

A
SHORT AND SCRIPTURAL METHOD
WITH
ANTIPEDOBAPTISTS.

CONTAINING STRICTURES
ON
The Rev. E. A. Crawley's Treatise
ON BAPTISM,
IN REPLY TO THE REV. W. ELDER'S LETTERS
ON THAT SUBJECT.

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PART I.



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P R E F A C E.

IN submitting the following pages to the candid and serious attention of the religious Public, it may not be improper to state, that, although the last fifteen years of my life have been principally devoted to Biblical and Theological research, and to the ministration of the Gospel of the blessed God, yet I have never read a Treatise nor preached a Sermon expressly on the subject of the Baptismal ceremony.—Nor could any consideration have impelled me on the eve of my departure from the Province, when multiplied engagements furnished sufficient occupation for every hour of my time, to have engaged in this controversy but a sense of imperious duty. Perceiving the sectarian spirit and tendency of Mr. Crawley's recently-published 'Treatise on Baptism'—and fully persuaded in my own mind that the arguments by which he has endeavoured to support his exclusive views, are just about as solid as the element employed in the administration of the ordinance in question, I strongly felt that I owed it alike to the cause of Christian *liberality*, and of Christian *truth*,—promptly to stand forth in defence of both.

I entertained a hope of being able to complete the work which I have been thus induced to undertake, before my departure : but my time is so extremely limited that I find this to be impracticable. I have therefore thought it preferable to issue it in two Parts : the present discusses the *mode* of Baptism ; and the other, which will appear as soon as circumstances in the order of Providence may permit, will exhibit the Scriptural grounds of Pedobaptist sentiments as to the *subjects* of the rite.

As the Part now before the reader is, the production of little more than a fortnight, —I may not unreasonably claim his indulgence towards any inaccuracies he may discover in the composition : in relation to the reasonings and philological investigations by which I have endeavoured to show the fallacy of Mr. Crawley's positions, I desire nothing but rigid impartiality.

Above all, may it ever be remembered, both by the writer and the reader, that "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,"—and that, "GOD IS A SPIRIT, and they that worship him, must worship him *in spirit and in truth*."

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A

SHORT AND SCRIPTURAL METHOD

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Part First.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

“PROVE all things: hold fast that which is good;” 1. Thes. v: 21. “Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind”; Rom. xiv. 5: “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men”; 1. Cor. xiv: 20. “Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand”; Rom. xiv: 3, 4. These are among the salutary monitions which were elicited from the Apostle Paul by certain diversities in opinion and conduct, among those whom he recognized as ‘brethren, dearly beloved,’ in his own day: and no one who entertains correspondent views of the spiritual character of Christianity, will hesitate for a moment to admit their application to all those peculiarities of religious sentiment, not involving the essential principles of the gospel, which distinguish the different classes of Christians at the present period. An obedient regard both to their letter and spirit is no less obligatory upon us than it was upon those to whom they were originally addressed. What then do those apostolic injunctions

inculcate, in reference to the diversities that exist among the true members of the visible Church of Christ? As to *ourselves*,—they require us to bring all our religious opinions to the test of the word of inspiration, and with docility of mind, and deep devotion of heart, to search the sacred records, that saved from error and established in the knowledge of the truth, “the word of God may dwell in us richly, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” With regard to *others*, who though of the household of faith, accord not with us on points of secondary consideration, they enjoin the cultivation of a spirit of love and forbearance; representing it as nothing less than an unhallowed usurpation of the prerogative of Deity, to criminate and condemn them on that account.

The divided state of the Christian Church has long been the subject of poignant regret to men who, with a piety unusually elevated, have combined a benevolence of heart nobly superior to the littleness of bigotry. However much we may deplore the existence and consequences of such dissonance in religious views among real Christians, it will awaken the less surprise the more we reflect on the plurality of causes that are in constant operation to produce and perpetuate it; such as—the power of habit and educational prejudice—the influence, often of adventitious associations in life—the susceptibility of error incident to minds of the highest order—and last, though not least, the infirmity and deceitfulness of the human heart. “Nor ought we, in tracing the causes of these differences, by any means to forget, that on many points of a merely secondary nature—those particularly which relate to *modes* of worship and of church government—there is to be found, in the divinely authorised records of the Christian revelation, very little of precise direction; and thus is there obviously left, in reference to such points, a considerable scope for the formation of different views.”

But surely, amidst all these diversities, there is ground of sufficient breadth and pre-eminently holy still left, on which all who maintain the fundamental principles of the gospel may stand, and keep, what is of infinitely greater moment than a mere accordance of speculative sentiments or of ritual observances,—“the *unity* of the *Spirit* in the *bond* of *peace*.”

Nothing more directly tends to sever that bond than the spirit of dogmatism and exclusiveness. I am anxious to believe that it was remote from the intention of the Rev. Mr. Crawley, to display such a spirit in the ‘Treatise on Baptism’ by the publication of

which he has recently gratified the importunities of the churches in these Provinces, with which he is associated. Discriminating, however, as may have been the judgment exercised by those churches, in so unanimously pitching upon him among all his ministerial brethren, as the champion of their impugned cause—and strong as may be his confidence in the rectitude of the views which he has adopted in connexion with the initiatory rite of the Christian dispensation, I was not, I confess, when I took up the work, prepared to see it intimated in language of no dubious import, that, in his estimation, the department of the church of Christ which derives its characteristic name, from its zeal respecting the baptismal ceremony, is, in reference to this ordinance, to be regarded as “the pillar and ground of the truth” ;*—that he is “compelled to look to the principles of Baptists, as a means essential to the *final* triumphs of the Cross—to the *complete* establishment of the reign of the Messiah” ;†—that “in the church of Christ, and in the participation of its holy ordinances, he dare hold communion with none but those whom in the exercise of the most christian and charitable judgment, he believes the Saviour has *sealed* [by *immersion* of course] as his sincere disciples” ;‡ with many declarations of a similar cast.—Now, not to speak of the preposterousness of instituting, on the ground of a disputable peculiarity of opinion respecting the *mere manner* of observing an outward ceremony, any comparison between the Baptist churches and the universal church of the living God, which, in virtue of her being the depository of the completed canon of divine revelation is called by St. Paul “the pillar and ground of the truth”,—what, let me inquire, is the *nature* of Messiah’s Kingdom? When he himself was demanded of the Pharisees, When the Kingdom of God should come? did he not most perspicuously discriminate it from every thing external? “The Kingdom of God” said he “cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for behold, the Kingdom of God is *WITHIN* you.” Luke xvii: 20, 21. In accordance with this declaration, the Apostle Paul gives equal prominence to the same essential distinction, and particularly describes wherein this *spiritual* empire consists:—“For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Rom. xiv: 17. How the *mode* of practising any *exterior* rite can be so essentially connected with the complete establishment of this *interior* dominion in the souls of men, we must confess ourselves utterly at a

* Treatise on Baptism, p. iv. † p. iv—‡ 177.

loss to conceive. To invest any rite which, at best, is only a *circumstance* of religion, with such immeasurable importance,—to make it little, if any thing, less than an essential of salvation, has too much the appearance of Pharisaism, to accord well with the spirituality of the Gospel, or with the present state of religious knowledge in the world. “Such strenuousness” says Professor Stuart “I am most fully persuaded, is a zeal without a proper degree of christian knowledge and liberality on this point. It is a zeal for the *costume* of religion, rather than the true spirit of it.—So far as it goes, I must believe it to be really and truly *sectarianism*.”* That there exist ample grounds for the formation of the sentiment thus delivered by the learned Professor, candid Baptists will themselves at once concede. We *have* their recorded admissions respecting this matter—their *denunciations*, they might rather be termed, against their brethren, who, in the exuberance of their zeal about a ceremony, *appear* at least, more solicitous to promote the predominance of their party, than the vital interests of the Gospel of salvation.

In the constellation of eminent men who have adorned the Baptist persuasion, enumerated by Mr. Crawley, Bunyan, ‘a name equally dear to genius and piety,’ and the ever-to-be-remembered Robert Hall, shine with distinguished lustre. Let the estimate then which these men formed as to the importance of a perfect coincidence in the observance of outward ordinances among Christians, be heard in their own words—by Baptists—by *every class* of the Redeemer’s disciples. The honest author of ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’ addressing his strenuous brethren on this point, says, “In my simple opinion, your rigid and church-disgusting principles, are not fit for any age or state of the church. I say they are babes and carnal, that attempt to break the peace and communion of churches, though upon no better pretences than *water*;—I am still of that mind, and shall be, so long as I see the effects that follow, viz. the breach of LOVE taking off Christians from the more weighty things of God, and to make them quarrel and have heart-burnings one against another.” — More *polished*, of course, but not less *pointed*, are the shafts which MR. HALL directs against “this loftiness of pretension and arrogance of language” as he expresses himself. “We reason” he says “as we conceive conclusively, in favour of adult, in opposition to infant baptism; our Pedobaptist brethren avow their inability to discern the justice of

* Bib. Repos. No. x, p. 378. † Treatise on Baptism, pp. 183, 184.

our conclusion: and are they on that account to be viewed in the same light as though they intentionally rejected the decision of inspired men? What is this but to set up a claim to inspiration, or, at least, to such an infallible guidance in the explanation of Scripture as is equally exempt from the danger of error or mistake? If we examine it accurately, it amounts to more than a claim to infallibility it implies, in Pedobaptists a knowledge of this extraordinary fact. The apostles were not only inspired and consequently infallible teachers, but were known and acknowledged to be such by the primitive Christians; and before we presume to demand an implicit acquiescence in our conclusions, and to consider ourselves entitled to treat dissentients as we suppose the opponents of the apostles would have been treated, it behoves us to evince our possession of infallibility by similar evidence.”* Rebuke administered in this form to our Baptist brethren, by one of their opponents, would no doubt be regarded as the language of contumacy and resentment: but emanating, as it does, from the eloquent lips of their own estimable and illustrious HALL, who being dead yet speaketh, it will surely be deemed entitled to some degree of regard: it should at least repress the triumph with which they are wont to represent themselves as virtually the only Christian church upon earth; and impose a check upon that sectarian vehemence, mistaken, perhaps, by themselves for zeal to *win* souls to Christ, one principal object of which, is, to effect the SEPARATION of *real* Christians from the bosom of those churches to which they are attached.† On this delicate subject, we should probably be deterred from expressing with unfettered freedom our own sentiments, from an apprehension that they would not be likely if associated with our name, to operate upon the minds of our esteemed Baptist brethren with any salutary influence;—we are therefore happy in being exempted from the necessity of so doing by one under whose most humiliating rebukes they cannot but remember, that “faithful are the wounds of a FRIEND.” Under these impressions, and prompted by a sincere desire to do them good, we are induced to lay before them another extract from the same celebrated writer:—

“We are incompetent judges,” observes Mr. HALL to his Baptist brethren, “of the light in which our conduct appears to those against whom it is directed; but the more frequently we place ourselves in their situation the less will be our surprise at the indica-

*Hall's Works, vol. 1, p. 408. N. Ed. †Treat. on Bap. p. 190.
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tions of alienation and disgust which they may evince. The very appellation of Baptist, together with the tenets by which it is designated, become associated with the idea of bigotry. With mingled surprise and indignation they behold us making pretensions which no other denomination of Protestants assumes, placing ourselves in an attitude of hostility towards the whole Christian world and virtually claiming to be the only church of Christ upon earth. Fortified as it is by its antiquity and universality, and combining in its exterior whatever has a tendency to dazzle the imagination and captivate the senses, there is yet nothing in the church of Rome that has excited more indignation and disgust than this very pretension. What then must be the sensation produced, when, in the absence of all these advantages, a sect comparatively small and insignificant erects itself on a solitary eminence, from whence it repels the approach of all other Christians. We propose to extirpate an error, and we plant a prejudice; and instead of attempting to soften and conciliate the minds of our opponents, we inflict a stigma. Professing serious concern that the ordinance of baptism, as it was practiced in the first ages, is fallen into neglect, we attempt to revive an unpopular rite, by a mode of procedure which, without the remotest tendency towards the removal of error or the elucidation of truth, answers no other purpose than to make *ourselves* unpopular.”* The sentiments which we have exhibited from the writings of the incomparable HALL, are only specimens from a mass of kindred materials: they are marked by a grandeur of conception respecting the essential verities of the Christian system, and an expansion of love towards all, of every name, that compose the extended fold of our Redeemer, truly worthy of the author, and in perfect harmony with the inspired directions prefixed to these remarks. With the admirable Works of HALL, it is natural to conceive that Mr. Crawley is intimately conversant; that he has yet, however, to imbibe the spirit of liberality, by which they are pervaded, we are presented with rather repulsive evidence in the very first sentence of his Treatise.

“It would be easy,” he says, “to settle the controversy respecting Infant Baptism, if men would agree to let the New Testament decide; for who, that had never heard of the custom of baptizing infants, and should confine his inquiries to the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, would ever think of introducing such practice?”† Considering the exalted intellectual and spiritual character of a numberless host ranged on the Pedobaptist side of the

*Hall's Works, vol. 2. pp. 226, 227. †Treatise on Baptism, p. 5.

long-agitated controversy, how extremely modest and deferential is this declaration!! Really, it must be admitted, it is no small trial of patience to be thus cavalierly treated in the very onset; nor can it be a matter of wonder, that the immediate tendency of such 'loftiness of pretension and arrogance of language' should be to excite in us 'mingled surprise and indignation.' The troubling of these waters, methought, is not very likely, at this rate, much to resemble in its effects the agitation of the pool of Bethesda. The recollection, however, that in the present era of light, the distinction, in a matter of doubtful disputation, between a *gratuitous assumption* and a *reasoned conclusion* is pretty generally understood, soon perfectly restored our equanimity. Implicit faith in human dicta has so long impeded the advancement of science and religion in the world, that it has most deservedly become quite unpopular; nor can any enlightened friend of either wish it ever again to prevail. Hence, in minds of penetration, bold assertion is much more likely to arouse suspicion than to create confidence: it cannot aid a bad cause; and it is admirably adapted to discredit a good one: if allowed by the unprejudiced and judicious to take the character of evidence at all, they will only admit it in proof of the *weakness* of the individual who hopes to produce conviction by such an expedient. In *this* view some may deem it *presumptive* evidence.

A distinguished theologian—who has laid *all* orthodox Christians under deep obligations by a triumphant defence of doctrines of much more vital importance than the mere ceremonial of Christianity,—the learned and excellent DR. WARDLAW—in addressing himself to a discussion of the baptismal controversy, approaches it with no such port of confidence as Mr. Crawley has assumed. We shall not, it is hoped, be suspected of a design to institute any invidious comparison, in suggesting, that at the feet of such a man as DR. WARDLAW, Mr. Crawley might well deem it a privilege to sit and learn: at least *we* should; and while we *admire*, as every one must, it is our unfeigned wish also to *imitate*, in the course of the present discussion, the spirit of the subsequent passage:—"Although" observes the DR. "our opinions and practice are not to be decided by names; yet the *manner of our treating* any subject not only *may* be, but *ought* to be, not a little affected by them.—And when I think of the names of high eminence, both for intellect and for piety, both for scholarship and for integrity, that are ranged on both sides of the present controversy, I cannot but consider pertness and dogmatism as indications, not of vigour of judg-

ment, but of the imbecility of self conceit. If through infirmity and corruption, I should, in any part of my argument, be found guilty of these evils or of the appearance of them, I have thus pronounced a previous verdict against myself.—My aim, however, shall be to avoid them, and to state my views and reasonings, although with decision and firmness, (because to this I do believe them, *bona fide*, to be entitled,) yet with becoming simplicity, self-diffidence, and charity.”*

Having thus animadverted on the rigid and repulsive spirit of Mr. Crawley’s performance, we may be considered as having given a sufficient answer to all that it contains in the shape of pure and positive assertion, a figure of speech for which he indicates an ardent predilection. It is his *arguments* however, not his *oracles*, that we purpose to examine: on those we shall bestow our best attention, with all possible brevity.

In every species of controversy, there ought, obviously, to be a distinct and perfect understanding between the disputants in regard to the preliminaries of the debate. Unless the principles from which they deduce their conclusions are matters of mutual concession and confidence they may indeed *wrangle*, but it will be impossible for them to *reason*. All difficulty upon this point is, in the present case, effectually precluded by the dignified enunciation recorded in 2 Tim. 3: 16, viz:—

“ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD.”

By the test of *this* principle, taken in the whole range of its legitimate application, we wish to stand or fall. Recognising, equally with ourselves, the Bible in all its entirety as the only authorised standard of faith and practice, our Baptist brethren are bound to receive whatever is clearly evinced from an examination of its records, to have the sanction of Divine authority,—although the manner in which its claim to that sanction is demonstrated may not accord with *their* previous conceptions of propriety. It is surely not the province of an erring mortal, to dictate to the Omniscient in what way he shall convey to us the knowledge of his will. For aught we are warranted to assume to the contrary, the *mode* of his communications may as far transcend our preconceptions as the *matter* of them.

Mr. Crawley lays it down as a principle which ought to be universally admitted by Christians, that “the New Testament is the

* Dissertation on the Scrip. Authority of Infant Baptism, p. 17.

only rule of Christian ordinances,"* and represents an appeal to the Old Testament on this subject as "inconsistent with the dictates of common sense." *We*, on the contrary, can neither admit the principle, nor divest ourselves of the impression that there is much more rudeness than reason, in charging us with a want of common sense for rejecting it. The great anxiety which our opponents indicate to confine us to the New Testament is, in our estimation, a very suspicious circumstance. It involves a hypothetical admission that the practice of baptizing infants, which they oppose, may be proved to have the support of Divine authority by allowing the Bible, including the New and Old Testaments, to decide the point.

A correct and adequate knowledge of the Christian ordinance of Baptism, cannot, we maintain, be derived from the New Testament apart from the Old. If—and we here use the sentiments and nearly the words of one who, Mr. Crawley seems to think, possessed rather *uncommon* sense†—the Rev. Richard Watson, the late talented Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society,—if the Abrahamic covenant and the Christian covenant is the same gracious engagement, on the part of God, to show mercy to man, and to bestow upon him eternal life, through faith in Christ as the true sacrifice for sin, differing only in circumstances; and if the sign and seal of this covenant under the Old dispensation was circumcision, and under the New is baptism, which has the same federal character, performs the same initiatory office, and is instituted by the same authority;—if none could have authority to lay aside the appointed seal, but the Being who first instituted it, who changed the form of the covenant itself, and who has in fact abrogated the old seal by the appointment of another—even baptism—which is made obligatory upon "all nations" to whom the gospel is preached, then, Antipedobaptist writers are bound to employ all their strength to prove that baptism was not appointed in the room of circumcision, since if they fail in establishing this position, one of their main objections to infant baptism is rendered wholly nugatory. Could they persuade us to treat the Old Testament, in this controversy, as though its authority and use were alike superseded by the New, their endeavours to give *plausibility* to their system would, we have no doubt, be materially facilitated, —although even then, it would behove them to assign reasons, of a very conclusive character, to justify their conduct in precluding from the church of Christ those whom he himself enfolded in his arms, and respecting whom, while he blessed them, he said,—

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 5.—† p.

"of such is the kingdom of heaven." But it will be quite soon enough, we deem, to interdict all application to those venerable and inspired oracles of God, on the point at issue between us and our opponents, when we shall have ascertained either, that they are perfectly silent on this subject, or that their responses are as equivocal in their import, as history informs us were those of the oracles of Paganism.

There are several interesting and important aspects in which the great *commemorative* rite of Christianity, as well as the initiatory one, is susceptible of illustration only in the light which the Old Testament throws forward on the New. It so occurred, that the very last Sabbath on which the writer of these observations administered the Lord's Supper, he addressed the congregation from 1 Cor. v. 7, 8,—“Purge out therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump—therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness—but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” With the recent recollection of the references which he found it absolutely requisite to make to the institution of the Passover, the preparations for its observance, and the manner of its celebration, in order to a due exposition of the words of the Apostle, how, he would ask could such allusions, replete as they are with materials of Christian edification, be elucidated independently of the Old Testament?

There lies another objection of a most serious nature against the principle assumed by Mr. Crawley, that “the New Testament is the only rule of Christian ordinances”:—It strikes at the root of the obligation of the sabbatic institution under the gospel economy. This objection he endeavours indeed to dispose of, by classing the duty of observing the sabbath with those principles of moral truth that have “belonged to religion under every dispensation, such as, love to God and salvation by faith.”* But the fallacy of this mode of reasoning appears, from its confounding the palpable distinction between duties of a nature purely *moral*, and those which are of a *mixed* character—being partly *moral* duties and partly *positive* institutions. Now of this latter kind is, unquestionably, the law of the Sabbath. The consecration of a part of our time to the worship of God is indeed a *moral* duty,—and one of pre-eminent practical importance; but the *proportion* of time to be thus appropriated, the designation of every *seventh* day to be observed as a holy rest,—must obviously be matter of *positive*

* *Treatise on Baptism*, p. 6.

enactment. Without an appeal to the Old Testament where shall we find such an authoritative appointment in reference to the Christian ordinance of the Sabbath ?

It is indisputably apparent then, that with regard to the *ordinances* as well as the *doctrines* of Christianity, there subsists an intimate connection between the Old Testament and the New : they reciprocally illustrate each other. In proceeding, therefore, to inquire ‘ *What saith the Scripture*’ in relation to the *mode* and *subjects* of Baptism ? we shall take the *unmutilated* word of God as our only adequate guide.

CHAPTER II.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM NEITHER ENJOINED NOR DESCRIBED IN
THE NEW TESTAMENT. BAPTISTS INCONSISTENT
WITH THEIR OWN PRINCIPLES.

WERE there a particle of precise injunction in the New Testament in reference to the mode of performing the baptismal rite, an expeditious method might be adopted to put an *end* to all controversy upon the point. The fact, that our Baptist brethren have produced no inspired prescription favourable to their views, will be deemed on all hands proof abundant that none such exists; since if it did, who can suspect that, by any possibility, it could have escaped the perspicacity of those who consider the *manner* of the thing of such essential consequence.

Not only have our Lord and his Apostles omitted giving any express direction in relation to this particular, but, we diffidently conceive, it will appear extremely probable, to say the least, from the *usus loquendi* forms of expression used by the sacred writers when speaking of Christian baptism, as compared with classic usage, and interpreted as the established laws of syntax and idiom in the Greek obviously require, that they have *studiously* avoided a description of the mode in which it ought to be administered. That they have done so, whether with or without design, will incontestibly appear in the sequel.

Our opponents, who impugn the validity of baptism performed by affusion or sprinkling, are bound, in order to sustain their exclusive immersion scheme, to prove, 1. That the word *baptise* means to *dip*, *submerge*, and nothing else, and 2. That a strict assimilation to the original *manner* of practicing an outward ceremony is obligatory upon all christians, in all climates, and in all the ages of the church.

Let them establish these positions by irrefragable arguments, and we shall strike hands with them at once. Yes! with their permission we shall be baptized *straightway*,—and seek in the bosom of a church where there is Christian discipline, the covenanted benefits of a due participation in the ordinances of our Redeemer; regretting only, that the method adopted by them to convince us of the rectitude of their sentiments, has so long given to *truth* the appearance of *discourtesy*, and prevented us from recognizing her celestial features. “Convince them [the Pedobaptists] says MR. HALL to his less candid brethren, convince them that it is their duty to be baptized in the method which we approve, and they stand ready, many of them at least we cannot doubt, stand ready to perform it. Convince them that it is a necessary inference from the correct interpretation of the apostolic commission and they will without hesitation bow to that authority.”

Now the only way in which they can possibly produce this conviction in enlightened minds, is, by establishing upon a Scriptural basis, the two principles which we have mentioned above.

Nay, were we freely to concede what, with unyielding positivity, they maintain, though upon evidence the force of which none can appreciate but themselves, namely, that the original word by which the sacred writers designate the baptismal ceremony, constantly involves the idea of *immersion*, to the exclusion of every other meaning, still, in order completely to vindicate their system, it would remain for them to evince, that in a religion supremely spiritual “and designed to be universal, a mode of administering this ordinance should be obligatory, the practice of which is so ill adapted to many climates, where it would either be exceedingly harsh to immerse the candidates, male and female, strong and feeble in water; or in some places, as in the higher latitudes, for a great part of the year impossible. Even if immersion were in fact the original mode of baptizing in the name of Christ, these reasons make it improbable that no accommodation of the form should take place without vitiating the ordinance.”*

The principle that a conformity to the Apostolic mode of practicing an outward rite, is necessary to its appropriate and valid observance, our Baptist brethren themselves most palpably surrender in point of fact, by departing from the primitive manner of partaking of the Lord's Supper. Is the impressive ceremonial insti-

* Watson's Theol. Inst. vol. 3.

tuted by our Lord immediately before his crucifixion, and designed to commemorate that *atoning* death by which he achieved the redemption of the world, of less importance and significance than the rite of Baptism? Let it be remembered, that the Eucharist was not only appointed by our Saviour, during the time of his sojourn upon earth, but was made the subject of a special and immediate revelation by him to the Apostle of the Gentiles, after his ascension. "For," says Paul, "I have received of the Lord" that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said, Take eat: this is my body which is broken for you; *this do in remembrance of me.*" 1 Cor. xi: 23, 24.

Now it is worthy of remark, that the *circumstances* of the first celebration of this commemorative Institute, are detailed in the gospel with a *minuteness*, to which there is not *the most distant approximation* in any recorded case of the administration of Baptism. When our Lord instituted and kept the feast with his Disciples,—they were in an *upper room*,—it was *night*,—they kept it with *unleavened bread*, for the houses of the Jews furnished no other at the time of the passover,—they drank the wine of *Palestine*,—and *reclined upon couches*, or *triclinaums*, according to the oriental custom.

If then—admitting for a moment that baptism was originally practiced by immersion—the principle for which our Baptist brethren so strenuously contend in relation to the initiatory rite of Christianity is a just one, why do they not recognize it as equally imperious in its application to the Lord's Supper?—"I ask now," says Prof. Stuart, "all the advocates for the *literal* sense of BAPTIZO, who urge upon the churches the original *mode* of this rite, why they do not urge upon them, in the same manner, and for the same reason, the *literal* doing of what Christ commanded, as to the sacrament? Is that ordinance, which is a symbol of the blood of Jesus shed for the remission of sins—of that blood which taketh away sin, and without which there is no salvation—is that ordinance of less significance and importance than the rite of Baptism? This cannot be pretended. Why then do you not plead for its celebration by night; and this too in a reclining posture, in an upper chamber, with unleavened bread, with the dress, furniture, and attendance that originally were exhibited? You regard not one of all these circumstances; not even a single one. How then do you obey the command of Jesus, *THIS do in remembrance*

of me? According to the tenor of your own exegesis, you do not obey it; you cannot, while you do not literally imitate all these particulars."

The philological accuracy, however, of this exegis, and its consonance with the word of truth, must be subjected to examination: and if it stand not the ordeal of these tests, then is the exclusive immersion scheme built upon a foundation of precisely the same material as compose that of the fabric of a vision—*imagination!*

In perfect coincidence with the preceding observations, a remark, of rather an opposite kind, might here be introduced, in regard to the Greek word *DEIPNON*—a *supper* i. e. a *full meal*, used in the New Testament to denominate the great commemorative ordinance; but having said quite enough, it is conceived, for our immediate purpose, I shall place the observation to which I have reference on my list of reserve, and avail myself of it in a future stage of the discussion.

The reader, I trust, will not be dispirited when apprised that all that has been advanced hitherto, is merely preparatory to the deciding process of investigation, which it becomes necessary to institute. The meaning of those words, employed in the original language of the New Testament concerning the initiatory ceremony, is a matter intimately relevant to the question at issue between us and our Baptist brethren; what their meaning is therefore, according to the usage of the Greek language, and in passages of the New Testament respecting the import of which there can arise no question, must be accurately examined. Details of this kind, I am not unaware, even in relation to *water*, must be extremely *dry* to those who have not at least an elementary acquaintance with the Greek: should any of our readers therefore regard the investigation now before us as a "hill of difficulty,"—I must here take my leave of them with a request that they will wind round its base: meanwhile I shall endeavour, with all possible agility, to climb its summit,—and descending on the other side, I shall present them with a true and faithful account of its statistics, in a popular form.

CHAPTER III.

REMARKS ON PEDOBAPTIST CONCESSIONS IN REFERENCE TO THE MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTIZO.

IN the absence of all express Scripture direction as to the *mode* of Baptism, the only sources from which we can derive information upon this subject are,—1, the Scripture meaning of the word employed to designate the ordinance,—2, the recorded circumstances of its administration, and—3, those allusions to the ceremony which are supposed to indicate the manner in which it was performed in the Apostolic age.

As the meaning attached to the word *baptize*, *baptism*—in the sacred idiom, is the matter upon which the controversy as to the mode of the rite especially hinges, we shall, in the first place, endeavour to settle this point.—Does the word BAPTIZO, the appropriate term, the *vox signata*, of the ordinance in question, always and exclusively signify to *dip*, *immerse*?

It must be perfectly obvious to every intelligent mind, that when our Baptist brethren appeal to the recorded circumstances of the administration of the ordinance, they virtually concede that to *immerse* is not the unvarying meaning of *baptize*; for were it shewn to have but the *one* meaning the necessity of such an appeal would be entirely precluded. I cannot therefore refrain from expressing my wonder, that Baptist writers do not concentrate all their energies to prove *immersion* and *baptism* to be in all respects perfectly synonymous terms. This would be the direct method to establish their sentiments upon the *mode*, and *nothing but this can* sustain them.

Whoever has examined this subject must have perceived, that the above statement precisely accords with the estimate which our opponents form of *the very strength* of their cause. Its whole weight reposes like a pyramid upon its point, upon the meaning of

this solitary word BAPTIZO. So thought *Dr. Gale*, a Baptist—"The meaning of the word BAPTIZO," he says, "must be considered as the main branch of our dispute."* *Mr. Robinson*, another Baptist writer, observes, "Whether John baptized by *pouring on* water, or by *bathing in* water, is to be determined chiefly, though not wholly, by ascertaining the precise meaning of the word baptize."† When they *speak out* upon the subject the perfect harmony of their views in relation to this matter is palpable.

Hence all their pains-taking research to collect together concessions from Pedobaptist writers, that BAPTIZO means to *immerse*.—But *such* concessions, were they accumulated to the skies, are perfectly irrelevant to the end which our Baptist brethren have in view, unless they can show that those authorities (to which they attach not the shadow of importance only when they can cull from them a detached expression *speciously* though not *really* favourable to their views) also decide that BAPTIZO means *nothing else but to dip*.

In the array of Pedobaptist concessions, falsely so called, which, following the example of Messrs. D'Anvers, Keach and Booth, Mr. Crawley has marshalled together, we see nothing whatever that omens ill to our cause, or produces the slightest intimidation. What Dr. Williams said of Mr. Booth's labours in this line, we may with the utmost propriety say of the Pedobaptist concessions exhibited by Mr. Crawley.‡ "What he has produced from Pedobaptist writers as concessions, no more regards the leading point in dispute than, I was going to say, the first verse of the first book of Chronicles, 'Adam, Seth, Enoch.' For the immediate question is not what is the radical, primary and proper meaning of the word *baptism*, in a philological or etymological sense; but whether the legal, the ceremonial or sacramental sense of the word, excludes, absolutely excludes, every other idea but immersion?—No concession short of this is of any real service to our opponents."|| Were a Pedobaptist to make such a concession, his opinion would not of course be entitled to exemption from scrutiny, any more than the assertions of an opponent. But the tendency of the manœuvre on which we are now animadverting, really and truly is to make an erroneous impression on the minds of the reader who is not versant in the controversy. After perusing such a list of concessions as Mr. Crawley has adduced, would not any

*Reflections on Wall's Hist p. 73, 74.

†Hist. of Baptism, p. 5.

‡Treatise on Baptism, p. 137, 8, 9, 140.

|| Antip. Exam. vol. 11. p. 5, 6.

simple reader imagine, that those men designed to plead for the exclusive system of immersion, or at least,—that they deemed immersion the more Scriptural mode of practicing the rite. Now this would be a false and misleading impression—for these writers believed just as we do, in regard to the Scriptural propriety of baptism by *aspersion* or *effusion*.

Ingenuousness demands, that as frequently as our opponents cite such concessions they should also fully state the sentiments which the contributors entertained upon the point. When Mr. Booth ranged together his host of Pedobaptist concessions,—to save his credit, he was compelled to prefix to them the following:—"N. B. To obviate mistakes, the reader is desired to observe, that many of the following quotations are to be considered as concessions, made by these learned authors; no inconsiderable part [indeed all] of them asserting, notwithstanding what they here say, that the word baptism signifies *pouring* and *sprinkling* as well as immersion."

In order however more effectually 'to obviate mistakes', we think it will not be amiss to allow a few of the most eminent of the learned authors, whose words Mr. Crawley has adduced to favour his side, to answer for themselves on a fair cross-examination. It will thus most satisfactorily appear how very inadequately and unfairly the meaning and design of a writer may be represented by a detached sentence, or—at times, when it serves our opponents—even by the detached *part* of a sentence, which to the reader appears a *whole* one. The concessions which Mr. Crawley has produced I place on the left hand—and the corrective decisions of the same authors on the right:

ALSTEDIUS.

"To baptize signifies only to immerse, not to wash."—*Lexicon. Theol. c. 12. p. 221.*

CALVIN.

"The word baptize signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was observed by the ancient Church."—*Inst. Chris. Relig. L. 4. c. xv. 13.*

WITSIUS.

"It cannot be denied that the *native* signification of the words *baptin* and *baptizein*, is to plunge to dip."—*Econ. Ped. L. 4. 116. 13.*

ALSTEDIUS.

"The term baptism signifies both immersion and *sprinkling*, (*aspersio*); and of consequence *ablution*."—*Encyclop. lib. xxv. sec. 3. loc. 40.*

CALVIN.

It is no consequence at all (minimum refert,) whether the person baptized is totally immersed, or whether he is merely *sprinkled* by an affusion of water. This should be a matter of choice to the Churches in different regions; although—

N. B.—Mr. Crawley's quotation *completes* this sentence.

WITSIUS.

"We are not to imagine that immersion is so necessary to baptism, that it cannot be duly performed by pouring water all over, or by *aspersio*."—*Econ. Fed. vol. p. 332.*

* Pedobaptist Exam. Chap. 11. Lond Ed. 1804.

On the concessions ! of these writers to the Baptists, I remark . To that from *Aistedius* Mr. Crawley has himself furnished a sufficient answer, by admitting, that, in *all* the Lexicons he has examined, *baptizo* has the meaning of *wash, cleanse*.* His optical powers must certainly have been of a superior kind, to enable him to make the discovery that *baptizo* signifies to *wash* !—a fact of which the veriest sciolist cannot be ignorant.—Ergo, we might say, it does not invariably mean to *dip*. *Calvin* only admits, that immerse is the *primary* signification of the term ; and by the *ancient* church, the reader must not understand him as meaning the *Apostolic* church ; he means nothing of the kind. *Witsius's* concession just goes to state what many Lexicons do, that immerse is the *native* or primary import of the word ;—but a thousand *such* concessions avail our Baptist brethren nothing, so long as it remains a fact attested by every Lexicon in existence, that it has more than one meaning besides dipping,—which as resolutely refuse to bow to the wishes of Immersionists, as did Mordecai the Jew to imperious Haman.

But now that I am on the subject of *concessions*, I cannot refrain from observing, that the most unaccountable and amusing part of the business is, the *pressing* of Jeremy Taylor into *their* service. —His lordship, though deeming the Baptists ‘deceived,’ to show what might be said for a *bad* cause, collected a few arguments in their favour ; which to himself appeared *sophistical*, and such as no person of judgment or penetration could accredit ;† and yet the bishop is represented by Mr. Crawley‡ as ‘pleading hard’ for immersion !

Had we, in adverting to Pedobaptist concessions as to the meaning of the word *baptizo*, (exhibited with such an air of triumph by our opponents), deemed it expedient to proportion the attention bestowed upon them to our estimate of their real importance in the debate, our remarks concerning them would have been much less extended, since, as has been previously intimated, unless they absolutely precluded the idea of *sprinkling* or *pouring* as the ceremonial or sacramental meaning of the word baptism, they are perfectly irrelevant to the object of exclusive Immersionists. It is well known, that words in common use sometimes assume, in the idiom of the sacred books, a meaning very different from that which attaches to them when employed about the

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 131.

† See Hammond's Six Queries.

‡ Treatise on Baptism, p. 132.

ordinary affairs of life. Of this we have a striking and appropriate example in the Greek word *deipnon*, and the English word *supper* used in reference to the sacrament, both of which import a full meal or banquet. Now, if because the primary meaning of *baptism* is immersion, no one can be properly baptized who is not immersed then by parity of reasoning, no one can properly partake of the Lord's Supper by merely receiving a crumb of bread and a table spoonfull of wine in commemoration of the death of Christ, because *supper* means a full meal. It would indeed be *much more specious* thus to argue in relation to the *Lord's Supper*, than to *baptism*; because, whereas the word *baptism* often means less than immersion of the whole person, *supper*, never means less than a full meal.

Were names of high celebrity sufficient to establish the position, that a single case cannot be produced from the New Testament in which baptism necessarily involves the idea of immersion, we might with the utmost facility muster a cohort of them. Let *one* suffice : that one Mr. Crawley himself will admit is a *host* on a question of biblical philology. Professor Stuart after an investigation—candid and elaborate to admiration, into the whole of the evidence furnished by the sacred text *pro* and *con*—thus presents the reader with the result of his inquiry:—

“ I have now examined all those passages in the N. Testament, in which the circumstances related or implied would seem to have a bearing on the question before us, viz. :—*Whether the mode of baptism is determined by the sacred writers?* I am unable to find in them any thing which appears to settle this question, * * *.— I do consider it as quite plain, that none of the circumstantial evidence, thus far, proves immersion to have been exclusively the mode of Christian baptism, or even that of John. Indeed, I consider this point so far made out, that I can hardly suppress the conviction, that if any one maintains the contrary, it must be either because he is unable rightly to estimate the nature and power of the Greek language ; or because he is influenced in some measure by party-feeling ; or else because he has looked at the subject in only a partial manner without examining it fully and thoroughly.”* Much as we esteem Mr. Crawley as a Christian and a Christian minister (and we do most sincerely regret that a sense of duty impels us to meet one on the field of polemic theology with whom we have cordially united in the services of the sanctuary)

* Bib. Rep. No. x. p. 337, 338.

much however as we esteem him, and respectable as no doubt are his literary attainments, yet we must think, that his opinion on a question of philological criticism is not of sufficient weight, even were it disinterested, to sustain any comparison in point of authority with that of his erudite instructor. But enough of names and authorities!

Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas.

The ultimate appeal must be to a higher tribunal.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WORD BAPTISM USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO DESIGNATE CEREMONIAL PURIFICATION, WHETHER PERFORMED BY WASHING, POURING, OR SPRINKLING.

THAT the words *baptizo*, *baptismos*, as used by the sacred writers, are terms applicable to all the various modes of ablution or ceremonial purification, whether performed by *washing*, *pouring* or *sprinkling*, is a fact, in proof of which we shall adduce some passages from the New Testament. If the word can be lucidly evinced to have this latitude of meaning when *not* employed to designate the initiatory rite,—and if our Lord, when he commissioned his Apostles to baptize all the nations who should believingly receive their message, did not restrict them to a particular mode of administering the ordinance,—and if neither the Scripture narratives of baptism nor the allusions to it, require us to believe that the Apostles baptized by immersion, we are fully authorised to conclude, that the ordinance is scripturally obeyed, when performed by *effusion* or *aspersion*.

Mr. Crawley has affirmed that “the English version of the Bible has in fact left the word *baptize* untranslated.”* There is an inexcusable want of precision in this statement, for this obvious reason—it is calculated to mislead the unlettered reader. I do not intend to insinuate that Mr. Crawley had such a design in thus vaguely expressing himself; but in order to preclude mistake, he ought to have said, that it is left untranslated, *when used in reference to the CEREMONY of baptism*. The intelligent reader would then have seen the propriety of endeavouring to obtain a clear perception of its meaning, from those places where it occurs in the New Testament, without such a reference, but in which it

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 107.

is nevertheless *translated*, or its import unfolded, by the connection in which it stands.

A few examples in point shall now be adduced :—“ And when they came from the market, except they wash (*baptisontai, baptize*) they eat not.” Mark, vii: 4. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled, that he had not first washed (*ebaptisthe, baptized*) before dinner.” Luke, xi: 38. From the question which the Scribes and Pharisees put to our Lord—“ Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for *they wash not their hands* when they eat bread.” Matt. xv: 2; it evidently appears that the baptism mentioned in the above passages, consisted merely in washing the hands. This Mr. Crawley concedes,* and endeavours to show that the Jews washed their hands by plunging, or dipping them in water. We have however a more venerable document than any to which Mr. Crawley refers, which throws light upon this subject. Let the reader take his Bible and turn to the second book of Kings, 3 ch. 11 v. and he will learn in what manner the Jews baptized their hands;—“ Jehoshaphat said, is there not here a Prophet of the Lord, that we may enquire of the Lord by him? And one of the King of Israel’s servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which *poured* water on the hands of Elijah.” The office here attributed to Elisha plainly designates him as having been the attendant or servant of Elijah; and therefore it is descriptive, not of a solitary instance, but of a *custom*. In the Odyssey of Homer,† who flourished probably about half a century after Elijah, there is an allusion to a similar usage among the Greeks :—

‘ Then came a nymph,
 ‘ With golden ewer charged and silver bowl,
 ‘ Who *poured pure water on my hands*, and placed
 ‘ The shining stand before me.’‡

This mode of washing before meals still prevails in Persia. A modern traveller (Sir J. Kerr Porter) remarks,—“ A silver plated jug, with a long spout, accompanied by a bason of the same metal, was carried round to every guest by an attendant, who *poured* water from the jug *on our right hands*, which we held in succession over the bason.”‡ That, *pouring* from a vessel was the Jewish mode of washing the hands, has been fully established by Dr. Pocock,—‘ *non lavant*’ he says, ‘ *manus nisi e vase affusa*

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 130.

† Lib. x. 367, 370.

‡ Travels in Georgia, Persia, &c. vol. 1. pp. 238, 239.

aqua.” The fact thus clearly made out, renders totally inadmissible the accuracy of the criticism, which Mr. Crawley adduces from Dr. Campbell, who himself explains ‘washing the hands oft, by *pouring water upon them.*’†

Now this ablution of the hands is represented by St. Luke xi: 38, as the *baptizing of the person*. From the insuperable difficulty that the baptism of the *hands* was the *baptism of the man*, Mr. Crawley, endeavours to escape, by observing, that the words, *the hands*, are to be supplied‡ in Luke xi: 38, after *wash*. That cause must certainly be in a most desponding state which is driven to such pitiful expedients for support. Unfortunately, however, for Mr. Crawley, even this refuge fails him; for the expression in the original, *oti ou proton ebaptisthe pro tou aristou*, should be translated thus :—*that he was not baptized before dinner*.

We adduce another example of the translation of the word baptism in our English Bible:—“And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (*baptismous*, *baptisms*) of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and tables.” Mark, vii: 4, 8. The traditional purifications, or *baptisms*, as the sacred historian denominates them, here mentioned, were quite different in their intention from common washings. Though originated by superstition, they would naturally conform to the legal mode of ceremonial purification in similar cases. What that was, we learn from the following direction in the Mosaic institute:—“And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and SPRINKLE it upon the tent, and *upon all the vessels.*” Num. xix: 18. Apart indeed from the illustration thus supplied, the idea of their *immersing tables*, or as the word ought to be rendered *beds* or *couches*, in water, is palpably absurd; and with regard to the other articles specified in this catalogue, we know from the highest authority that even the Pharisees ceremonially washed *merely* ‘the *outside* of the cup and platter’ and of course did not *dip* them. Here then are *baptismous*, baptisms, of the various articles in domestic use among the Jews, in which we discover not a trace of *immersion*.

The proof that the term *baptism* is employed by the sacred writers with a range of application inclusive of all the various ceremonial purifications among the Jews, whether traditional or divinely instituted, accumulates as we advance, and becomes brighter by scrutiny:—“Which stood only” says Paul, in meats and drinks

* Not. Mis. cap ix. † In Loc.

‡ Treatise on Baptism, p. 132.

and (*diaphorais baptismois*) divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances imposed until the time of reformation." Heb. ix: 10. Nothing can be more perfectly obvious at first view, nor susceptible of stronger confirmation from the most scrutinizing inquiry, than that the Apostle here alludes to all the various species of purification enjoined under the Mosaic dispensation. From the result of an examination instituted by Mr. Stuart, and extended through the whole of the ceremonial laws of Moses, in regard to ritual purifications, we present the reader with the following details:—"We find," he says,

"1. That *washing the clothes only*, is one of the ceremonial rites of purification. The first direction of this nature we find in Ex. xix: 10-14. Other similar directions, the reader will find, by consulting Lev. xi: 28, 40.—xiii: 34, 54, 58.—xiv: 47—xv: 17.—Num. viii: 7, 21.—xix: 10, 21.

2. That *washing the person* is also enjoined, by way of purification. Aaron and his sons were washed with water, when entering on the priest's office; Ex. xxix: 4.—xx: 19, &c. xl: 12. In all these and the like cases, the Hebrew verb is *RACHATZ*; which corresponds to the Greek *LOVO*, [and the Latin *LAVO*.]

3. That *both the clothes and the person were washed*, on a great variety of occasions. Lev. xiv: 18, 9.—xv: 5, 6, 7, &c. Num. xix: 7, 8, 19.

4. That *sprinkling was used most frequently of all*, by way of purification and consecration. As of blood.—Ex. xxiv: 6-8.—xxix: 20, 21. Lev. i: 5, 11.—iii: 2, 8, 13.—iv: 6, 17.—v: 9.—vii: 2.—viii: 19, 24, 30.—ix: 12, 18.—xiv: 7, 51.—xvi: 14, 15, 19. Num. xviii: 17.—xix: 4. Also sprinkling of *oil*; Lev. viii: 11.—And sprinkling of the water of purification; e.g. Num. viii: 7.—xix: 13, 18, 20, 21.

5. That *affusion was also used* in the rites of purification; Lev. xiv: 18, 29.

6. That *smearing over* was also a rite of purification. Lev. xiv: 17, 28.—xiv: 25.—xvi: 18."

It is relevant to our present inquiry, particularly to state, that although there is in the Hebrew language, a word which signifies to *merge*, *immerse*, it is never used in reference to any of the ceremonial purifications referred to in the preceding detail.

"We find, then, no example among all the Levitical washings or ablutions, where immersion of the person is required. The word *RACHATZ*, which is almost uniformly employed, and which our translators have rendered *wash* or *bathe*, does not imply *immersion*. It may, indeed, admit the idea of immersion, because a

washing or ablution may be effected in this way; but on the other hand, the meaning of the verb is equally well answered, *without immersion*.* This fact, in relation to the word employed in the Old Testament to designate the purifications under the law, is the more observable, because the Hebrew term which means to *immerse*, occurs in respect to the priest's *dipping* his finger into blood or oil, *in order to sprinkle* them before the Lord, Lev. iv: 6. —xiv: 16; and also in regard to a bundle of hyssop being *dipped* into water, *for the purpose of sprinkling*; just as a Pedobaptist minister *dips* his hand into a vessel containing the baptismal element for the purpose of sprinkling on the subject of the ordinance clean water,—the significant and prophetic emblem of the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, by which the mind is cleansed from all moral pollution and spiritual idolatry. Ezek. xxvi: 25. Among all the divers baptisms then, to which the apostle alludes, none, *no*, *not one*, appears to have been performed by *immersion*. In reply to Mr. Crawley's question in the words of Mr. Ripley, "What should hinder us, from employing the word *immersions* in †Heb. x: 19? What should hinder you! Such an one as Paul the aged, who, in language as plain as he could have used, speaks of the (*diaphoroi*) *diversified* baptisms, under the law without any limitation. What should hinder you from employing the word *immersions*! The fact that, while by far the most numerous of the purifications to which Paul indisputably alludes, were performed by *sprinkling* and many of them by *washing*, *pouring* and *smearing over*, you must find stronger evidence than you have yet produced, in order to prove that *any* of them were performed by *dipping*, before you can claim to consider the word as including a single case of *immersion* at all.

The apostle plainly enough suggests to the attentive reader, in the thirteenth verse, what species of purification he had most prominently in his view, by referring to the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, *SPRINKLING* the unclean;" and by enforcing in the following chapter, the great practical design of the whole epistle thus: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts *SPRINKLED* from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

One additional example shall close our scripture illustrations of the sense of *baptizo*; and it is one in which it not only *does not*, but *cannot*, by any imaginable method of interpretation, present a

*Stuart on the mode of Baptism.

†Treatise on Baptism, p. 133.

favourable aspect to our opponents. I refer to the Apostle's manner of expressing himself respecting the exode of the children of Israel from Egypt. "Moreover, 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 (*ebaptisanto*) *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." I. Cor. x: 2. That this passage should ever have been appealed to with exultation by our opponents, as affording confirmation to their sentiments, may well excite the astonishment of any one who has read the Mosaic narrative of the event alluded to. It is as follows:—"And it [the pillar of cloud] came between the camp of the Egyptians, and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but it gave light by night to these; so that the one came not near to the other all night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea DRY LAND; and the waters were divided.—And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon DRY GROUND; and the waters were a *wall* unto them, on the right hand and on the left." Ex. xl: 21, 22. Whatever view we take of this matter, one thing is certain—the collation of the words of Paul and Moses above given, clearly precludes the idea of *immersion*; for they went *under* the cloud, or as David, referring to the miracle says, the Lord 'spread a cloud for a *covering*.' Ps. cv: 39;—and then, in regard to the sea, 'the waters were a *wall* unto them, on each side, while they passed over upon *dry ground*.' Deeming the position assumed by many of his brethren, in adducing the baptism of the Israelites on *dry* ground, and *under* the *incumbent* cloud, as favourable to immersion untenable, Mr. Crawley prudently endeavours to get over the difficulty by citing the opinions of various writers, who on some points material to the present investigation widely differ.* *Professor Stuart's* words are *partially* quoted by Mr. Crawley, as tending to *remove* an objection; but, when *fully* exhibited, they also *throw one in the way* of our brethren; for he immediately subjoins to what Mr. Crawley has produced, the very *significant* little sentence—"So much is true, namely, that they (the Israelites) were not *immersed*."

St. Paul by saying, that our fathers were all *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea, obviously meant not merely, that *then* and *there*, were they brought under the obligation of acting in conformity with the divine legation of Moses, but that in

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 112.

respect to the *outward manner* in which they were thus dedicated there was a resemblance to the administration of Christian baptism. The question then is, Wherein did that resemblance consist? No similitude to *immersion* can, we have seen, be pretended. The view of a recent Commentator, supplies a very probable solution of one difficulty. Speaking of the cloud, Dr. A. Clark observes, "it was a covering for them during the day, and preserved them from the scorching rays of the sun, and supplied them with a sufficiency of *aqueous particles*, not only to cool that burning atmosphere, but to give refreshment to themselves and their cattle; and its *humidity* was so abundant, that the Apostle here represents the people as thoroughly *sprinkled*, and enveloped in its aqueous vapour."* With reference to their baptism in, or *by* the *sea*, the vehement agitation of the waters, produced by an *east* wind so strong as to dispart them, and make the sea *dry* land, may well be supposed to have occasioned a *spray*, by which they would be sprinkled in passing over.

On a review of the passages that have been adduced and considered in this chapter, we are, it is with deference apprehended, fully authorised to conclude, that while *in not one of them* is there a particle of internal proof, that to *baptize* signifies to *immerse*,—viewed together, they most satisfactorily evince that it *does* mean to *wash*, to *affuse*, to *smear over*, and to *sprinkle*.

* See Comment. in Loc.

CHAPTER V.

SCRIPTURE NARRATIVES OF BAPTISM. ALLUSIONS TO BAPTISM THE GREEK CHURCH. VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

WITH the advantages derived from the preceding investigations, for a correct understanding of the meaning of the term baptism in the idiom of the New Testament writers, let us now briefly contemplate the circumstances associated with the administration of the initiatory rite in the sacred narratives. We might with the utmost propriety, object to include the baptism of John in this examination, since the material and essential difference between it and Christian baptism, is admitted by some of our most distinguished opponents ;* but well knowing that they would not only demur to this mode of procedure, but exultantly interpret it, as an admission that John's baptism was performed by *plunging*, we shall obviate all difficulty, by giving it our earliest consideration.

The whole weight of the arguments which our Baptist brethren rest on the circumstances of the Baptismal ceremony, as practised by the forerunner of the Messiah, and the apostles, depends upon the meaning of Greek prepositions ΕΙΣ, ΑΠΟ, ΕΚ, and ΕΝ, and on the remark John iii: 23 that John was baptizing in Enon, because there was much water there. Before we direct our attention to those most unequivocal particles (which of course indisputably fix the precise import of every word with which they are associated) let us just look for a moment at our English translation, and see how triumphantly it bears Mr. Crawley out in the following declaration. He says with overwhelming positiveness, " It is impossible to read the above passages [namely, those which relate to the baptisms performed by John, and that of the eunuch by Philip] without feeling assured, that the ceremony which was performed in the river Jordan; to perform which the parties interested went

* Hall's Essen. Dif.

down into the water; and after which they are represented as coming up out of the water, could be nothing less than bathing or immersing the whole person." We begin with remarking on this declaration, that we are witnesses of the *possibility* of reading all the passages referred to, without receiving from them the persuasion which Mr. C. conceives, they must necessarily produce; for we have read them again and again, and are assured of no such thing. 'Oh' Mr. C. will be ready to exclaim, 'the incurable obstinacy of Pedobaptist prejudice!' Perfectly unaware however, that *our* minds are more largely imbued with that quality than *his own*, we shall claim the privilege of assigning our reasons, for not seeing eye to eye in this matter, with our Baptist brethren.

Admitting then, for a moment, the accuracy of our English translation in rendering the Greek prepositions in question, if it is an admissible and undeniable inference from such expressions, that John's proselytes, and Philip's sable convert, were really immersed, it is equally admissible and undeniable, that John immersed himself as well, and as often as he did his candidates—and that Philip was submerged as completely as the eunuch, because it is said of them *both* alike, that they went down into the water. It is equally apparent that both the administrator and the recipient of the ordinance, might go down into the water and come up out of it, without at all, necessarily involving the supposition, that the rite was performed by immersion.* Nor is there any thing improbable in imagining, that they *would* go into the water, though the rite were performed by *sprinkling* or *pouring*, when we consider the warmth of the climate, the custom of wearing sandals instead of shoes, and that frequent washing of the feet was both necessary and refreshing. † Moreover, from what has been previously advanced it appears, that our opponents consider the verb baptize alone as signifying to immerse under water, and as warranting an emersion correspondent with immersion. Now if they interpret the prepositions in question, when associated with the verb baptize, as meaning *into* and *out of* additionally, they make in fact two plungings under and two emersions, and therefore consistency with their own exegesis of their words, requires that if they do not

*Thorn's Modern Immers. not Scrip. Bap. pp. 139, 140.

† Mr. Wolfe, the Missionary, mentions in his Journal, an instance of this kind, in the customs of a people of Mesopotamia. This sect of Christians call themselves "The followers of St. John the Baptist, who was a follower of Christ." Among many other questions, Mr. Wolfe inquired of one of them respecting their mode of baptism, and was answered, "The Priest or Bishop baptizes children thirty days old. They take the child to the banks of the river; a relative or friend holds the child near the surface of the water, while the Priest *sprinkles* the element upon the child, and with prayers they name the child."

Journal, vol. ii. p. 311.

think proper to conform to the *trine* immersion of the Greek church, they should at least dip the *subject twice*.

But, in point of fact, the prepositions upon which our opponents lay such stress, are too indefinite to prove any thing relevant to their design. Of this a person acquainted with the Greek, may soon satisfy himself by consulting the best Lexicographers upon them—as *Bretschneider* or *Schleusner*. According to the last of these authors, *apo* has twenty six distinct senses—*eis* as many—*ek* twenty four, and *en* thirty six. What estimate must we form of an argument founded upon particles of language so varying in their import! From an examination of the authorised version of the Scriptures it has been ascertained, that the translators of the New Testament have rendered *apo* by twenty four English terms—*ek* by twenty three—*eis* by thirty six, and *en* by thirty two. Yet on the import of these terms which chameleon-like assume a different shade from almost every distinct point of observation, do our opponents found, as on the most veritable and unquestionable species of evidence, one of their most imposing, and we do believe, one of their most proselyting arguments in favour of immersion! In *all* the passages adduced by Mr. Crawley* the prepositions might with equal propriety be rendered thus:—*at* instead of *in*—*to* instead of *into*—and *from* instead of *out of*. In our English version “*apo* is translated *from*, three hundred and seventy four times—*eis*, *to*, or *unto*, five hundred and thirty eight times—*ek*, *from* one hundred and eighty six times—and *en*, *at*, *on*, or *with*, three hundred and thirteen times.”† *Bretschneider*, construes *en* to *Jordane* Mark iii. 6,‡ *at* *Jordan*; and the preposition *eis* when used to designate *locality* means no more, as in Mark i: 9.§

Mr. Crawley in his remarks on the words contained in Matt. iii: 11; “He shall baptize *with* the Holy Ghost” tries to show that the preposition *en*, should be translated *in* instead of *with* || i. e. if we do not misapprehend him, that it should be so rendered as to contradict the manner in which the prophecy was actually accomplished. For *when* and *how* was John’s prediction fulfilled? Eminently on the day of Pentecost, when there appeared

*Treatise on Baptism, pp. 107, 108.

†Thorn On Mod. Immers.

‡Art. BAPTIZO.

§“Jesus went away again beyond Jordan, *into* the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. John x: 40. Interpret this verse with Baptist strictness, and you make our Lord amphibious. For if John literally went *into* the water, and baptized by immersion; and if our Saviour went *into* the very place where John baptized, and abode there; it necessarily follows that the Redeemer must have lived principally in the water!”—MR. ISAAC.

|| Treatise on Baptism, pp. 108, 109.

to them cloven tongues as of fire and it SAT UPON each of them and they were all (not *immersed in*, but) FILLED WITH the Holy Ghost. And when this memorable visitation of grace took place Peter represents it to the astonished multitudes, as the accomplishment of Joel's prophetic declaration—'I will *pour out my spirit* UPON all flesh; while he thus describes the *mode* in which the exalted Saviour communicated the heavenly gift: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath SHED FORTH this which ye now see and hear." In the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, not one word do we hear of his own baptism—the divine archetype of water baptism, being administered by *immersion*. Perfectly coincident with the language that Peter employed on the day of Pentecost, is that in which he relates the success of his mission to the household of Cornelius;—"And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost FELL ON THEM as ON US at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized you *with* water, but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost*." Acts. xi : 15, 16. The expression *baptized in*, or into the Holy Ghost is alike anomalous and unmeaning in itself, and perfectly incompatible with the inflexible propriety of inspired language. Mr. Crawley's proposed alteration of the authorised version in this instance, receives as little countenance from the laws of Greek syntax and idiom, as it does from Scripture, and, I had almost used his own expression—common sense. For he must be aware, that when the Genitive or Dative case is used after the verb, either with or without a preposition, the expression does not designate the *manner* of the baptism, but only the kind of element by which the baptism was effected.*

Against Mr. Crawley's proposed translation of John's prophecy, respecting the Messiah's baptizing with the Holy Ghost, we have then 1. Its revolting absurdity, 2. Its incompatibility with the recorded fact of the case, as to the *mode* in which the baptism of the Spirit took place, and 3. Its entire want of support from the admitted usages of the Greek language. *For it*,—the only pretence he alleges is, that since the same particle is translated *in*, in some other places, it would *harmonize* those passages in which the preposition *en* occurs in reference to baptism, *always* to translate it, *in*.† Now if this principle of interpretation be admitted, we have no doubt we could gratify Mr. C. and our readers to satiety, with

* Stuart on the mode of Baptism, p. 517.

† Treatise on Baptism, p. 109.

the *delightful harmony* that would result from its application to almost innumerable passages in the New Testament. We shall exhibit examples of this species of harmony, under each of the prepositions. APO, EIS, EK, EN.

I. Let APO be translated, *out of*, in the following passages, in which it occurs, *euphonia causa* for the sake of harmony.

Matt. xxi: 43. 'The kingdom of heaven shall be taken *out of* you.'

xxvii: 42. 'Let him come down *out of* the cross.'

Luke i: 38. 'And the angel departed *out of* her.'

II. Let EIS for the same reason be rendered, *into*, in the following cases.

Matt. xii: 18. 'Behold my servant *into* whom I am well pleased.'

xviii: 29. 'And his fellow servant fell down *into* his feet.'

John ix: 7. 'Go, wash *into* the pool of Siloam.'

III. We shall translate EK, *out of*, in the subjoined verses.

Matt. xx: 2. 'He agreed with the labourers *out of* a penny a day.'

John xiii: 14. 'He riseth *out of* supper and laid aside his garments.'

Rev. ix: 21. 'Neither repented they *out of* their murders, nor *out of* their sorceries, nor *out of* their fornications, nor *out of* their thefts.'

IV. The *fourth part* is necessary to complete the harmony; we shall therefore in accordance with Mr. Crawley's proposal translate EN, *in*.

Matt. v: 34. 'Swear not at all, neither *in* heaven, nor *in* thy head.'

Mark i: 23. 'There was in the Synagogue a man *in* an unclean spirit.'

Heb. ix: 25. 'The High Priest entereth *into* the holy place *in* the blood.'

Enough! These examples fully establish the propriety of sacrificing *sense*, to such entrancing *harmony*. More especially, let not our Baptist brethren stumble at trifles, when they can thus *make* the Bible *harmonize* with their own views. The reader will now be able to estimate the real worth of any argument founded by our opponents, on the versatile meaning of the Greek prepositions. In fact, Dr. Cox, the most distinguished perhaps of all the Baptist writers, unhesitatingly surrenders them, as deciding nothing. "The criticisms of opposing parties on these prepositions," says he, "are comparatively immaterial, and in whatever manner adjusted, they must be deemed insufficient of themselves to determine the controversy."

*Cox's Reply, p. 104.

And then in regard to the expression of Mark i: 10, and of Matt. iii: 16, that Jesus *came up, or went up out of the water*, it has obviously no reference to his *emerging* out of that element, but is merely descriptive, of his returning *from* it (*asapo* properly signifies) *after* the baptism was *completed*. Both Evangelists accord in giving this view, representing his going up from the water, as an action perfectly distinct from his baptism, and as having taken place (*euthus, eutheos*) *immediately after* it. Nor does the verb (*anabaino*) which they use, signify to emerge from water. No example of its being employed in this sense, has been produced from either classic or sacred writers. The word in Greek, which appropriately means to *emerge from*, is *ANADUO*, which is never connected with *ANABAINO*, which means to *ascend*. Plainly therefore, the word determines nothing as to the *mode* of our Lord's baptism, but merely describes his retiring from the river, by ascending or going up its banks, *after* he *had been* baptized.

“And John was baptizing in (or *at*) Enon near Salim, for there was much water there, or literally,—there were (*polla hudata*) MANY WATERS there.” John iii: 23. The question arises here, did John select this station, because, being central and watered with many streams, it was peculiarly adapted to afford facility and accommodation, to those multitudes who attended his ministry, or merely in reference to the performance of baptism? Our opponents, although they experience *not the slightest inconvenience* from scarcity of water, in the Jewish metropolis at the driest season of the year when 8,000 are to be baptized *in a few hours*, somewhat incongruously maintain, that John was governed in choosing this post, solely by a reference to its abundant supplies, for baptizing the people unto repentance. “Here” says Mr. C. “the quantity of water in Enon is mentioned as the *reason* of John's *baptizing* there.” Now if this is so plain, why did John remove from JORDAN; for after all that has been said respecting the mighty waters of the Enon, its rills and purling streams will bear no comparison with the swellings of Jordan. The quantity of water that would have been required for baptism, even had John *dipped* the whole of them, can sustain no comparison with the quantity requisite for drink, culinary, and other purposes connected with the sustenance and comfort, of so vast a multitude of people. If there went out to him, as the sacred historian states, Jerusalem, and *all* Judea, and *all* the neighbouring region of Jordan, it was John's wisdom to choose a central and well watered position for the exercise of his ministry, where all might most

conveniently assemble, and be accommodated, while they remained. Had not this been his true motive, and if this is not the true meaning of the Evangelist in the passage under examination, there is no assignable reason, according to the showing of our Baptist brethren, why he should ever have removed from Jordan, or even itinerated beyond the precincts of the city of Jerusalem. Now the expression in the original happens precisely to accord with this conception. Had it been the intention of the sacred writer to designate the idea of abundance of water *for baptism*, he would not have said *polla hudata*, many waters, or as *Beza* and other eminent critics translate the words, *many rivulets* (*multi rivi*) but would naturally have spoken in the *singular* number. "A single brook," says Mr. Stuart, "of very small capacity, but still a living stream, might, with scooping out a small place in the sand, answer most abundantly all the purposes of baptism, in case it were performed by immersion; and answer them *just* as well, as *many waters* could do." The same distinguished biblicist observes, "No example can be brought in the New Testament of the application of *hudata* to designate merely *quantity* of water, simply considered as *deep* and *abounding*. It is either the vast *waters* of a sea or lake, as agitated by the winds and *broken into waves*, or the *multiplied waters* of *numerous springs*, which are here designated by the *plural* of the word in question." In confirmation of what has been advanced respecting John's station at Enon it may not be improper to remark, that when Sennacherib invaded this very country where John preached and baptized, we are informed "they stopped all the fountains, (*ta hudata* in the SEPTUAGINT, the same word that John uses) and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the Kings of Assyria come and find MUCH WATER II Chron. xxxii : 4. That John selected Enon then, that the immense multitudes who resorted to his preaching, might be well supplied with an element, so essential to their support as water, and in a country where it was generally so extremely scarce, must be plain to every one, who would not from the predominating influence of a religious prejudice, prefer that the whole multitude should be left to *die*, rather than not be *dipped*."

"It seems an observation of some weight in this debate—that as water was used by divine appointment under the Jewish law, in a figurative and sacramental manner, or as an emblem of moral purity; and the Christian ceremony of baptizing is, undoubtedly adopted from this usage under the law; so the only way in which

one person (the priest) was ever directed or known to use it upon another, for this symbolical or sacramental purpose, was by *sprinkling* or *pouring* it on, NEVER by dipping him into it. The priest's *plunging* a person, in order to his separation or cleansing, is a ceremony quite strange, and absolutely unheard of, through all the sacred records. Persons were, indeed, on some occasions directed to [wash, or] bathe themselves; but that one man should take another, and *plunge* him *under* water, is a thing utterly uncommanded, unprecedented, and unknown, throughout the whole constitution and history of the Jewish church. It may therefore strongly be presumed, not to have been the practice either of John or of Jesus Christ, when the Christian church was set up. For John being of the *priestly race*; and beginning his ministrations agreeably to their law, at thirty years old; and using, like them, an application of water to the body, as an emblem of moral purity; it is left to any impartial judgment, whether he is, most naturally, supposed to have plunged men under water, (a thing unpracticed amongst them) or, whether he only sprinkled or poured water on them,—a rite *divinely instituted*, and every day familiarly practiced in that church.”*

Hitherto, I have chiefly used the *shield*; I may now be allowed for a while to assume the *sword*—I mean of course ‘the sword of the Spirit,’ which though two-edged is imbued with no blood, and formed for the destruction of nothing but sin, and error. Claiming this privilege, I shall call the attention of the reader to a few of those cases of Baptism written for our learning, which present difficulties of rather a serious nature to immersion. I do not intend to lay much stress on the indelicacy of the ordinance as administered to females. Those who are persuaded that the rite was originally practiced by immersion, are not to be condemned for deviating a little from the suggestions of conventional decency; and most certainly they are rather to be commended, than blamed, for the invention of *leads* and *dresses* to diminish as much as possible the indelicacy to which we allude; though I am not aware that any of our opponents have as yet attempted to prove from sacred, or ancient ecclesiastical history, that such precautions were resorted to by John the Baptist, the Apostles, or the fathers of the first ages of Christianity. Making all due allowance, however, for the refinement of modern times, when compared to the days of the first commissioned administrators of the ordinance in ques-

*Towgood on Baptism, p. 104. *Fourth Ed.*

tion, still, it cannot be denied that those honoured persons themselves, had as great a sense of delicacy as *we* have; and therefore there *is* a little obstacle to the admission of the idea, that they, without any of the cautionary inventions of more recent times, *plunged under water* all the women who believed their report.

If John the Baptist was a person of like infirmities with other men, it is demonstrably impossible, that in the space of six months, he could have dipped such vast multitudes as, in that period, the sacred narrative represents him to have baptized. "There went out to him," we have seen, "Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan and *were baptized* of him." "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized," &c. Luke iii: 21. It is an admitted fact that as John was a priest, he entered on the exercise of his sacred office at the age of thirty. He was six months older than our Lord, of whom it is said that he was baptized, 'when he began to be about thirty years of age': therefore the Baptist could not have been engaged in preaching to the people, and baptizing them more than about six months. Take the population of the country surrounding the scene of his ministry at the very moderate estimate of 2,000,000, and suppose that John baptized but the *tenth* of them,— "to have accomplished this, he must have stood in the water twelve hours every day for six months, Sabbaths excepted, and have dipped over head and ears, and pulled up again 1,280 between the rising and setting sun—about 107 every hour—and nearly 2 every minute. The difficulty of doing this must be apparent on more accounts than one:—His garments must have rotted—his saturated flesh must have peeled from his bones—and the cold water must, without a miracle have caused a fatal rush of blood to his head."*

Our opponents are exceedingly pressed, or rather *oppressed* with the difficulties, attendant on the *immersion* of the three thousand converts on the day of Pentecost. After their modest demands *in forma pauperis*, as to premises wholly destitute of scriptural support, they give a most singular account of the matter, to which, however, all their ingenuity has failed to impart the shadow of verisimilitude. Mr. Crawley, of all the Baptist writers, decidedly bears away the palm in settling this matter: according to him thirty minutes are quite sufficient for the *immersion* and *emersion* of 3,000 persons under the circumstances in which the Apostles

*Thorn's Modern Immersion, p. 299.

were placed on that memorable day!* Some, however, may be inclined to dispute his claim to the prize, when they estimate the largeness of the grant that must be made him, before even *he*, in round assertion, *facile princeps*, can so thoroughly expedite the business. For you must grant him, that, although according to St. Jerom, there was no natural fountain of water in the city of Jerusalem itself, and but one in the immediate neighbourhood—the spring of Siloam, which was sometimes dry,† although pure water was so exceedingly scarce and estimable in the city, that it was chiefly procured from the clouds, and preserved with the greatest care in domestic reservoirs, the Apostles had, nevertheless, eighteen or twenty thousand hogsheads of this pure and precious element at their disposal in the driest season of the year, without one objection from the inhabitants, to whom their change of religion had made them detestable;—you must grant him that the three thousand either came prepared to clothe themselves after their baptism, with a change of raiment, or as soon as they were pricked in their hearts ran *home*, “Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians,” and procuring a second dress came to receive the initiatory ordinance;—you must grant him that every one of the candidates had been previously examined, as to their conversion, and given full satisfaction to the church on that head—yes, and you must after all this, grant him that the seventy disciples aided the Apostles in administering the rite, and obtained without any difficulty, each and all of them, convenient places for dipping men and women simultaneously, with delicacy, and with all the required despatch. Withhold from Mr. Crawley these unsupported premises and his circumstances are exceedingly perplexing: doomed to the fabled punishment of Sisyphus, he no sooner rolls the difficulty a little up hill, but anon it rolls back again.—Just so it must ever be,

“*Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum,*”

Not more auspicious to the cause of our Baptist friends is the sacred narrative of the baptism of the Jailor of Philippi, and his household. Acts xvi : 25, et seg. Here too, they require us to be most liberal and accommodating in our concessions, or they can *prove nothing*. Even then, indeed they are by no means at unity in their theories on the puzzling question, ‘Where was the Jailor

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 113. † Calmet’s Dictionary, art. Siloam.

and his family baptized ? in the prison ? or in a neighbouring river ? Who shall decide when Doctors disagree ? as Dr. Ryland and Dr. Jenkins, both Baptists, do, in reference to this matter. The text proves not an iota more than that they were taken *out of the cell or dungeon*, not out of the precincts of the prison. And if there was, as some of our opponents (capable of appreciating the *benignant* spirit of *Paganism* towards *prisoners*,) imagine, a tank in the gaol, it is a little strange that Paul and Silas had not the benefit of it after so severe a flogging, till the obdurate heart of the keeper yielded to grace, and conceived the grateful wish of alleviating their sufferings. If our opponents are determined, without either permission from the properly constituted authorities, or countenance from the sacred text, to give the prisoners a gaol delivery—then of course we recognize their liberty to believe—that the Jailor let them out of the precincts of the prison—directed the various members of his family to put under their arms a second suit—to follow him and the apostles through the streets of the city—till, having reached a river, the whole household were dipped, and waiting a few moments to change their apparel, returned to their unbolted prison, and found all the inmates in perfect order : I say we freely accord to our opponents the right to adopt either of those explanations, or any other, distinguished by superior felicity of imagination, that they may think proper ; but, really, unless the *necessity* of the case *demand*s our *implicit* acquiescence, we must be pardoned for rejecting ideas so extravagant and contradictory. As no such necessity happens to exist, the whole statement is susceptible of the most rational and easy interpretation, on the supposition that the Jailor and his household were baptized by sprinkling or affusion.

It is only by the omnipotence of *mere assumptions*, that the baptism of the Ethiopian *eunuch* is made to favour the scheme of baptists—assumptions plainly opposed to all the probabilities of the case. His descending from his chariot *to* the water,—for, as we have ascertained, the Greek preposition does not necessarily imply more, cannot be alleged in evidence that he was immersed, unless those who maintain so absurd an idea, are willing to take the consequence—that Philip was immersed in like manner. The scene of the ceremony is expressly called a desert, Acts viii: 36, the appropriate designation of a place insusceptible of cultivation from the unproductive nature of the soil, and the extreme scarcity of water. The sight of water in such a place accordingly produced a sensation of surprise, of which the exclamation of the eunuch is emphatically expressive,—See ! water ! (the words *here is*, are

not in the original) what doth hinder me to be baptized? In a desert in the east, every one, acquainted with books of travels in such parts, knows, that the discovery of a spring, though ever so shallow, is recorded with peculiar interest and delight.

The inspired narrative relating to Cornelius and his family, Acts x: 47, presents incidental evidence of a nature peculiarly forcible, that the rite of baptism was administered in the times of the Apostles by pouring or sprinkling. "Can any *forbid water*?" said Peter, "that these should not be baptized?" "When of two things," says Mr. Isaac, "the one is active, and the other passive, you never think of applying a restraining power to the passive subject: the supposition is absurd: the restraint must be imposed on the active agent. Now in what possible way could the water be forbidden, if it had not been customary to bring it upon the subjects of the ordinance? The Apostle evidently means, 'can any man forbid water being *brought* into the room for the baptism of those persons.'" Mr. Crawley egregiously trifles in remarking, it is as easy to say, "can any forbid water *to be used, or the use of water, for immersion*," as to say, can any forbid water to be brought for *sprinkling*."* There is this difference in the two suppositions, Mr. Crawley,—yours involves the idea that all in the company were not agreed as to the propriety of using *water*, as the element in baptism,—to the other method of supplying the ellipsis, no such extravagant inference can attach.

It is impossible to survey the multifarious and contrasted circumstances associated with the different accounts of baptisms, to which our attention has been called in this chapter, without being struck with the plastic energy of prejudication, by which our opponents never fail to mould all circumstances into a perfect adaptation to their own views. Like the Israelites in regard to manna, our friends, with respect to water, never have too little, neither is there any over. Place them in Jerusalem at the *driest* season of the year, and thousands of hogsheads of the pure and limpid element are at hand—transport them from 'the city full' to a barren waste—a miracle is instantaneously wrought for their accommodation,—'the parched ground becomes a pool!' What then shall their condition be in the 'swellings of Jordan,' and amid the *much water* of Enon? No complaint shall that abundance elicit—it is *all* of course needed for *baptism*. Into such incongruities does a determined adherence to the system of exclusive immersion lead its votaries.

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 125.

CHAPTER VI.

ALLUSIONS TO BAPTISM. BAPTISM BY SPRINKLING. THE GREEK CHURCH. VERSIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES. HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

THE allusion to baptism in I. Cor. x: 2, we have already examined; we must, I think, be satisfied that it presents an aspect as ominous to the immersion scheme, as did the cloud by which the Israelites were baptized, to the pursuing Egyptians; while it is indubitably certain that the Egyptians alone were *overwhelmed* or *immersed* in the sea.

I. The most material allusion that remains to be considered, is that in the Epistles to the Romans and Colossians, to which our opponents cling with as great tenacity as though it was their sole support, and which they are wont to reiterate with all the assurance of conscious triumph. Let us endeavour to ascertain whether their glorying in this particular is good. The passages are as follows: Rom. vi: 3, 4. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Col. ii: 12. Buried with him by baptism, wherein ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The fact, that many commentators have been of opinion that those passages contain an allusion to the immersion of the whole body under water, is no conclusive evidence that such an idea was designed to be conveyed or suggested by Paul. Of the inaccuracy of such a notion, the passages themselves when minutely examined, afford strong internal evidence. Writers of scholia or commentaries, on the *whole* or *principal part* of the Scriptures, often tread in the footsteps of their predecessors; but when a sacred interpreter, admirably qualified for the task, concen-

trates all his mental energies, and the resources of his learning, on a few component parts of Divine Revelation, he may be expected more thoroughly to investigate the meaning of every important or disputed passage. Such unquestionably is the character of Professor Stuart; and such the learning, the critical acumen, and diligence displayed by him, in his recent commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. His note on the words in question is too elaborate and critical to be here introduced, but towards its close, he has the following remarks, the force of which every reader of judgment and impartiality will appreciate:—"Indeed what else but a *moral burying* can be meant when the apostle goes on to say: *We are buried with him* [not by baptism only,] *by baptism INTO HIS DEATH?* Of course it will not be contended, that a literal *physical* burying is here meant, but only a *moral* one. And although the words, *into his death*, are not inserted in Col. ii: 12; yet, as the following verse there shows, they are plainly implied. In fact it is plain, that reference is here made to *baptism*, because, when the rite was performed, the Christian promised to renounce sin and to mortify all his evil desires, and thus to die unto sin that he might live unto God. I cannot see, therefore, that there is any more necessary reference here to the *modus* of baptism, than there is to the *modus* of the resurrection. The one may as well be maintained as the other."* But let us hear Mr. Edwards† on this subject, whose opinion claims particular regard, inasmuch as he was once a rigid Baptist and adopted Pedobaptist sentiments solely by the force of truth:—

"That the absurdity of supposing an allusion in this place to the mode of baptism may appear, I would observe, that what the Apostle calls, in verse 3, a being baptized into the death of Christ, he expresses in verse 5, by being planted together in the likeness of his death. This will be evident to any one who examines the place. Now if any man is disposed, after the method of the Baptists, to pick up allusions to the mode of baptism, here are two ready at hand, and he may take both, or either, as he pleases. It is usual with the Baptists, when contending for the mode of baptism, to affirm that the Apostle calls baptism a burial; and hence they infer that immersion must be the mode. This, however, is affirming what is not true; for the Apostle never, in any of his writings, calls "baptism a burial." But on the contrary, he does in this verse evidently speak of it under the notion of planting; and says, *We are planted in the likeness of his death.* Here then,

* Comment. in Loc. † Edwards's Candid Reasons, pp. 111, 112, 113.

upon the Baptist plan, are two allusions—planting, and crucifixion. There are none, I believe, who make planting an allusion to the mode of baptism: but should this be attempted by any, they will have this one advantage which the Baptists are destitute of; and that is, that whereas baptism is no-where called a burial, it is in this place plainly called a planting. Now, if we suppose a person reasoning upon the plan of the Baptists, he will say, that as the Apostle calls baptism a planting he must allude to the mode in which that ordinance was administered; and every one, who is at all acquainted with the art of planting, will easily guess what kind of mode that must be, to which it alludes. Were this only adopted, and it may be adopted with greater advantage than the Baptist plan, we should probably hear of some contention about the mode of baptism, between those who immerse and those who only plant: and in this case I can clearly see, that victory will crown the planters.

“ There is in the same way another allusion in this verse to the mode of baptism; I have mentioned it before, but do it again on account of its superior evidence to that allusion of the Baptists.—The Apostle says, we are planted, that is baptized, in the likeness of his death. Now, taking this for an allusion to the mode of baptism, the argument for the sign of the cross will be incomparably stronger than that of the Baptists for immersion. I say incomparably stronger; for whereas it is only said in the fourth verse, We are buried with him by baptism; it is said in this verse, We are planted [baptized] in the likeness of his death: There is nothing about similitude mentioned in their allusion; but here the word “likeness” is actually used. The argument, therefore, in favour of the sign of the cross, will, in the Baptist way of arguing, far outweigh that in favour of immersion. And how much soever the Baptists may despise that ceremony, it is evidently better founded in this context than their own. So that if their argument from this place be good, for immersion, the other is far better for the sign of the cross.—Upon the whole, the examination of this place convinces me of nothing so much as this, that both the Baptists in general, and myself in particular, have been carried away with the mere sound of a word, even to the neglect of the sense and scope of the truth of God.”

There is one consideration not yet noticed, abundantly sufficient of itself to neutralize the Baptist view of the above passages. It is this: on *their* scheme of interpretation, the two positive insti-

tutions peculiar to the Christian dispensation are emblematical of the *death* of *Christ*, and we have in consequence *none* symbolical of the *purifying* influence of the *Holy Spirit*. Now, it has ever been the manifest intention of God, by the appointed ritual of his church, to present prominently to the minds of his worshippers the two distinct but accordant ideas, of *vicarious atonement* for sin,—and *interior purification* from sin. This design lies at the basis of the *sacrificial* and *purifying* ceremonial of the Mosaic dispensation: how can it then be conceived, that under the Christian dispensation which is pre-eminently, MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT we should have two significant institutions, *both* emblematical of the *atonement*, and *none* to correspond to the ancient ritual of *purification*, or to recognize the *sanctifying* office of the *Spirit of God*?

II. It is deeply to be regretted, that our opponents in the zeal of their opposition to baptism by *sprinkling*, so often permit themselves to forget the veneration which they owe to the words of the living God. “How would it sound” asks Mr. Crawley in reference to the baptism of the Spirit “to say he will *sprinkle* you with the Holy Ghost.”* If he desires to refer the matter to the decision of reason, we have no solicitude about the result. We submit it to the *impartial judgment* of *all*—from the untutored child of nature, to the accomplished scholar, whose mind is disciplined to accord with the purest and most elevated standard of taste, whether it would not be much more accordant with their conceptions of propriety, to say I will *sprinkle* you *with* the Holy Ghost, then to say, “I will *immerse* or *plunge* you *in* the Holy Ghost?” If I may be permitted to give my own opinion I would say—that is scriptural, *this* unscriptural, the former *is* sense—the latter nonsense.

When the Most High cheers his church with the promise of the most plentiful communications of his grace, what language does he employ?” “I will *SPRINKLE* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness and from all your idols I will cleanse you.” “I will be as the *DEW* unto Israel.” He shall come as the *RAIN*, as the former and latter *RAIN* on the earth.” When the man after God’s own heart, earnestly implores the removal of all guilt from his conscience, and of all moral pollution from his mind, in what words is his petition expressed? *Purge me with hyssop* and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall

*Treatise on Baptism, p. 110.

be whiter than snow." The hyssop, as is well known, from its deterative and purifying qualities, was used in *sprinkling* the blood of the paschal lamb, and in *sprinkling* the leper. The paraphrase of the Psalmist's words in the Chaldee is, "Thou wilt *sprinkle* me like the priest, which *sprinkleth* the unclean with the purifying waters, with *hyssop*, and with the ashes of an heifer, and I shall be clean." "Baptismal sprinkling an unmeaning ceremony!" exclaims an eloquent preacher* "Let us point those who think it so, to language such as this, and bid them blush for their delusion. Nay, let us call upon them to contemplate Jehovah, as it were, rising from his throne, looking round on a world of creatures involved in guilt and covered with pollution, and then let them listen to the words which prophetic inspiration utters, "He will *SPRINKLE* many nations!" Is there any thing trifling or insignificant here? Is there not rather something which bespeaks at once the infinite fulness of his cleansing power? the virtue which resides in *every drop* of grace which he sheds upon a fallen world—the energy divine which he puts forth in every individual act of his saving influence—All in beautiful accordance with the spirit of that declaration of her, who touched but the *hem* of the Redeemer's garment, the truth of which was realized in her blest experience, "If I may but touch his garment I shall be whole!" Mat. ix: 21.

III. An appeal to the immersions of the Greek church, as affording a testimony in favour of dipping, as the original mode of practicing the ordinance, is founded on the *ostensible* but *erroneous* supposition, that that numerous communion is formed of the descendants of the inhabitants of ancient Greece, who retain a distinct knowledge of the language of their forefathers. Whence, if this is the case, arises the necessity of translating the original New Testament into Modern Greek, that those adepts in the pure and ancient language, may read in their own tongue the wonderful works of God? The truth is, the Greek church consists of a most heterogeneous population, whose languages are marked by a correspondent diversity:—"A considerable part of Greece, the Grecian Isles, Wallachia, Moldavia, Egypt, Nubia, Lydia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Cilicia, Palestine, the Russian Empire in Europe, great part of Siberia in Asia, Astracan, Casan, Georgia, and White Russia in Poland."† The absurdity of recognizing such a motley group as witnesses on a question of philology, is further apparent from the fact that "most of the Eastern churches,

*Dr. G. Burns, formerly of St. John, N. B.

† Encyclop. Lond. vol. 8. p. 971.

like the Roman, have both an ecclesiastical and a vulgar tongue. In that of Abyssinia, the Ethiopic is the ecclesiastical, and the Amharic the vulgar. In the Syrian churches of Mesopotamia and of Malabar, or wherever else there may be Syrian churches, the Syriac is the ecclesiastical tongue—while in Mesopotamia, the vulgar is the Arabic; and, in Malabar, it is the Malayalim; and, elsewhere, it is the vernacular language of the country. Among the Copts in Egypt, the Coptic is the church language, but the Arabic that of the people. In the Greek church, the ancient Greek is still used in the offices, and the Old Testament read in the version of the Septuagint, and the New in the original text—while Romaic, or modern Greek, Arabic, or Turkish, is spoken by the people. In the Armenian church, the scriptures are read in a language but ill understood by the people—and this is the case in the Russian church.”*

Mr. Crawley's reference to the plurality of *biblical translations*, that render *baptizo* immerse, suggests a strong collateral argument, derived from the purest source of that species now extant, strongly opposed to Immersionists. Waving at present the institution of any minute inquiry, into the practice of the ancient church, *subsequent* to the days of the *Apostolical* fathers, in relation to the mode of baptism,—it is abundantly sufficient for our present purpose, to observe, that *to the highest point* to which authentic history traces immersion, it attests the shameful and humiliating fact that the candidates received the ordinance (*in puris naturalibus*,) naked! and that greater importance was attached *to no one circumstance* connected with the rite, than that the recipient should be thus stripped, in order to its performance. *In some cases* those fathers, who have been often triumphantly referred to, as preserving the Apostolic mode, *would* dispense with the subjects being immersed or bathed, but *never*, with *his* or *her* being naked, because they thought, (in perfect accordance with Apostolic sentiment and usage of course,) that, as Wall remarks, in his history of Baptism, “it better represented the putting off the old man, and also the nakedness of Christ upon the cross; moreover as baptism is washing, they judged it should be the washing of the *body*, not of the *clothes*.” This is the *result* of the testimony;—the details which fully illustrate this matter, will be exhibited hereafter. In the mean time I merely allude to it, to show, that immersion can no more be evinced, from the practice of all antiquity upon which authorised history throws any light, to have been the Apostolic

* Eighteenth Rep. of the Church Miss. Soc.

mode of Baptism, than to prove that the three thousand on the day of Pentecost—the delicate and faithful Lydia—the sable chancellor of Ethiopia—the Philippian Jailor and his family,—in a word *all* whom they baptized were immersed, naked. That immersion was anciently practiced we know—but through precisely the same medium, we know that it was deemed essential to its appropriate administration, that the individual baptized—male or female—infant or old person—should be *perfectly naked*—a strong presumption that like several of its unscriptural and indecent accompaniments ‘it was one of those additions to the ancient rite, which superstition originated.’ From translations of the Bible therefore, made subsequent to the introduction of “such a *variety* into the ritual of the primitive churches, as to render it very difficult” says Mosheim, “to give such an account of the worship, manner, and institutions of the *ancient* Christians, as will agree with what was practiced in all those countries where the gospel flourished,”* no evidence can be adduced, of the slightest weight or authority, to vindicate the claim of immersion to Apostolic sanction. But let us press into a purer period of the church, than those, in which any of the translations referred to by Mr. Crawley were made,—let us carry our inquiry back to the old Syriac translation of the New Testament, and ascertain how it renders *baptizo*. “This version” observes Stuart “is the oldest of all the translations of the New Testament that are extant; for in all probability it should be dated during the first half of the second century. Withal, it is admitted by those who are able to consult it, *to be one of the most faithful and authentic of all the ancient versions.*” The Syriac, let it be remarked, has a word which signifies to *immerse*, *plunge*, or *dip*, but it never employs it to designate, in any way the baptismal ceremony. This is a most striking fact, since if baptism and immersion had been deemed correspondent terms at the time when this most venerable, from its antiquity, of all translations of the New Testament was formed, the Syriac word which means to plunge or submerge would have undoubtedly been used, and used invariably in such cases.”

In this translation, however, all the words used for *baptizing*, *baptism*, and *baptist*, are taken from the Hebrew word *HOMAD*, which signifies ‘to stand, continue, subsist, to cause to stand, to support as by a pillar—to set or raise up—to place, present, or establish, &c. It is the same word, also, which is used for baptism in the Arabic version. This word is, certainly worthy of particular

* Eccles. Hist. Cent. I. pt. ii. ch. 4.

attention, in the present inquiry, because in the Syro-Chaldaic dialect, it was in all probability the very word used by John the Baptist, as the name of the new ordinance which he administered, when he came to prepare the way of the Lord—the very word used by the messengers from Jerusalem, when they asked his reason for dispensing this ordinance—the very word used by Jesus when he gave the apostolic commission—the very word used by the Apostles and Evangelists, as long, at least, as they preached and baptized in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.”*

From the preceding investigations and reasonings, we are fully authorised to deduce the following conclusions:—

I. That neither from the precepts of the New Testament, nor from the forms of expression employed in it, in reference to baptism, can the original mode of its administration be with precision, or indubitable certainty gathered.

II. That *no one instance* of the immersion of the body, as a mode of ceremonial purification, can be proved as a part of the divinely instituted ritual, either from the Old Testament, or from the Christian Scriptures.

III. That the word *baptizo*, is palpably and undeniably employed by the sacred writers, to designate ritual purification by *washing*, [which does ^{not} necessarily imply *immersion*] *pouring*, and *sprinkling*.

IV. That as *sprinkling* was *the most frequent* and most *significant* method of purification under the law,—as the largest donation of divine grace, is promised under the idea of *sprinkling* clean water upon the recipient,—as Jesu’s blood is called ‘the blood of *sprinkling*,’ and the hearts of believers are said to be *sprinkled* from an evil conscience,—baptism by *sprinkling* with pure water, in the name of the *thrice holy* Lord, is scriptural and appropriate.

V. That this mode of baptism has the highest claim to decided and universal preference and adoption, because it best accords with the manner of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, of which it is emblematical, and which we know, indisputably was and still is, administered by *shedding*, *pouring*, *falling* or *descending* upon the subject, and not by *his immersion* in it.

* Ewing’s Essay on Baptism.

N. B.—A digest of the evidence of antiquity, respecting both the *mode* and the *subjects* of Baptism, will be given in an appendix to the complete work.