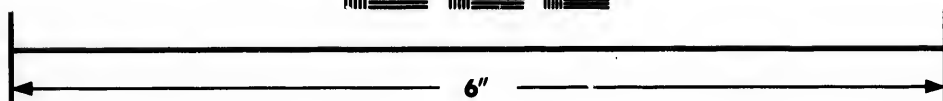
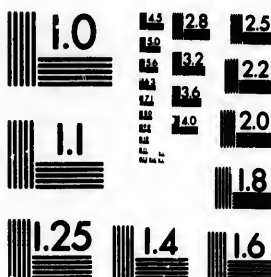


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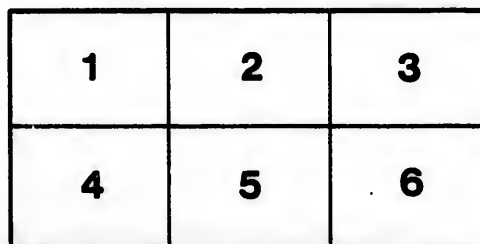
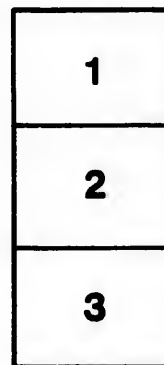
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The
Nature, Mode, & Subjects
of ¹²⁴⁴
Baptisms

2 Aug 19 74

EXAMINED.

BY JACOB STANLEY.

"He shall sprinkle many nations." ISAIAH.
"Our fathers—were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea."
PAUL.

DUDLEY;
PRINTED AND SOLD BY THOMAS STANLEY;

ST. JOHN, N. B.

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TO THE SOCIETIES AND CONGREGATIONS OF THE
WESLEYAN METHODISTS IN THE DUDLEY
CIRCUIT.

DEAR BRETHREN,

Very zealous efforts having recently been made to draw you aside from those views of Christian baptism in which you had been instructed, and to persuade you that infant baptism is no baptism, and that there is no true baptism but by immersion; by which means some have been prevailed upon to be dipped, and others have been not a little perplexed in their minds; I have thought it my duty as one of your Ministers to state what we conceive to be scriptural baptism, both as it respects its subjects, its mode, and its design.

In doing this, I have carefully abstained from adducing the authority of early ecclesiastical records, and have confined myself to the authority of Scripture alone, which is alike accessible by you all. My object in the following pages is two-fold—First to establish you in the belief of what I conceive to be the truth; and Secondly to give a check to that party proselyting zeal, which, whilst it may possibly increase the numbers of a particular society, does not add a single individual to the army of Emmanuel.

Praying that the great head of the Church may guide you into all truth.

I remain,

Your Servant in Christ,
JACOB STANLEY.

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THE NATURE, &c. OF BAPTISM.

THAT the baptism of water as well as the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is a Christian doctrine, has been admitted by the whole Christian Church, from the beginning, with very few exceptions. But, What is baptism? What is its mode? Who are its proper subjects? And, What is its design? are questions on which much diversity of opinion has prevailed. These questions we shall briefly consider.

Baptism, in the New Testament is used for *immersion*, *effusion*, and *sprinkling*.

The word sometimes signifies *Immersion* or *Dipping*. Thus it is to be understood in Mark, vii. 4. "The *washing* of Cups and Pots;" the original word signifies the baptism of Cups, &c. These are dipped into the water, and not merely sprinkled with it. Thus too, some have supposed Luke, xi. 38. is to be understood. "He marvelled that he had not first *washed* before dinner." If this washing, or baptism, refer to the hands only, then certainly it includes the idea of dipping; but if it refer to the face, as well as the hands, then it cannot be so understood, unless we suppose the Pharisees were in the habit of dipping their faces into the water, a

thing, which I believe is not pretended by any one. Thus too the Advocates for Immersion have interpreted Romans vi. 4. "We are buried with him by baptism." But this figure agrees better with the effusion, or pouring upon, than that of dipping; for the body which is buried, is not dipped into the earth, but has the earth poured upon it.

The word sometimes signifies *Effusion*, or *Pouring*. Thus it is understood in Matt. iii. 11; "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Not by dipping, most certainly, but by pouring, agreeably to the prophecy of Joel, (ii. 28,) "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." So also in Acts i. 5; and in verse 8, the historian expressly states how they were to be baptized: "Ye shall receive power, after that"—after what? After that ye have been dipped *into* the Holy Ghost? No, but "after that the Holy Ghost has come *upon* you." Thus also it is plainly to be understood, in Acts xi. 16. This is evident from v. 15: "The Holy Ghost fell on them"—not they fell into the Holy Ghost—"as on us at the beginning, 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."

The word sometimes signifies *Sprinkling*. Thus it is used in 1 Cor. x. 2: "And were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Here the Apostle refers to the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and to the cloud by which they were concealed from the Egyptians. (Exodus xiv. 20.) That they were not dipped in the sea, is certain, for the Historian says, "the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon *dry*

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ground: And the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." And that they were not dipped in the cloud, will, I suppose, also be readily admitted. But that they were sprinkled both from the cloud and from the waters, which "were as walls on their right hand and on their left," is so probable a circumstance, that few, if any, will soberly attempt to controvert it.

The word being thus variously applied, the *Mode* of Christian baptism cannot be determined from its import. Let us try whether we can ascertain it from any other source. Many cases of baptism are recorded in the New Testament; let us examine how baptism was administered in these. John's baptism, in order of time, is first entitled to consideration. Two things are recorded of this baptism. First: It was in Jordan: and, Secondly: The multitude baptized was immensely large; "There went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him." Whether the baptized as well as the baptizer, were in Jordan, or on its banks, neither St. Matthew nor St. Mark clearly state. Their words are, "They were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan." The words may either mean that John was in the river, or that they who were baptized were in the river, or that both were in the river. One thing, and only one from the history is clear, viz., that John baptized them with the water of Jordan. But whether they were in the water, or whether, if in the water, they were dipped or sprinkled, or had it poured upon them, are points, which, as far as the narrative goes, are left wholly undecided.

There are however two facts which are strongly presumptive against dipping in this case.

1. *The exposed situation of the place of baptism.* They were either baptized *with* or *without* their clothes. Common decency would forbid the latter; and if dipping were the mode, both health and comfort would forbid the former. It was not there as in a Baptist Chapel, where they have a Vestry contiguous to the baptistry, in which they can at once throw off the garment provided for that purpose. In this case there were no such conveniences; neither garments nor vestries, but they were in an open country, where they must of necessity remain in their wet clothes, to the great danger of their health.

2. *The immense multitude which John baptized, is another strong presumption against dipping.* "There went out unto him all the land," that is, all the people "of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were ALL baptized of him." I do not mean to contend that the word *all* in this passage is to be understood as comprising *every* individual, but only that a great proportion of the people were baptized by him. Suppose a writer, on whose veracity we could depend, were to affirm that a Baptist Minister was baptizing in the New Cut, and that all the people of Staffordshire and of Birmingham were baptized by him; though we should not think that every old man, and every infant were included in this description, yet we should most assuredly understand the writer as stating that a large proportion of the healthy part of the population, both male and female, old and young were intended. But if so, then he would have baptized on a very moderate calculation, at least fifty thousand people, which at the rate of five

minutes per head, supposing him to continue at it twelve hours a day, without allowing one moment for any kind of refreshment, which would be no very easy work, especially if standing up to the middle in water all the time, would require forty-nine weeks and four days, including Sundays as well as other days. Who can possibly believe that John was a whole year in Jordan? Or that he was immersed in water the one twelfth of that period? To baptize such multitudes by immersion in so short a time, was, without a miracle, absolutely impossible. But suppose John's baptism to have resembled the baptism of Israel in the sea, and in the cloud, that is baptism by sprinkling, then there is neither impossibility, nor difficulty, nor danger, nor indelicacy in it. In this case it was not even necessary for John to stand in Jordan at all, neither did it require the people, either male or female, to change their clothes. All that in this case would be necessary, would be for the baptizer, to stand at the edge of the River, and the baptized to stand in a row upon its banks, whilst with a switch dipped in the water, he could, without any extraordinary exertion, baptize thousands in a few hours.

The baptisms on the day of Pentecost, next demand our attention. The historian says,—“Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized: And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts. ii. 41.) The Spirit of God was not poured out upon the disciples till the third hour, that is till nine o'clock in the morning; (Acts ii. 15;) after which St. Peter preached his powerfully impressive Sermon, by which they were dreadfully alarmed, and enquired

what they should do. It is highly probable that some hours would elapse before any of them could be baptized. There is no probability that more than six hours of the day would remain for baptism, in which case, suppose dipping to be the mode, there must have been dipped five hundred in an hour, which is rather more than eight in the minute, that is, about seven seconds and a half per head. To say the least, this would be very quick work.

Then where could all these be dipped? It will not, I believe be pretended, that the disciples had any baptistries in Jerusalem; and Jordan was at a distance. Kedron indeed was at hand, but Kedron was only a brook, and not of sufficient depth for any such purpose. Then again, were they baptized in a state of nudity? Or had they garments for the purpose? Or were they dipped in their ordinary costume? Decency forbids the first. Not having previously thought of being baptized, is an irresistible argument against the second; and the danger to which they would expose their health, renders the third highly improbable. Baptism in this case, by dipping, is so clogged with difficulties, that to me it appears morally certain that it was not so administered. But whilst all these difficulties are involved in dipping, not one of them exists either in the case of effusion or sprinkling.

The baptism of the Eunuch recorded in Acts viii. 38, 39, has, by many of the advocates of dipping, been considered conclusive in its favour. I say by many, for some of the first men in the Baptist Connexion, do not so consider it. The words of the historian are these: "And they went down both into

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the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come out of the water," &c. The prepositions which are here rendered *into* and *out of*, very frequently signify *unto*, as is evident from the following texts: "I am not sent but *unto* the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. xv. 24.) "And the devil taking him up *into* an high mountain." (Luke iv. 5.) "He went out *into* a mountain to pray." (Luke vi. 12.) In the latter texts, the word evidently means *unto*, and not *into*. See also Luke ix. 28; Acts xiv. 21; Colos. i. 20; Luke xx. 4; John xix. 12; Acts xiv. 8; xv. 9; xvii. 3—§1; and xxvii. 34. "But supposing," says Henry, "we here understand them to signify *into* and *out of*, Philip and the Eunuch, who were bare-foot according to custom, perhaps went up to the ankles, or mid-leg into the water, and Philip sprinkled water upon him, according to the prophecy which this Eunuch had probably but just now read; for it is but a few verses before those which Philip found him upon, and was very apposite to his case." (Isa. lii. 15.) "So shall he sprinkle" not dip "many nations," &c.

The cases of Lydia and the Jailor, which both occur in Acts xvi. have not one single circumstance connected with them, from which dipping can be inferred; but on the contrary, there is the utmost improbability that in either case, they went into either a baptistry, a river, or a bath. Lydia indeed, heard Paul by a river side; but to suppose that the Apostle immersed her in the river, she having no previous intention of being baptized, and therefore being without change of raiment, to say nothing of the indelicacy of a female undressing and dressing in such a

public and exposed situation, is, to say the least, in the highest degree improbable. And as to the Jailor, he was baptized in his own house a little after midnight. He went to no river, neither is there the slightest evidence that he was dipped in either baptistry, or well, or lake, or pool. On supposition that baptism was administered by effusion or sprinkling, both cases are simple and plain; but if administered by dipping, the narrative is involved in difficulty.

Besides, baptism is a positive institution of Christianity, essentially belonging to it, and inseparably accompanying it in all the regions of the earth. Its mode therefore must be adapted to every latitude, and to the various local circumstances of our world. But is dipping adapted, for instance, to the frigid zones, where there is almost one eternal frost, and where to sustain life, instead of plunging into water, covered with thick ribbed ice, they find it necessary to burrow like the rabbit, and to clothe themselves with the hairy skins of wild beasts? Or is it adapted to those warmer regions of the earth, where a sufficient quantity of water can hardly be procured for the essential purposes of life? In each of these cases, baptism by immersion is impracticable; but by pouring or sprinkling it may at any time, and in any part of the world be administered.

III. But if *dipping* be not the *mode* of baptism, is it not quite clear that adults *alone* are its *subjects*? So our Baptist friends most confidently assert. They found their opinion chiefly upon the commission of our Lord, and upon what they think apostolic usage. Let us examine each of these.

(1.) They infer, that adults alone are fit subjects for baptism, from our Lord's Commission, which ac-

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ording to St. Mark xvi. 15, 16, reads thus, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," &c. On which they found this syllogism,

Faith precedes baptism;

But children are incapable of faith;

Therefore children are incapable of baptism.

By a similar syllogism, the salvation of children might be proved impossible; for example,

Faith precedes salvation;

But children are incapable of faith;

Therefore children are incapable of salvation.

But will any one affirm, that because in our Lord's Commission the word believeth, goes before the word saved, therefore all who die in infancy, and who are consequently incapable of this faith, must inevitably perish? The argument founded in the order of the words, is equally conclusive against salvation as against baptism. But if children are capable of salvation without faith, why are they not capable of baptism without it too? If they are capable of admission into the Church in Heaven without it, why should they not without it be admitted into the Church of Christ on earth by baptism? It is indeed admitted, that in the case of adults, faith must precede baptism as well as salvation; faith in their case is necessary to both; but in the case of children, it is not necessary to either.

(2.) What circumcision was in the Jewish, baptism is in the Christian Church. It was the outward sign or token of God's covenant with Abraham, the father of the faithful, and of his seed. And this sign or token was required not only in adults, but also in children: "It shall be a token of the co-

venant betwixt me and you ; and he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you." (Genesis xvii. 11. 12.) Abraham on believing and entering into covenant with God, received this visible sign or token ; but his children and all his descendants received the token, without either personal faith or engagement on their part. So on the introduction of the Christian Dispensation, of which both the Jewish and Patriarchal were typical, those who first entered into the Christian Covenant, who first embraced the religion of Jesus Christ, on their embracing it, received as a sign or token, the rite of baptism, by which they were admitted into the visible Church of Christ, or as the historian of the Acts expresses it, "were added to the Lord." But as in the Abrahamic, so in the Christian Covenant, the children of believers were admitted also. Hence, Lydia and her household ; and the Phillipian Jailor, and *all his* were baptized at the same time. Indeed we have not a single instance of the head of any family being baptized, without baptism being administered to the whole household. And it is utterly incredible that there should not have been some children in these families.

Baptism is the appointed rite of admission into God's visible church under the Christian, as circumcision was under the Jewish dispensation. But children were admitted into this Church under the former dispensation, and I shall be glad to be informed *when*, and *by whom* they were excluded. I can find no record of such exclusion. Instead of excluding children, Jesus Christ says, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. xix. 14.)

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To deny to children the ordinance of baptism, which is the only rite of initiation into the visible Church, is to deprive them of a privilege enjoyed by children in the Jewish Church, and virtually to exalt the Jewish above the Christian dispensation, which is directly opposed to the doctrine of St. Paul, who says the former "has no glory, by reason of the glory which" in the latter "excelleth." (Cor. iii. 10.)

Are then Adults not to be baptized? Not if they have been baptized before; for as there was but one circumcision, so also there is but one baptism. But if baptized in infancy? No, for by that baptism they were admitted into God's visible Church; and it would not have been more absurd, and contrary to God's appointment for a Jew who had been circumcised in infancy, to be circumcised than for a Christian, who has received baptism in infancy, to be baptized on the profession of his faith, when he became an Adult. As in Jewish times, there never was a second circumcision, so in Apostolic times, there never was a second baptism.

But what benefit can children derive from being admitted into the Church of God? They don't understand Christianity. Granted: But neither do children when first admitted into a Grammar or Commercial School, understand either Writing or Accompts, or Latin, or Greek. They are admitted not *because* they know these, but that they *may* know them. For the same reason children are admitted into the Christian Church, that as their minds open, they may be fully instructed in the doctrines of Christ, and participate in all the benefits of Christianity.

In baptism we are at once dedicated to the ser-

vice of God, and admitted into the School of Christ, that we may be placed under a course of Christian instruction and discipline. Not that baptism saves us, any more than admission into a Grammar School makes us learned; but as the latter is the way to become learned, so the former is the way to be made wise unto salvation. There is the baptism of water, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost: By the former we are admitted into the outward and visible church: and by the latter into the spiritual and invisible one; and we are admitted into the first, that we may be admitted into the second. But that the baptism of water neither is regeneration, nor inseparably connected *with* it, is evident from the total absence of the fruits of regeneration in multitudes of the baptized: These are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." But do these fruits accompany baptism, whether administered to Infants or Adults? In the former we see the same anger and peevishness after, as before baptism, and in the latter in multitudes of cases there is ample evidence that baptism has not only not entirely washed them from their unfaithfulness, but that it has not produced the least moral change. As all were not Israel who had been admitted into the Jewish Church by the outward circumcision; neither are all Christians who have been admitted into the Christian Church by baptism. And as he was not a Jew who was one outwardly, nor was that circumcision which was outward in the flesh, but of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter,—(Rom. ii. 28, 29;) so neither is he a Christian who is one outwardly, nor is that baptism which is outward in the flesh, but of the heart, in

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the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The sum of the whole is this : That the mode of Christian baptism cannot be determined by the word itself, it being alike applied to dipping, pouring, and sprinkling ; that to suppose the baptisms recorded in the New Testament to have been administered by dipping, involves them into difficulties, not to say impossibilities, from which pouring or sprinkling entirely frees them ;—that in some latitudes dipping is impracticable ;—that the subjects of baptism are in the case of all converts from Judaism, Mahometanism and Heathenism, Adults in the first instance, and then their children, who are as capable of being members of the Church of God under the New dispensation, as Jewish children were under the Old ;—that children being admissible into the Church triumphant, ought not to be despised and rejected by the Church Militant ;—that as the end proposed in their admission, is that they may be taught the doctrines of Christ, and trained up for a happy immortality, they cannot possibly be admitted too soon ;—And that water baptism being an appointment of Christ, it is obligatory on Christians, and whilst it typifies the baptism of the Holy Ghost, though not necessarily connected with it, is in the order of means, calculated to lead to the enjoyment of all its blessings.

