

THE ORIGIN OF
SPRINKLING
FOR BAPTISM

R. A. VENABLE

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OF
SPRINKLING,
FOR
BAPTISM,

BY

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PUBLISHED BY

BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
TEXARKANA, ARK.-TEX.

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PREFACE.

This little tract is now sent forth with a hope that its mission may be one of good. No claim is made to originality, either in the subject-matter or in the manner of presenting it. It is only a compilation of such historical facts as any one finds in a somewhat extended course of reading on the subject. Any one who has made himself at all acquainted with that class of literature, is already familiar with what is written in these pages. The object has been to put into convenient form, for the benefit of those who can command neither time nor the means to consult larger works, such facts as will be of service to them. A number of authors have been consulted, and credit has been given them. The circumstances and purpose of the administration of baptism have not been treated in these pages, as the author expects to issue a tract embodying an exposition of the passages which record instances of baptism where immersion was impossible, as is generally claimed by the advocates of sprinkling and pouring. The passages which refer to baptism in a figurative way, will also be treated in the same work.

R. A. V.

MEMPHIS, *Sept. 6, 1882.*

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ORIGIN
OF
SPRINKLING AND POURING.

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CHAPTER I.

THERE have been many books and tracts written upon the subject of baptism within the last quarter of a century. Every arrival of the mail brings us something "new," "critical," and "fresh" on this subject; and, what is most interesting, all these productions are rigidly correct, their authors being judges. Every conceivable position has been taken, both as to the mode and object of baptism, which either the topography of the country, time of the day, condition of the atmosphere, taste of the candidate, and physical ability of the administrator could suggest, or the meaning of the word expressing the act, and words of kindred form, together with the connection it sustains to other words in the sentence, could possibly

warrant. The reader of this little book must pardon the author for a breach of custom in not pretending to present the public with any thing "new" on the subject. The only object of the writer is to write a small tract which will do good. The only desire he should have in expressing his own thoughts, and in collecting what others have written, is to present the truth. Nothing but truth can live, because nothing else ought to live in the hearts of men and on the pages of books and tracts. It is now time that something more definite should be written in these pages.

SEC. I.—*Sprinkling and Pouring did not Originate with Christ and the Apostolic Preachers.*

This may be argued from the meaning of the word in classical Greek, from its meaning in New Testament usage, and, lastly, from the circumstances and purpose of its administration.

I. From the meaning of the term (*baptizo*) used to express the act of baptism. The meaning of any word may be determined by an appeal to the standard lexicons of that language in which the word is used. Webster's and Worcester's dictionaries are referred to when any one wishes to settle the meaning

of a word in our language. There is much more ground for differences as to the meaning of words in a living language than in a dead one, for languages, like men, change—grow up, decay, and die. Any word in a dead language must be unchangeable in meaning, and one has only to consider well every example of its use to arrive at every meaning given the word by those who used it. Those who make dictionaries are supposed to have seen every example of a word's use, or class of examples, before they can give the meaning. Now, the meaning of the term *baptizo* is not hard to determine, since the examples of its use are not very numerous. Dr. T. J. Conant says: "The examples of the common meaning and use of the word in Sections I and II are from every period of Greek literature in which the word occurs. They include all that have been given by lexicographers and by those who have written professedly on this subject; and these, with the examples added from my own reading, exhaust the use of this word in Greek literature." ("Baptizein," page 6.) The Doctor gives us, in all, one hundred and seventy-five examples of the use of this word in classic Greek. One can readily see, then, how easily the meaning of this term

can be determined. The writer feels like saying that there never would have been any trouble about the meaning of this word had it never been used by any sacred writer, though instances of its use, identical with those in Scripture, are to be found in classical works. But what do the lexicons say about the meaning of the word now in question?

Liddell and Scott define *baptizo*: "To dip in or under water; to draw water; to baptize." "In July, 1843, there was published, with great care, at the Oxford University Press, the now celebrated and standard Greek lexicon of Messrs. Liddell and Scott. It was founded on the great one of Passow, published in Germany, but embraced an amount of other investigations far beyond his. In fact, it may be almost said that there is not an important sentence in the whole range of Greek literature that it has not weighed. . . . The work itself was reviewed in the 'London Quarterly,' and considered justly,—as not, indeed, without its faults,—but very far before all other Greek lexicons extant. 'A great many' of the first scholars suggested 'corrections,' however, which were made in the second edition. In the meantime Professor Drisler was bringing out an edition in this

country, with his own 'corrections and additions.' Shortly after this was published the Professor of Ancient Languages, in the University of Louisiana, on comparing Professor Drisler's edition with a copy of the second published at Oxford, was surprised to find that the literal sense of the term *Baptizo*, not implying immersion (unless 'bathe' be an exception), which were in the American, were *not to be found in the London copy*. Public attention being called to this fact, and the American editor having been blamed, in some quarters, for making so important an interpolation without avowing it, he defended himself by showing that the meanings *to 'steep,' 'to wet,' 'to pour upon,' 'to drench,'* though quietly dashed out by Liddell and Scott from their second edition, were all in the first; this supposition being a part of those 'corrections' which the lexicon had undergone through the suggestions and coöperation of their many friends. Another edition of the American work being called for, it has been brought out by Professor Drisler. Among his own additions and corrections he has not esteemed it fitting to add any thing to the second English edition in regard to this word, but followed it, and has *withdrawn* all the senses which the

Oxford edition has retracted." ("Curtis' Progress of Baptist Principles," pages 177, 178, 179.) If there could have been found, within the whole range of the Greek language, one single example where the word was used in the sense of *pouring* or *sprinkling*, these men, who were members of the Episcopal Church, would have found it. Besides, if there could be found an example to-day, a large sum of money would be given to the discoverer. If it were any other question than a religious one, there might not be made another reference to a lexicon, and there would be no disturbance in any one's mind. But there are a great number of lexicons which may be consulted and all will bear out the definitions as given by Liddell and Scott.

Donnegan defines this word *baptizo*: "To immerse repeatedly into a liquid; to submerge; to soak thoroughly; to saturate."

Parkhurst defines it thus: "To dip, immerse, or plunge in water."

Stokius gives its meaning as follows: "*Baptizo* generally, and by the force of the word, indicates the idea of simply dipping and diving, but, properly, it means to dip or immerse in water."

Dr. Anthon: "The primary meaning of the

word is to dip or immerse, and its secondary meanings, if it ever had any, all refer, in some way or other, to the same leading idea. Sprinkling, etc., are entirely out of the question."

Professor Stuart, Professor of Sacred Literature, for years in the Andover Theological Seminary, gives the following definition: "*Bapto* and *baptizo* mean to dip, plunge, or immerse into any thing liquid. All lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this." ("Stuart on Baptism," Nashville edition, page 51.)

The late Dr. Summers, of Vanderbilt University, universally respected for his scholarship, makes use of the following language: "The truth is, *baptizo*, *baptisma*, and *baptismos* imply plunging the whole person or thing; dipping a part of it; immersing the whole or a part with or without plunging or dipping; overwhelming, by bringing water over the person or thing." ("Summers on Baptism," page 94.)

The "Encyclopædia Britannica" has this language on the subject, in the article on *Baptism*: "The word is derived from the Greek *baptizo*, the frequentative form of *bapto*, to dip or wash, which is the term used in the New

Testament when the sacrament is described." So much for the classic meaning of the term *baptizo*. There could be given many more authorities on this subject did it seem necessary, but as there is so little difference of opinion about the classic use of the word that it is deemed unnecessary to occupy any more space.

2. The question now in hand may be argued from the meaning of the word *baptizo* in New Testament Greek. The presumption is that the word would have the same meaning in New Testament Greek as it had in classic authors, but it would not be absolutely safe to assume that as true. Before proceeding to furnish the definitions given by those thoroughly competent for the work, and in every way entitled to a hearing, one question ought to be considered: Where did the writers of New Testament Greek get their knowledge of the language? or where did they learn the meaning and use of this word *baptizo*? They must have learned much of the language from the Septuagint version, which was translated from the Hebrew into the Greek. The translation was begun about 280 B. C., and was completed after the course of many years. That the Jews were conversant with this word

is evident from the constant use made of it by Christ and the Apostles. Now, if the meaning and use of this word can be ascertained in the Septuagint version, it will go very far in settling the probable meaning in New Testament Greek. The word *baptizo* is used in 2 Kings 5: 14: "And Naaman went down and dipped himself seven times in the river Jordan." This Naaman did in obedience to the command of the prophet Elisha. The word is used, metaphorically, in Isaiah 21: 4: "My iniquity overwhelms me" (me baptizei). The word also occurs in the Apocrypha of Judith 12: 7. It is said of Judith: "And she remained in the camp three days, and went forth by night into the valley of Bethulia, and washed (*baptizeto*) herself in the camp at the fountain of water." There is another instance of its use in Eccles. 34: 25: "When one is *cleansed* (*baptizomenos*) from the defilement of a dead body, what is he profited by his *washing* if he touch it again?" How this cleansing was done can be learned from the instructions given to Naaman by the prophet Elisha. The verb there used to express the act of washing, and which Naaman understood to mean that he should dip himself in the Jordan, corresponds to the noun here translated *washing*.

The noun (*loutron*) is derived from the verb (*louo*) These are all the examples of the use of baptizo in the then sacred writings of the Jews. There can not, by any sort of torture, be gotten either sprinkling or pouring from the use of the word in the above instances. They could not have learned here that sprinkling was the meaning of baptizo. What the use of the verb *baptizo* was, in the hands of New Testament writers, may be learned by consulting competent authorities on the subject. There are several lexicons of New Testament Greek. "Cremer's Biblico-Theological Lexicon" says: "The peculiar New Testament and Christian use of the word to denote immersion, submersion for a religious purpose = to baptize."

"Wall's Clavis of New Testament" defines the word thus: "*Baptizo*, to immerse; properly and truly concerning sacred immersion."

"Grimm's Wilkes' Lexicon of New Testament Greek" defines the word: "(1) To immerse, submerge; (2) To wash or bathe by immersing or submerging; (3) To overwhelm." This reference to lexicons may be closed by giving the testimony of Professor Sophocles, of Harvard University, a native Greek, regarded as in every way trustworthy. In his

"Lexicon of the Greek of the Roman and Byzantine Period," from 140 B. C. to 1000 A. D., he defines the word: "(1) *To dip, immerse, sink, with figurative uses derived from this*; (2) *Middle, to perform ablution, to bathe*; (3) *To plunge a knife*; (4) *To baptize*." He says: "There is no evidence that Luke and Paul and other writers of the New Testament put upon this verb meanings not recognized by the Greeks." So much for the testimony of New Testament Greek lexicons. Such testimony ought to put the truth of the above proposition beyond all question; but that line may fall upon line, and precept upon precept, reference will now be made to other writers who have distinguished themselves as commentators, exegetes, and historians. These authorities are of that class of ecclesiastical writers whose creed would lead them to speak very differently, but whose scholarship and loyalty to the truth they will not sacrifice at the shrine of a mere creed.

Dr. Cunningham Geike places himself on record in the following language: "Ablution, in the East, is, indeed, of itself almost a religious duty. The dust and heat weigh upon the spirits and heart like a load; its removal is refreshment and happiness. It was, hence, im-

possible to see a convert go down into a stream, travel-worn and soiled with dust, and, after disappearing for a moment, emerge pure and fresh, without feeling that the symbol suited and interpreted a strong craving of the human heart. It was no formal write with John. . . . Bathing, in Jordan, had been a sacred symbol at least since the days of Naaman; but *immersion*, by one like John, with strict and humble confession of sin, sacred vows of amendment, and hope of forgiveness, if they proved lasting, and all this in preparation for the Messiah, was something wholly new in Israel." ("Life and Words of Christ," pages 395 and 396.) Again, in his beautiful description of John baptizing Jesus, he uses this language: "John resisted no longer, and, leading Jesus into the stream, the rite was performed. Can we question that such an act was a crisis in the life of our Lord? His perfect manhood, like that of other men, in all things except sin, forbids our doubting it. Holy and pure before sinking under the waters, he must yet have risen from them with the light of a higher glory in his countenance. His past life was closed; a new era had opened. Hitherto the humble villager, veiled from the world, he was hence-

forth the Messiah, openly working amongst men. It was the true moment of his entrance on a new life. Past years had been buried in the waters of Jordan. He entered them as Jesus, the Son of Man; he rose from them the Christ of God." ("Life and Words of Christ," pages 413 and 414.) The words of Canon Farrar are equally explicit as to how John baptized: "So Jesus descended into the waters of the Jordan, and there the awful sign was given that this was, indeed, he that should come. From the cloven heaven streamed the Spirit of God, in a dove-like radiance, that seemed to hover over his head in lambent flame." ("Life of Christ," vol. 1, page 117.) Every body knows what Dean Stanley said about the subject of baptism, for his manly concession made all men seek to read his words; but it will not be amiss, however, to quote him again. He says: "This leads us to the second characteristic of the act of baptism. 'Baptism' was not only a bath, but a plunge—an entire submersion in the deep water; a leap, as into the rolling sea or the rushing river, where, for a moment, the waves close over the bather's head, and he emerges again as from a momentary grave; or it was the shock of a shower-bath—the rush of

water passed over the whole person from capacious vessels, so as to wrap the recipient as within the veil of a splashing cataract. This was the part of the ceremony on which the Apostles laid so much stress. It seemed to them like a burial of the old former self and the rising up again of the new life. So St. Paul compared it to the Israelites passing through the roaring waves of the Red Sea; and St. Peter to the passing through the deep waters of the flood. 'We are buried,' said St. Paul, 'with Christ, by baptism at his death, that like as Christ was raised thus we also should walk in newness of life.' . . . It was a change effected only by the same effort and struggle as that with which a strong swimmer or an adventurous diver throws himself into the stream and struggles with the waves, and comes up with increased energy out of the depths of the dark abyss." Again, he says: "We now pass to the changes in the form itself. For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word baptize—that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water." ("Christian Institutions," pages 9-21.)

Again, let Canon Farrar be heard on this subject. He has indicated to us how Jesus was baptized. He is equally express as to the baptism of the Roman Christian: "The life of the Christian being hid with Christ in God, his death with Christ is a death to sin. His resurrection with Christ is a resurrection to life. The dipping under the waters of baptism is his union with Christ's death. His rising out of the waters of baptism is his resurrection with Christ." ("Life and Works of Paul," vol. 2, page 220.) Again he says, in his comments on the Epistle to the Colossians, chap. 2: 11, 12: "Their circumcision was spiritual, and had already been performed, not by human hands, but by Christ himself; not as the partial mutilation of one member, but as the utter stripping away from them the whole body of the flesh. It was, in fact, their baptism in which they had been buried with Christ, and also raised with him through their faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead." (Page 461.) Want of space forbids the giving of more than one other historian. Conybeare and Howson give the following testimony in their "Life and Epistle of Paul:" "With him, therefore, we were buried by the baptism wherein we shared his death

(when we sank beneath the waters and were raised from under them), that even as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, so we likewise might walk in newness of life." They say, in a foot-note: "This passage can not be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion." (Page 497, cheap edition.) Only brief reference can be made to commentators, and, indeed, it looks like a work of supererogation to spend any more time or space in citing authorities on the subject.

Bishop Ellicott's commentary, edited by Professor E. H. Plumptre, D. D., on Acts 2, 41, contains the following: "The largeness of the number has been urged as rendering it probable that the baptism was by affusion, and not by immersion. On the other hand, (1) Immersion had clearly been practiced by John, and was *involved in the meaning of the word*, and it is not likely that the rite should have been curtailed of its full proportions at the very outset; (2) The symbolic meaning of the act requires immersion, in order that it might be clearly manifested, and Romans, 6: 4 and 1 Peter, 3: 21, seem almost of necessity to imply the more complete mode. The swimming-baths of Bethesda and

Siloam, or the so-called Fountain of the Virgin, near the temple inclosure, or the bathing places within the Tower of Antonia ("Josephus Wars," v. 5, 8), may well have helped to make the process easy." The Bishop here gives us the meaning of the term baptizo, the manner of John's baptism, the possibilities and probabilities of the peoples being immersed on the day of Pentecost, and intimates the interpretation which should be given to the two passages cited by him. Meyer, pre-eminently the commentator of this century, has this to say about Mark 7: 4: "The expression in Mark 7: 4 is not to be understood of the washing of the hands, but of an immersion, which the word always means in the classics and in the New Testament; that is, according to the context, the taking of a bath." Again, in his comments of Matthew 3: 11, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," he says "en (in) is in accordance with the meaning of baptizo (immerse), not to be understood instrumentally, but, on the contrary, *in*, in the element wherein the immersion takes place." In his remarks on 1 Corinthians 10: 1, 2: "All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea,"—*en te*

nephele,—"en," says he, "is local, as in *baptizo en hudati* (Matthew 3: 11), indicating the element in which, by immersion and emergence, the baptism was effected. Just as the convert was baptized in water with reference to Christ, so also that Old Testament analogue of baptism which presents itself in the people of Israel at the Red Sea, with reference to Moses, was effected in the cloud under which they were, and in the sea through which they passed." The above citations have been chosen with a view, first, to bringing out the meaning of the word denoting the act of baptism, but regard has been had to the passages treated by the authorities quoted, since these have been frequently brought forward to show the impossibility of immersion being referred to. No one can claim that the position that *sprinkling* and *pouring* did not originate with Jesus and the apostolic preachers is hasty, rash, and untrue. If testimony can establish any thing, it would seem that that proposition has been established.

SEC. II. *The proposition next to be established is that sprinkling and pouring did not originate during the first two hundred and twenty-five years of the Christian era.*

It might be said that immersion was the

almost universal practice for the first thirteen hundred years after Christ. The above proposition can not be settled by any appeal to syntax. No grammatical and lexical considerations can be of any service. The question is one which must be referred to the bar of history; and whatever judgment is there given must stand, for the verdict will be impartial. The justice of this method of settling complicated and important questions is universally recognized.

The first authority cited is the late Dean Stanley: "There can be no question that the original form of baptism—the very meaning of the word—was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters; and that for at least four centuries any other form was either unknown or disregarded, unless the case of dangerous illness, as an exceptional, almost a monstrous, case. To this form the Eastern Church still rigidly adheres; and the most illustrious and venerable portion of it, that of the Byzantine Empire, absolutely repudiates and ignores any other mode of administration as essentially invalid." ("History of the Eastern Church," page 117.) Again he says: "For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which

we read in the New Testament, and which the very meaning of the word baptize—that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into water. That practice is still, as we have seen, continued in Eastern churches. . . . Baptism, by sprinkling, was rejected by the whole ancient church (except in the rare case of death-beds or extreme necessity) as no baptism at all. Almost the first exception was the heretic Novatian. . . . It is a larger change even than that which the Roman Catholic Church has made in administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the bread without the wine. For, whilst that was a change which did not affect the thing that signified, the change from immersion to sprinkling has set aside the most of the Apostolic expressions regarding baptism, and has altered the very meaning of the word. . . . The substitution of sprinkling for immersion must, to many at the time, as the Baptists now, have seemed the greatest and most dangerous innovation." ("Christian Institutions," pages 21, 22, 23.) Rev. Dr. Schaff, now of New York, says: "Immersion, and not sprinkling, was unquestionably the original form. This is shown by the very meaning of the Greek words *baptizo*, *baptisma*, and *baptis-*

mos, used to designate the rite." ("His. Apos. Ch.," page 488.) These are his words when writing about the first three centuries of the Christian Church. So Neander says when writing about the same period: "In respect to the form of baptism, it was in conformity with the original institution and the original import, performed by immersion as a sign of entire baptism into the Holy Spirit, being entirely penetrated by the same." ("Christian History," vol. 1, page 310.) Coleman, in writing about the same period, says: "In the church, immediately subsequent to the age of the Apostles, immersion, or dipping, was undeniably the common mode of baptism. The utmost that can be said of sprinkling, in that early period, is that it was, in case of necessity, permitted as an exception to a general rule. This fact is so well established that it were needless to adduce authorities in proof of it." ("Ancient Christianity," page 395.) The same testimony is given by Mosheim, Gieseler, Hagenbach, Guericke, Hasse, Stourdza, Brenner, and others, but want of space forbids the citing of more than one other authority. Professor Stuart, of Andover, closes his investigations of this subject in the following measured terms: "But

enough; it is a thing made out, says Augusti, viz., the ancient practice of immersion. So, indeed, all the writers, who have thoroughly investigated this subject, conclude. I know of no one usage of ancient times which seems to be more clearly made out. I can not see how it is possible for any candid man, who examines the subject, to deny this." (Stuart on Baptism, page 149, Nashville edition.) There is but one thing which can possibly give more satisfaction to the reader as to the correctness of the position assumed at the beginning of this section, and that is, to give some references made to this rite by the writers of the time designated. These references are not so numerous but that they may easily be added without demanding much space. Hermes (150) has this to say by way of reference to this ordinance: "But this seal is water, into which men descend who are bound to death, but those ascend who are destined to life. To them that seal is disclosed, and they make use of it, that they may enter the kingdom of God." Justin Martyr, A. D. 139, in his Apology, makes reference to this subject in a way rather peculiar, but still there can be no misunderstanding him: "They (believers or converts) are led out by us to the

place where *there is water*. . . . And in the name of the Father of the universe, the Lord God, and of the Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they wash themselves with water. . . . leading him who is to be washed to the bath or washing place. . . . he who is enlightened is washed, or washes himself." Professor Stuart says: "I am persuaded that this passage, as a whole, most naturally refers to immersion. For why, on any other ground, should the convert who is to be initiated go out to the place where there is water?" There can be no doubt about what he means by baptism if the following are borne in mind: "For, by an image we die in baptism, but truly rise in the flesh, as did also Christ." Again, Tertullian (200) says: "Know ye not that so many of us as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into his death? for by an image we die in baptism. . . . Then we are three times immersed, answering somewhat more than the Lord prescribed (for he only requires one immersion) in the Gospel." Again, he says: "As of baptism itself there is a bodily act, that we are immersed in water a spiritual effect, that we are freed from sin." Clement of Alexandria (180) says: "You were led to a

bath as Christ was conveyed to the sepulcher, and were thrice baptized, to signify Christ's three days burial." Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem (350), says: "For, as Jesus, assuming the sins of the world, died, that having slain sin, he might raise thee up in righteousness; so, also, those going down into the water, and in a manner buried in the waters, as he in the rock, art raised again, walking in newness of life." The same writer says: "After these things ye were led, by the hand, to the sacred font of the divine immersion (baptism), as Christ from the cross to the prepared tomb. And each was asked if he believes in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and ye professed the saving profession, and sank down thrice into the water, and again come up; and there, by a symbol shadowing forth the burial of Christ." Chrysostom (350-400): "For to be baptized, and to sink down, then to emerge as a symbol of the descent into the under-world (or the grave), and of the ascent from thence. Therefore, Paul calls the baptism the burial, saying: We were buried therefore, with him, by baptism into death." Again, he says: "For, as this body buried in the earth, bore for fruit the salvation of the world; so also ours, buried in

baptism, in baptism bore for fruit righteousness, sanctification, sonship, ten thousand benefits, and will have also the final gift of the resurrection. Since, therefore, we, indeed, in water, but he in earth, and we in respect to sin, but he in respect to the body, was buried on this account. He did not say planted together in death, but in the likeness of death."

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (328), says, in a sermon on the Passover: "In these benefits thou wast baptized, O newly enlightened. The initiation into the grace, O newly enlightened, has become to thee an earnest of the resurrection. Thou hast the baptism as a surety of the abode in heaven. Thou didst imitate, in the sinking down, the burial of the Master; but thou didst rise again from thence, before works witnessing the works of the resurrection." Gregory of Nazianzen (born 330), in a sermon on baptism, makes use of the following language: "Let us, therefore, be buried with Christ by baptism, that we may also rise with him. Let us go down with him, that we may also be exalted with him. Let us come up with him, that we may be glorified with him." Ambrose (born 340) uses this language, in referring to the ordinance:

“Naaman the Syrian dipped seven times under the law; but thou wert baptized in the name of the Divinity. . . . Hold fast the order of things in this faith. Thou didst die to sin, and didst rise again to God; and, as though co-interred with him in that element of the world, having died to sin thou wert raised again to life eternal. . . . For, when thou sinkest down, thou hast taken on a similitude of death and burial. Thou saidst, I believe, and thou didst sink down; that is, was buried. So, then, also in baptism, since there is a similitude of death, without doubt, whilst thou dost sink down and rise again, there is a similitude of the resurrection.” If authorities which are regarded as reliable can be depended upon, the second proposition is established beyond a reasonable doubt. The testimony of standard historians has been given, and citations from the works of those who lived in the very time referred to in the proposition above made, and all confirm the truth of what is affirmed. There should be no hesitancy, then, in affirming that sprinkling and pouring were not known and did not originate during the first two and a quarter centuries. Sufficient proof has been offered, but much more could be added were it desirable.

CHAPTER II.

When sprinkling and pouring did originate, and why?

SEC. I. There need not be expected much historical testimony on this subject, but history is sufficiently full and clear to establish, beyond question, all that is claimed in these pages. There are ample reasons why the historical data is so meager; reasons which the candid mind does not and can not question. The first instance given of any thing else than immersion for baptism occurred about the middle of the third century. The case was that of Novatian, to which reference was made in a quotation above from Dean Stanley. The best and most satisfactory way of dealing with this example, is to give the circumstances as they are recorded by Neander, as taken from Eusebius: “Novatian had been thrown, by fierce conflict from within, from an earnest state of mind into one of those states usually considered, in those times, as a demoniacal possession. This was for him, as it was for so many others of that period, the hard way to faith. . . . From this violent convulsion of his whole being, he fell into a severe sick-

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ness, whence first resulted his entire and radical cure. In the course of this sickness, his faith became established, and, seeing death near at hand, he received baptism on his sick bed. He found in Christianity peace, rest, and sanctifying power. As he became distinguished for steadfastness in faith, clearness in Christian knowledge—of which his writings bear witness—for a happy faculty of teaching, and for an ardor in the purity of holiness, which afterwards led him into æscetic life, the bishop (Fabian) ordained him presbyter, overlooking the fact that he had first made profession of his faith and been baptized in a bed of sickness. The Roman clergy were dissatisfied, from the first, with this procedure, because they held the letter of that church law which required that no individual baptized on the sick bed—*no clinicus*—should receive ordination; but the wiser Fabian decided more according to the *spirit* than according to the letter of this law, for its object was simply to exclude from the spiritual order those who had been induced to receive baptism without true repentance, conviction, and knowledge in momentary agitation, excited by fear of death." Again, he says: "After his restoration from his demoniacal disease, it is objected

again that he fell into a severe fit of sickness, . . . and that, in the apprehension of death, he received baptism, but baptism only by sprinkling, as the condition required (the baptism *clnicorum* not being according to the usual practice of those times by immersion), if it could be said, indeed, that such a one had been baptized at all." ("Church History," vol. 1, pages 237 and 238.) The history of this whole transaction can be found in "Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History," book VI, chap. 43. This circumstance gave rise to a correspondence between Magnus and Cyprian. The subject of this correspondence is whether those who have only been poured upon, or sprinkled, should be regarded as Christians. Cyprian answers in the following language: "You have inquired also, dearest son, what I think of those who, in sickness and debility, obtain the grace of God; whether they are to be accounted legitimate Christians in that they are poured upon, not washed (*non loti sunt, sed perfusi*) with the saving water, wherein diffidence and modesty forbid me to prejudge any that he think not as he deems right, and acts as he thinks. I, as far as my poor ability conceiveth, account that the divine blessings can in no respect be mutilated and weakened,

nor any less gift be imparted, when what is drawn from the divine bounty is accepted with the full and entire faith both of the giver and receiver. For, in the saving sacrament, the contagion of sin is not so washed away as in the ordinary washing of flesh is the filth of the skin and body, so that there should be need of saltpeter and other appliances, and a bath and a pool in which the poor body may be washed and cleansed. For, otherwise is the breast of the believer washed, otherwise is the mind of man cleansed by the worthiness of faith. In the saving sacraments, when need compels and God vouchsafes his mercy, his compendious methods confer the whole benefit on the believers. Nor should it disturb any one that the sick seem only to be sprinkled or affused (*aspergi vet perfundi*) with water when they obtain the grace of the Lord, since the Holy Scriptures speak through Ezekiel the Prophet, and says. . . . From which it is apparent that sprinkling of water also has like force with the saving washing; and that when this is done in the church, where the faith both of the giver and receiver is entire, all holds good, and is consummated and rendered complete by the Lord's power and the truth of faith." (Cyprian also protested against calling

those who were baptized during sickness clinics rather than Christians.) It appears from the above quotations that sprinkling and pouring were departures from the regular manner of baptizing, as the legality of these methods was what had disturbed the mind of Magnus. It appears, also, that these methods of baptizing were compendiums or abridgments of the divine plans (*divinia compendia*), but which, nevertheless, claimed God's favor through his mercy (*Deo indulgentiam suam largiente*), and not on account of obedience to what was commanded. It is also quite apparent that Cyprian nowhere claims that such a manner of administering the ordinance is anywhere taught in the New Testament; nor does he quote any tradition, or the act of any council, to justify his deliverance on this subject. Cyprian states, incidentally, what the regular normal mode of administering this ordinance was. It was a washing; not a pouring or a sprinkling. Again he puts himself down on record as to this question. In his Epistle No. 25, he says: "The Lord, when he had been raised from the dead, sent his Apostles forth. Commanding them, he said, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, immersing

them (*tingentes eos*) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,' etc." It is evident also, from the statement given by Neander, as taken from Eusebius, that grave doubts were entertained as to whether Novatian had been baptized at all or not, since he had been only sprinkled or perfused. In further confirmation of this subject, Neander says: "In respect to the form of baptism, it was in conformity with the original import of the symbol, performed by immersion, as a sign of entire baptism into the Holy Spirit—of being entirely penetrated by the same. It was only with the sick, where the exigencies required it, that any exception was made; and in this case baptism was administered by sprinkling." ("Church History," vol. I, page 310.)

Professor Kurtz says ("Church History," vol. I, page 119): "Baptism was performed by thrice immersing, during which the formula of baptism was pronounced. *Sprinkling* was only common—in case of the sick (*baptismus clinicorum*). The water of baptism was set apart for the sacred rite." Dean Stanley says ("Christian Institutions," page 22): "Baptism by sprinkling was rejected by the whole ancient church (except in the rare case of

death-beds or extreme necessity) as no baptism at all. Almost the first exception was the heretic Novatian."

The case seems, then, to be made out and stands thus: The first innovation upon the apostolic manner of baptizing by immersion, was introduced in case of death-bed subjects or extreme illness, and that the first recorded instance of such innovation is the case of Novatian, which occurred about the middle of the third century.

The learned Dr. Wall, who wrote a history and defense of infant baptism, in all his researches could not find an earlier example, even of clinic baptism, than that of Novatian. No one ever wrote who desired to find it more than he did; and no one ever searched more diligently than he. His learning qualified him for such work. Ford ("Studies on Baptism," page 88) says: "And here, we may properly state, that even the compend perfusion, like the perichusis of Novatian (the first clinic mentioned in history), was no mere hand-pouring of water,—a mode of baptism which was never pictured on the old frescoes,—but probably a pouring around and over the whole body; and thus, instead of being a very slight pouring of water on the head, or a mere

sprinkling of water on a part of the face, or a finger-tip moistening of the forehead, was a very thorough washing of the body, and almost equivalent to a bath or immersion, so far as the wetting is concerned." "The ancients," says Salmasius, "did not baptize otherwise than by immersion, either once or thrice; except clinics, or persons confined to their beds, who were baptized in a manner of which they were capable; not in the entire lava, as those who plunge the head under water, but the whole body had water poured upon it." Clinic baptisms grew more into public favor, and would, doubtless, have become the rule, because of the effect of baptism, as it was thought, was to wash away all sin, had it not been that the faith of the clinic was called in question, and the manner of baptizing was doubtful. Again, this magical effect of baptism introduced another error which tended also to counteract any thing like a rapid spread of sick-bed baptisms. That error was infant baptism. The mother, believing that baptism cleansed her child from all sin, insisted on having the little one baptized, lest he should die before he reached years of accountability. The same error, then, which gave rise to clinic baptisms would

and did give rise to infant baptism. Infant baptism, doubtless, would have become universal quite soon had not the belief in the magical effects of baptism, its power to drive away sin—wash away guilt—led to the postponement of baptism till the hour of death, so that all the sins of a life-time could be washed away at once. But these clinic baptisms were not always effected by a pouring upon, but often by immersion. Dr. Cathcart ("Baptism of the Ages," page 138) gives an account of such immersion more than a century after the baptism of Novatian. "More than a century after Novatian had his memorable baptism, by 'pouring around,' Socrates, the historian, tells us that a Jew had been confined to his bed by paralysis, and had been benefitted neither by medical skill nor by the prayers of his Jewish brethren, and that he determined to have recourse to Christian baptism. Atticus, the Archbishop of Constantinople, instructed him in the first principles of Christian truth, and preached to him the hope in Christ; and then, instead of going to his bed and pouring water around him, he directed him to be brought, in his bed, to the font. And, the paralytic Jew receiving baptism with a sincere faith, as soon as he was taken *out of the water* found

himself perfectly cured of his disease." ("So- crates' Ecclesiastical History," book 8, page 4.) In the "*Centuriæ Magdeburgenses*," it is said of this convert: "*He was brought, together with his bed, to the baptistry, and he was let down into the sacred font, and, on the completion of the rite, he was lifted up again from it.* This baptism occurred at the capital of the empire, and of the intelligence of the eastern world; and it is clear testimony that even the paralyzed shunned *pouring* around for baptism, and that such an act was only the forlorn hope" of the dying,—an act which should be carefully avoided by all who wanted obedience without serious defects." It must be plain to the reader, that such an innovation upon the scriptural mode of baptism, would necessarily be very slow in gaining the general favor. So defenders of the practice, even in cases of illness, would be few; and very rare, indeed, would be those who would dare defend the practice from New Testament authority, especially as of equal value with immersion. That the change was very gradual, is quite apparent from history. "The practice of immersion, though peculiarly suitable to the southern and eastern countries, for which it was designed, was not found seasonable in the

countries of the north and west. Beginning in the thirteenth century, it (sprinkling) has gradually driven the ancient Catholic usage (immersion) out of the whole of Europe." ("Christian Institutions," page 22.) Philip Schaff says: "Not till the end of the thirteenth century did sprinkling become the rule and immersion the exception—partly from the gradual decrease in the number of adult baptisms, and partly from considerations of health and convenience, all children having now come to be treated as infirm." ("His. Apos. Ch.," page 569, note.) Brenner, a Roman Catholic writer, in a review of the history of baptism, from the first century, gives the results of his investigations in the following: "Thirteen hundred years baptism, generally and regularly, an immersion of the person under water, and only in extraordinary cases a sprinkling or pouring with water; the later, moreover, was disputed as a mode of baptism—nay, even forbidden." (See "Act of Baptism," by Henry Burrage, page 123.) The question very naturally occurs, Why did such a radical change as this come to pass during the first part of the fourteenth century? What was the cause of so great a revolution in faith and practice at this period of church life?

The "Encyclopædia Britannica" helps to answer these questions: "The usual mode of performing the ceremony was by immersion. In the case of sick persons (clinics), the minister was allowed to baptize by pouring water upon the head, or by sprinkling. In the early church, clinical baptism, as it was called, was only permitted in cases of necessity; but the practice of baptism by sprinkling, gradually came in in spite of the opposition of councils and hostile decrees. The Council of Ravenna, in 1311, was the first council of the church which legalized baptism by sprinkling—by leaving it to the choice of the officiating minister." (Vol. 3, page 351.) It is not a matter of surprise, then, that sprinkling and pouring became the rule, when it is remembered how much importance was attached to the actions of councils and edicts of Popes. To refuse to obey was heresy, and heresy was a crime. But as this council only decided that baptism was to be administered "by trine aspersion or immersion" (*sub trina aspersione, vel immersione*), immersion continued to be very generally practiced in many parts of the Christian world. It is, perhaps, well enough to state that while this is the first action of any council ratifying this mode of

baptism, yet Pope Stephen the Second had decided, in 754, that it was lawful to baptize an infant, in case of necessity from sickness, by pouring water upon his head. He said: "This baptism, if administered, in the name of the Holy Trinity, holds good, especially when necessity requires that he who was detained by sickness and regenerated in this manner, should be made a participant of the kingdom of God (Burrage, "Act of Baptism," page 94.) Pertinent to what has been said, in this section, is a quotation from the "Edinburgh Encyclopædia" on the subject of Baptism: "The first law for sprinkling was obtained in the following manner: Pope Stephen II, being driven from Rome by Astolphus, King of the Lombards, in 753, fled to Pepin, who a short time before had usurped the crown of France. While he remained there the Monks of Cressy, in Brittany, consulted him, whether, in case of necessity, baptism performed by pouring water on the head of the infant would be lawful; and Stephen replied that it would. But though the truth of this fact be allowed, which some Catholics deny, yet pouring and sprinkling was admitted only in cases of necessity. It was not till 1311, that legislature in a council held at

Ravenna, declared immersion to be indifferent in this country (Scotland); however, sprinkling was never practiced in ordinary cases until after the Reformation; and in England, even in the reign of Edward IV, immersion was commonly observed. But during the persecution of Mary, many persons, most of whom were Scotchmen, fled from England to Geneva, and there gradually imbibed the opinions of that Church. In 1556, a book was published at that place containing the form of prayers and ministration of the Sacraments, approved by the famous and godly learned man, John Calvin, in which the administrator is enjoined to take water in his hand and lay it on the child's forehead. These Scottish exiles, who had renounced the authority of the Pope, implicitly acknowledged the authority of Calvin, and returning to their own country with John Knox at their head, in 1559, established sprinkling in Scotland. From Scotland, this practice made its way into England, in the reign of Elizabeth, but was not authorized by the Established Church." So much, then, for the origin of these substitutes for God's commands. They are without God's sanction.

SEC. II. What fundamental doctrine respecting the very essence of salvation gave rise to

this error of changing the form of baptism itself? What vital truth, so considered, made the change of baptism from that of immersion to sprinkling and pouring? There is quite a close connection between the act of baptism as presented in the Word of God and the act of faith. "Believe and be baptized;" "arise, and wash away thy sins;" "whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" "repent and be baptized," are all passages which show the connection between baptism and faith, baptism and salvation to be strikingly intimate. That some should have imagined these interdependent, taking the sign for the thing signified and the externalities and outward forms for the internal, inward working of the Spirit, is what might have been reasonably conjectured. But there is no need of conjecture, when attention is given to the study of Church History, History of Christian Doctrines, Dogmas, etc.; for, in the words of Dean Stanley: "There was the belief in early centuries that it was like a magical charm which acted on the person who received it without any consent or intention, either of administrator or recipient, as in the case of children or actors performing the rite with no serious intentions." There was also the belief that it wiped away all sins, how-

ever long they had been accumulating, and however late it was administered. This is illustrated by the striking instance of the postponement of the baptism of the first Christian Emperor Constantine, who had presided at the Council of Mecca, preached in churches, directed the whole religion of the empire, and yet was all the time unbaptized till the moment of his death; when, in the last hours of his mortal illness, the ceremony was performed by Eusebius of Nicomedia. There was also the belief in the third and fourth centuries, almost as firmly fixed as the corresponding belief in regard to the Eucharist, that the water was changed into the blood of Christ. There was the yet more strange persuasion that no one could be saved unless he had passed through the immersion of baptism. . . . If only the person of a human being be wrapt in the purifying element, he was thought to be redeemed from the uncleanness of his birth. . . . And this "washing of water" was now deemed absolutely necessary for salvation. No human being could pass into the presence of God hereafter unless he had passed through the waters of baptism here." (Christian Institutions, page 15). This language is quite in harmony with the sentiments of Cyprian, who lived about the

middle of the third century. He says: "For me, while I yet lay in darkness and bewildering night, and was tossed to and fro on the billows of this troublesome world, ignorant of my true life, an outcast from light and truth, I used to think that the second birth which divine mercy promised for my salvation a hard saying according to the life I then led; as if a man could be quickened to a new life in the lava of healing water as to put off his natural self and keep his former tabernacle, yet be changed in heart and soul. How is it possible, said I, for so great a conversion to be accomplished? . . . But after that life-giving water succored me, washing away the stain of former years, and pouring into my cleansed and hallowed breast that light which comes from heaven; after that I drank in the heavenly Spirit and was created into a new man by the second birth." (See "Ford's Studies on Baptism," page 340.) Very much to the point is the language of that prince of English writers, Mr. Leckey ("Rationalism in Europe," pages 360, 361, vol. 1): "According to the unanimous belief of the early Church, all who were external to Christianity were doomed to eternal damnation, not only on account of their own transgression, but also on account of the transmitted guilt of Adam; and,

therefore, even the new-born infant was subject to the condemnation until baptism had united it to the Church. . . . At a period which is so early that it is impossible to define it, infant baptism was introduced into the Church; it was adopted by all the heretics as well as by Orthodox; it was universally said to be for the remission of sins; and the whole body of the Fathers, without exception or hesitation, pronounced that all infants who died unbaptized were excluded from heaven. In the case of unbaptized adults a few exceptions were admitted, but the sentence on infants was inexorable. . . . Some of the Greek Fathers, indeed, imagined that there was a special place assigned to infants, where there was neither suffering nor enjoyment; while the Latins inferred from the hereditary guilt that they must descend into a place of torment; but both agreed that they could not be saved." Again, on page 362, this language stands: "Among the writings of the Fathers there are few which long possessed a greater authority than a short treatise '*De Fide*,' which is one of the clearest and most forcible extant epitomes of the Patristic faith, and which, till the time of Erasmus, was generally ascribed to St. Augustine, though it is now known to have been written in the begin-

ning of the sixth century by St. Fulgentius." (A. D. 467-520.) "In this treatise we find the following very distinct statement of the doctrine: 'Be assured' writes the saint, 'and doubt not that not only men who have obtained the use of their reason, but also little children who have begun to live in their mother's womb, and have there died, or who, having been just born have passed away from the world without the sacrament of holy baptism administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be punished by eternal torture of undying fire; although they have committed no sin by their own will, they have, nevertheless, drawn with them the condemnation of original sin by their carnal conception.'" The author cites these, not with a view to discussing infant baptism, but to show what power baptism was supposed to present. Then it appears that these "cases of necessity," which justified an abridgment of the divine mode were cases of extreme illness, where the ordinance was administered to save the soul of the one supposed to be in a dying condition, where immersion was next to impossible. The eternal destiny of a human soul, as it was thought, depended upon the baptism; hence, an urgent necessity drove them to abridge what they knew to be God's prescribed

method of baptism. There can be no risk, then, in saying that erroneous conceptions of the saving power of baptism gave rise to the change of God's command. "Many sick persons were baptized in their beds from the third to the sixth century. This was called clinic baptism, from the Greek word *klinee*, a bed or couch. It met with much opposition, but as even this sort of baptism was supposed to take away all sin, it was freely resorted to in cases where the disease threatened to prove fatal. Novatus, of Rome, enjoyed the application of water in this way (*perichuthenta*), when it was imagined that he was at the point of death, and his future career as the founder of a new sect of Puritans, opposed to some of the customs of the churches in his day, brought his baptism into notoriety and dispute. But he believed it gave him a full outfit for the 'Shining Shore' at a time when he supposed he was leaving the earth." ("Cathcart's Papal System," page 157.) When one of these clinics recovered, his baptism, though irregular and an abridgment of the divine command, was respected, and it was not far for the mind to go to find the question whether, if such baptism was admissible in case of one recovered from sickness, it might not obtain also when administered to a well person.

But still the "necessity" idea prevailed for a long time, and immersion continued to be the rule till the thirteenth century. So Winer says: "Affusion was at first applied only to the sick, but was gradually introduced for others after the seventh century, and in the thirteenth became the prevailing practice in the West." ("Fuller on Baptism," page 99.)

Dr. Fuller also quotes Du Fresne as saying: "From the custom of baptizing by pouring or sprinkling the sick, who could not be immersed (which is properly baptism), was introduced the custom which now prevails in the Western Church" (page 100). There can be found no better example of how one error leads to another, and how all error leads to a nullification of God's truth, than the one now under consideration. Baptism necessary to salvation, baptism (immersion) impossible with the dying or nearly so, baptism abridged, changed, perverted, destroyed. Other influences after the beginning of the thirteenth century were brought to bear upon this subject in the Western Church, which served to popularize sprinkling and pouring and to depreciate immersion.

(2.) *Convenience* came in to play a conspicuous part in deciding the question. Dr. Philip Schaff says: "Not till the end of the thirteenth

century did sprinkling become the rule, and immersion the exception—partly from the gradual decrease in the number of adult baptisms, partly from *considerations of health and convenience*, all children having now come to be treated as *infirm*." ("Apostolic Church," 569.) It was so much easier to pour or sprinkle some water on one in the Church or around the family fireside, than carry him off to a stream and dip him, or to baptize him in a font for that purpose. Then it was so *convenient* to remember that an infant could not be saved without baptism, and that all infants were *infirm* or weak, so were sick persons weak; and if *baptism* by sprinkling and pouring would answer in one case of weakness, why not in another? There was so much convenience about this way of thinking, and this way of abridging God's commands, that these abridgments grew constantly more popular, and immersion was regarded with less favor because it was so inconvenient. The advocates of these substitutes for God's commands have not forgotten the convenience of these abridgments, and the inconvenience of baptism according to apostolic example, precept and practice.

(3.) Again, a formal enactment by a council had served to render lawful these substitutes.

"The Council of Ravenna, in 1311, was the first Council of the Church which legalized baptism by sprinkling, by leaving it to the choice of the officiating minister. The custom was to immerse three times, once at the name of each of the persons of the Trinity." ("Encyclopædia Britannica," vol. 3, page 851.) So Dr. Wall says: "The Greek Church, in all its branches, does still use immersion, and they hardly count a child, except in case of sickness, well baptized without; and so do all other Christians in the world except the Latins. That which I hinted at before is a rule that does not fail in any particular that I know of. All those nations of Christians that do now, or that formerly did, submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, do ordinarily baptize their infants by pouring or sprinkling; and though the English did not receive this custom till after the decay of Popery, yet they have since received it from such neighboring nations as had begun it in times of the Pope's power. But all the other Christians, who never owned the Pope's usurped power, do and ever did, dip their infants in the ordinary use." ("History of Infant Baptism," page 727, Nashville edition.) Such is the mighty influence which came in to render this custom of sprinkling and pouring as legal as

baptism by immersion. That influence is the authority of the Church. How many times have Catholic Priests told the world that the Apostolic mode of baptism was immersion, but that the Church had a right to change it, and she did change it?

(4.) Another reason has been given which, to say the least of it, is unique and daring if not blasphemous: "But speaking, generally, the Christian civilized world has decided against it (immersion). It is a striking example of the triumph of *common sense* and convenience over the bondage of form and custom." (Dean Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, page 22.) We are sorry for any cause which has to be sustained by such blasphemous assertions as the one above. Nothing but a great lack of reverence for holy things could possibly induce any body to make such assertion. It must be a hopelessly reckless condition of mind and heart that can trust the saving power of Jesus, and expect to be justified, sanctified and glorified by his divine sacrifice; and yet, call in question his "common sense," because he sanctioned and commanded the administration of the ordinance of baptism. Yes, baptism; for if he said men must believe and be baptized, and immersion was what he meant, nothing else is bap-

tism but immersion. Then a lack of common sense upon the part of Christ gave rise to the command to be baptized? But, according to the Dean, this lack of "common sense" has been supplied by the taste and convenience of the people. The people have outgrown the commands of Christ; if so, they may lay aside any and every command which either their taste, which is ever changing, or their "convenience" may dictate. Then the saying, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" must be altered and made to read, "If ye lack common sense ye will keep my commandments." That the Dean was willing to accept the results of his position is quite clear from his language in this same connection. Hear him: "The change from immersion to sprinkling has set aside the most of the Apostolic expressions regarding baptism, and has altered the very meaning of the word." (page 23.) In other words, "common sense," has set aside much of what the Apostles preached and wrote, which amounts to saying that the "common sense" element was lacking in the gift of inspiration. The most agreeable thing to do with this subject is to turn away from its contemplation, throwing "the vail of charity" over the words and deeds of one who could be

driven to such desperation in estimating the common sense of Him who spoke as never man spoke. The Dean has passed away, and has ere this learned how puny and impotent is the wisest common sense of men compared to the wisdom, knowledge, and omnific ken of Him who made the universe and peopled it with shimmering stars, shining satellites and burning suns. There he has learned whether obedience is the result of love or the lack of common sense.

(5.) But there is still another reason which is urged, more especially now, why sprinkling and pouring may be practiced and immersion abandoned, even though it is granted that immersion is the Scriptural mode of baptism. The reason is generally given about as follows: "God requires me to be obedient, and I have just as much of the spirit of obedience in being sprinkled as in being immersed. He only asks me to worship him in spirit, and so I do in being sprinkled or poured." Such were the words used by an able Methodist divine once in trying to persuade the writer that it was unnecessary to be immersed, granting that immersion was the Scriptural way of baptizing. To the young and the unthoughtful such an argument has much force, and can be effectually

used in quieting the conscience of those who want to obey their Lord. There is a failure to discriminate between things that differ. Because some commands are of an inward character, and the command does not prescribe the method by which it is to be carried out, the unthinking are led to believe that all commands are of this character; that as some commands are wholly inward all commands must be so. Take an illustration in the language of another treating on this point: "Two cases therefore arise: one case is that of commands that are wholly inward in their nature; the other is that of commands that are partly inward and partly outward. These two cases admit of being clearly distinguished. In the case of commands wholly inward obedience, and the spirit of obedience, are identical. Take, for instance, the command to Rejoice. There, evidently, having the joyful spirit is precisely the thing commanded. To rejoice and have the spirit of rejoicing are the same thing. . . . In the case, however, of particular commands that are partly inward and partly outward, we are compelled to establish a distinction. Here two quite separable elements enter into the command, and two severally corresponding elements, also quite separable in thought, enter into

the obedience. There is a spirit of the command—that is one element; and there is a letter of the command—that is another element. For full obedience these two elements, of course, must co-exist. If I have only the spirit to obey I meet only the spirit of the command. It is needful, besides, to actually obey, in order to discharge a complete obedience. . . . Now, for an important application. Christ says: 'Be baptized.' Here a particular act is enjoined whether he meant sprinkling, or pouring, or dipping. Let us suppose it is uncertain, but is some act. Now, with reference to this command—no matter for the moment whether of dipping, or pouring, or sprinkling—full obedience is no conceivable except as rendered in an *act* performed by a person addressed. The person to be baptized is spoken to (no one else) and commanded to perform an *act*. The act is, being baptized. This *act*, therefore, must be performed by him, or no obedience is rendered." ("The Baptist Principle," pages 115, 116, 119.) The above seems to be a sufficient reply to this rather popular and deceptive reason for failing to submit to baptism as prescribed in the Word of God. There is a specific and definite act commanded, and the world of scholars has decided that that specific thing

commanded is immersion in water. No obedience can be rendered save in the performing of the very thing commanded.

(6.) Another reason given now for the practice of these substitutes for God's commands, is that those who sprinkle and pour are just as successful, and enjoy just as much of the Divine favor as those who practice immersion. This is also a very plausible reason, and has satisfied the minds of a great many good people. But it will not stand the test when tried by the canon of God's Word. But the reason here given in justification of such practice proves too much, and, therefore, proves nothing. All are familiar with the parable of the vineyard. This parable can be used to show that the reason above given is of no weight. It may be well to show where the parable touches the case. The Jews had sent to them prophet after prophet. God continued his favors to them in spite of their rejection of his servants. Every rejection led was followed by some brighter and more convincing proof of God's love for them. Finally God sent his own Son, that, as he was the heir, they might respect him, but they did not. They said this is the heir; let us kill him. The climax was reached by sending the Son; the climax of their wickedness and rebellion was reached

only in the rejection of the Son whom the Father had sent. Now, if we are to argue the right of any departure from the Divine command, from the fact that God continues his favors, and blesses the perverters of his will, then we must argue that it was right for the Jewish people to reject the prophets, casting some out and stoning others. Yea, more, upon the same grounds the crucifixion of Christ can be shown to be a righteous thing. There are other reasons which are frequently given to justify the practice of these caricatures upon the commandments of God, which need not be mentioned here. Now, one fact stated, and one question asked must close these pages. Every denomination of Christians which believe in any baptism at all, admit that baptism by immersion is valid. Many of them admit that it is the only way during the days of Christ and the Apostles. Now, reader, is it not safest always to do that which all agree is right, rather than something else about which there is no such agreement,—something, too, of which the time, place, and cause of its origin can all be shown?