

A

**DISSERTATION**

ON THE

NATURE AND ADMINISTRATION

OF THE

**ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.**

**PART I.**

---

By the Rev. Wm. Semmerville, A. M.

HORTON.

---

**HALIFAX. N. S.**

PRINTED AT THE NOVASCOTIAN OFFICE,

**1845.**



## A DISSERTATION, &c.



### *What is Baptism?*

In an investigation of the manner in which the ordinance of Baptism is to be administered, it is essential to the correctness of our conclusions, that the premises from which they are drawn be just. According to the line of argument adopted by Anabaptists in general, the determination of the *mode* must turn upon the original, and (what is assumed, not very accurately, to be identical,) the proper signification of the term Baptise or Baptism: and the advocates of the *rite* of *pouring* or *sprinkling*, which they deny to be *baptismal*, have, to a considerable extent, acquiesced with them in this; their reasonings seeming often tacitly to take for granted, that if the term employed to denote the ordinance be found invariably to denote *Immersion*, the ground must be abandoned to their opponents.

It seems to me extremely probable, that the paramount reliance placed by Anabaptists upon the determination of the original or proper meaning of the single word, and the admission, by their opponents, of the important relation which it is thought to bear to a satisfactory adjustment of the ideas of Christians on the *mode* of Baptism, is to be traced to a striking apparent anomaly in the direct Scriptural allusions to that ordinance. In the New Testament, in which alone the word Baptise or Baptism occurs, it is unaccompanied by any explanatory details bearing upon the mode in which Baptism is to be administered. The speakers, whose words are recorded by the inspired writers, evidently proceed upon the assumption, that those who heard them, so fully understood what ideas were intended to be communicated by the word in question, that any explanation or particular description of the mode of administering the ordinance indicated by the term Baptism, would be entirely superfluous. And the inspired writers also obviously take for granted the perfect intelligibility of their phraseology when speaking of the

dispensation of that ordinance. "And were *baptised* of him in Jordan.—Teach all nations, *baptising* them.—Why *baptisest* thou then." In fact, throughout the New Testament, for our knowledge of what constitutes Baptism as a divinely instituted rite, if we except incidental allusions not primarily intended to cast light upon the present inquiry, we are left to look to the word in its naked individuality.

Here, then, there might seem to be—nay, according to the impression that the first and last question must be,—What does the word BAPTISE mean?—there certainly is an anomaly in the plan of Divine doctrine respecting positive ordinances. No such source of embarrassment and doubt exists in the case of any other rite,—no such meagreness of instruction upon the subject of instituted duty. Under the former dispensation, circumcision, oblation, sacrifice and festival, were enjoined. But in no one of these branches of Divine Service, is the knowledge, upon the part of either the people or the Priest, of the manner in which obedience is to take form, suspended upon the knowledge of a solitary word. The specification of the mode of procedure, that the intention of the Head of the Church be understood and fulfilled, is often so minute as to appear, to our simplicity, superfluous,—so complete as to remove all cause of controversy. Accordingly, it is a fact, that, divided as the Jews were in the latter period of their eventful history, upon points of high import, there is no evidence of the existence of more than one opinion upon the form of the instituted rights of the ceremonial law; and exposed to heavy censure for encumbering the service of God with traditional practices, our Lord charges them not with informality in their approaches to the Holy One, in consequence of having turned aside from the letter of commanded customs. And when we turn to the New Testament we do not find it otherwise. The Lord's Supper is unquestionably peculiar to the last days of the world. Being required to keep the feast, we are not left to gather from the word *Supper*, the mode in which the Divine will is to be fulfilled. Lest the, by no means imperfect information supplied by three Evangelists, should still leave room for misapprehension, the Holy Spirit takes occasion from the excesses into which the Church in Corinth had run; or perhaps it would be more correct to say, the Saviour permits the Corinthians to run into excesses, under the notion of commemorating his death, for whatever other reasons, that occasion might be taken, to supply, by the pen of Paul, instruction so much more definite, that all but deviation from the will of God, simply vo-



luntary might be anticipated. And has any disputation taken place respecting the mode of dispensing and eating the Lord's Supper among men who receive the word of God, as an infallible rule of faith and practice, to be used by every man for his personal direction? None respecting *the meaning of what is written*. That Bread and Wine are the elements to be used—that they are not used to answer the purposes of corporeal nourishment—that the repast is social, and to be enjoyed without limitation to the frequency of the observance, are fully admitted. Different views are entertained and defended, not about things specified, but about the propriety of circumstances of which nothing is specifically mentioned or enjoined.

Is, then, BAPTISM the exception, the solitary exception, to the gracious and condescending particularity with which the Head of the Church has used to exhibit the duty of his members, when they would observe a positive ordinance according to his word? That word "is profitable for all things, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*." Must the meaning of the word *Baptise* determine the precise nature of our duty?—Whether we are in Baptism to be immersed, or have the water applied to us?—Whether we must be covered, or have a small quantity poured or sprinkled upon us? Must we direct the inquirer into divine things, to the Lexicographer, and the Critic, to teach him his duty? And are we to admit that, in one instance, the will of God is so expressed, that an important and imperative positive appointment is to be hidden from our view, or exhibited before the Church, according to the false or correct interpretation of a single Greek vocable? Shall a divine ordinance be displaced by human invention, or come under our notice in the reflection of divine light, according to the error or accuracy of a Translator in rendering a single word? And if that word remain untranslated, must we remain in utter ignorance of one prominent part of commanded duty? So say the Anabaptists, with few exceptions. And as their doctrinal adversaries are not prepared to admit positions so difficult, if the matter stand as they allege, it is much to be feared that the controversy shall not soon come to a termination, the persuasion of the Rev. A. Carson notwithstanding, that he has settled the question respecting the mode of Baptism as certainly as **axioms are true**. The bootless and pedantic boast, so very unseemly in one who had more than once found cause to change his ministerial profession and practice, is nevertheless in the full spirit of the people among whom he had cast in his lot.

To Anabaptists every thing here appears so plain, that they are hardly able to reconcile opposition to their peculiar views with a willing subjection to the laws of Christ. The lettered advocate of Immersion finds the application of the original word so easy and conclusive, that a child can be at no loss to learn that "Baptism means to lay under water:" and the unlearned, with a smile of conscious superiority, or the scornful glance due to wilful ignorance or obstinate impiety, rises in triumph over sanctified talent and education, adorned with the fruits of practical piety, when found in opposition, holding aloft in his nervous grasp, a flag inscribed thus—"HE WENT DOWN INTO THE WATER, AND CAME UP OUT OF THE WATER."

And is it, indeed, so easy to ascertain the nature or the form of a positive ordinance, from the particular name by which it is indicated? Could the nature of the ordinance in question have been easily determined from its name, by them to whom that name was familiar as one of their native tongue? Let us try how near we could approach to a knowledge, according to this rule, of the nature of other ordinances, and the order of their observance. Out of the many, we shall select, for the sake of experiment, two: not because they are better adapted to serve a purpose than others, but that the names given to them by inspiration have been reduced to equivalent terms in the authorised English version. These are the PASSOVER and the LORD'S SUPPER. In regard to neither shall we find reason to believe the distinctive name appropriated to it, intended or adapted to afford the information necessary to its due observance according to divine appointment.

1. PASSOVER.—The name appropriated to this ordinance, intended to perpetuate among the Israelites the remembrance of their wonderful deliverance from the land of Egypt and the means by which it was effected, was taken from the circumstance that the destroying Angel who traversed the land and smote all the first-born of the Egyptians, on that night on which it was first solemnized, and which immediately preceded their escape from bondage, *passed over* the houses of the Israelites, the lintels and door-posts of which were smeared with the blood of a lamb, slain and eaten according to the command of God, by Moses.

Now, from the term *Passover*, who could derive any information respecting the nature of the ordinance of which it is the Scriptural denomination? Not one, it may be unhesitatingly affirmed, could form the most remote idea of it. The literal and allowed meaning, which is not connected except by instituted

association with the festival, affords not the most vague hint of its technical import. From the words *pass over*, no deduction could lead the mind to the contemplation of an annual observance—the use of a lamb of the first year—the roasting of the lamb in opposition to every other mode of culinary preparation—the eating of it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, by persons in the equipments of travellers—the necessity of using every part of it,—and the careful avoidance of breaking one of its bones. Nor could the reason of man, borne away on the wings of the wildest fancy, discover from *pass over*, uninfluenced by information previously imparted, or the association of ideas formed by familiarity with an established custom, a single one of those particulars. It is in its technical application alone, that the phraseology in which it is introduced appears neither absurd nor unintelligible. If we should suppose the compound word used in its original, literal, and allowed import, what could we understand by killing the *pass over*, roasting the *pass over*, eating the *pass over*, holding or keeping the *pass over*? With more surprise and confusion than seized the Disciples when our Lord said, “A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me,” might those who know, or would know, nothing but the original and literal meaning of *Passover*, exclaim, hearing such language from the lips of any one, “We know not what he saith.”

2. LORD'S SUPPER.—Similar remarks apply to this ordinance also. How shall we ascertain that the repast must consist of bread and wine—that it is to be eaten in company with our brethren—that it belongs exclusively to members of the Church—that it is commemorative of the death of Christ—that the bread must be broken and the wine poured out, and that they are the symbols of his broken body and shed blood, and that we do not eat to satisfy the cravings of animal appetite? Will the word *Supper* teach us? No. It would lead us to the ideas of a full meal—the latest repast of the day—a solitary or social meal, as it might fortuitously occur—and a meal consisting of any esculents that might be desired or could be procured. In this instance again, the name appropriated to the commemorative ordinance is taken, not from its nature or form—of course it is not indicative of either; but from the use of such things as constitute food, and the time when it was instituted.

The preceding remarks shew that there are two ordinances known by divinely prescribed names, not indicating their nature or mode of administration, but originating exclusively in



the evanescent circumstances of their institution. And it will be found, that the proper and distinctive designations of other positive ordinances will, no more than these, supply us with the information necessary to an acquaintance with their nature, mode of solemnization, or design. So far is it from being true in any case, that we are made acquainted with a positive ordinance by its name, that we need first to know the ordinance, to understand the origin and reason of the name.

In the face of facts, shewing that the adoption of the rule must leave us entirely at fault in observing other positive ordinances, or lead to most distressing embarrassment and suspense, not to say despair, of ever arriving at definite information respecting the order of procedure, it is passing strange that Christians should be held bound down to the literal and proper, or if it seem good, the established and universally admitted signification of the appropriated designation of the ordinance, in ascertaining what God requires when he commands us to be *Baptised*. If the word *Supper* would lead us wide of the mark, when we would attend upon one ordinance; and *Passover* leave us standing still, utterly at a loss how to proceed to the observance of another, why should there be so much confidence that the appropriated denomination of the initiatory ordinance of the New Testament shall competently fill a place and serve an end, which the proper names of other ordinances are not designed or adapted to do. Or why should any be seriously animadverted on, because, after admitting that the original and literal signification of *Baptise* is to *immerse*, they hesitate to admit that *the ordinance of BAPTISM* is identical with *IMMERSION*.

Still, it may be said, if we be not supplied with definite information from other sources—if we be left to glean our knowledge of the ordinance from its proper name (and it has been admitted that the New Testament supplies not one sentence of direct information upon the subject,) what are we to do? Are we not to use what light the word *baptise* supplies? or are we to lay aside the ordinance till God condescend to separate the litigants by an immediate adjudication between them? We might, without offence, suggest to Anabaptists the propriety and comeliness of a little moderation, of a little less dogmatism—a more sparing use of “great swelling words.” Surely the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please themselves. Let not him that immerses, despise him that immerses not. The advocates of the simple and unostentatious rite, administered by pouring or sprinkling a little water upon the face of an adult or infant,

have not been forward to condemn the practice of exclusive immersion. They have stood for the most part upon the defensive. Perhaps, in the sequel, there may be found some reason to hesitate to make so ample a concession as that which is usually made, that there is no objection to *Immersion* being considered *one* mode in which the ordinance of Baptism may be administered. That the mode is indifferent might have remained the concession of indolence, and gratifying to indolence. But when Anabaptists refuse to give repose—when they will persevere in asserting that to be unquestionable, which has again and again been denied—when they ascribe to others concessions which were never made—when they do not cease to insult, to depreciate the intellectual, and hold up to suspicion, the religious character of those who differ from them—when they continue virtually to invalidate the orders of every other than an immersed Minister of the Gospel, and excommunicate every professed follower of the Lamb who follows not with them—when they not only claim and desire to possess a distinctive privilege, but insist that we must surrender what we believe to be an honest possession; it is natural, and, by no means unreasonable, to look a little more closely into their title to what they hold.

But what are we to do? Scholars of the first name, and of close and accurate research, have applied themselves to the investigation of the *word*, and the end of the controversy is not seen even afar off. Mr. Carson, armed with axioms, and canons, and a dogmatism possessed by few, and supported by an imposing array of heathen subsidiaries, has failed to produce submission in the minds of his opponents. He has pushed aside, very unceremoniously, the ablest writers on the same side of the question, and taken upon himself the whole burden of the controversy, that he might sweep away every cobweb within which the Pedobaptists have hitherto ensconced themselves, by his more extensive research, his more accurate criticism, and his more exact philosophy: and the objects of his assault still enjoy, in their places, an undisturbed security, unappalled by the thunder-cloud of divine vengeance, to which he has, as with his finger, once and again pointed: although I think there are among them some few, who at once possess integrity, fear God, and are capable of appreciating an argument.

We do not propose to enter the field, in which so many, more able to improve it, have laboured, of a dry critical examination of a word or words, barbarous to the overwhelming majority of those who are equally interested in the decision. There is no ne-

cessity for it. God has not forgotten his condescension to the infirmities and wants of his children—his little ones, when he requires them to be *Baptised*, more than when he says, “Do this in remembrance of me.” The necessity of confining our attention to the word *Baptise*, assumes that Baptism is an ordinance peculiar to the New Testament dispensation, and that therefore all the Scriptural information to be obtained respecting it, must be sought in the pages of the New Testament. This is the assumption of the Anabaptists. It is a groundless assumption. Baptism is not an ordinance peculiar to the New Testament times. It is a *divinely instituted rite of the former dispensation*. Let it be remembered that the question before us is neither, who ought to Baptise?—nor, who to be Baptised?—nor, whether Baptism is to be administered once or frequently?—but, *what is it to be Baptised?* It is not asserted that Baptism occupies the same place, or retains the same relation to a religious profession as of old; but simply that it was a rite observed, according to an expression of the divine will, by the covenant people of God, before the incarnation of the Son of the Highest.

If this can be proved, there appears a most satisfactory reason why, when Baptism is spoken of in the New Testament, there should be no special explanation of its nature or the mode of its administration—why the hearer or reader should be addressed as one acquainted with the rite—why the naked denomination should be introduced in the same manner with *Sacrifice*, *Circumcision*, or *Passover*. Every reader of the New Testament, who is in any measure acquainted with the Old, would at once perceive that there would have been a needless superfluity of detail, had the inspired writers, who often allude to Sacrifices, Circumcision and the Passover, the Altar, the Tabernacle and the Temple, furnished us with an account of the nature and intention of these ordinances, or the mode of their administration, and supplied a description of the structures mentioned, or the purposes to which they were applied; unless, haply, the idea should present itself, that the latter revelation was intended for such as were ignorant of the former, or that the purpose to be served by the Old Testament had been accomplished, and that its perusal and application had been superseded. At the same time, the strict propriety and consistency with the Divine plan, in bringing positive ordinances before the Church, of a minute account of the design of the Lord’s Supper, and the mode of its celebration, are discovered in a more distinct light. The supposition that Baptism was an ordinance, instituted, explained, understood, and observed, before



God was manifest in the flesh, removes the appearance of an anomaly, that, as such, must otherwise press itself upon the attention of the observant student of the Bible, when he finds Baptism, viewed as an ordinance peculiar to this economy, stand forth, without any specification of its object or mode, or this to be gleaned from a critical analysis of the name appropriated to it, in the midst of a cluster of ordinances, not more of a positive nature—not more important—not more peremptorily enjoined—of which such a minutely faithful account has been furnished, that controversy, if it exist at all, obtains only on the outworks.

That this supposition is founded in fact, is to be proved. Here we step to a conclusion at once, by a process the most simple, the most easily apprehended, and the best adapted, to say the least, to an overwhelming majority of religious enquirers. The conclusion is founded on testimony—*Divine testimony*. Scriptural statement, where such statement is fully admitted to be decisive evidence, sets the matter at rest. It has been already noticed, that, from the beginning of the New Testament, Baptism is always introduced to view as a subject with which those addressed are fully acquainted. Paul shows us the good reason the Jews had, nay, all who were acquainted with the Old Testament had, perfectly to understand what Baptism meant.

Writing to the Corinthians,<sup>1</sup> he says, “Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” They were Gentiles to whom he addressed these words, for he says in a subsequent part of the same chapter, “Behold Israel after the flesh,” and presses upon them the necessity of separating themselves from all participation in services of the Idols’ Temples, which, in respect to Jews, in the most corrupt times subsequent to the Babylonish captivity, would have been quite superfluous. Observe the propriety of his address, “I would not that ye should be ignorant.” With the fact, of which he makes mention, the Jews were well acquainted. At present it would be out of place to enquire how the Baptism was or was not administered. This shall form a subject of future examination. It is to the fact that the reader’s attention is invited, that, “in the cloud and in the sea,” the whole body of the Israelites were *Baptised*. “All our fathers were *Baptised*.” We might not have been able to discover a

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor., 10: 1, 2.

*Baptism* of the Israelites in their march through the Red Sea, or in the allusions to it in other parts of the Old Testament. Ignorance or prejudice may have produced dulness of apprehension on the subject of Baptism. Were it otherwise, the doctrine of Baptisms, one "of the *principles* of the doctrines of Christ,"<sup>1</sup> would not furnish the materials for so keenly contested a discussion. But it would be very illogical to infer that the enlightened Israelite did not recognise the Baptism of his fathers. Christians of the last days, (of the nineteenth century :) are accustomed, with great complacency, to take credit to themselves for clearer, and more correct, and more extensive apprehensions of divine things than the despised sons of Abraham of the olden time. Did our attainments bear proportion to our privileges, our knowledge of spiritual things would be more exact and extensive ; but it is a melancholy fact, that the light in men is sometimes darkness, and some are "ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."

But the following passage admits of no evasive explanation. The man who asserts that Baptism is exclusively an ordinance of the last days, does so in opposition to a very plain Scriptural proposition, and *contradicts the testimony of the Holy Ghost*. "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."<sup>2</sup> Observe,

1. The Apostle is here treating of the Religious services of the Israelites, and informs us that they consisted in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances.

2. He is not treating of traditional rites, and the superstitious forms of will-worship, but the divinely appointed services of the Tabernacle and Temple—of the Mosaic Dispensation.

3. The "divers washings," as we read, are divers BAPTISMS. This fact is hidden from the mere English reader by the introduction of the word *washings* to translate the original, instead of employing, as usual, when the ordinance of Baptism is spoken of, the derivative *Baptisms*.

From this it appears that *divers Baptisms* constituted a part of the divinely appointed services of God's people of old. A clue is now furnished that shall conduct us to a discovery of both the nature of Baptism, as a divine ordinance, and the mode of its administration—a clue that at once introduces us, for instruction,

<sup>1</sup> Heb 6: 1, 2

<sup>2</sup> Heb 9: 10.

into the sphere of Mosaic institutions. It may appear annoying to self-righteousness and self-sufficiency to be turned back so far for information; but an Apostle has taken us by the hand, and we have, consistently with due submission to the Divine will, no alternative.

Still, it may be asked, how are we to distinguish, in the multitude of Mosaic rites, those to which the appellation of BAPTISMS is given? Baptisms will not readily be confounded with *meats* and *drinks*. But how shall we distinguish a *Baptism* from a *carnal ordinance*. If we were to adopt the emendation of Griesbach, the knot would be cut at once. In his edition, the connective that is found in the authorised text and the English version, between *Baptisms* and *carnal ordinances*, is dropped, and the verse reads thus:—"Meats and drinks, and divers Baptisms, carnal ordinances imposed on them, &c." Thus the *carnal ordinances* are made to stand in apposition to *meats, drinks, and baptisms*, furnishing an exposition of their nature. We have no desire, however, to take advantage of the proposed emendation. The classification of the Old Testament ordinances would not seem to be complete, without viewing *carnal ordinances* as a distinct class; and the omission of the conjunction, placing them in apposition, enforces an improper conception of the character of *meats, drinks and baptisms*. They are not carnal ordinances.<sup>1</sup>

We might expect to find *Baptisms* in the diversified application and use of liquids, which were introduced, according to the appointment of God, in his service. There is no need to look for Baptism in connexion with *wine*, which constituted the *drink* offering; nor with *oil*, with which flour was mixed, cakes prepared, and wafers anointed, to be presented before the Lord, as it

---

<sup>1</sup> *Carnality* is that which springs from natural descent, and does not necessarily express iniquity. It can never be properly applied with reference to contracted moral impurity or actual sin, and expresses the depravity of man, inasmuch as that depravity exists by nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," says Christ to Nicodemus. And Paul says to the Corinthians, "Are ye not carnal and walk as men?" Accordingly, that precept, the obligation and application of which depends upon birth, is denominated a *carnal* precept. The Son of God, therefore, is made a Priest, "not after the law of a carnal commandment," as he "sprang out of Judah: of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." Priests under the law, were made "after the law of a carnal commandment," as their right to the Priesthood is founded on their natural connection with Aaron, and their induction into office supposes that the evidence of this is valid. In the days of Nehemiah "the children of Habaiah, as polluted, were put from the Priesthood," because they "sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found." Whoever, I am persuaded, duly appreciates the force and bearing of the preceding quotations, will be satisfied that no one of the ordinances of purification was a carnal ordinance, as not depending immediately upon birth. Circumcision, the whole Levitical economy, the obligations and privileges of the first born, as of kinship in general, and the laws of inheritance, were "carnal ordinances."



constituted a part of the *meat* offering. Beside these, blood and water were extensively used. We shall take and give the benefit of the various applications of water, blood, with the exception already specified, oil, and (under the direction of John the Baptist, who teaches us to connect Baptism with its use, we shall add it to the elements already specified) fire, or any one of them, in ascertaining the nature of Baptism, and the mode of its administration; and shall not pronounce a severe sentence upon any mode of administration which is supported by the Old Testament use of oil, blood, water, or fire, as it is limited and directed by the law of symbols.

## OIL

was used to *anoint* Aaron and his sons, the Tabernacle, the Ark, the Table and his Vessels, the Candlestick and his Vessels, the Altar of Incense, the Altar of Burnt Offering and his Vessels, the Laver and his foot, to *sanctify* them,<sup>1</sup> that they might be employed in the service of God.

Aaron and his sons were anointed by *pouring* oil upon their heads,<sup>2</sup> and the Altar by *sprinkling* oil upon it seven times.<sup>3</sup>

Oil was *put on* the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot, and *poured* or *put on* the head of the Leper to be *cleansed*, that he might present his offering unto the Lord.<sup>4</sup> Oil was *sprinkled* before the Lord seven times, in the ceremonial of cleansing the Leper,<sup>5</sup> and, mingled with blood, on Aaron and his sons, and on their garments, to *hallow* and *sanctify* them.<sup>6</sup>

## BLOOD

was *SPRINKLED* upon all the *people*, on the day when, at Horeb, they *entered into Covenant* with God by sacrifice. This blood is called the blood of the Covenant, and was sprinkled for the purpose of *purging* away sin.<sup>7</sup> Blood was sprinkled upon the Leper on the day of his cleansing<sup>8</sup>—probably mixed with oil, on Aaron and his sons, and on *their garments*, to *SANCTIFY* them<sup>9</sup>—*before the veil*, when the sin offering of the Priest or the people was presented.<sup>10</sup> The blood of the red heifer was *SPRINKLED* before the Tabernacle of the congregation,<sup>11</sup> and that of the sacrifices generally upon the Altar.<sup>12</sup> Blood is *PUT ON* the tip of the right

<sup>1</sup> Ex. 30: 26—30, 40: 9—15.

<sup>2</sup> Ex. 29: 7—40: 15.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. 8: 11.

<sup>4</sup> Lev. 14: 17—19, 28—30.

<sup>5</sup> Lev. 14: 16.

<sup>6</sup> Ex. 29: 21—Lev. 8: 30.

<sup>7</sup> Ex. 24: 8—Heb. 9: 19, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Lev. 14: 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ex. 29: 21.

<sup>10</sup> Lev. 4: 6, 17.

<sup>11</sup> Num. 19: 4.

<sup>12</sup> Ex. 24: 6—Lev. 5, 9.

ear, the thumb of the right hand, and on the great toe of the right foot of Aaron and his sons, when being consecrated to the office of the Priesthood, to SANCTIFY them<sup>1</sup>—upon the same parts of the Leper to be *cleansed*, in connection with other ceremonies of purification,<sup>2</sup>—and upon the horns of the Altar—and is Poured out at the bottom of the Altar, to SANCTIFY it to make reconciliation upon it.<sup>3</sup>

## WATER

was used to WASH Moses, and Aaron, and Aaron's sons, at their consecration, before entering the holy place, and before approaching the Altar to offer sacrifice; and to WASH the High Priest, before putting on the Holy Garments, that he might enter into the most holy place<sup>4</sup>—to WASH or BATHE the Leper to be *cleansed*, or any other person, really or ceremonially unclean, or both, for his *purification*.<sup>5</sup>—to WASH the inwards and legs of the burnt-sacrifice<sup>6</sup>—to WASH garments, skins, or any work made of skin, in which there was real or ceremonial uncleanness, the garments of persons really or ceremonially unclean, and of the Levites, on the day of their *purification*.<sup>7</sup>

Water was SPRINKLED seven times upon a leprous person, and on a leprous house, to CLEANSE them;<sup>8</sup> on the Levites, and on unclean persons for their PURIFICATION, and on tents and vessels for the same purpose.<sup>9</sup> The brazen pot, in which the sin-offering had been sodden, and the vessel of wood, touched by him who had an issue, were RINSED in water;<sup>10</sup> and a vessel of wood; raiment, skin, or sack—any vessel in which work was done, upon which an unclean reptile, when dead, had fallen, was PUT INTO WATER, that it might be clean.<sup>11</sup>

## FIRE

was used by the divine commandment to CLEANSE, *gold, silver, brass, iron, tin and lead*—every thing that *might abide* the fire, that it might be brought into the *camp*, or into the *tabernacle* of the congregation, when specially devoted to the Lord.<sup>12</sup>

In reviewing the preceding statements, derived immediately

<sup>1</sup> Ex. 29: 1, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 14: 14.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. 8: 15, 16: 18.

<sup>4</sup> Ex. 29: 4, 40: 31, 32.

<sup>5</sup> Lev. 14: 8, 15: *passim* 16: 26, 28, Num. 19: 8, 19, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Ex. 29: 17. Lev. 1: 9.

<sup>7</sup> Lev. 11: 25, 13: 6, 31, 54, 15: *p.* Num. 8: 7, 8, 19: 7, 8, 10, 19, 21.

<sup>8</sup> Lev. 14: 7, 51.

<sup>9</sup> Num. 8: 7, 19: 18, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Lev. 6: 28, 15: 12.

<sup>11</sup> Lev. 11: 32.

<sup>12</sup> Num. 31: 22—24, 54.

from the inspired record, there are three particulars brought under our notice, perfectly distinct from one another: and as they are common to every case of the instituted application of oil, blood, water, and fire, they are unquestionably to be viewed as entering into the complex idea of the ordinance in which the application is made. These are,

I. The thing commanded, or the substance of the ordinance.

II. The ultimate object contemplated, and for the sake of which the ordinance is enjoined and observed.

III. The mode in which the Administrator is, in each case, to proceed in observing the ordinance and seeking the object.

I. The substance of the ordinances, in which blood, oil, water, or fire is used—the thing enjoined in every case, is *purification or cleansing, or sanctification, or hallowing*. For this purpose is blood sprinkled or poured out—for this purpose is oil applied in the same forms—for this purpose is water used in washing, bathing, rinsing and sprinkling, and for this purpose is fire used.

The identity, in this particular, of the Baptism, enjoined and observed under this dispensation, with the ordinances, which required the application of these several elements, is obvious, from the allusions to it in the New Testament. Paul represents Baptism by “Washing,”—“the washing of regeneration,”—“having the body washed with pure water,”—and “the washing of water.”

The distinct specification, in the epistle to the Corinthians, of both sanctification and justification, constrains us to associate “washing” with Baptism,—the purifying ordinance of the former and latter dispensation. “But ye are *washed*, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.”

In the Epistle to Titus, the allusion to Baptism, in the “washing of regeneration,” is ascertained by being discriminated, in the sentence, from “the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” “According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration *and* renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Should any one ask, “is Baptism, then, a saving ordinance?” such a one is referred for an answer to the Apostle of the Circumcision, who teaches us to say that “Baptism *doth* save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” not however as a “putting away of the filth of the flesh,” not from any virtue in the water—not from any efficacy that is lodged in the administrator; but as being “the answer of a

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 6: 11.

<sup>2</sup> Tit. 3: 5.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 10: 22.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 5: 26



good conscience toward God." And a comparison of the Apostle's statement with the declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God," serves to confirm this application of "the washing of regeneration," and to show with what propriety the baptismal washing is associated with the new birth, being symbolical of that gracious effect of the exceeding greatness of divine power toward them that believe. What the Lord calls, being *born of water*, the disciple calls, the *washing of regeneration*; what the former calls, being *born of the Spirit*, the latter calls, the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*. And as the Saviour exhibits the one birth from on high, as of water and of the Spirit, so the Apostle represents salvation as imparted not by the washing or renewing, but by the complex provision of divine mercy—the washing of regeneration *and* renewing of the Holy Ghost. By bringing before us, at one view, the divine ordinance and the divine operation, we are taught how closely we should have combined, in our conceptions, the uniform attention to positive institutions of divine origin, and the gracious exercise of divine power, of which these are symbolical; the exercise of Faith taking hold of God's Covenant, and the demonstration of profound respect and submission to the Covenant Head, to the praise of the glory of his grace. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the spiritual application of the blood of the everlasting covenant for the real putting away of sin, expressed by "The heart being sprinkled from an evil conscience," and the direct and distinct allusion to the body, determine the reference of the *washing with pure water* to the ordinance of Baptism. Here also is brought before the mind the imperative duty of an explicit and formal dedication of the whole man—of presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God; and the invariable connection between the faith of the operation of God, and an acknowledgment of Jesus, according to his own, the only proper order—"He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved."

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, which says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word," we recognize the ordinance of baptism in the *washing of water*, which is the accompaniment of the word, and the emblem of the influences of the divine Spirit, who gives effect to the word by which men are born again and cleansed; as it is written, "Sanct-

tify them through thy truth : thy word is truth ;” and again “ Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you ;” and again, “ Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, *through the Spirit* ;—being born again—by the word of God.”<sup>a</sup>

Such were the divers baptisms of ancient times, and such is baptism to us—ordinances of purification—washings.

II.—The object contemplated in those divers washings was, uniformly, union and fellowship with a covenant God and with his people. *Without purification*, in the cases contemplated in the law, in all cases in which access to God is sought, *persons* may not draw near to God, in the performance of instituted service, the enjoyment of desired privilege, or the participation of the fellowship of God’s Covenant with a Covenant people :—*things* cannot be employed in the divine service, although prepared in all other respects according to a divine prescription and pattern ; nor used, for their proper purposes, by a people devoted to the glory and service of a reconciled God and Father.

Aaron and his sons are specially designed of God himself to the office of the Priesthood, yet do they not appear to execute the duties of that office, before their actual investiture, or consecration according to the law of purification. Before they enter, and that they may enter upon their proper functions, they are washed at the door of the Tabernacle ; the High Priest is anointed by pouring oil upon his head, the blood of the ram of consecration is put upon their right ears, hands, and feet, and their garments are sprinkled with oil and blood. That the High Priest may enter into the most holy place, and approach the altar of burnt offering, to offer for himself or for the people, he must wash in water.<sup>4</sup> The Levites are purified that they may do the service of the Tabernacle. Taken from among the children of Israel, to represent the people instead of the first-born, they are not accepted till they have observed the whole appointed process of sanctification.<sup>5</sup> The Tabernacle and all its furniture are sanctified, that they may be used in the divine service,—the sole purpose for which they were prepared. The altar and its vessels are sanctified, that reconciliation may be made on it ; the Laver and his foot, that the water it contained might be used for necessary ablutions on sacred occasions.

That persons, affected with any uncleanness, may draw near to God’s sanctuary, present their offering, or sit down to eat of sacrificial and social feasts, they must be cleansed. If they are

<sup>1</sup> John 17. 17.  
<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. 1, 22.

<sup>2</sup> John 15, 3  
<sup>4</sup> Ex. 29—Lev 8 : 16.

<sup>5</sup> Num. 8 : 6—15.

not forbidden to enter the camp at all, they may not touch any person who is clean, or any clean thing, inasmuch as such person or thing is rendered unclean by the contact. Tents, beds, seats, saddles, clothes, which have been occupied by unclean persons, cannot be used by clean persons, till they have been purified, without producing contamination in the sight of God. By the approach of an unclean person, whether unclean in himself, or by having come in contact with an unclean person or unclean things, and who has not been washed; or who hath touched a dead body, one slain, the bone of a man, or a grave, and the water of separation has not been sprinkled upon him, the sanctuary of God is defiled, and such person is threatened with excision from the Church.

In this also, we recognise the ordinance of *Leuitism*. The same is the object of Baptism, as appears from the allusions to its design in the New Testament. Union with Christ and his people, and access to God in this relation, constitute *us* exalted end—the object contemplated, according to the character of the ordinance of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

“Our fathers,” says Paul, “were all baptised *unto (into) Moses*, in the cloud and in the sea.” By *Baptism* they are brought into union with Moses, and with him, into a state of fellowship one with another. He is their common Head and centre of union. Moses is their *mediator*, and is so denominated in the Epistle to the Galatians. “It (the law) was ordained by Angels in the hand of a mediator.” By him God communicates his will to the people, and their words are returned to God. By him they obtain deliverance, and he stands between God and them, to turn away his wrath from them. By him they obtain divine blessings, “all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink,” and are led in the way they should go. And his death placed at their head a Captain, who introduced them into the actual possession of the inheritance which was by promise.

Moses is presented before them and us, in the exalted character of a Type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant; exhibiting in his person, the office and work of Christ manifest in the flesh. In eating the same spiritual meat, and drinking the same spiritual drink, the people whom he led are

---

<sup>1</sup> It may serve to prevent misapprehension, to state, once for all, that I unhesitatingly copy the current example of the inspired writers, and ascribe the same thing to the symbol, which is true of that which is symbolized.



brought to view, in possession of the fellowship of those, who "are one bread and one body (as being) all partakers of one bread." The spiritual bread, which they ate, was Christ; and the spiritual Rock of which they drank, was Christ. And under this dispensation we are taught to say,—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” “My flesh (says Jesus) is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” They have been, and still are, to the Covenant people of God, and to them as such, meat and drink.

The object of the baptism of the Israelites, and of believers now, is the same,—union to a mediator, in whom we have fellowship with God, and with one another. The former are baptised into Moses, the latter into Christ. The one, into the type as such, the other into the anatype. “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised unto Jesus Christ, were baptised unto his death?” Their knowledge of the subject is presumed; and the union contemplated in baptism, is expressed still by the same phrase:—*Baptised into*. Accordingly, being *in Christ*, is a common description of the state of that man who is accepted before God through Christ, embracing a condition of freedom from all evil, and of the possession of all blessedness, or complete assurance of both. “There is no condemnation to them that are *in Christ Jesus*.—*In the Lord* shall all the seed of Israel be justified.—We have hope *in Christ*.—*In Christ* shall all be made alive.—If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature.—God causeth us to triumph *in Christ*.—He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in Christ*.—Fallen asleep *in Christ*.—Dead *in Christ*.” All these spiritual blessings are the result of that union of which Baptism is the sign and instrument—an interest in his office, work, and glory, unto whom we are baptised.

The text says, that being baptised into Christ, we are baptised *into his death*; and in the subsequent part of the chapter, we are assured that being united to him, “sin shall not have the dominion over” us, and are taught to reckon ourselves dead, indeed, unto sin, inasmuch as Christ, in dying, died unto sin, and we are crucified *with him*.

The consequence that follows from this, according to the spirit, is that we are buried *with him*. “*Therefore we are buried.*” If it follows from our union with Christ, that we have fellowship with him in his death, it must also follow that we are par-

takers with him in his burial. The order of the words is carefully to be noted. It is not said, we are buried into death, which would convey the preposterous idea of a burying alive;—that the burial not only precedes death, but is the cause of it. We are buried by the baptism into the death of Christ before mentioned. The burial is just another blessed fruit of that baptism by which we are dead with him. It is not said that baptism is a burial, nor that, being buried, we are baptised, nor that we are buried *after the example* of Christ; but that baptism is the instrument or means of burial:—“Buried *by* baptism:”—that our burial is *with* Christ. Being baptised into him, we are crucified with him—dead with him; and being baptised into him, we are buried with him: and we know that *if he wash us not, we have no part with him.*<sup>1</sup>

Nor is our baptism into Christ, merely productive of death with him and burial with him. It is of a thorough and permanent character, and carries us with Christ in his progress to perfection. Being baptised into Christ, we are partners also in his resurrection. Our resurrection is involved in his, and to this are the death and burial subservient. The first and second are not, but as leading to the third. Wherefore it is added, “*That* like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.” “*if* we be dead *with* Christ, we believe that we shall also live *with* him.” Because he lives, we shall live also.<sup>2</sup>

In the passage upon which we have been commenting, the Apostle exhibits fellowship, in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, simply as the result of baptism into him. In another place this privilege appears not only as the object of union by baptism, but an object immediately secured; and the sameness of the relation that burial and resurrection bear to baptism is more directly expressed. “Buried with him *in* Baptism, *wherein* also you are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God.”<sup>3</sup> If baptism in the order of nature precede burial, in order of time they are simultaneous:—“buried *in* baptism.” The same may be said of our resurrection. risen with him *in* baptism. (“Wherein also, &c.”) Death in or with Christ is set forth in the verse immediately preceding, under the notion of circumcision. “In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.” Christ

<sup>1</sup> Joh. 13. 8.<sup>2</sup> Rom. 6, 5; John 14, 19<sup>3</sup> Col. 2: 12.

“was *cut off* out of the land of the living,” and we are *cut off* with him. As natural death is described by a putting off this Tabernacle, (the natural body,) so spiritual death—death to sin, death with Christ, by “putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.” And this is by baptism, designated, as some suppose, in the conclusion of the verse, “the circumcision of Christ,” or Christian circumcision. Who will not exclaim with Paul, “Ye are complete in him.” In him dwelleth all fulness, and believers have an interest in it all. Are we dead? our life is hid with Christ in God: and, “when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Yes! in virtue of *the union*, we shall be glorified together with him. Nothing less than all this is contemplated in baptism. We seek not in baptism a momentary fellowship with Christ in his burial and resurrection, shadowed forth to carnal eyes, and a perverted imagination, and directed by the spirit of a laborious superstition; but in faith’s surrender of us and ours to him, who is able to save, and faith’s obedience to him, who is our Lord and our God, an eternal death to sin, an eternal separation from a dead world, and eternal life and glory in the bosom of our Father, and the Father of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The whole matter is brought before us in one short and nervous sentence: “As many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Christ is here represented as the believer’s raiment, armour, or whatever is put on. In him he appears. On the Christian is exhibited all that Christ is, made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. By baptism, he proclaims his apprehension of Christ for all these, that before God, he may stand justified, before the adversary, safe, before Angels and men, glorifying his Father who is in Heaven. And this is the privilege of all the Saints, as it is added,—“there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

This view of the nature and design of baptism illustrates the propriety of Peter’s address to the assembly on the day of Pentecost: “Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,”—of Ananias to Paul: “Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins:”—and explains the connection between “being baptised,” and

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 3: 27.



“added to the Church.” Ignorance of the nature of baptism, and its place in the economy of divine grace, as an ordinance of divine appointment, produces the hesitancy that too often appears to introduce it to notice, in addressing enquirers after the way to Zion, and in showing forth to professors the design and application of the work of Christ. Belief, repentance, are often viewed as superseding the necessity of an ordinance to which they are adapted to lead: men are recognised as members of Christ, who are unbaptised, hold it to be superfluous, at most a ceremony of decent respect for its author, or refuse to submit to it; and in Christ, who have never been united to his body, the Church.

Having now shown the nature and object of the ordinances of purification under the law—that the thing enjoined and effected in all was cleansing, and the end contemplated, union and fellowship with God and his people—and that baptism under this dispensation is fully identified with them, in these respects, we feel the utmost confidence in seeking a definite determination of the mode in which baptism should be administered, in

III. The mode in which the baptismal ordinances of the former dispensation, were administered. The baptisms of the legal economy were, the Apostle tells us, *divers*. It has been shown that their nature was *one*—they were ordinances of purification: that their object was *one*—they contemplated access to God, acceptable employment in his service, and fellowship with him and his people. They were *divers* in respect to the subjects of them. Persons, houses, tents, furniture, garments, metals, were purified. They were *divers* in respect to the elements of purification. These were oil, blood, water, and fire. They were *divers* with respect to the Administrator. He was sometimes a Priest; sometimes any indifferent clean person; sometimes the subject of the rite. They were *divers* with respect to the mode of applying the cleansing element. It is, however, to be carefully observed that this diversity was regulated by determinate rules. When purification is to be effected in a particular instance, it is not by any means indifferent, whether oil, or blood, or water, or fire, or whether one or more of these, are to be used; who is to be the administrator of the rite or rites; or how the application is to be made. The case known, the law determines the mode of procedure, in most instances, with a precision that anticipates every doubtful enquiry; in all cases, with so much minuteness of specification, as to leave the servant of God free from all embarrassment, in regard to the pro-

priety of a given process. The case of baptism under this dispensation is defined in the following particulars. The *subject* is PERSONS; the *element* is PURE WATER; and the *administrator* is DIFFERENT FROM THE SUBJECT.

1.—The *subject* of baptism is *Persons*. Nothing, therefore, that is peculiar, in the mode of applying the element of purification, for the purpose of cleansing houses, tents, furniture, garments, or metals, can be introduced in proof of the mode in which baptism is now to be administered. This follows so much as a matter of course, that it is quite unnecessary to enlarge either in defence or explanation. It is so obvious, that no amplification could make it clearer.

2.—The *element* is *pure water*. As oil and blood are always *poured out* or *on*, *sprinkled before*, *towards*, or *upon*, *put on* with the finger, Anabaptists do not appeal to the mode of their application in justification of their distinguishing practice. But if there were anything peculiar, that might seem to strengthen their cause, the appeal could not be sustained, as these are not used in Christian Baptism, strictly so called. For the same reason, no inference can be drawn from the application of *Fire*: as also because it never was used in the purification of persons. The necessity of using *pure water*, either for literal or symbolical purification, obviously suggested from a general view of the subject, is affirmed by divine testimony, in the case of Baptism in this age.—“Having our bodies washed with *pure water*.” Under the law, the water of separation, most extensively used for cleansing, and without which, things made to pass through the fire are not fully purified, was prepared with the *ashes* of the red heifer; and the water used in the cleansing of the leper, was mingled with the *blood* of a slain bird. Yet neither in preparing the water of separation, nor that by which the leper was cleansed, is the original quality of the water disregarded. It must be *running* (Mar. *living*) water, or that which issues from a spring. The Apostle’s direction makes the purity of the water imperative, to the exclusion of the addition of blood, or ashes. But it goes farther, and rebukes the traditional and superstitious practices of modern will-worship. It involves the condemnation of salt, and oil, with which the Baptismal water is polluted in the Church of Rome. And amongst Anabaptists, who reprobate Popish practices in no measured terms, and desire to be considered as removed to a holier distance, and separated by a higher wall of partition, the same error in principle is the regulator of their customs, to a great extent, with reference to the ordinance of

**Baptism.** They disregard the obligation to use nothing but *pure water*. Turning their backs upon one another, Anabaptists and Papists move round the same centre, and must meet on the extreme part of the circumference. The latter render the water impure—the former, without scruple, use water, in the observance of a symbolical ordinance, in a symbolical point of view, utterly impure. Constrained in argument to admit that Baptism is, in its nature, an ordinance of purification, their minds are so completely engrossed with the supposed representation of a burial, in the form, that the apprehension of its nature is excluded, in all practical respects. And if they can only have the *immersion* and *emergion*, they are satisfied, whether it be in “the troubled sea, whose waters” already impregnated with salt, “cast up mire and dirt,”—in a pond of standing water—or in a baptistry, whose waters must always be to the second person who is plunged, polluted.

3. The *administrator* is different from the *subject* of the ordinance. This fact would forbid the numerous cases of persons, by divine direction, washing or bathing themselves, to be adduced, in explanation of the practice obligatory upon us, in the solemnisation of Baptism. Though it were proved that, in consequence of the command to *wash*, persons immersed themselves completely, no example could be drawn from such washings in favor of immersion under this dispensation, as Baptism is not administered but by another. The Apostles are commanded to baptize *others*. The thousands who were converted on the day of Pentecost were directed to *be baptized*. And Saul himself, who had seen the Lord, must *be baptized* by Ananias. There is no case on record of one baptizing himself, since Christ ascended, nor is any provision made for any supposed emergency that might render such a practice necessary. Even granting then that the washings under the law, performed by men upon themselves, were of the divers Baptisms spoken of by Paul, and that they were immersions, the example comes not within the range of New Testament practice. This serves to bring the determination of the mode to be adopted by us, within the narrowest compass; and, in connection with the preceding specifications, prepares the way to an easy application of the law, regulating divine ordinances of purification, to the Baptism of the New Testament dispensation.

With the exception of Aaron and his sons, whom Moses was commanded to *wash*, and whom he did *wash* with water at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, *the purification*



of persons in water, by the instrumentality of another, was effected in every case, by SPRINKLING the water upon them.

The tribe of Levi was purified by *sprinkling*. "Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: *Sprinkle* water of purifying upon them."<sup>1</sup> The leper was cleansed by *sprinkling*. "And he shall *sprinkle* upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean."<sup>2</sup> By *sprinkling*, was every one cleansed who had been contaminated by contact with any unclean object; and though other ceremonies were associated with this, the least apparently adapted to produce purification, yet to it is our attention specially directed, as that by which the desired effect is secured, and without which every other means is valueless. Nor do we ever find any associated ceremony to which prominence is given. *Sprinkling* is presented in bold relief, and shaving, bathing, and washing of clothes, are only exhibited as appendages of this leading ordinance. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." Who would not say, "Shaving, washing, and bathing, look like means of cleansing; but to what purpose sprinkle a little water, and that adulterated by a mixture of the ashes of a burnt heifer?" Hear what God says: "A clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and *sprinkle* it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave;—But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: *the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.*"<sup>3</sup>

The ordinances of divine appointment, under the Mosaic economy, among which the Spirit tells us there were "divers Baptisms," furnish abundant examples in favour of the administration of Baptism by *sprinkling*, and do not supply a single instance, warranting the introduction of any other mode, except it be deducible from the *washing* of Aaron and his sons by Moses, at their consecration. And we shall now proceed to show, as far as we may be enabled, what the Scripture teaches upon this subject, and for this purpose shall endeavour to improve what light may be derived from other cases of *washing*, to justify the supposition that Aaron and his sons were *immersed* in water, or that

<sup>1</sup> Num. 8: 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 14: 7.

<sup>3</sup> Num. 19: 19—20.

they were the subjects of its application in some other form. The following particulars seem to have a bearing on the object of this investigation.

1. The term *washing* denotes the process by which purification is accomplished. To *purify* is to *make clean*,—to *wash* is to *use effectively the means* of cleansing. The word leaves the mode, by which the purification is to be accomplished, undetermined. When God commands to wash the person, the flesh, the hands, or feet, the clothes, the legs and inwards of sacrifices, the mode by which the operation is to proceed is left optional, except other terms are used to define the process. Disobedience is ascertained by the use of means not adapted to the end. Objects may be immersed in order to be washed, or water may be applied to them for that purpose,—but assuredly *washing* does not necessarily suppose immersion, in any case; much less when it is a symbolical act, than when the actual putting away of impurity is required. When immersion is requisite, it is expressed by other and more definite terms. I believe that a vessel of wood, raiment, skin, or sack, being unclean, should be immersed, not because they are to be washed and purified, but because the lawgiver enjoins that they be “put into water.”<sup>1</sup> And this is not enjoined for the *sake of the mode*, as the same thing is expressed by making “to go through the water.”<sup>2</sup>

2. *Dipping* is never enjoined for the purpose of cleansing or washing the thing dipped. The priest is to *dip* his finger in oil or blood, not to wash or purify his finger, but that he *may sprinkle or put it upo* some other object for that purpose.<sup>3</sup> And even in such cases, it is extremely improbable that, in prescribing the dipping of the finger, the *mode* is contemplated at all, or that the insertion of the finger into oil or blood is imperative, but simply the taking up the one or the other for the purpose of applying it. The same action is expressed by *taking* of the blood with the finger, in several places: besides, the priest is instructed to pour oil into his left hand, and to sprinkle with his right finger, or put of the oil, without any direction respecting the mode in which he is to lift the blood or oil. For any thing prescribed, instead of inserting his finger into the blood or oil in the palm of his left hand, holding his right finger beneath, he might pour from his left hand upon it, and still have fulfilled all the conditions of dipping. A living bird, cedar-wood,

<sup>1</sup> Lev. 11. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Num 31. 23

<sup>3</sup> Lev 4. 6 9-10. 14-16

scarlet and hyssop are *dipped* by the Priest into blood and water, that he may *sprinkle* of the mixture upon him who is to be cleansed of his leprosy; and by a clean person, hyssop is *dipped* into the water of separation, that it may be *sprinkled* on an unclean person for his purification.<sup>1</sup> Even admitting the extravagant idea that the bird, the cedar, the scarlet and the hyssop were to be baptized, and not the person to be cleansed, "the totality of immersion," upon which Anabaptists insist, is utterly unknown. No one case of *dipping* supports their hypothesis. As there is no command to that effect, there is no case discoverable of one person immersing another for the purpose of cleansing.

3. *Immersion* is no more adapted to cleanse than *sprinkling*. The one has no more affinity to *washing* than the other. As a symbol, immersion is not more significant of washing than sprinkling is, inasmuch as an object of any kind is as much cleansed by sprinkling water upon it, as by dipping it into water. And it is to be recollected that the mode is the grand object for which the opponents of sprinkling contend. Dip a person into water, dip a vessel or garment, and when brought out they are just as filthy as they were before. It may, in some cases, be very convenient to put an object into water with a view to its being cleansed, but the process of real purification must follow upon the immersion, or the end is never accomplished. The nicer adaptation of the symbol will depend upon the greater effectiveness of the mode of the application of the water; and since the absolute weakness of immersion, to be followed by an immediate emersion, without any intermediate operation, must be confessed, it is really marvellous that our brethren, who insist upon a more exact type, have never suggested the propriety of introducing soap and a flesh brush.

4. Complete purification is ascribed to *sprinkling*. By sprinkling the purifying element upon them, men are washed. David says,—“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow.” The thing for which he prays is complete cleansing,—a thorough washing. The symbol of that washing is the sprinkling of “the water of separation.” To this agrees the divine prediction or promise,—“I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart



will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you.—And I will put my spirit within you.<sup>1</sup>” Here is, in fact, a prediction, only fulfilled in the New Testament use of Baptism. This is to “sanctify and cleanse with the washing of water by the word.” The promise is, that they shall be *cleansed* by the application of the cleansing element, and that application is by *sprinkling*.

The Apostle John exclaims, in triumphant gratitude, and teaches the seven Churches to exclaim,—“Unto him that loved us and *washed us from our sins in his own blood*, be glory!<sup>2</sup>” Yet blood was never applied under the law, except by sprinkling or smearing. The application of the blood of Christ is accordingly represented by being sprinkled. “Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus.<sup>3</sup>” What serves to determine the exclusiveness of this mode of expressing, with propriety, its application, as a type, is, that Paul calls it the *blood of sprinkling*.<sup>4</sup> From the preceding quotations we learn how closely holy men of God, under the teaching of the spirit, had *sprinkling* and *washing* associated in their minds. With them, to be *sprinkled with* blood and *washed in* it were phrases of equal import: so that those who were *sprinkled with*, were viewed as *washed in* the cleansing element. All who are *sprinkled with* the precious blood of Christ, are *washed in* that blood in consequence of its being so applied. The sprinkling of the blood is the mode of its application, that they may be washed. The inference is perfectly easy, that as washing in blood implies nothing more than sprinkling of blood upon the persons who are subjects of such washing, there is the most exact propriety, according to the law of the symbolical language of scripture, in representing one as washed in or with water, when water has been merely sprinkled upon him.

As it has been already shown that the proper idea of baptism is washing, it is worthy of particular observation, that the very same forms of expression are used, when baptism is spoken of. When the spirit was “*poured out*” or “*fell on*” the household of Cornelius, Peter recognised the fulfilment of the promise,—“Ye shall be baptized with (or in) the Holy Ghost.<sup>5</sup>” The spiritual baptism is administered by the spirit being *poured out*, and consequently *falling* upon the persons to be baptized. The resemblance between the language descriptive of the mode of

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. 36: 25—27.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 1: 5, 6.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 2.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. 12: 21

<sup>5</sup> Acts 11: 15, 16.

washing and of baptising is very exact. The element of washing and that of baptism are applied to the subject—another proof of the identity of washing and baptism.

5. There are circumstances connected with the washing of Aaron and his sons which show that they were not *immersed*, in whatever form the prescribed ablution may have been performed. The most extensive ablution specifically mentioned is of the hands and feet. This is once and again described by the general expression, "washing with water." "When they go in to the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water.—When they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses."<sup>1</sup> The preceding verses show that, in form, this washing was confined to the hands and feet. "They shall wash, or they washed," and "they shall wash, or they washed their hands and feet," are statements made to denote the same process, the latter being explanatory of the former. Had the explanation not been furnished, we might have been disposed to think that the general proposition must necessarily express a more extensive application of water. As it is, we are taught the necessity of guarding against a hasty determination, respecting the mode in which a general direction must be followed. The injunction in certain cases to wash the flesh, might generally be understood to require the application of water to the whole surface of the body, but in meeting with another direction to "wash *all* the flesh," the unwarranted apprehension is corrected, and we learn to understand the former to be obeyed, in cleansing a part of the body in a literal view, the part, for instance, which is the particular subject of impurity.

The laver, provided to contain water for the purpose of washing, and which stood at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,—the only vessel provided for that purpose in the service of the tabernacle,—was not adapted for the practice of immersion. Its dimensions are not pointed out, but we know that it rested upon one foot, and must have been either too small to receive the whole man, or too lofty to admit of an easy entrance, without a special accommodation, of which we read not, and an exposure, in a state of nudity, to the gaze of the worshippers, against which even partially, it is well known, God did, in a certain case, provide.

The laver was not *intended* for the purpose of immersion, as it

---

<sup>1</sup> Ex 30 : 20. 40 : 32.

was set up and supplied with water, that Aaron and his sons might wash their hands and their feet *thereat*.<sup>1</sup>

6. The remarkable declaration of our Lord to Peter, on the eve of his departure, must confound all reasonings in favour of immersion, founded on the command to wash, as though it must infer an obligation to immerse; and of the Anabaptistical practice, from the nature of Baptism viewed as a cleansing ordinance. "He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."<sup>2</sup> Peter's ideas of purification were more carnal, and more nearly allied to the notions of Anabaptists. In his mind, the idea of extensive or complete purification is associated with such an application of water as shall bear some apparent proportion to the effect to be produced. "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." It is owing to the same earthly apprehensions, that the ritual or baptismal washing, which is performed by sprinkling or pouring water upon the person to be cleansed, is now treated by the advocates of immersion with contempt and ridicule: and that a vast amount of laborious argument, not derived from such sources, as are accessible to the overwhelming majority of those who are all equally interested in the decision, is profusely expended. Our Lord's definitive sentence, absolutely subversive of Anabaptistical speculations, suggests to us a most important evidence of divine wisdom, in the appointment of rites of purification in particular, and in subsequent allusions to them. The necessity of entire purity must be taught, and, at the same time, the utter inefficiency of external observances to accomplish it, must be kept up before the eye of the mind. It is God alone who sanctifies wholly, in soul, in body, and in spirit. The blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer (the water of separation) cannot sanctify, even partially, nor contribute to the sanctification of the soul. Had a total immersion been requisite, or had the application of the cleansing element to the whole man been enjoined, the mind would have been led into the notion, too much in accordance with the views of the darkened understanding, that there must be some virtue in the symbol. On the other hand, the injunction of a partial application, in order to a total purification, is calculated to anticipate any leaning to a superstitious reliance upon the outward ceremonial. The Saviour says, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Then would the disciple say, "I must be washed." Again the

<sup>1</sup> Ex. 30: 19.

<sup>2</sup> Jno. 13: 10.



Saviour says, "He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Now the disciple would very naturally subjoin, "What is this that he saith? Water can cleanse no farther than it is applied, yet he has averred that a man is clean every whit, in consequence of having had his feet washed. Water is not the real means of the purification intended. Another means, and another than outward purification, are contemplated." The inquiry, forthwith arising, would have respect to the interpretation of the language of what, from its very form, must appear to be a symbol. The like reflections would be suggested to the mind of the child of God, under the former dispensation, in the observance of the rites of purification enjoined upon him.

Admitting with unfeigned satisfaction the total absence of all reliance upon a total immersion in the article of Baptism, contemplated as a cleansing ordinance, on the part of many who strenuously contend for it, I submit that the practice of total immersion, in Jew, or Christian, is superstitious,—that the addition of more water to that which is required and sufficient for sprinkling, that the whole man may be covered, is of the same character with the addition of one immersion to another, and another still, or of oil and salt to the baptismal water, and is adapted to pervert the ideas of Christians, with reference to the intention of an external ordinance, and to leave false and unscriptural impressions, as it proceeds from perverted ideas and false principles. The Greek Christian is as fully entitled to three dips, and the Papist to a little salt, and oil, as the Anabaptist to more water than is necessary for aspersion.

7. In purification, God discovers a solicitude that nothing, to be purified, be subjected to a process from which it is not naturally fitted to come forth uninjured. Nothing may be exposed to an ordeal which is calculated to destroy it. "The gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, *every thing that may abide the Fire, ye shall make go through the fire, and it shall be clean; and all that abideth not the fire, ye shall make go through the water.*"<sup>1</sup> Here is the evidence, and an exemplification of the principle—a principle strictly adhered to in every part of the Mosaic ritual—a principle diametrically opposed to the supposition that washing necessarily implies immersion, and utterly subversive of the practice of immersion for the purification of persons. Total immersion at once points to the destruction of

persons, and is an apt emblem of destruction, not of safety. In a state of total immersion, the functions of life presently experience a suspension, or at least a violent interruption to their exercise, which must soon put a period to temporal existence. The action of the lungs, upon which the movements of the whole animal machine depend, immediately ceases. It is to no purpose to adduce the fact that a man may be immersed, and sustain no permanent or even present injury, when everyone knows that the safety entirely depends upon a speedy extrication from a state of submersion. Death is the issue involved in that state, simply considered; and as it is not insinuated that baptize signifies to *take out* of the water as well as to *put into* it; moreover, as the argument in favour of total immersion is made to turn upon the word *baptize*, and that is said to denote *mode*, and *nothing but mode*, it is plain that, according to the divine direction, no provision is made for emergence from the water. That Anabaptists have the ideas of immersion and destruction as closely united in their minds as others, is evident from this,—that whilst they pertinaciously contend that *baptize* signifies to *immerse*, and nothing but *immerse*, the administrator of the ceremony of immersion finds it expedient to supererogate, and is as careful to take the subjects out of the water as to put them into it.

The whole tenor of Scripture phrasology, respecting the ends fulfilled by coming in contact with water, agrees with the principle stated above, and applied to the solution of the question between immersion in water, and sprinkling or pouring water in legal washings and baptisms of the former or latter dispensation. In every case in which water is described as *coming upon, from above, poured upon or sprinkled*, it is expressive of a blessing; and, invariably, being immersed in water is expressive of a ruinous calamity to every thing destructible by immersion, and from which, as being destructive to persons, the child of God would humbly pray to be delivered. *Being covered with water, is never represented as a privilege, but a calamity; never a blessing, but a curse.* Take for proof and illustration the following passages of Scripture, in which

*The SPRINKLING or POURING OUT or FALLING OF WATER from above, is spoken of. "Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: to set up on high those that be low; that those that mourn may be exalted to safety." I will be*

---

<sup>1</sup> Job, 5: 10, 11.

as the *dew* unto Israel: he shall *grow as the lily*, and cast forth his root as Lebanon.<sup>1</sup>—I will *pour* water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will *pour* my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and *they shall spring up* as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.<sup>2</sup> I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.<sup>3</sup>—As the *rain* cometh down, and the *snow* from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it *bring forth* and *bud*, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that proceedeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void.<sup>4</sup>—My doctrine shall *drop as the rain*, my speech shall *distil as the dew*, as the *small rain* upon the tender herb, and as the *showers* upon the grass.<sup>5</sup>—The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a *dew* from the Lord, as the *showers* upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the souls of men.<sup>6</sup>—He shall *pour* the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.<sup>7</sup> The blessing is the rain, the dew, or represented by the rain, the dew, which descend from on high in crystal drops, and by a gentle distillation; or it is symbolised by water poured out. No blessing is ever exhibited under the emblem of overflowing floods, or submersion in the deep waters, as will appear from an examination of the following passages of Scripture, in which we have reference to

IMMERSION *in* or BEING COVERED *with* water.

“The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the *breach of waters*.<sup>8</sup>—Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken: therefore snares are round about thee, and *abundance of waters covers thee*.<sup>9</sup>—The *waters covered* their enemies; there was not one of them left.<sup>10</sup>—Forasmuch as this people refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly; now, therefore, behold, the Lord *bringeth up upon them the waters of the river*, strong and many, even the King of Assyria, and all his glory; and he shall come over all his channels, and go over all his banks. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over: he shall reach *even to the neck*. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge

<sup>1</sup> Hos. 14: 5.

<sup>2</sup> Isai. 41: 3, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. 36: 25.

<sup>4</sup> Isai. 55: 10, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Deut. 32: 2.

<sup>6</sup> Mi. 5: 7.

<sup>7</sup> Num. 24: 7.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Sam. 5: 20.

<sup>9</sup> Job 22: 9—11.

<sup>10</sup> Ps. 106: 11.



of lies, and *the waters shall overflow the hiding place.*<sup>1</sup>—It shall rise up wholly as a flood, and it shall be drowned, as by the *flood of Egypt.*<sup>2</sup>—*Waters flowed over mine head; I said, I am cut off.*<sup>3</sup>—The serpent cast out of his mouth, *water as a flood*, after the woman; that he might cause her to be *carried away of the flood.*<sup>4</sup>—I am come into *deep waters*, where the *floods overflow me.*—Let me be delivered out of the deep waters. Let not the *water flood overflow me*, neither let the *deep swallow me up.*—If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then the *waters had overwhelmed us*, the *stream had gone over our soul*; then the *proud waters had gone over our soul.*<sup>5</sup>”

But the general principle admits of direct reduction to the case of baptism. It would not be an exercise of little ingenuity to furnish even a plausible argument against the conclusion, drawn from this principle, that immersion is alien from both the nature and the object of the baptismal ordinance. Nothing but an impious ingenuity will attempt it, having the testimony of two inspired writers to the existence of a *contrast* between baptism and immersion. Their testimony shall now be laid before the reader.—“Our Fathers were all *baptized* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” Compare this statement with the history of the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and the following facts, worth a thousand speculations, imaginings, and philological fancies, will present themselves to every reader; and it only remains to be tried whether unquestionable *facts* are to be admitted in evidence. If there be a man who refuses a known *fact* in opposition to the supposed accuracy of *verbal interpretation*, he may be entitled to esteem, but certainly not on account of the soundness of his judgment. The facts, bearing upon the baptism of the Israelites, are these:—

1. The Israelites were *baptized*, but *not immersed*.
2. The Egyptians were *immersed* but *not baptized*.
3. The Israelites were *saved*, and the Egyptians *perished*.

Again, “The world that then was, being *overflowed* with water, *perished.*—God spared not the old world, but *saved* Noah, the eighth person, bringing in the *flood* upon the world of the *ungodly.*<sup>6</sup> The long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were *saved by water.* The like figure whereunto, *baptism*

<sup>1</sup> Isai. 8: 6, 7, 8, & 28: 17.

<sup>2</sup> Am. 8: 8 & 9: 5.

<sup>3</sup> Lam. 3: 54.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. 12: 15.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. 69: 2, 14, 15, & 124

2, 1, 5.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Pet. 3: 6 & 2: 5.

doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Now for a view of the facts necessarily involved.

1. The old world was *overflowed* and *perished*.

2. Noah and his family were *saved by water*, but not *overflowed*.

3. Salvation by baptism is a *figure*, and the salvation of the eight members of Noah's family is a *figure*.

4. These are *like figures*.

The water was to Noah what water in baptism is to the believer, figurative of a divine and effective agent in giving salvation. The safety of Noah and his family answers to the salvation secured by baptism, both being figurative of spiritual deliverance. The ark is like the organized visible society—the body of Christ, into which the believer enters on earth. And as the ark, in being lifted up, lifts up them that are in it, so in the resurrection of Christ, they are raised up with him to newness of life, who are of his body.

It follows, unless the Apostle has made some mistake in introducing the phrase,—“the like figure whereunto *baptism*,”—(the similitude is of figures,) that *the BAPTISM which saves is NOT IMMERSION*, total or partial; a conclusion which is strengthened by the consideration that, in baptism, “the putting away of the filth of the flesh” is not contemplated. Let it be, meanwhile, kept in mind that the preceding quotations from the inspired writers, Paul and Peter, have not been introduced for the purpose of ascertaining the propriety of any given form of baptism, but simply to show that *immersion* cannot be the form, in which it is, in any case, to be administered to persons.

The result of the preceding investigation may be briefly summed up in the following particulars:—that the nature or form of any ordinance, and of course of baptism, cannot be learned from the name appropriated to it;—that baptism is an ordinance of the Old Testament dispensation, and what is necessary to be known of its nature, intention, and mode of administration, must be learned from that portion of the Living Oracles;—that, as to its nature, baptism is an ordinance of purification;—that the end of baptism is access to God in union to the Mediator;—that the mode of purification or baptism, in all cases agreeing with the case and conditions of New Testament baptism, was by *sprinkling* or *washing*;—that there is not *one* case in which, among all

the varied and multiplied rites prescribed of old, any man is commanded either to immerse himself, or to be immersed;—that washing does not imply more than the sprinkling or scattering of water upon the person;—that total immersion, so far from representing the purification and safety of persons, is a symbol of irremediable destruction, and directly opposed to the spirit of the divine institutions;—and that the allusions to baptism in the New Testament, are, in no instance, at variance with these positions, and in several instances, forcibly sustain them.

Having, to the best of my recollection, pursued the examination of the subject of baptism thus far, without once thinking of them, it ministers no little satisfaction that the examination fully justifies the description of the ordinance furnished by the Westminster Divines, and the propriety of the solemn profession of adherence, made many years since, to this article, in the works compiled by them, as being founded upon and agreeable to the word of God. They represent Baptism to be “a washing with water,” “which, for the manner of doing it, is not only *lawful*, but *sufficient*, and most *expedient* to be by pouring or sprinkling of water on the face,” to “signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace, and our engagement to be the Lord’s.”

Anabaptists may be surprised to find a conclusion brought, not merely against their exclusiveness, but against the very character of *their* ordinance; and, although, the conclusion be neither new, nor peculiar, may be almost disposed, in the fullness of their self-sufficiency, to make the alleged extravagance of it a substitute for a more reasonable examination of the grounds upon which it rests, or an exposition of its presumed want of firmness. Be it so, that a majority of Pædobaptists would divide the child with them. I have no doubt that a simple division with Moses and the Prophets, with Christ and the Apostles, will lead to the same conviction which rests with unflinching firmness on my mind, that the doctrine of exclusive Baptismal immersion is a fancy, founded in the mire of superstition and will worship; that it is a substitution of a type of complete dissociation from God and his people, and of utter destruction, for the appointed figure of union to them, and of eternal salvation; and that it is connected with views of revelation which ought not to be lightly passed over. When the second branch of the investigation comes forward, there may appear reason to believe that immersion is, notwithstanding, an appropriate appendage of the covenant-societies of Anabaptists, and that there must be some



fatality in the union of infant-exclusion and total immersion, which so generally obtains, contrary to what might be expected in things that are obviously, to a great extent, independent of each other. The doctrine that total immersion alone is Baptism, supplies no argument in favor of exclusive adult baptism, nor does the latter argue the propriety of total immersion, yet do we seldom find that the adoption of the one doctrine is not accompanied by a going into the advocacy of the other. We do not expect to find the ordinances of God administered but in the house of God. When Jeroboam abandoned, and caused the people to abandon the temple, he made calves, and ordained of the lowest of the people to be Priests. And when ordinances are superseded, the place of God's feet will not long seem glorious, and be visited with the frequency of true devotion. We expect to hear of a total desertion. The conduct of Anabaptists exemplifies these statements. They have forsaken the ordinance, and substituted an ordinance after the vanity of self-wisdom ; and we shall see presently that they have forsaken the House of God, and erected a Tabernacle according to their own ideas of spirituality and purity, but wanting the evidence of that of which the spirit of Christ is the author.

## NOTES.



### 1. *Anabaptists.*

We ought not to pay a compliment at the expense of a consistency. Socinians, Arians, and Anabaptists, have adopted names which involve the whole question at issue between them and their doctrinal opponents. The first two style themselves UNITARIANS, assuming that all who stand opposed to their peculiar views, are TRITHEISTS, and that themselves are distinguished from other professing Christians, by holding the doctrine of the divine unity. In like manner the last, with equal modesty of assumption, call themselves "Baptists," and under the name hold out the alleged unbaptized state of all who have not been totally immersed. It may appear to many that the name by which they are called is a matter of too little importance to justify an objection; and that no real evil can accrue from conceding and using whatever appellation they may choose to adopt; but if it should appear that, by calling them "Baptists," we are, in fact, though indirectly, pronouncing ourselves *unbaptized*, and are understood by them to admit not only the validity, but the exclusive validity of their mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, it must be evident that there is something more in the use of the name *Baptist*, than a decent compliment. In Nova Scotia you will find the letters from the Churches to the Association at its annual meeting very frequently commencing thus:—"The baptized Church of ——— to the Elders, &c" which sufficiently indicates the comprehensive import of the appellation, as claimed and used by them, and a sensitive apprehension that the commonness of the term *Baptist*, as the index of the Denomination, may have diluted its emphasis.

We are not always sufficiently alive to the importance of a *word*. Allow an improper word or phrase to be introduced and currently used, and, although hundreds may plead for it, because it admits of a harmless interpretation, the thing itself, correctly expressed by such word or phrase, shall soon be found almost as current as the language. Call bitter sweet, and sweet bitter, and forthwith the bitter will be applauded and sought after, and

the sweet condemned and refused. When the Anabaptists are in a very small minority, the words *Baptist*, *baptise*, and *baptism*, with application to them and their rite, will scarcely modify the mode of thinking in a perceptible degree; but it will be found quite otherwise where Anabaptists are in great numbers. They are too much under the influence of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness to accommodate their diction to any taste but their own. They always by baptism mean *immersion*, and there will rarely be found among them, the reciprocation of that politeness which, among Pædobaptists, dignifies "immersion" with the name of the divine ordinance, by a departure from the contemptuous use of *sprinkling*, *infant sprinkling*, *unbeliever sprinkling*, to denote the baptismal rite retained by such as refuse their principles and practice. In Britain, it would only excite a smile to hear a preacher announcing, "We read of John, the *Baptist*, but never of Paul, the *Presbyterian*, or James, the *Methodist*;" but in the western parts of Nova Scotia, where Anabaptist principles have the ascendancy, the announcement might pass for a good "hit" in favour of those principles. My ears have become familiar among *Presbyterians by education*, and other *Pædobaptists*, with the exclusive application of *Baptism* to denote *immersion*, and *sprinkling* to denote the ordinance of which they were the subjects in infancy, and the validity of which they do not call in question.

It is high time that Pædobaptists should pay more attention to the defence, and the consistent exemplification of the principles of their profession, come forth from the privacy in which they too often hide the administration of baptism, improve the opportunity which a public reception into the Church affords for setting forth the nature and importance of that ordinance, teach the people to speak the language of Disciples, instead of concealing an institution of divine appointment under the superstitious mantle of giving a Christian Name. *When men sleep, an enemy sows tares among the wheat.*

## II. *Baptize or Baptism.*

It is well known that this is a Greek word, introduced into the English language through the Latin medium, modified by an English termination. The derivative has been adopted by the authors of the received English version, in preference to any supposed equivalent of Saxon original. Before the authorised translation was executed, the question whether the initiatory or-



dinance of God's House should be administered by immersion of the subject in water, or by the application of water to the subject, by pouring or sprinkling, had been long agitated: and the Translators had too humbling a sense of their own liability to err, and too correct an apprehension of their responsibility, to aim at deciding for Christendom a disputed point, in which sincere followers of the Lamb were deeply interested. A translation of the word *Baptize*, might cast a sinking weight into the scale of either party in the argument. It would have been well, if Translators of the Scriptures into other tongues had followed their example, and with the introduction of Christianity, had ingrafted into the languages of the nations for whom translations were made, a word or words, used to denote divine ordinances. However, the Anabaptist Translators into the languages of the East, have been true to the assumption of their own perfection of knowledge, and, in the spirit of infallibility worthy of the Papacy, have put the British and Foreign Bible Society upon the painful necessity of denying to those for whom such translations have been executed, any assistance from its funds, in consequence of translating *Baptize* and its derivatives, by terms in the native languages, equivalent to *immerse* or *dip*. A "Bible Translation Society" has been organized to support their arrogant and obstinate exclusiveness, the uselessness and injurious tendency of which, even with respect to the Anabaptists, have been ably and lucidly pointed out by one of their own number in "Letters" addressed to W. B. Gurney, Esq. And, at its annual meeting in 1840 the Anabaptist Association of Nova Scotia passed the following resolution, equally extraordinary in itself and its terms, designed, as it evidently was, to come before and to persuade men, many of whom, in understanding and conscience, fully satisfied of the propriety of Baptism by effusion or sprinkling, have never entertained the idea of pressing or suggesting the translation of the word baptize in an exacter accordance with their own views and practice:—

"Whereas it appears that for some years past, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society have refused to aid in the circulation of those versions of the Scriptures in foreign languages, which have been made by (Ana) Baptist Missionaries, solely because our brethren have faithfully translated the word baptize by words which signify to immerse. Res.—That this Association do respectfully memorialise the Parent Society, through its Agent, the Rev. J. Thompson, requesting that such restriction be removed, &c."

There never was a more feeble objection raised against the use of the word baptize than its Greek origin. The reason that exists for its exclusion would invalidate the standing of a thousand words that are familiarly used by the English nation, and the propriety of which is never challenged,—words that have been introduced with as little variation as the one in question. Nor can Anabaptists themselves find another word to express baptism, without having recourse to foreign aid. I quote with pleasure the shrewd remarks of the late Rev. D. Ross, a Presbyterian Minister of Nova Scotia, upon this subject. Having quoted the words of the writer to whom he is replying;—"Our translators have not translated it into the English—it is a Greek word; it means immersion;"—"he subjoins:—"I would remark here, that the terms baptism, baptize, Christian, were admitted into the language of England, when the Christian religion was introduced into the nation, and notwithstanding all the changes which the language has undergone, have kept their station; so that it would be very hard, if not impossible, to produce other three terms in the present English language, of so old a standing. Those terms may, therefore, be reckoned English terms, though, like many others, derived from the Greek. If you were to translate the New Testament, and render baptism *Immersion*, it might be objected, 'Immersion is a Latin term, and, compared with the term baptism, but lately adopted into the English language;' and were you to translate the word baptize *dip*, it might be said, 'This is but the Greek word *dypto*, in an English dress.'"

The objection to the retention of the word, must, I apprehend, be traced to another source than its parentage. It is for the sake of a translation which would forestall discussion, and endorse the correctness of Anabaptist interpretation and application, that the word *baptize*, in the English version or other versions, would be repudiated. Upon the meaning of the word the whole controversy, respecting the mode of baptism, is made to turn by Anabaptists generally, and by Mr. Carson in particular. Every allusion must be explained in accommodation to this. By this must every difficulty be solved, or if it admit not of a solution, except by a deviation from Mr. C.'s mode of interpretation, this is a fixed point at which he rests. Let the difficulty remain undiscussed, or the Spirit of God speak nonsense, rather than that the word should signify anything but *immersion*.—*total immersion*. "He (Mr Ewing) may call on me to find a place sufficient to immerse a couch. But I will go on no such errand."

If I have proved the meaning of the word, I will believe the spirit of God, who tells me that the Pharisees baptized (immersed) their beds." p. 111. "Is it strange to find the Phari-sees, the superstitious Pharisees, immersing their couches for purification, or themselves after market? For myself, it is perfectly sufficient that the holy spirit testifies that the Pharisees baptized themselves before eating after market; and that they baptized their couches." p. 116. "The Jailor and his household were baptized, therefore they were immersed." p. 274. "I care not where the water is to be found, if they were baptised they were immersed." p. 272. Upon the faith of the premise that the meaning of the word precludes all inquiry upon different principles, he presents the following awful appeal in his preface:—"It behoves those who change the mode and subjects of baptism, to consider this awful example, (of the prophet who went from Judah to Bethel.) If Christ has commanded his disciples to be baptized, on their belief of the truth, who can change it into the baptism of infants? If he has commanded them to be immersed, who can change it into pouring or sprinkling?" And lest he should be compelled to admit a secondary and modified acceptation of the term, by the necessary bearing of the passage in which it is found, he forewarns us that he is prepared to sacrifice the meaning of the passage upon the altar of his critical accuracy, in the following sweeping sentence:—"Now, although I could make no sense of the passage at all, I would resolutely refuse to admit any meaning but one that the word confessedly has in some other place." p. 26. From the preceding quotations it is apparent that with Mr. C. the meaning of the word baptize is the all-important point in the controversy. Mr. Crawley, an Anabaptist Minister of Nova Scotia, who, before *Mr. Tupper's* work appeared, was considered by the Churches here to have set the question at rest in a "Treatise" put forth against another Minister of that denomination, who had apostatized from the faith, and published his reasons, proceeds upon the same principle, that the meaning of the word must determine the mode in which the ordinance denoted by it ought to be administered, the most cogent objections derived from other sources notwithstanding. "We are now to turn our attention to the meaning of the word baptizo: if this can be ascertained, and it be found to possess a single specific meaning, every one of course, perceives that this must set the question forever at rest." p. 126. According to the spirit of benevolence usually displayed by Mr. Crawley, he not only discloses his identity of views with Carson, but his dis-



position to save others the trouble of thinking for themselves, and expressing their own impressions:—"Every one of course perceives." As the object of this note is simply to exhibit the single spot upon which the Anabaptist intrenches himself, and a general view of the strength of which has been disclosed in the text, I shall only here remark, that if it be found sufficient to support him, it becomes absolutely necessary that nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand be precluded from forming a judgment in the case, and leave the remaining individual to judge for them, suspending their faith upon his integrity and accuracy.

### III. *Jewish Anticipation.*

That the Jews, when John appeared, were familiar with the subject of Baptism, is evident, from the interview between him and the Priests and Levites, sent to ask him who he was. The rite which he came to administer does not strike them as a novelty, nor have they any question to put respecting its nature or design. All their anxiety was to know whether he was the *Christ*, or *Elias*, or *that Prophet* who should come into the world. And when he had answered undeviatingly in the negative, the final question is not,—“What means this new rite,—this baptism? but “Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?” This question not only discovers an acquaintance with the rite, but an expectation that when Christ, or Elias, or that Prophet should appear, he would come baptizing. Whence could such an expectation have its origin? Is there any prediction to that effect, in the Old Testament disclosures of the future appearance and work of those Messengers of the Father? What are the predictions that might lead to the belief, that, when appearing, they would baptize? Or was the question put, derived from a merely conjectural anticipation. The investigation of these matters would conduce more to the benefit of our opponents than the study of all that Elian, or Dio, or Hypocrites, or even the Seventy ever wrote. Even the Rev. Alexander Carson of Tobermore, and the learned Champion of Anabaptist principles, might have profited by it. We submit, as a subject of reflection, to such as take an interest in this inquiry respecting a divine ordinance, the ground of Jewish anticipation.

### IV. *Religious Controversy.*

There are many who profess to be opposed to all controversy,

but, especially, to religious controversy. Of these, not a few make the profession under a misapprehension of its nature, invariably confounding it with the spirit of severity and revenge, which collision never fails to rouse in the unsanctified mind. Such are accustomed to view and represent it as directly opposed to the spirit of the Gospel, which enjoins love to enemies. Many are really opposed to religious discussion. Some do not like to have the even current of their musings ruffled, and, being perfectly satisfied with themselves, shrink from the agitation of questions, however important, the results of whose investigation might diminish their self-complacency, and furl the sails of spiritual pride. Some are too ignorant of the importance of scriptural truth, its influence upon the spiritual state of individuals, and its bearing upon the advancement of the Kingdom of God, and are, consequently, too indifferent to its definite character, to allow themselves to *believe any thing*, or to say that *any believe in religion, what God has not revealed, or what he condemns*. To such, truth and error are hardly distinguishable; the friends of truth and the friends of error, who say Lord, Lord, are equally acceptable. Some proclaim Peace, Peace, and plead the cause of liberality, that the friends of sound doctrine may be reduced to a state of profound security, and, while they repose, the seeds of error may be more successfully sown. The natural tendency of the human mind is to error and corruption, and there never has been, accordingly, an age of professed liberalism, an age not disposed "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints," which did not dig the grave of evangelical truth, and vital godliness.

Do we always find these lovers of peace, who would sacrifice truth upon its altar, the most active promoters of peace? Do we find those who plead, in opposition to religious controversy, the precept, "Love your enemies," furnishing the brightest example of obedience? Very far otherwise. Their clamorous demands for Peace, very frequently constitute the chief element of disorder in the land. They are furious in favour of moderation, and pursue, with rancorous animosity, those whom they are pleased to consider destitute of the spirit of Love. I have somewhere met with an allusion to a eulogium pronounced upon a departed friend, in which his liberality was very prominently displayed, and evidenced by the fact, that "he could not endure a man who was not as liberal as himself." This discovers the full extent of popular charity. The admirers of it love those

that love them. Christian charity "rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth."

Controversy is never sought by the Minister of Christ. Like the Prophet's message, it is the *burden* which the Lord has given him to bear. The object of it is the advocacy of truth and righteousness, in opposition to error and vice; the maintenance of God's cause, in opposition to Satan's sway, and Satan's stratagems. So long as flesh and spirit exist together, the spirit will lust against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit. So long as truth and error, piety and ungodliness are in the world, there shall be controversy. The moment it ceases, either error and ungodliness have disappeared, or truth and piety have ceased to exist but in name. The cause of God has never been signally advanced in the world, but by men who, disdaining the scorn of infidelity and latitudinarianism, and the bribes of the interested supporters of evil, have stood forth, the uncompromising advocates of the truth as it is in Jesus, and the unflinching foes of all known deviation from that truth, or perversion of it. It is opposition to God, which alone is ruinous to men's souls, and that man hates his brother in his heart, who suffers sin upon him, and allows it to pass without rebuke. Those who spare the sinful principles and practices of men, manifest more love of self, than love of God, and of man's eternal welfare. We may not confound the profession and appearance of religion, with pure and undefiled religion. In the words of Walker, which I quote from memory,—“There is more difference between true religion, and the most specious form of false religion which looks most like it, than there is between the latter and gross idolatry.”

Accordingly, stare and flounce who will, there is not a more controversial book in the world than the *Bible*. This I might verify by a multitude of references, but my limits do not admit of their introduction. A few shall suffice.—What was the ministry of Elijah, but a continued course of controversy with false worship and foul practices? Behold him standing alone, upon Mount Carmel, against the King of Israel, four hundred and fifty priests, and a deluded and oppressed people, to decide a question as difficult then, as any scriptural question that is at this day in dispute, may be to us. Is Jehovah or Baal, God? Had modern liberality seen the disputants ranged on opposite sides, it would have scorned the presumption which would put a single man forward against the united judgment, and voice, and worship of King, and Priests, and people. Had its advocates heard the



loud and earnest cry, "O Baal, hear us," and marked the fervour, the sincerity, and the gushing blood of the congregated Priests; and had they turned to see the Prophet gathering his mantle around him, to mark the sarcastic smile playing upon his features, and to hear his sneering voice,—“Cry aloud, for he is a God, &c.” I doubt not, with them, the fervent devotion of the Priests would have commanded respect and admiration, and the Prophet appeared a profane infidel. God seeth not as man seeth. Was not our Lord moved by love, love of enemies? How did he discover it? Read his sermon on the mount. Its pervading character is controversial. He spares no arrows, when perverted principles and practices are the object. The question stands between him and the men of old time whom the people followed, and he meets their recognised principles with a flat contradiction, and unequivocal condemnation. He denounces the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, the leaders of the people, as that by which a man can never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Not satisfied to inculcate the duty of prayer, he must proclaim the ostentatious hypocrisy of pretenders, which is to be shunned. He points out the danger of following false prophets, their meek, and gentle, and attractive bearing,—their sheep's clothing, notwithstanding. His example is copied by all the Apostles. Would you see a specimen of vigorous controversial discussion, turn to the Epistles to the Galatians, Romans, and Hebrews. Not even the mild and affectionate John is free of what, in modern phrase, is heartless bigotry. “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house. neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” We condemn the *rage* and *harshness* of Luther and Calvin, of Knox and Melville,—their style of preaching would not suit the “ears polite” of our polished times. But these men saw Satan as lightning fall from Heaven, whilst error smiles at our well turned periods and gentle aspect, and the monster which was crushed by their giant tread, has revived to shake the Thrones of Kingdoms, and even Britain's Ministry bow in awe, and purchase favour.

Still, controversy must be regulated by certain rules, to be conducted to an honorable and a profitable issue.

1. Let the language employed be *just*. Many imagine they can divine the spirit by which a man is actuated by the mere complexion of his language. Here ignorance may roam at large, and prejudice find an escape from every blow aimed against it. The mildest words may hide a deceitful heart; for there are those

who "by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." Christ does not forfeit his divine character by pronouncing the Scribes and Pharisees to be hypocrites, persecutors, remorseless extortioners, serpents, a generation of vipers; nor dare we condemn Paul's spirit, when, after one of their own poets, he asserts the Cretans to be, "always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." If I utter a lie against a man, I am actuated by a bad spirit, though my face be as bright as the polished mirror, and honey be upon my tongue. If I call a man a liar or a thief, at random, I deserve to be punished; but if *I prove him guilty* of lying and theft, no man may blame my spirit if I call him liar or thief. I quote the words of Dr. Wardlaw, for whom the "Christian Messenger" professes great respect, as I find them in the Church of S. Mag. vol 1. p.p. 60, 61, and let them be my apology for the severe terms I have used in times past and now use, in dealing with the Anabaptists. "If any reader shall consider the terms in which I have spoken as too severe, and as exposing me to the charge of rendering 'railing for railing,' I would only entreat him to remember, that it is often impossible to call things by their true and simple names, without an appearance of this. The reason lies in the essential badness of the things themselves, and if men will act in such a way that you cannot describe their actions truly, in any other terms than those which are expressive of moral turpitude, are we obliged, on this account, to speak falsely or not to speak at all?" The principle here stated, regulated all the inspired writers. They must speak truth, and things essentially bad demand severe terms.

2. Let questions at issue be fairly stated. It is easy to beat down the man of straw ourselves have formed, and to prove what nobody denies. I charge upon the Anabaptists, the violation of this rule. As I have not entered upon the subject of infant baptism, I shall not refer to the false principles assumed by them, in that branch of the baptismal controversy. In their discussion of the mode of baptism, they assume our denial that baptize signifies to *immerse*. Carson has occupied many pages, indeed, the greater part of his work, in proving this, which never was, to my knowledge, doubted. The question is not what the word *signifies*, but what is the *sense* in which it is used by the inspired writers; or, in other words, what is the form of the ordinance indicated by the word baptism. Philologists, I presume, will not generally object to the distinction between the signification of a word, and the sense in which it is used in a given instance. Nobody can be ignorant of the sig-

nification of *Candlestick*, yet it would be very ridiculous to attempt to show, from the signification, that it is not commonly used in the sense of a utensil of iron, brass, or silver. Because *vapours* signifies *exhalations* mingling with the atmosphere, it will not be denied that the sense, in which it is frequently used, is melancholy. Anabaptists disregard the distinction altogether, in treating of the mode of baptism.

Whilst the Anabaptist argument takes for granted our denial that *baptize* signifies *immerse*, should an unfortunate *sprinkler* explicitly make the admission, forthwith he shall *hear* that he has conceded all his opponents want—that the word is used in *no other sense*. My own experience confirms this.

3. Let us beware of introducing, in controversial discussions, evidence which has no bearing upon the subject discussed, or statements calculated to excite prejudice, but not partaking of the nature of evidence. The contrary practice is well adapted to operate upon ignorance and secure its suffrage, but can have no other effect, among intelligent persons, than to excite contempt, or indignation against such as are capable of the base trickery.

In particular, personal character should remain inviolate. Were a disputed point to be determined by the testimony of men, then, as the credibility of the witness will depend, in a great degree, upon his personal integrity, it is proper to ascertain the moral character he sustains. The case is very different when an appeal is made to the word of God. The proof of a given position is, in this instance, neither better nor worse for the personal character of the man who produces it. Judas's hypocrisy neither invalidated his commission nor deteriorated the character of his proclamation. Paul understood this. He rejoiced and expressed his determination to rejoice, that Christ was preached, even when he knew that he was preached, in some cases, by unprincipled scoundrels from envy, and to add affliction to the Apostle's bonds. He knew that the claims of Christ crucified, nor its efficacy, depended upon the spiritual condition of any man.

This rule is commonly and flagrantly violated. The rulers of the Jews could not meet Jesus in argument, but if they can persuade the people that he is a Samaritan: has a devil, and is mad, they may prevent them from listening to him. Paul, in writing to the Galatians, must prepare the minds of the brethren, for weighing, without prejudice, the evidence of his doctrine, by a vindication of his character, which had been assailed by false teachers, for the purpose of depriving him of the confidence



which might be subservient to his overthrow of their false principles. Luther is able to bring unanswerable arguments against the mass, because the Devil taught him! And Presbyterian influence in Ireland, in promoting the reformation of religion, must be neutralised by the current report that Presbyterians had *black mouths*, an unanswerable argument of the bad state of the inner man.

I charge Anabaptists with walking in the steps of these unworthy predecessors. I do it deliberately, hoping that, by the blessing of God, they may eventually be brought to shame and repentance. I charge them collectively. Individuals there are among them whom I respect, and for whom I entertain Christian affection, though the more I love them, the less I be loved. I could say much more to the same purpose, and not express all that my heart feels, but I would not captivate their judgment by occupying their hearts if I could. I would convince and not inveigle them, because I would bring them into the green pastures of divine ordinances and not into my fold.

All their writings that I have read, a work written by Innes of Edinburgh excepted, contain statements clearly insinuating a charge of moral and religious delinquency against Pedobaptists, a wilful disregard of divine authority. Several years ago, I preferred this charge against the Anabaptists of Nova Scotia, in a letter addressed to Rev. J. Pryor, and supported it by evidence which they cannot meet, except by one step which I shall presently point out. To the other slanders circulated against myself, this has been added, that I was sorry for having written that letter. When I am sorry for having stated facts and exhibited sound arguments, I shall be sorry for having written it. Let it be noted, however otherwise viewed, neither in that publication, except with reference to two or three persons implicated in the false rumours which gave occasion to it, did I prefer a charge against individuals. My accusation was founded upon the statements made in Dr. Crawley's "Treatise," of which the representatives of the Churches, in Association, expressed their *unqualified* approbation. And the Antipedobaptists of Nova Scotia will never be able to vindicate themselves from the accusation, so long as their resolution, expressive of approbation, stands uncanceled upon the books of the Association. I withdraw my charge upon this condition. At the next meeting of the Association let them pass the following resolution:—

"Whereas, in an unguarded moment we expressed our unqua-

lified approbation of Mr., now Dr. Crawley's "Treatise on Baptism," Res.—that whilst we still approve of the principles advocated by him, and his zeal in our good cause, upon more mature deliberation we cannot coincide with him, in the unhand-some, and unjust imputations which he has, in various parts of that work, cast upon the integrity and piety of our Pedobaptist brethren."

But I am not alone, in bringing this accusation against the Anabaptist mode of conducting the controversy. I pass by British and American writers whom I could quote, and adduce the words of "A Baptist," the author of letters to Gurney, to whom I have referred in my first note. Nothing more explicit can be found in my pages first or last.

"Charges are preferred against the Bible Society, which, if they allow the piety of the Committee, sadly impeach their knowledge and judgment." p 11.

"I think, Sir, that this fact (that the Committee of the Bible Society has always been composed of men of known integrity) has been too much forgotten in this controversy, (respecting the Bengalee version,) during which it has been almost assumed that a strict regard for biblical truth is confined to the Baptist Denomination." p. 25.

He next quotes the following passage from the memorial of the Baptist union:—"The question then comes to this, Are human opinions to control the Bible, or is the Bible to control human opinions? The Committee of the Bible Society say in effect the former: for their rule determines that since the New Testament will not speak in a certain manner, it shall not speak at all. *They insist that the meaning shall be pushed aside, blinked, studiously suppressed,* when it does not harmonize with the creed of all the parties composing the institution." This might form a text for a long sermon. Were such a charge preferred against Anabaptists as it is by them, we should hear such a yell as would frighten Nova Scotia out of its propriety. Read this, and say if I have done Anabaptists injury. But we shall hear what this "Baptist" has farther to say to Gurney.

"You are fully aware, Sir, that it is almost universally stated in our denomination, that these Missionaries (the Pedobaptists of India) were fearful of the Baptists making converts, if they translated the passages relating to Baptism their own way and that their appeal to the Bible Society on the subject, had no other motive than a sordid fear of the truth, which they are said to have admitted in theory, but denied in practice. Thus, men

who 'have jeoparded their lives in the high places of the field' for the Gospel of Christ, are made the victims of injurious suspicions. We are, by insinuations like these, required to believe that the Committee of the Bible Society, and the Missionaries of India, know that the Baptists are right, and tremble for the safety of that system to which without any regard to conscience, they adhere! They determine, *at all events*, to uphold that system, and to accomplish their object, in the worst spirit of Popery, wrap the divine records in obscurity! A morbid fear of the Heathen becoming Baptists banishes every other feeling. Conscience cannot be heard, and the sweet accents of truth are disregarded!" pp. 27, 28.

The calumny which is here so severely but justly reprehended by one of themselves, has been repeated by Dr. McClay of New York, who has come to Nova Scotia to plead the cause of the American and Foreign Bible Society,—a Society for sustaining those versions of the Scriptures, which, by translating baptize, by words tantamount to *immerse*, are made to speak the language of Anabaptists; or more properly, he has come to preach a crusade against Pedobaptism and Pedobaptists. He shall probably hold a more subdued tone among the Presbyterians in the East, than when he traversed the Western parts, which he might consider his own ground. If my anticipation be unjust to his disinterested and Christian boldness in advocating a good cause, I shall in due season make proper acknowledgments. Dr. McC. in my hearing, charged the Bible Society with asking the Baptists to *conceal*, by nontranslation, the meaning of the word baptize, as the condition upon which they could obtain any assistance in publishing their versions. Disguise it as we may, the statement insinuates a charge of positive dishonesty, and in a matter, too, that affects the intercourse of God and man. I deny, in the name of Pedobaptists, the truth of the charge. We ask no concealment. The nontranslation of the word *baptize*, upon the part of Pedobaptists, is not *concealment*. When we ask our brethren to leave the word untranslated, we ask them not to give what we believe and know, *even upon their own principles*, to be a view of a divine ordinance, at once defective and false. And Dr. McC. ought to know this.

As I called the correctness of the statement in question publicly, when it was made in Horton, a conversation followed, of which the use that was made presents the members of the Anabaptist Churches in no very enviable position; showing how eagerly ignorance hastens to propagate, and intelligence, without



much inquiry, to nourish any rumour that may seem adapted to excite a prejudice in favour of their cause. 'Am I of so much importance that it was considered worth while to report, westward to Wilmot in less than a week, eastward to Halifax in a short time, that I had been reduced to silence *in a few minutes*, in connection, in some quarters, with the pretty discovery, that, according to my own admission, I did not understand the Greek language; especially when it is considered that both parts of the report are alike true.

Dr. McC. *knows* that the report is false. I write, believing that he may see this before he leaves the Province. He *knows* that nothing passed during our brief interview, warranting any such statement. However I shall give a brief account of what did pass, without intentionally omitting any thing, the omission of which might injure the character of the correct report of what transpired. When Dr. McC. stated that the majority of modern versions, to which the British and Foreign Bible Society gave support, translated *baptize* in accordance with the Eastern and repudiated versions, I, not understanding any modern language but my own, opposed to him the authority of Dr. Henderson, who wrote in defence of the Bible Society, in opposition to the Anabaptist claims. The Dr's. reply denied Henderson to be a classical scholar, or competent to judge in the case. As I knew nothing of Dr. H. but as the author of a cleverly written pamphlet, which Dr. Thompson, the agent of the Bible Society, himself a Baptist, thought worth leaving in Horton, I felt no desire to press a merely literary point. This I was the less inclined to do, believing that the most perfect unanimity, respecting the signification of the word *baptize*, does not settle the question respecting the mode in which baptism is to be administered. However, as the literary character of an individual, exposed to unjust suspicions, is entitled to a vindication, and as I have since procured information through a channel which, with me, leaves no room to doubt its correctness, I feel pleasure in being able to state that "Dr. Henderson is generally esteemed in Great Britain, one of the first Biblical Critics of the day. His Commentary on Isaiah is considered a more rigidly critical, and more erudite work than that of Louth. He is Professor of Divinity in Highbury College, London, which ranks among the first of the Academical Institutions of the Congregationalists."

With respect to the mode of baptism Dr. McC. *knows* that we have explicit Apostolic authority, to which I appealed, for

saying that God INSTITUTED *divers baptisms* by Moses; that I challenged him, accordingly, to produce from the whole Mosaic ritual one case, in which a man is commanded to immerse himself, or immerse another man; that I engaged, if one case be produced, to admit that to be baptism, and that nothing else is baptism. The Dr. met the challenge by adducing the case of Naaman, though he *knows*, as I remarked to him, that it comes not within the range of Mosaic institutions, that Naaman was not commanded to *immerse* but to *wash*, and that, according to the Septuagint, as he suggested, in obeying the command he *baptized* himself seven times. When I pressed an appeal to Moses, with whom the Apostle found *baptisms*, he *knows* that his reply was to this effect and in this form. "There were *divers immersions* under the former dispensation. (He did not seem inclined to say *baptisms*, although he *knows* that the Apostle does.) The Priest dipped his finger in the blood in his left hand when he would sprinkle it. That was *one* immersion. He dipped his finger in oil for the same purpose. That was *another* immersion. He dipped a living bird into a mixture of blood and water. That was a *third* immersion. There were *divers immersions*." These constituted the *divers baptisms* of the Apostle, according to Dr. McClay, and his reply to my call for an example of the immersion of persons. I answered not. This *last word* I heard with a smile, and I conceded to him without the least reluctance. Though I was not disposed to claim any victory, in consequence of any thing that passed in Horton, I shall now say, that, at the time, the impression was upon my mind that Dr. McC. must have felt himself very much at a loss for an answer, when he adduced the dipping of the Priest's finger in as much blood or oil as he could hold in the palm of his hand, or the dipping of a bird in blood and water, to meet the demand of *one* example of the immersion of persons; very much dissatisfied that he was really furnishing examples of the Apostle's "*divers baptisms*;" and that it was impossible but the people present must consider his answer a complete failure. After reflecting upon all that passed between us, and comparing it with the report founded upon it, I can imagine no limits to which Anabaptist Ministers may not calculate upon the ignorance or prejudice of the people. Of the motives that led me to decline a discussion of the subject of baptism that *evening* or *the next day*, after which he must take his departure, I shall say nothing. I shall not deprive them of their satisfaction, who are far more disposed to speculate about what they cannot discover, than to attempt the investigation of facts; take

more pleasure in the romance of "devout and honorable women," than in the oracles of truth.

But the misrepresentation of personal character, and the proclamation of defeat, are not the only means employed by our friends to stimulate prejudice, and which are not adapted to produce conviction of error. The use of unqualified denunciation, uttered merely for effect, is of the number. Of this nature is Dr. McC's. assertion that Pedobaptism is the "very worst part of Popery." For his own sake, I should be glad to number this among the hasty statements of an excited mind, which would not be deliberately repeated. But I cannot. Whether for the sake of exciting a senseless horror in such as better understand the strength of an assertion than the force of an argument, or from conviction of its accordance with fact, I believe he would abide by the position. So it would have been better for Europe, better for the world, better for the Church of God, that the Reformers had cast off infant baptism, and retained the ascription of the honour due to Christ, to a wafer, the worship of Saints and Angels and images, than to have pursued the course they did. Better for me and my people to worship a piece of bread, pray to angels and deified men, deny the doctrine of justification by faith, than to administer and receive the baptism of infants. Are the Ministers of the Association of Nova Scotia and their people prepared to admit this? Do they indeed glory more in the exclusion of infants from *their Churches*, who, according to their own opinions, are never excluded from *Heaven*, than in the absence of Idolatry and justification by works? No. Much cause as I consider I have to blame, I cannot believe this.

But perhaps all the other errors are to be traced to infant baptism? Then there must have been infant baptism in the days of the Apostles, for "the mystery of iniquity" was working at that time, and only awaited the removal of a particular impediment to be fully unfolded, the doctrine of Justification by the law had obtained a footing in the Churches, and the Disciples needed to be cautioned against "the worshipping of Angels" and "voluntary humility." Nay, infant baptism must have spread before the time of the Apostles, over Greece and Rome, for they were guilty of worshipping the Gods which their own hands had made, and gave divine honours to dead men and women, and to men and women who had probably never lived, as Papal Rome does. How unfortunate, when the Apostle tells us that the "man of sin" should sit in the Temple of God, and claim divine honours, that they should "forbid to marry, and



command to abstain from meats," that he omitted to forewarn us of the greatest abuse of all, that they would *sprinkle infants!!* If Paul had been an Anabaptist, any thing resembling any one I have ever known, we should have heard of this, though other things had been omitted; or if the Spirit that dictated the Scriptures were the same that moves an Anabaptist upon the subject of baptism, this would have been communicated.

To the statement which has been often made, and repeatedly advanced by Dr. McC. though not in my hearing,—a statement not at all affecting the merits of the question, but adapted to excite contempt of the Westminster Divines and their labours, that in the Westminster Assembly, the cause of *sprinkling* as opposed to *immersion* was sustained by a majority of only one, and *that* the casting vote of the President, I oppose no mean authority, on any question respecting the facts in Ecclesiastical history, the authority of Dr. S. Miller of Princeton, and with his words shall close, having much more to say, this, my last note.

"It has been sometimes ignorantly, and most erroneously asserted, that the Westminster Assembly of Divines, in putting to vote, whether baptism should be performed by *sprinkling* or *immersion*, carried it in favour of *sprinkling*, by a majority of *one only*. This is wholly incorrect. The facts were these. When the Committee who had been charged with preparing a "directory for the worship of God," brought in their report, they had spoken of the mode of baptism thus: "*It is lawful and sufficient to sprinkle the child.*" To this Dr. Lightfoot, among others, objected; not because he doubted of the entire sufficiency of sprinkling; for he decidedly *preferred* sprinkling to immersion; but because he thought there was an impropriety in pronouncing that mode *lawful* only, when no one present had any doubts of its being so, and when almost all preferred it. Others seemed to think, that by saying nothing about *dipping*, that mode was meant to be *excluded*, as *not a lawful* mode. This they did not wish to pronounce. When, therefore, the clause, as originally reported, was put to vote, there were twenty-five votes in favour of it, and twenty-four against it. After this vote, a motion was made and carried, that it be *recommitted*. The next day, when the Committee reported, and when some of the members still seemed unwilling to exclude all mention of *dipping*, Dr. Lightfoot remarked, that to say that *pouring* or *sprinkling* was *lawful*, would be "all one as saying, that it was *lawful* to use *bread and wine* in the Lord's Supper." He, therefore, moved

that the clause in the "Directory" respecting the mode of baptism, be expressed thus:—"Then the Minister is to demand the name of the child, which being told him, he is to say (calling the child by name)—

*I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

As he pronounceth these words, he is to baptize the child with water, which, for the manner of doing it, is not only *lawful*, but *sufficient*, and *most expedient* to be, by *pouring* or *sprinkling* of the water on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony." This was carried. See *Lightfoot's Life*, prefixed to the first volume of his *Works*, (folio edition,) p. 4; compared with *Neale's History of the Puritans*, vol. II. p. 106, 107, compared with the Appendix No. II. (quarto edition,) where the "Directory," as finally passed, is given at full length.

We do not learn, precisely, either from Lightfoot's biographer, (who was no other than the indefatigable Strype,) or from Neale, by what vote the clause, as moved by Lightfoot, was finally adopted; but Neale expressly tells us, that "the Directory passed the Assembly with *great unanimity*."

From this statement, it is evident, that the question which was carried in the Assembly, by a majority of *one*, was, not whether *effusion* or *sprinkling* was a *lawful* mode of baptism; but whether all mention of *dipping* as *one* of the *lawful* modes, should be *omitted*. This, in an early stage of the discussion, was carried by a majority of one in the affirmative. But it would seem that the clause, as finally adopted, which certainly was far more decisive in favour of effusion or sprinkling, was passed "*with great unanimity*." At any rate, nothing can be more evident, than that the clause, as it originally stood, being carried by one vote only, and afterwards, when recommitted, and so altered as to be *much stronger* in favour of sprinkling, and then adopted without difficulty, the common statement of this matter by our Baptist brethren is an entire misrepresentation."—*Miller on Baptism*. NOTE E. pp. 120—122.