. It would have involved an exposure not to be endured. Moreover, the fountain was no doubt the place by which the camp was supplied with water; —and hers was a ceremonial washing or purifying, generally, if not always, performed by pouring or sprinkling. The son of Sirach, (Ecclus. xxiv. 25), speaking of a person who had been purified from the pollution contracted by touching a dead body, calls him "baptized from the dead." Now, if we look at the law of Moses here referred to, we shall find that such parties were purified by *sprinkling*. See Num. xix. 13.

It is said, 1st Cor. x. 2; that the Israelites were "all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Although the Israelites passed through the sea referred to, *dry shod*, some try to show that there is a distant allusion to immersion, by saying, the waters were piled up on each side of them, and the cloud above completed the immersion. This is very poetic, but not very convincing. For can anything be more absurd than to suppose a case of plunging or dipping, when the element never came into contact with them? Evidently they were baptized either by the spray produced by the strong east wind which divided the waters, or by the descent of rain from the cloud. That the latter occurred, we are told, Ps. lxxvii. 17. To say, as a certain writer does, "the sea is water, and a cloud differs little from water," and that therefore something like immersion took place, is not only far-fetched, but absurd and ridiculous.

In Rev. xix. 13, we have another instance in which the word cannot mean to plunge or dip. The Saviour is described

as clothed in a garment,—“*dipped* in blood” says our translation, literally “baptized with blood.” The connexion excludes the idea of immersion altogether. Christ is described under the figure of a warrior and a conqueror, and the garments of such a personage are not “*dipped* in blood,” but stained or sprinkled with the blood of his enemies, which has spirted from their wounds during battle. This is the image presented in the parallel passage in Is. lxiii. 3, where in the same character, Christ is described as saying, “Their blood shall be *sprinkled* on my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.”

Some instances, if possible still more conclusive, might be given from the Greek classics, but a single plain proof is sufficient for our purpose, and every candid hearer will acknowledge that I have produced *more than one*, so that the supposed argument from “baptizo” *always* meaning “immerse,” vanishes into thin air.

2. The following testimonies go to prove the same point. Dr. Owen, affirms, (Ser. p. 581,) “No one instance can be given from the Scriptures where “*baptizo*” necessarily means to *dip* or *plunge*.”

Schleusner, one of the ablest lexicographers, says, “The word *never* signifies to *immerse* when used by the sacred penmen.”

Dr. Dwight says, (Theol. p. 831,) “I have examined almost 100 instances, in which the word “*baptizo*,” and its derivatives are used in the New Testament, and four in the Septuagint; these, so far as I have observed, being all the instances contained in both. By this examination it is to my apprehension evident, that the following things are true:

That the primary meaning of these terms is cleansing; the effect, not the mode of washing:

That the mode is generally referred to incidentally, wherever these words are mentioned; and that this is always the case, wherever the ordinance of baptism is mentioned, and a reference made at the same time to the mode of administration.

That these words, although often capable of denoting any mode of washing, whether by affusion, sprinkling or immersion, (since cleansing was familiarly accomplished by the Jews in all these ways,) yet, in many instances, cannot

without obvious impropriety be made to signify immersion ; and in others *cannot signify it at all.*"

Dr. Henderson, universally admitted to be one of the most learned men of the age, states, \* " With respect to the Greek word "*baptizo*," after having read almost every work that professes to throw any light upon it, and carefully examined all the passages in which both it and its derivatives occur in the sacred volume, and a very considerable number of those in which it is found in classical authors ; I am free to confess I have not fallen in with a single instance in which it can be satisfactorily proved, that it signifies a *submersion of the whole body*, without, at the same time, conveying the idea, that the submersion was *permanent, i. e.*, that the body thus submerged, sunk to rise no more. So far as has yet been ascertained, the word is *never* used by any ancient author in the sense of one person *performing an act of submersion upon another* ; yet it is necessary that we bring this idea with us to the reading of the New Testament, before we can affix to "*baptizo*," as there occurring the sense of immersion."

I will not add to these testimonies, though it were easy to multiply them to any amount. These would not have been cited, but for the fact that it is so common for great names to be arrayed on the other side of the question. Now, while some are bold enough to say "*baptizo*" means only to immerse, there are abler men and more of them, who affirm the contrary. If it is to be a question of great names, the Baptists are very far from having the majority. As a general thing, the more ignorant parties are of the original, the more dogmatical are they on this point. Indeed it is not uncommon to hear persons who do not know one Greek letter from another, and who can neither speak nor write their own mother tongue grammatically, giving out their weighty decisions on the meaning of Greek words relating to Baptism, with an air of bombast and arrogance, that would have put Xenophon or Homer to the blush.

Here I must stay one moment to point out the unfair manner in which Pædobaptist authors are sometimes

† Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, on the Bible Society.

quoted. Men who by no means admit that the word means to dip *only*, are arrayed along with those who take this presumptuous ground, as though they agreed with them. When it is well known that an author did not hold a particular sentiment, what can be more unfair than to quote him as if he did? *Pengilly*, for example, whose "Scripture Guide to Baptism," is literally studded with great names; in attempting to prove that "baptize," signifies only "immerse," cites Mr. Ewing, author of an excellent Greek Lexicon, in the following partial manner. "Mr. Ewing, of Glasgow, "Baptizo," in its primary and radical sense, I cover with water. It is used to denote, 1st, I plunge or sink completely under water." Compare this garbled extract with the subjoined quotation, taken direct from the Lexicon. "Baptizo,"—In its primary and radical sense, I cover with water or some other fluid, in whatever manner this is done, whether by immersion or affusion, wholly or partially, permanently, or for a moment, &c." Then follow eight different meanings to the word, all of which are amply sustained by instances from the Scriptures, and from the authors of antiquity. Many others are treated with equal unfairness in the work referred to.

3. Finally, many of the more intelligent and candid Baptist writers deny the bold position I am combatting, and admit that the word has several meanings. By some of them, the correctness of an alphabetical list of renderings, amounting to no less than 42, has been acknowledged. Indeed, the statement that "baptize" means only to dip, refutes itself.\* Let any individual apply this *only correct* translation wherever the word occurs in the New Testament, and see the absurdity it will make. We need only take the 3rd chapter of Matthew as an illustration of this.

Yet in the face of these plain facts, Dr. Carson, in his celebrated defence of Immersion, p. 392, says, "Sprinkling cannot be called baptism with more propriety than sand can be called water!" And I doubt not some present, as

\* Carrying out their own principle to its issues, our Baptist friends ought to style themselves "Immersers," or as that is as much a Latin term as "Baptists" is Greek, in plain old Saxon "Dippers." But they would take the application of these terms as an insult.

well as myself, recollect the strange assertion of the venerable Dr. McClay while preaching in this town, a few months ago—"They might as well have rendered 'baptizo' to eat *roust beef*, as to *sprinkle*."!!

However positively and boldly it may be asserted that the word means to *dip only*, it is utterly impossible to *prove* it. The truth is, that *from the word alone*, no satisfactory conclusion can be formed as to the Scripture mode of baptism. It neither proves definitely, dipping, pouring or sprinkling. There were words which might have been used by the sacred writers to express with certainty either immersion or affusion, but these are avoided, and a term of more general import chosen. "Baptize," like the words wash, cleanse, purify, is of sufficient latitude to admit of either mode. Christian Baptism is the application of water, as emblematical of purification to a person in the name of the Trinity, the manner of doing so being indeterminate and unexpressed, so far as the *word* adopted to designate the ordinance is concerned.

If, then, the question cannot be settled by an appeal to the word "baptize," we must look at the circumstances in which the ordinance was originally administered, to ascertain what was the mode practised.

This leads me to observe—

II.—That no case of Baptism recorded in the New Testament can be shown positively to have been by immersion. More than this, all the probabilities are against this mode.

It is plain from the inspired narrative that as soon as people embraced the truth the rite of baptism was performed without delay. Whole families, and even thousands at a time were baptized, without any account being given of their having to wait for preliminary arrangements, or go to a distance for a sufficient supply of water.

\* It is often argued that the places chosen for baptizing by John the Baptist, prove that his mode must have been *dipping*, because had he practised *pouring* or *sprinkling*, sufficient water for such a purpose might have been found any where. He is said to have baptized in Jordan, and it is also mentioned that he selected Enon near to Salim for the same purpose, because there was much water there.

Now, according to the statements and practice of Baptists, "water about 3 feet deep, pure and quiet, is best adapted for immersing grown up people. Were it much deeper, or shallower, or foul, or much agitated, it would be unfit for such a purpose, rendering immersion exceedingly troublesome, if not impossible."

But the Jordan did not offer these advantages.

"The baptizing spot has been visited and minutely examined by many intelligent and credible travellers, who tell us that here "the river Jordan is of considerable width—the water turbulent—the bottom rocky—the edges of the bank abrupt—and the depth about six or seven feet close to the shore." *Volney* says, "Its breadth between the two principal lakes, in few places, exceeds 60 or 80 feet, but its depth is about ten or twelve."—*Monro* says, "The river here, at the baptizing spot, forms an angle, &c.; the width of it might be 35 yards, and the stream was running with the precipitous fury of a rapid; the bank was steep; shelving off abruptly into deep water."—*Thompson* says, "it is exceeding deep, even at the edge of the inner bank."—*Dr. Shaw* computes it "about thirty yards broad, and three yards in depth."—*Chateaubriand* found the Jordan to be "6 or 7 feet deep close to the shore."\*

Unless, therefore, men and women in John's time, were twice the height they now are, dipping them in the Jordan must have been quite impracticable. They must have been baptized by pouring or sprinkling.

The waters of Enon were doubtless, as much too limited for the purpose of dipping, as those of Jordan were too deep and abundant.

"Enon, as the word imports, was nothing more than a well; or, as described by a Baptist writer, "a cavernous spring, called the Dove's Eye; and such were of great account in Judea, especially in some seasons." *Robinson*.—"It is remarkable that no such place, distinguished by an abundance of water, can be discovered at this day." *Calmet*.—It is most likely that Enon was to Salim what Jacob's well was to the inhabitants of Samaria—a place of drawing

\* Thorn's Dipping not Baptizing.



water. At all events, it is clear that John could not have quitted the Jordan for Enon on account of the *quantity* of water it contained; for surely he had enough in the river, and more than in this insignificant well—which, at best, must have been a most inconvenient place for immersing many people.

The original terms, rendered much water, are literally "many waters". They do not designate merely *quantity* of water, simply considered as *deep* and *abounding*, but numerous waves, fountains, or streams, however small the amount of water in each. *Stuart*.—Had a large body of water been meant, other terms would have been employed to express it. Those used, no more indicate that the water was adapted for dipping than for sprinkling. In a country where wells or fountains are often ten or twenty miles apart, congregations could not assemble, nor caravans encamp, far from them for the space of a day, without the most dangerous consequences. Had John made Enon, or any other place, a mere preaching station, without baptizing an individual, he would have needed much water for refreshing his vast audiences, who probably continued with him for many days together, and for preserving them from perishing with thirst in that arid land.

But had the river Jordan and the well Enon been ever so nicely adapted for dipping, their localities must have rendered them very unsuitable for such a mode of purification. It is manifest, that in all out-of-door immersions, of vast multitudes, where there were few or no houses at the command of the Baptizer—which appears to have been the case in the present instances—the candidates, both men and women, rich and poor, young and old, sick and sound—must inevitably have been exposed naked either *twice*, while shifting their clothes, or *once*, while being immersed; or if, to avoid this indelicacy, they had been dipped in the garments they had about them, they must have returned to Jerusalem, 25 miles off, and to other distant places, dripping with water, to the imminent peril of the r health and lives—a case wholly incredible.\*

\* *ib.*

There is not the slightest evidence that OUR SAVIOUR WAS baptized by immersion. The remarks made concerning the baptism of the eunuch apply with the same force here. The prepositions used in this description afford no proof of plunging having taken place, nor does the word "baptize" necessarily imply it, as has been abundantly demonstrated.

CORNELIUS and his household, were doubtless baptized by affusion. "They went to no river, they are not said to go down to any water, nor are we told that they had a bath adapted for such a purpose in their house." Indeed Peter's question, "Can any forbid water?" &c., clearly indicates that it was to be brought to him for the administration of this rite. And, particularly, it ought to be noticed that when the apostle saw the Holy Spirit descending upon them he was reminded of what Christ had said of John's baptizing with water. Why should *this* have been suggested to him, if baptism by water, did not resemble the descent of the Holy Ghost, in the mode of its administration? What is there either in the narrative or the allusion, at all favouring the idea of immersion?

"That the SAMARITANS, Acts, viii. ch., were baptized by sprinkling or pouring scarcely admits of a doubt. They had no river or fountain of pure water in their city or immediate neighbourhood; what was required for domestic use being fetched from Jacob's well, which was both distant and deep. Now the immersion of an adult would require about 180 gallons of water, and to have obtained this from a distance in every case of baptism would have been next to impossible."

"The case of PAUL, Acts, ix. ch., is equally conclusive. He was evidently baptized in the room where he was sitting. He was directed, as he himself tells us, Acts, xxii. 16, to stand up, (not to go away to a spot fit for immersion) but to be baptized there at once. This act is called washing away his sins, (ceremonially of course,) which was always done by sprinkling the penitent offender with blood or water. While to have plunged him under water, when weak and exhausted with three days fasting and excitement, would have been anything but humane and christian-like." \*

\* Dip. not Bap.

The baptism of the JAILOR must also have been by pouring or sprinkling. Some to maintain the cause of immersion imagine that there was a bath in the jail at Philippi, "a luxury which no prison in the Roman Empire, or in any country of the East, either in ancient or modern times, ever boasted. Our "positive-proof brethren" draw largely upon probability and inference in this and other cases, concluding on the strength of mere conjecture, that there were always at hand ample conveniences not only for "shower baths," but for "plunge baths." It is doubtful whether bathing by complete immersion, was common in the countries and times referred to in the sacred narrative. LAMARTINE tells us in his travels, that "what is called a bath in the east, is not a complete immersion, but a succession of *sprinklings*, more or less hot, and the pressing of vapour on the skin."

We cannot allow our opponents, in the absence of evidence, to *imagine* that the prison at Philippi, contained a cistern or tank, adapted or available for an immersion.

Others suppose, that where it is said the Jailor "brought out Paul and Silas, the meaning is that he took them out of the prison altogether, and that then they all walked away in the dead of night, dark as it was, to some neighbouring river or stream where the immersion was performed. Such persons fail to notice, that having received a strict charge concerning these prisoners, the Jailor had "thrust them in the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks." It was from the *inner prison*, not *not out of the jail altogether* that Paul and Silas were brought. It was customary in the East for the Jailor's house to be within the walls of the prison. Nor would the laws of the Roman Empire, nor indeed of any country, have allowed this officer, charged as he was, to keep his prisoners in safe custody, to let them walk about the city at large for purposes of their own. The narrative plainly states that he retained them in his keeping within the precincts of the prison, until they were released in due form. How absurd to imagine that he, who a short time before was on the point of slaying himself, "supposing that the prisoners had been fled," and knowing that the law held him responsible for all in his charge, would, as the result of believing in Christ, have been ready, not only to

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let his prisoners go at large, but to leave the premises himself, and with his family accompany them to some stream to be immersed. There is no need for such unfounded suppositions. Immediately on believing, this individual and his family were baptized, and without any shadow of proof, we are asked to believe that they were all plunged over head at the midnight hour, when all was agitation and haste, and when it cannot be shown that there were any conveniences at hand for so doing. Surely it must appear plain to any unprejudiced person, that this baptism, *administered without delay and within the prison walls*, as it unquestionably was, must have been by pouring, or sprinkling. All the probabilities are in favour of this mode, and against the other.

In the cases that have been referred to, the question whether baptism was performed by dipping or by affusion, can only be decided by *circumstantial evidence*, and I leave my hearers to judge on which side that evidence preponderates.

III.—There are no Scripture allusions to Baptism which authorize the conclusion that dipping was the mode practised.

1. An argument has been attempted to be drawn from what our Lord said in relation to his sufferings, Luke xii. 50, "I have a baptism to be baptized with," &c. "Here," it has been observed "is a reference to those deep waters of Divine justice into which he was soon to sink for man's redemption." But surely an unprejudiced reader of the Scriptures would rather say, "Here is an allusion to the *pouring out* of the Divine wrath upon him for the sins of men." No figure is more frequently employed in the word of God to denote the infliction of suffering than that of "*pouring out*," as when we read of *pouring out indignation*, *pouring out fury and wrath*, &c.

We have a plain instance here of the impropriety of always rendering the word "baptize," to "dip" or "plunge." Apply either of these terms to the passage under consideration. "I have a dipping to be dipped with,"—"a plunging to plunged with!" How manifestly forced, unnatural, unmeaning and absurd!

2. An amazing amount of stress is laid by many of our op-

ponents upon the language of the Apostle Paul in Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, where he speaks of "being buried with Christ in baptism." What but immersion it is asked resembles burial? It is also triumphantly asserted that all Pædobaptists must admit, as some of them do, that this is conclusive in favour of immersion having been the Apostolic mode of Baptism. To this I answer, that while many allege these portions of Scripture as undeniable evidence in favor of plunging, there are not a few of the more enlightened, intelligent, and eandid *Baptist* writers, who give up the expression altogether, acknowledging that it affords their cause no support.

As this is an argument much dwelt upon *in this country*, it demands more than a passing notice.

1. First, then, it is not at all likely that the Apostle is here alluding to the external rite of Baptism,

The only proof of any such allusion, is a supposed analogy between burial and dipping; But the train of the Apostle's argument, and the connexion of the words in question, show clearly that he is here speaking of something inward; viz. the purification of the heart by the influence of the gospel.

In Rom. vi. 4, he is answering the objection that "the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins by free grace, tends to relax the power of motives to holiness, and to encourage men to live in sin." In reply, he asks, "how can we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" And then he goes on to show that the gospel system does in reality tend to *holiness*, and not to *sin*. Now what would be convincing proof of this? The solemnities of an external rite, or the renewal of heart to which the rite points? Assuredly, the latter. The believer's participation in the death of Christ, resulting in his dying unto sin, is what is pointed out, not his being put under the "baptismal wave," as a resemblance to the burial of the Saviour's body.

From this passage of scripture, it is very common for those who practice immersion to speak of baptism as a setting forth of the Saviour's death and resurrection. One Baptist writer assures us, "it is the noble design of this ordinance to represent a buried and risen Saviour." Ano-

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ther says, "That cannot be Christ's true baptism wherein there is not a lively representation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ." This we do not hesitate to pronounce, a *total misapplication of the ordinance*. The Lord's Supper, and not baptism, is the sacrament in which Christians "show forth the Lord's death till he come." The Christian Sabbath, and not baptism, commemorates the Saviour's resurrection. Baptism is a symbol of internal purification, and it is to the spiritual, inward experience of that purification, and not to the outward mode of a rite, that the Apostle is calling attention. A *spiritual resurrection*, a rising to "newness of life," is spoken of as the *result* of this baptism, we are therefore warranted in concluding that the *interment* is *spiritual*, as well as the resurrection, and not a mere natural plunging.

It is not necessary here to dwell on the *second* of the passages in which the allusion we are considering occurs, Col. ii. 12. If there be evidence that the burial in the first passage is spiritual, and not a particular mode of performing baptism, there is still more evidence of it in this, as any one may at once see by perusing the verse and context.\*

2. Farther, the analogy between the burial of Christ, and baptism by immersion is *fancied*, and not *real*. Persons who quote these expressions with so much confidence, seem to suppose that our Lord was buried after the manner of our own country and times. But even granting this for a moment, "what resemblance can there be between dipping a person under water, and a burial, where a corpse is conveyed by a train of mourners—is let down slowly into the grave,—covered over with earth,—and left there"?

But the burial of Christ was not like our modern burials. Mr. Robinson, a Baptist writer, justly remarks, "the first English Baptists, when they read the phrase, 'buried in baptism,' instantly thought of an English burial, and therefore baptized by laying the body in the form of burying in their own country; but they might have observed that Paul wrote to Romans, and that Romans (at that period) did not bury but burned the dead, and buried nothing of the dead

\* I would here recommend, particularly to brethren in the ministry, a most masterly defence of the *interant* view of these passages, in Dr. Beecher's new work on Baptism, pp. 83-114.

but their ashes in urns; so that no fair reasoning on the form of baptizing can be drawn from the mode of burying the dead in England."

Those, however, who fancy any resemblance between an "English burial," and that of our Saviour, are entirely mistaken. His body was not lowered into the earth, and covered with mould, but placed in a "new tomb hewn out in the rock," like a small apartment, the floor of which was on a level with the ground, or only slightly depressed from it, and the corpse was laid in a niche, or on a shelf at the side, or perhaps on the floor itself, covered only with grave-clothes. The sepulchre was so capacious that a person could sit or stand upright in it, and it was closed by a stone being rolled to the entrance. Let Baptists now point out if they can, the least resemblance between the plunging of a person under water, and the burial of Christ. In it there was no more similarity to the dipping of an individual under water, than when the body of Dorcas was carried up stairs, and laid upon a bed. "No two things are more unlike," and the entire argument drawn from these passages is one of *sound*, not of *seise*.

3. Finally, in these passages, we have *several figures* employed. The Apostle not only speaks of *burial*, but of planting, crucifixion, and circumcision, and all with reference to the same subject. Now why amidst such a variety of figures, is one selected, and the rest avoided and passed by? Can we suppose this would be done, were there not a theory to support? Is it not far more natural to suppose that the Apostle is not speaking of an external rite, but of the inward reality? Ought not our opponents to be consistent and either symbolize all these figures or none of them? But, as Dr. Beecher pertinently remarks, "had there been no external rite, but internal baptism only, the force of the analogy would have called for the use of burial in both these passages. In speaking of the spiritual crucifixion, death, and resurrection of the believer, how could Paul help inserting burial? The real origin of the language is obvious. *Christ was buried in fact*, as well as crucified, and the same series of events that furnished to Paul all the rest of his figures, would naturally furnish this."

By applying these passages to the outward rite, power-

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ful exhortations to holiness are frittered away to mean, "a fellow creature putting us under water, and then lifting us up again."!!

IV. I argue against Immersion, further, because it is not fitted to represent what is set forth in Baptism.

It is generally admitted that Baptism denotes the purification of the heart by the influence of the Holy Spirit.—With the promises and descriptions of the communication of the Holy Spirit, Baptism by sprinkling or pouring, beautifully harmonizes; while dipping is not adapted to represent it at all.

It is never said we are *immersed in the Spirit*, or *dipped in the Spirit*. On the contrary, it is written, "I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean."—Ezek. xxxvi. 25. The Holy Spirit is said to be *poured* upon men,—to *fill* on them,—and to be *shed forth*. Is it at all probable that God would speak of his own operations in one way, and symbolically denote them by another; that he would promise to sprinkle or pour out his Spirit upon us, and represent that blessing by a plunging? "Surely the sign by water, will correspond with the sign by words."

Moreover, the disciples are said to have been baptized with that which *descended*, or was *poured upon them*. John said, Matt. iii. 11, "I indeed baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Here the idea of dipping or immersing is excluded by the very form of expression used; and accordingly we find, by comparing Acts ii. 3 33, with this passage, that when this prediction was fulfilled, the Holy Ghost *descended* on the disciples, and clove tongues as of fire, came down, and sat on each of them. Speaking of this marvellous occurrence, Peter says, "He hath *shed forth* this, which ye now see and hear." Thus also, in Acts x. 44. we read, that while Peter spoke to Cornelius and his family, "the Holy Ghost *fell* on all them which heard the word." The Apostle recognizes this as the fulfilment of the language already referred to, saying, "Then remembered I the word of the Lord how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."\*

\* See also, Is. xxxii. 15.; xlv. 3.; lii. 15. Ezek. xxxix. 29. Joel ii. 28, 29. Zech. xxii. 10. Compared with Acts ii. 17.; viii. 16.; x. 38. Titus iii. 6.; &c. &c.



Here it ought to be borne in mind that the Jewish people were familiar with Baptism as a sign of ritual purification, and that these religious or ceremonial purifications, were performed almost always by pouring or sprinkling, chiefly by the latter method. In Heb. ix. 10, we read of the services of the first tabernacle consisting in meats, and drinks, and divers washings." In the original it is "*divers baptisms*;" and how these baptisms were performed, we may learn by taking into consideration the fact, that the laver where they were performed was a portable vessel of brass, standing on one foot, and quite too small to admit of immersion; and also by consulting the details of the ceremonial law, where again and again the priest is directed to sprinkle the people, sometimes with blood, sometimes with oil, sometimes with ashes, and sometimes with water. We repeatedly read of persons being *cleansed, purged, sanctified, and washed*, by a mere sprinkling either of water or blood. The Apostle, shortly after speaking of these "*divers baptisms*," mentions some of them thus: "if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer *sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh," &c.—Heb. ix. 13. Doubtless the mode of applying the purifying element, so common among the Jews, was adopted by John the Baptist, who was himself a priest, and perpetuated by the Apostles of our Lord.

In passing, I may just refer to a passage in Mark vii. 4, which speaks of the "*washing*," literally the *baptizing*, "of cups and pots, of brazen vessels, and of tables." It is their ceremonial purification which is here referred to, as you may see by looking at the context. Now, although we can readily conceive of *cups* and *pots* being washed by being dipped into water, it is impossible that "*beds*," literally "*couches*," used while taking their meals, and large enough for three to recline upon at their ease, could have been immersed. Dr. Carson, while admitting that it is these long couches that are here referred to, says he will maintain an immersion until its *impossibility* is proved, and therefore ingeniously suggests that they might have been so made as to be taken to pieces, for this end. The learned Dr. seems to have forgotten that there may be *absurdity*, where there is not *impossibility*.

V. I argue against Baptism by immersion, further, because it is impossible that the vast numbers who came to John the Baptist, could have been so baptized; and also, because the baptism of the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost, by immersion, is equally impossible.

According to the inspired narrative, it would seem that John alone baptized all that came to him during the period of his ministry; and there is no reason to think he was engaged in the work more than six months. We are told, Matt. iii. 5, that "there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him." If we take this language as signifying, literally all the inhabitants of the places specified, he must have baptized (according to a calculation gathered from Josephus) about two millions of people. This would have been 12,000 a-d-y. To have dipped such vast multitudes, would have been impossible, had he possessed the strength of a giant.

But lest any should think the calculation just given formed on too large a scale, we will suppose that John baptized but a *tenth* of the probable inhabitants of the country. This is a very moderate estimate, yet to have accomplished this, he must have dipped 1,280 every day—about 107 every hour, and nearly two every minute!! One in two minutes is the quickest rate of performing immersions that our opponents give us any account of; but this falls far short of the work of John the Baptist, even though he had stood in the water from dawn till twilight. All these, and still greater numbers, could have been *sprinkled* with perfect ease; and who can doubt that this was the mode adopted?

Neither could it have been by immersion that the 3,000 were baptized on the day of Pentecost, as we read, Acts ii. 41. That all the converts made on that day, were actually baptized ere its close, is evident; and is not only *admitted*, but contended for by our opponents, who maintain that baptism always preceded admission into the visible church. "Now, supposing immersion to have been the mode, and the 12 apostles to have been employed in the work, it must have been a most laborious and disagreeable, if not utterly impracticable undertaking, to be accomplished in the course of 5 or 6 hours. It should be taken into the account,

moreover, that at least 24 robing-rooms and a dozen dipping-places, must have been obtained for the purpose. And if more agents assisted, and lightened the labours of each, a proportionate increase of both kinds of conveniences, must have been provided."\*

To remove one part of the difficulty in this case, it has been supposed "that not the apostles only, but all the male members of the church, engaged in administering the immersion; that as there were one hundred and twenty members in all at Jerusalem, 60 of these may have been males; that each of these 60 might immerse an individual, and go through the whole service in two minutes; and that thus the whole 3,000 might be immersed in one hour and 40 minutes."

But we have no proof from Scripture that private members of the Church *ever* baptized, so that the idea of so many being engaged in baptizing, is purely imaginative.—Then just conceive of 60 persons being engaged in immersing 3,000 others, at the rate of two minutes to each. What a scene! How little like a solemn ordinance of religion!—But more than all, and completely fatal to this absurd conjecture, there was no place within Jerusalem where such a service could be performed. "In the city itself," says a certain writer, "there was neither a river, nor fountain of water. Kedron was little better than the common sewer of the city, and was dry except during the early and latter rains. Siloam was only a spring without the walls, not always flowing, the contents of which were sometimes sold to the people by measure; and the pools supplied by its pure streams when flowing, were either used for washing sheep and similar purposes, (rendering them very unfit for ceremonial lustrations,) or they were the property of persons not very likely to lend them for baptizing apostate strangers in. The water used for domestic purposes was obtained from the rains of heaven, and preserved in household tanks, and, of course, was guarded with the utmost care, and used with a rigid economy,—it raining in that country only twice a year." It may be further mentioned, that LAMARTINE in his travels says, of the fountain of Siloam,

\* Dip. not Bap.

that it is "the *only* place in the environs of Jerusalem, where the traveller can moisten his finger, quench his thirst, and rest his head under the shallow of the cool rock, and on two or three tufts of verdure." That the case was precisely similar, in the time of the apostles, may be clearly proved by a reference to the writings of Josephus, their countryman and contemporary.

"But it has been said, where was Bethesda with its pools? "I may reply," says Mr. Law, "where indeed? There was one pool called Bethesda, though there are no traces of it to be found now. We gather from the account in John 5th ch., that it must have been a narrow and confined place, into which only one person could step at a time."

"Under these and many other equally outward circumstances, which cannot now be mentioned, where could the despised and persecuted disciples and their no less anathematized converts, obtain convenient places and a sufficiency of fair and pure water for such a hasty and extensive dipping! to say nothing of providing second dresses, or dipping naked, or walking through the streets streaming with water,—one or other of which must have been done by every person baptized.

In a word, immersing such multitudes, on these occasions, without the intervention of a miracle,—which appears never to have been wrought in furtherance of a baptizing—was a thing incredible, and the very next step to an utter impossibility. Suppose them all affused or sprinkled, and every difficulty vanishes in a moment."\*

The same remarks apply with equal force to the still greater number, viz. 5,000 who believed under Peter's sermon preached in Solomon's porch soon after, and were of course, immediately baptized.

VI. I would adduce, as a further reason against Baptism by Immersion, that we have no evidence of its being thus practised immediately after the days of the Apostles. We have no positive instances of immersion until Baptism and other institutions of Christianity, began to be perverted, and the Church began to grow sadly corrupt. Thorn says:

"There is no proof of dipping, in a single instance, for a great

\* Dip. not Bap.

number of years after the death of the latest apostle ! nor until this institution had confessedly been corrupted by superstitious attributes, modifications, and appendages, nearly as much so as at present in the Roman Hierarchy. Neither does it appear that dipping was deemed essential to Christian Baptism, by any person during the first four centuries, or, indeed, at any subsequent period, by the general body of Christians. A citation or two will prove this. About the year 130, *Justin Martyr* distinctly compares the *sprinklings* of the Gentiles with Christian Baptism—making not the slightest allusion to dipping as a part of the ordinance. In 265, Cyprian says that “*sprinkling* is sufficient instead of immersion.” About 300, Lactantius writes, “that he might save the Gentiles by baptism, that is by the *perfusion* of purifying water.” And about 380, Augustine says, “the person to be baptized is either *sprinkled* with water or dipped in it.” Therefore, as far as church history is concerned, the earliest evidence is in favour of sprinkling only ; while our opponents have no more authority for dipping, from this source, than Catholics and Episcopalians have for employing sponsors, making the sign of the cross, using spittle, oil, exorcism, and inculcating baptismal regeneration—for all these are coeval with the first notice of baptismal immersion.

“Dipping, I admit, was introduced early ; but then it should seem as only a part of this rite---to indicate more distinctly, in the judgment of half evangelized professors, the putting off, or washing away, the filth of the flesh ; and was in the case of adults, generally, if not invariably, done by themselves alone ; while pouring or sprinkling was always added by another to represent putting on the new man or the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon them. The usual mode, from the second century downwards, as evinced by ancient carved and painted representations---the best possible evidence in such a case---was this : the candidate stood in the water up to his ancles, knees, or middle, and the minister, from his hand or a vessel, poured the element on his head. So that, upon the whole, history is far more against the mode of our opponents than for it. Even the Greek and other eastern churches, (on the traditional knowledge and practice of which the Baptists talk so eloquently,) never administer this ceremony without pouring or sprinkling, as the last or most important part of it ; and, in the case of adults, as the whole of the rite. In some oriental communions it is still customary to take their children to a river and to pour or sprinkle the running water upon them--as the entire act of baptizing.”

Ecclesiastical History is often appealed to by our oppo-

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nents, but it really affords them no succour. True, they affirm that for more than 1800 years, dipping was the universal practice, and that it was only in the 14th century, that a change was introduced.

Now, the New Testament gives us the history of the *first* century, and I have abundantly shown that there is no proof of dipping having been practised at all during *that* period.

You have just heard the testimony afforded from the end of the first to the end of the fourth century, and with regard to the practice of the church, from *that time* to the 14th century, no one acquainted with the real state of things then existing, will pay much attention to it, for any sect of Protestants must be hard pressed for arguments when they are obliged to go for them to the *dark ages*.

VII. Finally, I object to immersion, because it is a mode attended with many difficulties, inconveniences, and even dangers.

Baptism, as a religious ordinance, was intended for all nations, in every climate, for all persons in every variety of condition and circumstances.

But in some parts of the world, the polar regions for example, how could dipping be practised? In how many spots on the earth's surface, is water too scarce to admit of it without the greatest difficulty. Even in this town where we are blessed with a plenteous supply of this necessary of life, how much trouble is, connected with filling the baptismal box prior to an immersion, when it is wished to have it performed comfortably in the chapel, instead of imitating Philip and the Eunuch, by *going down into* a stream of water, as the Baptists say they did.

How impracticable is the dipping of aged, infirm, and sickly persons, on their being brought to believe on Christ, particularly in the winter season.

What a shock to the minds of timid, delicate, or nervous females is the idea of submitting to such a mode of baptism as this. How natural is it that they should shrink from being plunged under water by a stranger, or even a friend of the other sex. And how much indelicacy is there often in connexion with immersions. For want of the leads and dresses used by John the Baptist and the apostles(?), scenes of exposure have sometimes occurred, which have filled the

modest and refined with shame and confusion, and caused the vulgar to indulge in shouts and hisses. On this point I will not dwell, further than to remark, that if difficulties such as these exist *now*, they must have operated still more powerfully in apostolic times, when christianity was struggling for a foothold; when every evil report was raised against it and its preachers that human or satanic hatred could lay hold of, and when females were much more secluded and bashful than now, when indeed, the customs of the country and the times, shut them out very much from social intercourse with men. Are we to suppose that the same apostles who carried their ideas of female delicacy so far as to forbid women appearing unveiled in public assemblies, would nevertheless dip them under water in the presence of gazing crowds? How many females are there, even at this day, who though prevailed on to think that it is *their duty* to be immersed, cannot muster courage sufficient to go through with it. Indeed, anxiety and fear are not unfrequently visible in the administrator and spectators.\* *Pengilly* says, referring to these things, "Thank God that the ordinance is a *cross*. Christ never intended his religion or his ordinances to suit the fancies of unregenerate men." But it is even the *regenerate* who feel these difficulties, and while it is true that religion is not shaped to please worldly minds, it is also true that *it does not war against the finer sensibilities of our nature*. Be it remembered that the same God who instituted the ordinance of baptism, has implanted within us those feelings which are outraged by the indelicacy, and shocked by the roughness of this objectionable mode. None of the Divine institutions conflict with the natural laws he has wisely ordained. There is nothing unreasonable in any requirement laid upon us. Many things are to be found in the Bible *above* human reason, but nothing can be met with contrary to it.

Further, this mode of baptism is quite inconsistent with a proper frame of mind on the part of the individual submitting to it. When he ought to be in a composed, calm,

\* I witnessed an immersion a few months ago, at which the minister prayed before *going down into the water*, "that no accident might occur," "that nothing might take place to discompose their minds," "that they might be kept calm," &c.

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devout frame of mind, he is beforehand fearing, and at the moment of being dipped, guarding against suffocation. Instead of such a mode of baptism being calculated to suggest and foster spiritual ideas, it is just fitted to drive them all away. How unlike the spirit of Christianity, which enjoins no burdensome, painful ceremonies, is this mode! How unlike the sister sacrament of the Lord's Supper, where all is eminently calculated to excite and to aid profitable and devout contemplation!

It is sometimes said by Baptists, and was much dwelt on by Rev. J. Inglis (late of this town,) in the *Evangelical Pioneer*, that the solemnity of this mode of baptism, is one proof among others, of its being the right one. Whatever impressions of a solemn nature others may have received from spectacles of dipping, I can only say, they wear to me anything but a solemn appearance. Besides it is not uncommon for accidents to take place which render seriousness impossible, and give rise to confusion and mortification.\*

Nor is it in some cases unattended with danger. True. Baptists have affirmed,

"That afflicted persons have been occasionally benefited in their health by immersing them in cold water at baptism." This I will not deny, any more than I would the accounts I have read of men being cured of rheumatism and gout by finding their houses on fire. Such results, however, are accidental, contrary to the natural course of things, and never anticipated by the parties themselves. Whereas causing people to stand up to their knees but a minute in cold water, or plunging them under it—particularly if advanced in years, heated by excitement or a crowd of spectators; or if subject to chronic diseases, or having a tendency of blood to the head or the heart; is calculated to produce the most serious physical mischief. And, in this conclusion, we are fully borne out by the precautions sometimes observed by our experienced opponents. Hid beneath his black gown, the minister has been known to wear leathern boots reaching above his middle—the water in the baptistry has been privately warmed before the dipping has commenced—the baptism of many invalids has been postponed for months and years, and even to the end of their lives through the apprehension of bodily mischief. Surely, then, danger is sometimes anticipated, even by persons who loudly dilate on the safety and the pleasure of being baptized by immersion.†

Nor are these dangers wholly imaginary; sicknesses, and

\*A case of this sort occurred 4 years ago in the village of — C.W. A Baptist minister was in the act of immersing a married female, when his foot slipped, and immediately they were both floundering in the water. The husband fearing that his wife would be literally "buried in baptism," and find a watery grave, was rushing to the rescue, when the minister recovered his foothold, raised the lady, and as thoroughly mortified as he was drenched, made his way to the bank. This was certainly a *literal* fulfilment of the words, "they went down both into the water."

† Dip. not Bap.



even deaths have been known to result from plunging persons in cold water. Now we do not say that any *duty* is to be avoided, because of either difficulties or dangers, but no good proof can be given that *this is a duty*, and hence we maintain that to enforce it as such is to attempt to burden us with a yoke which cannot be shown to be of any advantage to ourselves, the church, or the world. Pouring or sprinkling shuns all these difficulties, is more expressive, more solemn, and more easy of application to all.

We have no hesitation then in forming the conclusion, in which we think you will heartily join, that *immersion is not the mode of baptism we are required to adopt.*

I close by observing ;

I. It plainly appears from what has been said, that it can only be an *OPINION* with the Baptists, that *Immersion* is the *ONLY SCRIPTURE MODE* of Baptism. This is asserted as though it were an *ascertained certainty*, a *fixed fact*.

From this they *INFER*,

I. That all other denominations are unbaptized, because unimmersed, and that they are therefore in a state of disobedience against God.

II. That other denominations cannot be recognized and treated by them as members of the church of Christ.

III. That other denominations are guilty of mis-translating the word of God, or at least of covering up its sense on the subject of baptism.

Now I would earnestly and affectionately ask, are they warranted in founding such sweeping and tremendous conclusions on a *mere matter of opinion*, respecting the particular mode of observing an outward ordinance ?

“ I speak unto wise men, judge ye what I say.”

2. I cannot conclude without one word on the necessity of having the *heart* right in the sight of God. It is not enough for us to be right in externals: our righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. “ The kingdom of God is not meats and drinks ;” it does not consist in outward forms, but in “ righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” \*

\* This discourse concludes abruptly, for want of space, but it was thought best to give the argument entire, and omit nearly all the closing remarks.

