

literature down to its close (a period of about two thousand years) not an example has been found in which the word baptizo has any other meaning than 'to put into or under water (or other penetrable substance), so as entirely to immerse or submerge.' There is no instance in which it signifies to make a partial application of water by affusion or sprinkling." This statement of Dr. Conant is confirmed by the best scholarship of the world. More than thirty professors of the Greek language have published lexicons for classical Greek, and in no one of these has any other meaning than immersion been given as the original significance of baptizo. There can be no doubt, then, that immersion is the classical meaning of baptism.

But has the word baptize in the New Testament a meaning different from its classical signification? Let any man think I am prejudiced because of my church relations, I will ask you to receive the testimony of Prof. Sophocles, of Harvard university. In his religious profession he is not a Baptist. By birth he is a Greek. He is acknowledged by scholars to be eminently qualified to judge of the uses of Greek words in our Savior's time, and for the few centuries next following, because he was made Hellenistic Greek a special study, and is entirely familiar with the writings of the early Christian fathers. What does he tell us of the meaning of baptize in his recent Greek lexicon, concerning which Dr. Peabody says: "It is the best lexicon now extant for the Greek of the New Testament." What does this learned Greek say?

After giving as the classical meaning "to dip, to immerse, to sink," he adds: "There is no evidence that Luke and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament put upon this verb meanings not recognized by the Greeks." In other words when the Greeks wrote baptize they meant to immerse, and when the sacred writers wrote baptize they meant the same thing.

Secondly, we are justified in our definition of baptism by the propositions which accompany the word baptize with the element water. For example, in Mark i. 9, we read, "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth to Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan." The preposition translated "in" is eis, which with a penetrable substance must be translated "into." Now for the word "baptized" we will substitute "sprinkled," keeping in mind the passive form of the verb and the preposition "into." "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was sprinkled into Jordan of John." How absurd and irreverent! But if we translate "and was immersed into Jordan by John" the sense is plain and consistent. Other passages of a similar nature might be cited. A third reason why we believe immersion to be the proper rite, is the attendant circumstances in the apostolic age.

Notice the account of the baptism of Jesus. The Sacred narrative reads: "He was baptized of John into the Jordan, and straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened." "Coming up out of the water"—this one circumstance is sufficient to convince any candid mind that Christ went down into the river and was immersed. That Christ was immersed is now admitted by the scholars of all denominations.

Examine another incidental allusion (John iii. 28): "And John also was baptizing in Aenon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." Because there was much water there! Does not this settle the mode? If John had sprinkled the converts, a small quantity of water would have been sufficient. Why, then, make a journey to the springs and pools of Aenon in search of much water?

Note the attendant circumstances

of another remarkable scene, (Acts viii. 37). Philip, the deacon, has preached Christ to the eunuch on his way from Jerusalem to his home in Ethiopia. The eunuch believes in Christ. And as the chariot which bears them comes near a certain water, he asks, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip answers, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayst." "I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God."

The chariot stops. The two dismount. Now listen to the historian: "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing." Mark these expressions: "They went down both into the water—when they were come up out of the water." If you were describing immersion could you select more appropriate or concise expressions of the mode? But how unnatural and inconsistent would they seem if applied to the mode of sprinkling!

Fourth.—The history of the Christian church confirms the truthfulness of our position that immersion is the external rite.

Prof. Paine, of the Bangor Theological seminary, a Congregational school, recently said: "We have no controversy with our Baptist brethren on the historical question of the primitive form. It was without doubt immersion." Every student of church history must come to the same conclusion. Leonard Woods, Jr., of Andover, Mass., a Congregationalist, has given us an admirable translation of Dr. Geo. C. Knapp's theology, in which occurs the following paragraph:

"Immersion is peculiarly agreeable to the institution of Christ and the practice of the Apostolic church, and so even John baptized, and immersion remained common for a long time, except that in the third century the baptism of the sick was performed by sprinkling or affusion. Still some would not acknowledge this to be true baptism, and a controversy arose concerning it—so unheard of was it at that time to baptize by simple affusion. But it did not become general in the Western (or Latin) church until the commencement of the fourteenth century. It would have been better to have adhered to the ancient practice, as even Luther and Calvin allowed."

But while the Latin church thus corrupted the mode, the Eastern, or Greek church still held to immersion. It is a fact, not disputed, that in the Greek church, occupying the oldest sections of Christendom, embracing millions of souls in Greece, Armenia, Russia and other lands—living, too, in some of the coldest climates of the world—in the Greek church immersion has always been practised; and such an act as sprinkling, administered as an ordinance of religion, and called by the name of baptism, was never seen within its folds.

In the Anglican church, until the year 1662, all healthy children were received by immersion; and the canon of the council of Calcuth, A. D. 816, determines the practice of the church of England, before the reformation: "Let the presbyters also know, when they administer the holy baptism, that they may not pour the holy water over the infants' heads, but let them always be immersed in the font, as the Son of God furnished by himself an example to every believer, when he was thrice immersed in the waves of the Jordan."

Nearly all the authorities I have quoted thus far have been those who practise affusion or sprinkling. No one will charge the Baptists with "a narrow literalism," when such a scholar as the German Lutheran Meyer says: "Immersion (das untertauchen) was indeed a thoroughly essential part of the baptismal symbolism." When

Neander, the great church historian, writes: "In respect to the form of baptism, it was, in conformity with the original institution and the original import of the symbol, performed by immersion." When Dr. Philip Schaff, an eminent Presbyterian, in his history of the church, says: "Immersion and not sprinkling, was unquestionably the original, normal mode of baptism." You will not say that we are claiming too much when we affirm immersion is baptism, since we are supported in this statement by such scholars as Neander, Gieseler, Schaff, Brenner, Kurtz, Dean Stanley, Dollinger and Reuss in the department of church history, and Meyer, De Wette, Tholuck, Olshausen, Schœpke, Langs, Alford, Ellicott and a host of others in the department of exegesis—all of whom are outside the pale of our own denomination.

Lastly, we are justified by the references which are made to baptism in the epistles of Paul. To the church at Rome he writes: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection." Romans vi, 3-5.

Learned commentators of all denominations for fifteen hundred years or more are agreed that Paul here refers to immersion. The words of Conybeare and Howson are but echoes of their opinions: "These passages can not be understood unless it is borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion."

Immersion is a burial.—The candidate is led down into the liquid grave and buried beneath the water in the likeness of Christ's death. Again, he is raised up and led out of the water in likeness of Christ's resurrection. Immersion fully meets the requirements of Paul's figure of a burial and resurrection. But what appropriateness or consistency could there be in comparing sprinkling or pouring with a burial and resurrection.

We are at liberty in the circumstances of each baptism. We are at liberty to baptize in a river, a baptistery or a pool. We are at liberty to clothe the candidate in whatever attire we may deem proper. So far we have not added to, or subtracted from, the essential meaning of the rite. But when we change the mode itself, when we substitute some other from the original mode, we not only destroy the symbol, but also the idea set forth in the symbol. If I surrender immersion I have no symbol of a death and resurrection; I have no emblem either of the death or resurrection of Christ, or of my own death to sin and resurrection to a better life.

As a mere act, it is a form; as a mere ordinance, a command; as a symbol it is the life, passion and death of Christ, His blessed resurrection, His glorious ascension; yea, it is the whole Gospel in precept and spirit, framed into one expressive and impressive rite. Substitute any other symbol for it and you destroy its whole significance. Use it as a mere form—a ceremony that may be changed to suit the caprice of any one, and you put a human device into the place of a divine ordinance.

Accept it, in all fidelity to Christ as He instituted it, and it is a profound symbol of all that is holiest in Christ's life, all that is dearest in Christian experience and all that is sweetest in our hopes and aspirations.

It is a curious chemical fact that the substances required to form salt are both of them poisonous—chlorine and sodium. No one can use either of these articles separately with safety.

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