

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

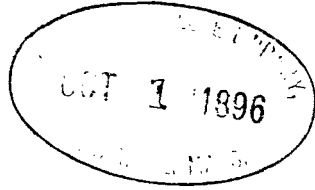
<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php



THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

THE ARCHÆOLOGY OF THE MODE OF
BAPTISM.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D. D., LL.D.

It is rather striking to observe the diversity which has grown up in the several branches of the Christian church in the mode of administering the initiatory rite of Christianity. Throughout the whole West, affusion is in use. The ritual of the great Latin church directs as follows: "Then the godfather or godmother, or both, holding the infant, the priest takes the baptismal water in a little vessel or jug, and pours the same three times upon the head of the infant in the form of the cross, and at the same time he says, uttering the words once only, distinctly and attentively: '*N, I baptize thee in the name of the Father,*'—he pours first; '*and of the Son*'—he pours a second time; '*and of the Holy Ghost*'—he pours the third time." Here is a trine affusion. With the exception of the large Baptist denominations, Protestants use a single affusion. The Baptists employ a single immersion. Throughout the East a trine immersion is the rule. Although practice seems sometimes to vary whether all three immersions shall be total,¹ the Orthodox Greek church in-

¹Cf. Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual*, pp. 42-43.

sists somewhat strenuously upon trine immersion. The ritual in use in the Russian church directs as follows: "And after he has anointed the whole body, the Priest baptizes the candidate, held erect and looking towards the east, and says: '*The servant of God, N, is baptized in the name of the father, Amen; and of the Son, Amen; and of the Holy Ghost, Amen; now and ever, and to ages of ages, Amen.*' At each invocation he immerses the candidate and raises him again."¹ Significant variations obtain, however, among the other Oriental communions. The Nestorians, for example, cause the candidate to stand erect in water reaching to the neck, and dip the head three times.² The Syrians, whether Jacobite or Maronite, place the candidate upright on his feet and pour water three times over his head in the name of the Trinity.³ The office of the Syrian church of Jerusalem provides as follows: "The priest first lets the candidate down into the baptistery. Then laying his right hand on the head of the person to be baptized, with the left hand he takes up water successively from before, behind, and upon each side of the candidate, and washes his whole body (*funditque super caput ejus, et abluit totum ipsius corpus*)."⁴ In the Coptic church the custom has become fixed for the priest to dip the body the first time up to the middle, the second time up to the neck, and the third time over the head.⁵ Sometimes, however, apparently, the actual practice is that the child is dipped only up to the neck, and the im-

¹ Bjerring, *The Offices of the Oriental Church*, p. 94; cf. p. xxiv.

² Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium*, etc., i. 17; Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, ii. 267. Cf. the ritual in Denzinger, i. 381.

³ Denzinger, *loc. cit.* Cf. Washburn, *The New York Independent*, August 7, 1884.

⁴ I have quoted the words from Egbert C. Smyth (*Andover Review*, May, 1884, p. 540), who takes them from Chrystal's *History of the Modes of Christian Baptism*. Cf. Denzinger, as above, p. 17, and for actual forms, pp. 277, 287, 307.

⁵ Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, ii. 267; also Bernat, as quoted by Denzinger, *loc. cit.*

mersion is completed by pouring the water over the head.¹ The Armenians duplicate the rite in a very odd way. Among them, we are told, "the priest asks the child's name; and, on hearing it, lets the child down into the water, saying, '*This, N, servant of God, who is come from the state of childhood (or from the state of a catechumen) to baptism, is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. . . . While saying this, the priest buries the child (or catechumen) three times in the water, as a figure of Christ's three days' burial. Then taking the child out of the water, he thrice pours a handful of water on its head, saying, 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Hallelujah! As many of you as have been enlightened of the Father, the Holy Spirit is put into you. Hallelujah!'*'"²

If we neglect for the moment the usages of minor divisions of the church, we may say that the practice of the church is divided into an Eastern and a Western mode. Broadly speaking, the East baptizes by a trine immersion; the West by affusion. When we scrutinize the history of these differing practices, however, we quickly learn that, with whatever unessential variations in details, the usage of the East runs back into a high antiquity; while there are indications on the surface of the Western usage that it is comparatively recent in origin, and survivals of an older custom persist side by side with it. To be sure, the immersion as practiced by the Protestant Baptists can scarcely be numbered among these survivals. The original Baptists apparently did not immerse; and Dr. Dexter appears to have shown that even the first English Baptists who seceded from the

¹ Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual* (ed. 2), p. 43 †.

² I have quoted this from Smith and Cheetham, i. 169a. But cf. Denzinger, *loc. cit.*, and for the ritual itself, pp. 387 and 395, where, however, the order of the two halves of the rite differs from that given above, and in both cases the actual baptism is connected with the affusion, and the burial is separated from it.

Puritan emigrants and formed a congregation at Amsterdam, baptized by affusion.¹ It would seem that it was by the English Baptists of the seventeenth century that immersion was first declared to be essential to valid baptism; and the practice of immersion by them can be looked upon as a survival from an earlier time only in the sense that it was a return to an earlier custom, although with the variation of a single instead of a trine immersion. We may more properly designate as a survival the practice of immersion which has subsisted in the great cathedral of Milan²—a diocese in which many peculiar customs survive to remind us of its original independence of Rome. The Roman ritual itself, indeed, continues to provide for immersion as well as for affusion, the rubric reading: "If he baptizes by immersion, the priest retaining the mitre, rises and takes the infant; and being careful not to hurt it, cautiously immerses its head in the water, and baptizing with a trine immersion, says only a single time: '*N, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*'" A similar survival appears in the Anglican Prayer-book,³ the rubric in which runs as follows: "Then the priest shall take the child into his hands, and shall say to the godfathers and godmothers, '*Name this child.*' And then, naming it after them (if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it), he shall dip it into the water discreetly and warily,

¹ Schaff, as above, p. 53, note †; cf. in general Whittitt, art. "Baptism" in Johnson's *Universal Cyclopædia* (new ed. 1893).

² Stanley, *Eastern Church*, p. 117; Augusti, *Handbuch d. christ. Archæologie*, ii. 399.

³ Cf. Augusti, as above, for somewhat similar facts as to the German churches. The first translated "*Tauf-Büchlein*," of 1523, and its revision of 1524, alike provided: "*Da nehme er das Kind und tauche es in die Taufe*"; but the Lutheran *Agende* and *Forms of Baptism* give no precise instructions in the matter. Luther is quoted as in one passage expressing a preference for immersion (Walch, *Th. x. s. 2593*, cf. 2637); but the theologians (though not without exceptions) treated it as a matter of indifference (e. g. Gerhard, *Loc. theol.*, t. ix. pp. 144-147).

saying, '*N, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*' But if they shall certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it, saying the foresaid words," etc. Here immersion—though a single immersion—is made the rule; and affusion appears only as an exception,—although an exception which has in practice become the rule. The Prayer-book of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America accordingly parallels the two modes, the rubric reading: "And then, naming it [the child] after them, he shall dip it in water discreetly or else pour water upon it, saying," etc. A similar reminiscence of the older usage was near being perpetuated in the formularies of the British and American Presbyterian churches. John Lightfoot has preserved for us a curious account of the debate in the Westminster Assembly upon the question whether the new Directory for Worship should recognize immersion alongside of affusion as an alternative mode of baptism, or should exclude it altogether in favor of affusion. The latter was determined upon; but Lightfoot tells us, "It was voted so indifferently that we were glad to count names twice: for so many were unwilling to have dipping excluded that the votes came to an equality within one; for the one side was twenty-four, the other twenty-five."¹ The guarded clauses which finally took their places in the Westminster Directory and Confession of Faith, reflect the

¹ Journal, etc., for August 7, 1644, in Lightfoot's Works, Pitmann's edition (London: 1824), xiii. 299-300. It is inexplicable how persistently the purport of this vote has been misapprehended. Even Mr. (now Professor) James Heron, in his admirable treatise on *The Church of the Sub-Apostolic Age* (London: 1888), p. 140, writes: "I may remark that the vote by which the Westminster Assembly thus pronounced pouring or sprinkling legitimate was a very close one—twenty-five to twenty-four." This was not the vote by which they pronounced affusion legitimate,—on that they were unanimously agreed: it was the vote by which they pronounced immersion illegitimate. Nor was the discussion upon the Confession of Faith, xxviii. 3, to which Mr. Heron refers it, but upon the Directory for Worship.

state of opinion in the Assembly revealed by this close vote; and, when read in its light, will not fail to operate to enshrine still a reminiscence of the earlier custom of baptism by immersion. If we will bear in mind the history of the mode of baptism in the English church as thus exhibited in the formularies framed by her, we shall be at no loss to understand how it came about that the English Baptists desired to revive the custom of immersion, or how it happened that, in reviving it, they gave it the form of a single immersion.

Survivals such as these prepare us to learn that there was a time when immersion was as universal even in the West as in the East. In certain sections, to be sure, as in Southern Gaul and its ecclesiastical daughter, Ireland, affusion appears to have come into quite general use at a very early date. Gennadius of Marseilles (495) already speaks of the two modes of baptism as if they stood upon something like the same plane; he is comparing baptism and martyrdom, and remarks: "The one after his confession is either wetted with the water or else plunged into it; and the other is either wetted with his own blood or else plunged into fire."¹ By the time of Bonaventura affusion appears to have become the common French method; a synod at Angiers in 1175 mentions the two as on an equal footing, while one in 1304, at Langres, mentions pouring only. Possibly affusion first found a formal place in a baptismal office in the case of the earliest Irish ritual, in which it is made, as in the office of the American Protestant Episcopal Church, alternative with immersion.² But it was not until the thirteenth century that it began to become the ruling mode of baptism on the Continent,³ and not until after the Reformation, in England.

¹ De eccl. dogg., chap. lxxiv. as quoted by Wall, *History of Infant Baptism* (2d ed. 1707), ii. 466, whence also the following facts are derived.

² Bennett, *Christian Archæology*, p. 408, quoting Warren, *The History and Ritual of the Celtic Church*.

³ Cf. Weiss in Kraus' *Real-Encyklopädie*, ii. 828a.

Walafrid Strabo, writing in the ninth century, speaks of it as exceptional only. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century still represents immersion as the most common and commendable way of baptizing, because of its more vivid representation of the burial of Christ; and only recommends affusion in case the whole body cannot be wet on account of paucity of water, or some other cause,—in which case, he says, “the head in which is manifested the principle of animal life, ought to be wet.” His contemporary, Bonaventura, while mentioning that affusion was commonly used in France, gives his own opinion as that “the way of dipping into water is the more common and the fitter and safer.” A council at Ravenna in 1311, however, declared the two modes equally valid; and the rubric of the baptismal service edited by Paul V. (1605–1621) treats the matter as entirely indifferent: “Though baptism may be administered by affusion, or immersion, or aspersion, yet let the first or second mode, which are more in use, be retained, agreeably to the usage of the churches.”¹ The change was much slower in establishing itself in England. A century before Paul V., Erasmus witnesses: “With us infants are poured upon; with the English, they are immersed.” The first Prayer-book of Edward VI. (1549) directs a trine immersion: “first, dypping on the right side; secondly, the left side; the third time, dypping the face toward the fronte.” Permission is first given to substitute pouring, if the sponsors certify that the child is weak, in the second Prayer-book (1552), and in the same book trine immersion is changed to single immersion. The form at present in use does not appear until the Prayer-book of Charles II. (1662).²

There is a sense, then, in which we may say broadly that the present diversity in baptismal usage is a growth of time; and that, should we move back within the first millennium of

¹ Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual*, pp. 44–45.

² Schaff, *Op. cit.*, pp. 51–52.

the church's life, we should find the whole Christian world united in the ordinary use of trine immersion. The meaning of this fact to us will be conditioned, however, by the results of two further lines of inquiry. We should inquire whether this universality of trine immersion was itself the result of ecclesiastical development, or whether it represents primitive, i. e. apostolic practice. And we should inquire whether conformity to this mode of baptism was held to be essential to the validity of baptism, or only necessary to the good order of the church.

The second of these queries is very readily answered. There never was a time when the church insisted upon immersion as the only valid mode of baptism.¹ The very earliest extant account of baptism, that given in the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" (chap. vii.), which comes to us from the first half of the second century, while evidently contemplating ordinary baptism as by immersion, yet freely allows affusion in case of scarcity of water: "But if thou hast neither [living water nor standing water in sufficient quantity], pour water on the head three times, into the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit." "We have here," comments Harnack, "for the first time obtained evidence that even the earliest Christians had, under certain conditions, recourse to baptisms by sprinkling, a very important point, since it shows that the scruples about baptisms in this manner were only of late origin in the Catholic Church."²

¹Cf. Wall, *History of Infant Baptism* (2d ed., 1707), ii. 863.

²The *Contemporary Review*, vol. 1 (July-Dec., 1836) p. 231. Harnack's comment in his edition of the Teaching may be compared: "We have here the oldest evidence for the permission of baptism by aspersion; it is especially important also that the author betrays not the slightest uncertainty as to its validity. The evidences for an early occurrence of aspersion were hitherto not sufficiently certain, either in respect to their date (as the pictorial representations of aspersion; see Kraus, *Roma Sotter.* (2d ed.), p. 311, etc.) or in respect to their conclusiveness (*Tert. de Pœnit.* 6; *de Bapt.* 12); doubt is now no longer possible. But scruples as to its complete validity may have been primitive in many lands: never-

“You have here,” comments Funk,¹ “the oldest witness for the form of affusion or aspersion in administering baptism. . . . Notice also that the author holds that form valid with certitude. . . .” From that day to this, the church as a whole has allowed the validity of baptism by affusion, in case of necessity, whether the necessity arise from scarcity of water or from weakness of the recipient, rendering immersion a cruelty. Even the Orthodox Greek church which, in its polemic attitude against Latin affusion, is apt to lay great stress on immersion, is yet forced to admit the validity of affusion in cases of necessity.² And Dr. Washburn tells us of the other Oriental churches: “While trine immersion is the general rule, none of the churches of the East insist on this as in all cases essential. All admit that in exceptional cases other forms are valid. The Jacobites do not practice immersion at all, and the Armenians recognize the full validity of affusion or sprinkling in any case.”³

The whole case of the validity of clinic baptism—or the baptism of the sick on their bed, *ἐν τῇ κλίνῃ*, whence they were called *κλινικοί*, *clinici*, and more rarely *grabatarii*, *lectularii*, or even *superfusi*—was canvassed by Cyprian in the third century in a manner which seems to show not only that it had been commonly practiced, but also that it had not been formally challenged before.⁴ He declares that clinic baptism by aspersion has all the necessary elements of baptismless we can appeal to Eus. Hist. Eccl. vi. 46; 14, 15 for this only with reserves; while against it we may appeal to Cyprian, Ep. lxix. 12-14, and to the practice of the Orient.”—Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel, pp. 23-24.

¹ Doctrina Duodecim Apostolorum (Tübingen, 1887), op. vii. 3.

² Cf. Bryennios' comment on the Didache at this point; and Bapheides as quoted by Schaff, *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

³ The Independent, Aug. 7, 1884. Cf. Denzinger, *Op. cit.*, p. 18. Dr. Washburn had especially in mind in these words, the Greek, the Armenian, the Armeno-Catholic, and the Jacobite churches.

⁴ Ep. lxix. 12-14: Hartel's edition of Cyprian's Letters, Vienna, 1871, p. 760 seq. The argument is admirably abstracted by Bingham.

tism, so that all such baptisms are perfect, provided faith is not wanting in ministrant and recipient,—the mode of the application of the water not being of essential importance. He argues that, as the contagion of sin is not washed away like the filth of the body by the water itself, there is no need of a lake for its cleansing: it is the abundance not of the water but of faith that gives efficacy to the sacrament, and God will grant his indulgence for the “abridgment”¹ of a sacrament when necessity requires it. The essential portion of Cyprian’s representation runs as follows:—

“You have asked also, dearest son, what I thought of those who obtain God’s grace in sickness and weakness, whether they are to be accounted legitimate Christians, for that they are not washed (*loti*) but sprinkled (*perfusi*) with the saving water. In this point my diffidence and modesty prejudices none, so as to prevent any from feeling what he thinks right and from doing what he feels to be right. As far as my poor understanding conceives it, I think that the divine benefits can in no respect be mutilated or weakened; nor can anything less occur in that case (*æstimamus in nullo mutilari et debilitari posse beneficia divina nec minus aliquid illic posse contingere*) when with full and entire faith, both of the giver and receiver, what is drawn from the divine gifts is accepted. For in the sacrament of salvation the contagion of sins is not in such wise washed away as the filth of the skin and of the body is washed away in carnal and ordinary washing, or that there should be need of saltpeter and other appliances also, and a bath and a basin wherewith this vile body must be washed and purified. Otherwise is the breast of the believer washed; otherwise is the mind of man purified by the merit of faith. In the sacraments of salvation when necessity compels and God bestows his mercy the divine methods confer the whole benefit on believers (*in sacramentis salutaribus necessitate cogente et Deo indulgentiam suam largiente totum credentibus conferunt divina compendia*); nor ought it to trouble any one that sick people seem to be sprinkled or affused when they obtain the Lord’s grace, when the Holy Scripture spake by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel and says: ‘Then shall I sprinkle clean water on you and ye shall be clean,’ etc. [quoting further, Num. xix. 8–13, viii. 5–7]. Or have they obtained indeed the divine favor but in a shorter and more limited measure of the divine gift and of the Holy Spirit? . . . Nay, verily, the Holy Spirit is not given by measure, but is poured out altogether on the believer,” etc.²

¹ Dr. E. C. Smyth, *Andover Review*, May, 1884, p. 540, thinks this refers only to the abridgment in amount of water.

² I have availed myself of the translation in *The Ante-Nicene Library*, Am. Ed., p. 401.

Those who were thus baptized were often looked upon with suspicion, seeing that they were frequently such as had neglected baptism until they believed they were dying (the so-called *procrastinantes*, *βραδύβαυτες*), and in any case had not fulfilled the full period of their catechumenate and were therefore supposed to be insufficiently instructed in Christian knowledge, and seeing that they had been brought to Christ by necessity, as it were, and not by choice and lacked the grace of confirmation and all that it was supposed to imply.¹ They were therefore denied the right to receive orders in the church, except when a scarcity of men fitted for orders, or other necessity, forbade the strictness of this rule. This judgment concerning them is already brought to light in the letter of Cornelius on the Novatian heresy, quoted by Eusebius;² and the reason on which it rested is clearly expressed in the canon of the council of Neo-Cæsarea (314; c. 12): "He that is baptized when he is sick ought not to be made a priest (for his coming to the faith is not voluntary but from necessity) unless his diligence and faith do afterwards prove commendable, or the scarcity of men fit for the office do require it." There were reasons enough to look on those who had so received baptism with suspicion; but the validity of the baptism so conferred was not itself in doubt.³

As little did men doubt the propriety and validity of baptism by affusion when scarcity of water rendered immersion impossible. This is the precise case which occurs in the prescriptions of the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles"; and that the practice of the churches continued in accordance with these prescriptions may be illustrated by a variety of references which have come down to us. For example, in the seventh-century canons of James of Edessa, the priest is

¹ Cf. Weiss in Kraus' Real-Encyk. ii. 223. ² Hist. Ecc. vi. 43.

³ Bingham, Archæology, etc., XI. xi. 5; Wall, as above, p. 403; Kraus, *Op. cit.* 223.

instructed to baptize a dying child with whatever amount of water he happens to have near him.¹

"31. *Addai*—When an unbaptized infant is in danger of death, and its mother carries it in haste even to the field, to a priest who is at work there, where there is no stream and no basin and no water-vessel, if there is only water there for the priest's use, and necessity requires haste, what is proper for him to do? *Jacob*—In necessity like this it is right for the priest, if water happens to be with him, to take the pitcher of water and pour it on the infant's head, even though its mother is holding it in her hands, and say, 'Such an one is baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.'"

Indeed, so little was immersion of the essence of baptism to Syrian Christians, that we read of their mistaking for baptism in the twelfth century the blessed water of the feast of the Epiphany "with which every believer who entered the Holy Church was signed after the manner of the cross," "or sprinkled," and only thus "approached the mysteries;" so that the authorities needed to guard them from this error.² A body of legends from every part of the church illustrates the same conception. There are, for example, the well-known stories of St. Lawrence baptizing Romanus with a pitcher of water, and of Lucillus baptizing by pouring water on the head.³ There is the curious story of the bishop observing the boy Athanasius "playing at church" with his young companions and baptizing them, and the decision of the council that "as water had been poured upon these persons" after the interrogations and responses, the baptism was complete.⁴ There is the similar story of travellers baptizing a Jew in the desert by sprinkling sand three times on his body, and the decision that true baptism had taken place in all but the material, with the order that the Jew was now

¹ See Isaac H. Hall, *The Presbyterian Review*, January, 1888.

² It is so reported by one Mar Michael Chindisi in the introductory remarks to a twelfth-century MS. of the Syriac Hydrogologia, published by Carl von Arnhard (Munich: F. Staub). See the *New York Independent*, April 11, 1889, p. 15.

³ Bingham, as above. ⁴ Smith and Cheetham, i. 167b.

to be *perfusus* with it.¹ The Copts have a story of a woman, who, in a storm at sea, drew blood from her breast and made the sign of the cross on the foreheads of her children with it, repeating the formula of baptism. On arrival at Alexandria she took them to the bishop for baptism, but the water in the font petrified to prevent the sacrilege of a repetition of a baptism thus declared valid.² It is not needful to multiply examples of such legends: they bear witness to much popular superstition; but they bear witness along with it to a universal allowance of the validity of baptism by affusion.

Perhaps in no way is the universality of this sentiment more pointedly brought out, than in its easy assumption in the discussion by the fathers of the salvation of the Apostles or of other ancient worthies who had died unbaptized. We meet already in Tertullian with the point of view which pervades all the attempts to explain their salvation. "And now," he says, "as far as I shall be able, I will reply to them who affirm 'that the Apostles were unbaptized.'" He quotes some suggestions to the contrary, and continues:—

"Others make the suggestion,—forced enough clearly—'that the Apostles then served the turn of baptism, when, in their little ship, they were sprinkled and covered with the waves: that Peter himself also was immersed enough when he walked on the sea.' It is, however, as I think, one thing to be sprinkled or intercepted by the violence of the sea; another thing to be baptized in obedience to religion."³

He refuses, in other words, to look upon a chance wetting as baptism, but the mode in which the wetting is supposed to come raises no doubt in his mind: nor indeed is he too seriously concerned "whether they were baptized in any manner whatever, or whether they continued unbathed (*illoti*) to the end." The Syriac "Book of the Bee" on the other hand

¹ Smith and Cheetham, i 168a.

² Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, ii. 399, cf. 266.

³ *De Bapt.* 12. I have availed myself of the translation in the Antenicene Library, Edinburgh, i. p. 245.

deems it important to insist on the baptism of the Apostles, and finds it in the following way:—

“And Mar Basilius says that on the eve of the passion, after the disciples had received the body and blood of our Lord, our Lord put water in a basin, and began to wash his disciples’ feet; and this was the baptism of the Apostles. But they were not all made perfect, for they were not all pure. For Judas, the son of perdition was not made holy; and because this basin of washing was in very truth baptism; just as our Lord said to Simon Peter, ‘Except I wash thee, thou hast no part with me,’ that is, except I baptize thee thou cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”¹

We may take, however, Augustine’s discussion of the case of the thief on the cross as our typical example of the way in which the fathers dealt with these, to them, puzzling facts.

“Accordingly, the thief who was no follower of the Lord previous to the cross but his confessor upon the cross, from whose case a presumption is sometimes taken, or attempted to be taken, against the sacrament of baptism, is reckoned by St. Cyprian among the martyrs who are baptized in their own blood, as happens to many unbaptized persons in times of hot persecution. For to the fact that he confessed the crucified Lord, so much weight is attributed and so much availing value assigned by him who knows how to weigh and value such evidence, as if he had been crucified for the Lord. . . . There was discovered the full measure of a martyr in him who believed in Christ at the time when they who were destined to be martyrs fell away. Now all this was manifest to the eyes of the Lord who at once bestowed so great felicity on one who though not baptized was yet washed clean in the blood of a putative martyrdom. . . . Besides all this there is the circumstance which is not incredibly reported, that the thief who then believed as he hung by the side of the crucified Lord, was sprinkled as in a most sacred baptism with the water which issued from the wound of the Saviour’s side. I say nothing of the fact that none can prove, since none of us knows, that he had not been baptized previous to his condemnation.”²

Such unhesitating appeals as this to “sprinkling,” as confessedly true and valid baptism, if only it can be believed to have taken place, reveal to us in a most convincing way the patristic attitude towards this mode of baptism. With

¹ Ch. xliii., “On the Passion of our Lord,” p. 165 of the Syriac Text, (as reported by Dr. Isaac H. Hall).

² On the Soul and its Origin, i. 11. I have used the translation in the Post-Nicene Fathers, New York, Vol. v. p. 319.

whatever stringency trine immersion may have been held the right and only regular mode of baptism, it is perfectly obvious that other modes were not considered invalid and no baptism. We read of those who baptized with a single immersion being condemned as acting contrary to the command of Christ,¹ or as making a new law, not only against the common practice, but also against the general rule and tradition of the church;² and we find the deposition ordered of every bishop or presbyter who transgressed good order by administering baptism by a single immersion:³ but the form or mode is ever treated as having the necessity of order and never as having the necessity of means.

Accordingly we find that the very mode of baptism against which these charges and canons were directed,—that by a single immersion,—is easily allowed, when sufficient occasion for its introduction arose. Trine immersion was insisted upon on two symbolical grounds: it represented Christ's three days' burial and his resurrection on the third day; but more fundamentally it represented baptism as into faith in the three persons of the Trinity. "Rightly ye are immersed a third time," says Augustine, "ye who accept baptism in the name of the Trinity. Rightly ye are immersed the third time, ye who accept baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, who on the third day rose from the dead." The Arians in Spain, however, in the sixth century, while following the general custom of trine immersion, explained it as denoting a first, second, and third degree of divinity in the three persons named in the formula. This led some Spanish Catholics to baptize with only one immersion, in testimony to the equality of the Divine Persons in the unity of the Godhead; and when disputes arose as to this divergence from ordinary

¹ Pope Pelagius in his Epistle ad Gaudentium; quoted by Bingham.

² Sozomen and Theodoret, *ibid.*

³ Apostolic Canons, Can. 42, *ibid.*

custom, Leander, Bishop of Seville, appealed for advice in his own name and in that of the other Spanish bishops to Gregory the Great. Gregory replied as follows:—

“Nothing truer can be said concerning the three immersions of baptism than the opinion you have yourself given, that diversity of custom does not prejudice the holy church if the faith be one (*quod in una fide nihil afficit sanctae ecclesiae consuetudo diversa*). We use trine immersion that we may signify the mystery of the three days' burial, so that as the infant is raised three times from the water, the resurrection on the third day may be expressed. But if any one thinks this is done rather out of veneration for the Holy Trinity, neither does a single immersion in water do any prejudice to this; for, as there is one substance in three Persons, there can be nothing reprehensible in an infant's being immersed either thrice or once,—because in the three immersions the Trinity of Persons may be as well designated as in one immersion the unity of the Godhead. But seeing that now the infant is three times immersed in baptism by heretics, I think that this ought not to be done by you: lest while they multiply the immersions they divide the Godhead; and while they continue as before they glory in the victory of their custom.”¹

The application of the principle here is, of course, not to affusion or aspersion but to single immersion; but the broad principle that “divergent custom in unity of faith is no detriment to holy church” is quite clearly laid down, and is made the basis of advice which runs counter to all previous custom. This did not mean that all canonical authority should be broken down, or that each church should not order its affairs by its own canons. They of Rome continued to use and to insist upon trine immersion; they of Spain, after a few years' struggle, decreed at the Council of Toledo

¹ Gregor. M. Epist. lib. i. ep. 41; cf. Bingham; Augusti (p. 400); Kraus (p. 827-828), *opp. cit.* I use Bingham's translation. A similar instance of liberality in judgment by Gregory is the somewhat famous case mentioned by Bede, Hist. Eccl. i. 27. When speaking of the varying Uses of the Roman and Gallican churches, he says that “things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things,” and advises Augustine to “select from the Roman, or Gallican, or any other church, those things that are pious, religious, or correct; to make these up into one body, and instil them into the minds of the English for their use.” Surely this is not out of character with Gregory's strictness of home administration, as the Abbé Duchesne (*Origines du Culte Chrétien*, p. 94) urges, and is closely paralleled by the instance under discussion.

(633) that only a single immersion should be used thereafter in their churches: and though later offense was taken here and there with the Spanish custom, yet it received the support of both German and French synods, and the Council of Worms (868) finally recognized both practices. But the whole incident shows perfectly clearly that a distinction requires to be drawn between regular or canonical and valid baptism; and the passages which have been quoted from Cyprian, Augustine, and Gregory, when taken together, seem to show that the church of that age did not contemplate the possibility that difference in mode of baptism could operate to the absolute invalidation of the rite. We meet with no evidence from the writings of the fathers that baptism by affusion was held anything other than irregular and extraordinary; but we meet with no evidence that it was accounted void: it was even held, on the contrary, imperative duty in case of necessity, whether on account of paucity of water or on account of the weakness of the recipient.

The evidence of the practice of affusion as something more than an unusual and extraordinary mode of baptism which fails us in the writings of the fathers, seems to be provided, however, in the monumental representations of the rite. The apparent evidence of the monuments runs indeed oddly athwart the consentient witness of the literary remains. It may be broadly said that the fathers, from the second century down through the patristic age, represent ordinary and regular baptism to be a rite performed on perfectly nude recipients by a form of trine immersion. In seemingly direct contradiction to this literary evidence, we read in one of the latest and most judicious handbooks of Christian archæology: "It is most noteworthy, that from the second to the ninth century there is found scarcely one pictorial representation of baptism by immersion; but the suggestion is always uniformly either of sprinkling or of pour-

ing."¹ Representations which clearly indicate immersion neither were impossible nor are altogether lacking;² but they bear no proportion in number to those which seem to imply the act of pouring, and when clear are usually of late date. On the other hand, representations in which affusion seems to be implied are of all ages and comparatively numerous. The fact is so obvious, indeed, that with a bald statement of it we might be tempted to conclude that the literary and monumental evidences stand in hopeless contradiction.

Any survey of the monumental evidence which would hope to be fruitful must begin with a sharp distinction between two series of representations,—those which depict the historical scene of the baptism of Christ, and those which depict ordinary baptism. The treatment of neither of these subjects has escaped influence from the other. Artists seeking to represent the rite of baptism have not always given a perfectly realistic rendering of the service as seen by them day after day in their own baptistery, but have allowed reminiscences of familiar representations of our Lord's baptism to affect their treatment. And on the other hand they have not been able to exclude the influence of the rite of baptism as customarily administered before their eyes, from affecting their representation of Christ's baptism. Even the most incongruous features from ordinary baptism have sometimes with great *naïveté* been permitted to enter into their pictured conception of Christ's baptism; thus very early our Lord is represented as of immature age, and later

¹ Bennett, *Christian Archæology*, p. 407. Cf. statement of Withrow, *The Catacombs of Rome*, p. 535 *seq.*: "The testimony of the catacombs respecting the mode of baptism, so far as it extends, is strongly in favor of aspersion or affusion. All their pictured representations of the rite indicate this mode, for which alone the early fonts seem adapted; nor is there any early art-evidence of baptismal immersion."

² Cf. example from a Pontifical of the ninth century, in Smith and Cheetham, i. 159, 171.

he is even sometimes placed in a sculptured marble font.¹ But despite the influence exerted upon one another by the two series of representations, they stand in very different relations to our present inquiry; and must be used not only separately but in different ways. Representations of the baptism of Christ have a definite historical scene to depict, and can tell us what contemporary baptism was like only accidentally and so far as the artist has forgotten himself. Representations of the rite of baptism on the other hand are available as direct witnesses of Christian usage, except in so far as they may be judged to depict what was conceived to be ideal baptism rather than what was actual at the date of their production, or to have been affected by traditional modes of representation or by influences from parallel scenes, as, e. g., from the representations of the baptism of Christ. Each series may, however, have something to teach us in its own way, as to how Christians baptized in the earlier ages of the church.

The sequence of representations of the baptism of Christ may be very conveniently examined in the plates of Dr. Josef Strzygowski's "*Ikonographie der Taufe Christi*," to which he has prefixed a very illuminating discussion. Dr. Strzygowski cannot be acquitted, indeed, of bending his material a little here and there to fit what he is led, from the literature of that age, to expect the representation of baptism to be in each age. The purity of his induction is thus marred, and the independence of the testimony of the art-evidence to some degree affected. But he has placed in his reader's hands, both in the course of the discussion itself and in the series of representations given in his plates, ample material to guard against the slight deflection which may arise from this cause. The series of representations of the baptism of Christ begins with a fresco in the crypt of Lucina in the

¹ Cf. plate viii. in Strzygowski's *Ikonographie der Taufe Christi* (München: 1885), and the remarks on p. 36.

Roman catacombs, which seems to belong to the opening of the second century.¹ Here Christ is represented as being aided by John to step up out of the river in which he is still immersed almost up to his middle. Then, there is a somewhat enigmatical fresco in the catacomb of Prætextatus, assigned to the end of the second or beginning of the third century, which is variously interpreted as a representation of our Lord's baptism (so Garrucci and Roller) or of his crowning with thorns (so Martigni and De Rossi).² In this picture Christ stands, clothed, on the ground, while a second figure stretches over his head something which looks like a twig, and there is a cloud of something surrounding his head. If baptism be represented here, it is evidently conceived as a simple affusion. After the frescoes, come a series of representations on sarcophagi belonging to the early post-Constantinian age. As a type,³ these represent Christ as a boy, naked, generally in full face, with the head turned slightly to the left towards John, and the arms hanging down. John either holds his right hand over Christ or rests it on his forehead. Jordon pours its water out of a lump of rock, hanging over Christ from behind; while a dove generally flies near the rock. Among these representations there are also some, as e. g. the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus († 359), in which lambs symbolically take the place of persons; and either light or water or something else is poured from the beak of the dove on the head of the lamb which represents Christ.⁴ On the cover of a fourth-century sarcophagus in the Lateran,⁵ John is represented as pouring water on the

¹ Given by Strzygowski, plate i. fig. 1; De Rossi, *Roma Sott.*, Atlas i. tav. xiv.; Roller, *Les Catacombes de Rome*, Vol. i. pl. xviii. 1; Kraus, *Rom. Sott.*, 2 ed., p. 139, fig. 18.

² Given by Strzygowski, i. 4; Roller, i. pl. xviii. 2; Perret, *Les Catacombes de Rome*, i. pl. lxxx.

³ Cf. Strzygowski, as above, p. 7; for representations see plate i.

⁴ Given in Strzygowski, i. 13.

⁵ Given in Strzygowski, i. 9; Roller, ii. p. lxvii.

head of Christ from a bowl: but Strzygowski points out that this portion of the sculpture is a later restoration. The Ravenna Mosaics come next in point of time: and in the primary one of these—that in the Baptisterium Ursianum (middle of fifth century), John is again represented as pouring water on Christ's head from a bowl; but again Strzygowski considers this feature to be due to later restoration.¹ The typical representation at this date seems to be of Christ, waist-deep in Jordan, with John's hand resting on, and the dove immediately above, his head. From the opening of the eighth century we have a new type which places a jug in the beak of the dove from which water pours upon Christ's head,² while from the twelfth century examples occur in which John pours water from an urn;³ and something of this sort becomes everywhere the ruling type from the fourteenth century on.⁴ As we review the whole series of representations of the baptism of Christ, we are struck with the absence from it of decisive representations of complete immersion: it may be interpreted as a series of immersions, but in any case it is strangely full of hints of incomplete immersion, which can only be accounted for by the influence of contemporary habit in baptizing upon the artist, as he attempted to depict this historical scene. It is hardly possible to understand the manner in which the artists have pictured to themselves the baptism of Christ, without postulating familiarity on their part with baptism as something else than a simple immersion.

This judgment is fully borne out by the parallel series of representation of the rite of baptism in general. This series also begins in the Roman catacombs,—in the so-called sacramental chapel of the catacombs of Callistus, where we have two frescoes dating from the opening of the third century.⁵

¹ Given in Strzygowski, i. 14.

² Strzygowski, viii. 1, 2, and the discussion on p. 36.

³ Strzygowski, xiii. 9, and the discussion on p. 49, cf. note 5.

⁴ Strzygowski, p. 54, and plates xv. *seq.*

⁵ Strzygowski, i. 2, 3; Garrucci, i. 3 and vii. 2; Roller, Vol. i. pl. xxiv. 5.

In both of these the river is still presupposed—probably a trait in representing baptismal scenes borrowed from the typical instance of the baptism of Christ. Into it the neophyte has descended, but the water scarcely reaches his ankles. John stands on the adjoining ground with his right hand on the neophyte's head. In one of the pictures a cloud of water surrounds the head. In neither case is a complete immersion possible; and in one of them affusion seems to be evident. For the period after Constantine¹ we have three especially important monuments: a gravestone from Aquileia² on which the neophyte stands in a shallow font and water descends on him from above: a silver spoon from Aquileia³ on which the water descends on the head of the neophyte from the beak of the dove; and a glass fragment found in the ruins of an old Roman house, representing a girl upon whom water descends from a vase, while she is surrounded with spray from it.⁴ The representation of the baptism of St. Ambrose on the famous Paliotto in S. Ambrogio at Milan, comes from a later date (c. 827). Here the recipient stands in a font up to his middle and the priest pours water on his head from a vase.⁵ The later examples fall entirely in line with these earlier ones; says Kirsh:⁶ "A complete immersion is not found in the West even in the first period of the middle-ages, but the form of representation which we have just noted goes over into the later art with certain modifications." We need not pause to note the examples that are adduced in illustration of what seems the general course of later art-representations: our in-

¹ Cf. the account in Kraus, *Real-Encyk.* ii. p. 837 *seq.*, from which I borrow at this point.

² De Rossi, *Bul.* 1876, tav. 1^a and pp. 7 *seq.*: Garrucci, tav. 387.

³ Kraus, *Real-Encyk.* ii. 342, fig. 189; Garrucci, tav. 362.

⁴ Kraus, ii. 837, fig. 484; De Rossi, *Bul.* 1876; Garrucci, tav. 354. Cf. Strzygowski's note, p. 56 note 2.

⁵ Strzygowski, viii. 2, cf. p. 36.

⁶ In Kraus, *Real-Encyk.* ii. 838.

terest will naturally center in the earlier examples already cited. In them there seems to be borne an unbroken testimony to baptism by affusion.

It is, of course, impossible to believe that the literary and monumental testimony as to the mode of baptism prevalent in the patristic church, is really as contradictory as it might at first sight seem. Reconciliation of the two lines of evidence has naturally been sought by the students of the subject; and equally naturally, in different directions. Sometimes the method adopted seems only forcibly to subject one class of evidence to the other. Dr. Withrow, for example, seems ready to neglect the literary evidence in favor of the monumental, speaking of immersion as if it were only a fourth or fifth century corruption of the earlier rite represented in the art remains, and pleading, against its primitive employment, that it is not represented in the catacombs and that the early fonts are not suitable for it,—with an inclination to include among the fonts the so-called *benitières* or “holy-water vessels” of the catacombs.¹ On the other hand, it is not uncommon to see the monumental evidence set practically aside in favor of the literary. This is done in some degree, as we have seen, even by Strzygowski. A tendency towards it is found also even in so judicious a writer as the late Dr. Schaff,² who pleads that, as it is impossible to depict the whole process of baptism, we must read the monumental representations as giving only one moment in the complete trine immersion witnessed to in the contemporary literature, and not treat them as representing the whole rite,—though he does not stop to tell us what part affusion plays in an ordinary immersion. The fullest and most plausi-

¹ The Catacombs of Rome, p. 535 *seq.*

² In the notable discussion of Baptism which he incorporated in his edition of the *Didache*, as quoted above. The explanations of Garrucci, who finds in each representation a moment subsequent to the completion of baptism itself—confirmation or the like—will belong to the same class of explanations with Dr. Schaff's: and fails for like reasons.

ble statement of this point of view is made by Victor Schultze in his "Archäologische Studien über alt-christliche Monumente."¹ Quoting De Rossi's opinion that the baptism of the boy depicted in the catacombs of St. Callistus with a cloud of water about his head, is a mixed form of immersion and affusion, he comments thus: "Such a rite, however, never in reality existed,² and is seen to be an illusion from the consideration that aspersion is nothing else than a substitute for immersion and was not gradually developed out of it. The first traces of aspersion are found among the Gnostics, and this circumstance, as well as the blame which Irenæus had for the rite, are proof that the church had not adopted aspersion in the third century." He proceeds to remark that if the fresco is of Tertullian's time, it must certainly represent immersion, as that father knows no other baptism;³ and then explains the scene as representing the moment when the candidate is just rising from the water after immersion, and the water brought up with him is streaming from his head and person; whereas, if aspersion had been the idea of the artist, he would doubtless have placed a vessel in the hand of the administrator, as is done in later pictures. These very acute remarks overlook, however, two decisive facts,—the facts namely that the water in which the youth stands is too shallow for immersion, and that this fresco does not stand by itself but is one of a series of representations, no one of which speaks clearly of immersion, and many of which make aspersion perfectly clear. Such an explanation of the one picture as Schultze offers would only render the explanation of the series as a whole impossible.⁴

Rather than adopt either of these extreme views which would imply the untrustworthiness of one or the other lines of

¹ P. 55.

² Yet compare the present-day Oriental practices as above, p. 602.

³ Yet see how broadly Tertullian deals with the matter in *De Bapt.* v.

⁴ Prof. E. C. Smyth has criticised Schultze's theory in the *Andover Review* for 1884, p. 538.

evidence, it would be easier to believe that the monumental evidence represented the actual practice of the church while the literary evidence preserved the canonical form of the church. It would be no unheard-of thing if the actual practice varied from the official form: indeed, we know as a matter of fact, that not only have such changes in general, but that this change in particular has usually taken effect in practice before it has been recognized in law. It was only because actual baptism had come to be by affusion that the Western church was led in later ages to place affusion on a par in her formularies with immersion: and the same history was subsequently wrought out in the English church. It would not be at all inconceivable, that from the beginning the actual celebration of baptism differed somewhat from the formal ritual; and this difference might well underlie the different testimony borne by the monuments as representations of what was actually done, and by the fathers as representatives of the formal ritual. Whether and how far this hypothesis will avail or is needed for the explanation of the facts before us, may be left, however, for subsequent consideration.

We need to note, now, certain other suggestions which have been made for the harmonizing of the divergent lines of evidence, from which we shall gain more light upon the problem. Mr. Marriott,¹ for example, supposes that early baptism included both immersion and affusion, something as the modern Armenian rite does; and that the artists have chosen the moment of affusion for their representation. This acute suggestion, however, scarcely offers a complete explanation of the facts. For unless affusion was the characteristic and determining element in baptism, it will be difficult to account for the almost unvarying choice of this moment in the rite for representation. It is needful to bear in mind the unsophisticated and unconscious nature of monumental testimony; the artist, seeking to convey the idea of baptism

¹ In Smith and Cheetham, *Dict. of Christ. Archæology*, as cited.

to the observers of his picture, would choose for representation, out of mere necessity, a moment in the rite which would at once suggest "Baptism" to the beholders of his work. Mr. Marriott's view does not seem, then, to remove the conflict between the literary and monumental evidence; the literary evidence represents immersion, and the monumental evidence affusion, as the characteristic feature of the rite. M. Roller has still another useful suggestion: he distinguishes localities, remarking that in the Orient and Africa, baptism may have been by "a triple immersion and a triple emersion, accompanied by a triple confession of faith in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost," while in Rome Christians may have been for a time satisfied with "an immersion less complete." Our attention is thus at least called to the important fact that our early monumental evidence is local,—confined to Rome and Roman dependencies. But again the explanation is inadequate for the whole problem: the conflict exists in Rome itself. It is not only the second and third century pictures, but also the representations from the fifth and sixth and seventh centuries and beyond, in which stress is laid on the moment of affusion. When Jerome and Leo and Pelagius and Gregory were speaking of trine immersion as of order in Rome, the artists were still laying stress on affusion.

The only theory known to us which seems to do full justice to both classes of facts—those gathered from the literature and monuments alike—is that which De Rossi has revived¹ and given the support of his great name. This supposes that normal baptism was performed in the early church by a mode which united immersion and affusion in a single rite—not, as in the Armenian rite, making them sep-

¹ Kraus refers us, as to the older existence of this theory, to Ciampini, *Vet. Mon.* ii. 19 *seq.*, and remarks that it is now almost generally accepted, as e. g. by Corblet.

arate parts of a repeated ritual.¹ We shall arrive, indeed, at something like this conclusion if we will proceed simply by scrutinizing the two lines of evidence somewhat sharply. We will observe, for example, that though affusion is emphasized by the monuments, it is not necessarily a simple affusion. The candidate stands in water, which reaches to his ankles or even to his knees in the earlier pictures, and in later ones to his waist or above. Hence Dr. Schaff says, "Pouring on the head while the candidate stands on dry ground receives no aid from the catacombs."² This is a rather extreme statement. The fresco in the catacomb of *Praetextatus*, if it be thought to represent baptism, would be a very early example to the contrary;³ and symbolical representations on somewhat later monuments,—as for instance that on the sarcophagus of *Bassus*,—do not indicate water below. But if it be read only as a general remark, it is worthy of remark. The points of importance to be gleaned from the monuments are that the candidate was baptized standing, ordinarily at least standing in water, and the affusion was a supplement to the water below. And if we so read the monuments we shall find ourselves in no necessary disaccord with the literary notices. The idea in any case would be an entire bath. The candidate standing in the water, this could be accomplished either by sinking the head beneath the water or by raising the water over the head. The monuments simply bear their witness to the prevalence of the latter mode of completing the ordinance. And when we once perceive this, we perceive also that the pictured monuments do not stand alone in this testimony. The extant fonts also suggest this form of the rite. And

¹ In the *Römische Quartalschrift* for 1888, H 1, De Rossi still insists that the performance of the rite by pouring was by no means exceptional in the early church; he says that the catacombs agree with the oldest form in this matter, as given in the *Didache*.

² *The Oldest Church Order*, p. 41, note.

³ Cf. Roller; Garrucci; Bennett (p. 400); Smyth (p. 535, note).

the literary notices themselves are filled with indications that the mode of baptism thus suggested was the common mode throughout the Christian world. This is implied, indeed, in the significance attached to the baptism of the head.¹ "When we dip our heads in water as in a grave," says Chrysostom, "our old man is buried; and when we rise up again, the new man rises therewith."² The ritual given in the "Catechesis" of Cyril of Jerusalem (347)³ contains the same implication; we are told that the candidates, after having confessed their faith, "thrice *dipped themselves* in the water, and thrice lifted themselves from out thereof." The same may be said of the West Gothic rite for blessing the font: "God who didst sanctify the fount of Jordan for the salvation of souls, let the angel of thy blessing descend upon these waters, that thy servants being wet (*perfusi*) therewith,"⁴ etc.; and in general of the occasional use of *perfusus* as a designation of the catechumen.⁵ Perhaps, however, the exact nature of the literary evidence and the precision with which it falls in with this conception of the mode of ancient baptism, may be best exhibited by the adduction of a single passage, extended enough to convey the writer's point of view. We select somewhat at random the following account of baptism by Gregory of Nyssa:—⁶

"But the descent into the water and the trine immersion of the person in it, involves another mystery. . . . Everything that is affected by death has its proper and natural place, and that is the earth in which it is laid and hidden. Now earth and water have much natural affinity. . . . Seeing, then, that the death of the Author of life subjected him to burial in earth, . . . the imitation that we enact of that death is expressed in the neighboring element. And as he, that man from above, having taken deadness on himself, after his being deposited in the earth, returned

¹ Cf. Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual*, pp. 33, 41.

² Hom. 25 on John iii. 5, as quoted by Bingham.

³ Smith and Cheetham, i. 157.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁶ *Oratio Catechetica*, or, *The Great Catechism*, ch. xxxv. (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2d series, vol. v. p. 502 *seq.*).

back to life the third day, so every one that is knitted to him by virtue of his bodily form, looking forward to the same successful issue, I mean the arriving at life by having, instead of earth, *water poured on him* (ἐπιχεόμενος), and so submitting to that element, has represented for him in the three movements, the three days' delayed grace of the resurrection. . . . But since, as has been said, we only so far imitate the transcendent Power as the poverty of our nature is capable of, by having *the water thrice poured on us* (τὸ ὕδωρ τρις ἐπιχεόμενοι), and ascending again up from the water, we enact the saving burial and resurrection, which took place on the third day, with this thought in our mind, that as we have power over the water, both to be in it and to arise out of it, so he too who has the universe at his sovereign disposal, immersed himself in death, as we in the water, to return to his own blessedness."

Does it not look as if baptism was to Gregory very much what it is depicted on the monuments,—an immersion completed by pouring?

We may, then, probably, assume that normal patristic baptism was by a trine immersion upon a standing catechumen, and that this immersion was completed either by lowering the candidate's head beneath the water, or (possibly more commonly) by raising the water over his head and pouring it upon it. Additional support for this assumption may be drawn from another characteristic of the patristic allusions to baptism. It is perfectly clear that baptism was looked upon by the fathers,—however much other symbolisms attached themselves to it,—primarily as a bath. It is not necessary to multiply passages in support of so obvious a proposition.¹ One of the favorite designations of baptism was "the bath," and the Greeks delighted in the paronomasia which brought together the two words *λουτρόν* and *λύτρον*. It will suffice here to cite a few passages from Tertullian, merely by way of examples of what could be copiously adduced from the whole series of the fathers: "Since we are defiled by sin," he says,² "as it were by dirt, we should be washed from those stains by water." "We enter then the laver *once*,—*once* our sins are washed away, because they ought never to be repeated. But the Jewish Israel

¹ Cf. Augusti, as above, p. 314. ² De Bapt. 4.

bathes daily, because he is daily being defiled; and for fear that defilement should be practiced among *us* also, therefore was the definition concerning the one bathing made. Happy water, which *once* washes away; which does not mock sinners; which does not, being infected with the repetition of impurities, again defile them whom it has washed.”¹ Our hands “are clean enough, which together with our whole body we once washed in Christ. Albeit Israel washed daily all his limbs over, yet he is never clean.”² In the divers “washings” of the heathen, he tells us, they “cheat themselves with widowed waters,” that is, with mere water, without the accompanying power of the Holy Ghost.³ “Moreover,” he continues, “by carrying water around and sprinkling it, they everywhere expiate country seats, houses, temples, and whole cities; at all events at the Apollinarian and Eleusinian games they are baptized; and they presume that the effect of their doing that is their regeneration and the remission of the penalties due to their perjuries. Among the ancients again, whoever had defiled himself with murder, was wont to go in quest of purifying waters. Therefore, if the mere nature of water, in that it is the appropriate material for washing away, leads men to flatter themselves with a belief in omens of purification, how much more truly will waters render that service, through the authority of God, by whom all their nature has been constituted?” For Tertullian, thus, the analogues of baptism were to be found in the Jewish lustrations and the heathen rites of cleansing; and so fundamental is this conception of baptism to him, that it takes precedence of every other; though these rites were performed by sprinkling they yet remain rites of the same class with baptism.

This primary conception of baptism as a cleansing bath, seems to find an odd illustration in the form of the early Christian baptisteries. When separate edifices were erected

¹ De Bapt. 15. ² De Orat. 13-14. ³ De Bapt. 5.

for baptism their models appear to have been drawn from the classic baths. "When the first baptisteries were built," writes Mr. G. Baldwin Brown,¹ "we have no means of knowing; but both their name and form seem borrowed from Pagan sources. They remind us at once of the bathing departments of the Thermæ, and the fact that Pliny, in speaking of the latter, twice uses the word *baptisteria*, seems to point to this derivation." If this is true, the Baptistery is emphatically the Christian "Bath-house." Lindsay² adds some congruous details as to the font itself. "The Font," he writes, "is placed in the center of the building, directly beneath the cupola; in the earliest examples, as in the baptistery adjoining the Lateran, it consists of a shallow octagonal basin, descended into by three steps, precisely similar to the pagan bath,—in later instances it has more resemblance to an elevated reservoir.³ . . . The figure of the octagon was peculiarly insisted on; even when the baptistery itself is round, the cupola is generally octagonal, and the font is almost always so. This may have been in the first instance mere imitation of the pagan baths, in which the octagon constantly occurs." Having obtained their models of the baptistery from the surrounding heathendom, it may possibly be that the early Christians the more readily leaned toward completing their symbolical bath by pouring, that that was one of the common modes of bathing among the ancients, as appears for example in Ovid's description of Diana's bath, "when her attendants '*urnis capacibus undam effundunt.*'"⁴ But we are bound to remember

¹ From Schola to Cathedral, p. 146.

² History of Christian Art, p. 220. Cf. Lundy, Monumental Christianity, p. 385: "In these baptismal frescoes the matter is obviously represented as that of a bath. . . . It was a real washing, a thorough cleansing."

³ The note adds that it sometimes receives the shape of a sarcophagus in allusion to the "death unto sin" (Col. ii. 12).

⁴ Marriott.

in this connection that the early representations of baptism do not seem to borrow at all from heathen representations of their purificatory rites,¹ but exhibit, as Strzygowski points out, entire independence in treating their subject, although borrowing, of course, the forms of the antique.

The crowning indication, however, that we have found the true form of early Christian baptism in a rite performed on an erect recipient, standing in water, and completed indifferently by sinking the head beneath the water or raising the water above the head, is supplied by the fact that, on assuming this as the early practice, we may naturally account for the various developments of later practice. In such a rite as this, both later immersion and affusion can find a natural starting-point; while the assumption of either a pure immersion or a pure affusion as a starting-point will render it exceedingly difficult to account for the rise and wide extension of the other mode. To point to the growing influence of the symbolism of death and resurrection with Christ attached to baptism, as making for a rite by immersion, or to the lax extension of clinic aspersion as making for a rite by affusion,² will no doubt help us to understand the development of either practice; but only on the assumption of a starting-point for the assumed developments such as the mode now under consideration supplies. Nor need we confine ourselves to the broad developments of the rite. The assumption of the mode suggested will account also for numerous minor elements in the later rites. It will account, for example, for the insistence still made throughout the

¹ As to these rites see Hermann, *Lehrbuch der gottesdienstlichen Alterthümer der Griechen*; 2d ed. (Heidel.: 1858), p. 124, and for the few representations that have come down to us of their lustrations see *Mon. dell' Instituto*, 1862, Tav. lxiv. I owe these references to Strzygowski, p. 2.

² That the rise of aspersion cannot be connected with the practice of infant baptism all history shows. See this briefly indicated by Augusti, as above, p. 398.

East upon holding even the infant erect in the act of baptism. Indeed, on assuming this to have been early Christian baptism over a wide extent of territory, numerous peculiarities of Oriental services at once exhibit themselves as survivals of earlier practice. In this category belong, for instance, the Nestorian usage of thrice dipping the head of an already partially submerged candidate; the various mixtures of the two rites among the Copts and Armenians; the preservation of a partial immersion and trine affusion among the Syrians, and the like. When we add to the explanation of the apparent conflict between the early literary and monumental evidence which the assumption of this mode of baptism offers, the further explanation which it supplies of later developments in the rite, it would seem that we had discovered in it the actual form in which early Christians were accustomed to celebrate the initiatory rite of their religion.

Whether this early mode of baptism—underlying, as it would seem, all the notices and practices which have come down to us—represents truly the original mode of baptism as handed down to the church by the Apostles, requires further consideration. Our earliest literary and monumental evidence alike comes from the second century. The frescoes in the catacombs of Praetextatus and Callistus date from the end of the second century or the opening of the third,—the age of Tertullian, who is probably the earliest Latin writer to whom we can appeal as a witness to the prevalent mode of baptism. In the East the evidence runs back a little further. The account of baptism given by Justin Martyr indeed scarcely conveys clear information as to the mode of its administration. The candidates, he tells us,¹ “are conducted to a place where there is water, and they are regenerated (*ἀναγεννώνται*) after the same manner of regeneration as that in which we ourselves were regenerated. For they

¹ Apol. i. c. 79.

then make their ablution (*τὸ λουτρὸν ποιοῦνται*) in the water, in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost." This defect is now supplied by "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," which, however, may in this part be little if any older than Justin. Its directions for baptism¹ run thus:—"Now concerning baptism, baptize thus: Having first taught all these things, baptize ye into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in living water. And if thou hast not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou hast not cold, then in warm. But if thou has neither, pour water thrice upon the head in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is certain, therefore, that by the middle of the second century some such mode of baptism as we have suggested—a form of immersion though not without allowance of a simple affusion in case of need—was practiced in the church. We may even be bold enough to say that at this date some such mode was probably the practice of the church. This evidence, of course, has a retrospective value. What was the practice of the church a decade or so before the middle of the second century was probably the usage also of a somewhat earlier day. But we must be chary of pursuing such a presumption too far. Christian institutions in the middle of the second century, and much more at its end, were not the unaltered institutions of the apostolic age. The Bishop, for example, was already a different officer from what he was in the days when the New Testament was writing; and the Epistle of Clement of Rome witnesses to quite another church system from that which was in operation in the days of Irenæus. The "Teaching" itself, in other items of church order, brings before us a later stage of Christian life and practice than the first. The second century, in a word, marks a considerable

¹ Chapter vii.

advance on the first in the development of church usages; and it is necessary to exercise great caution in assuming what we find to be the practice of this century to be also apostolic, merely because it represents the earliest usage which we can trace.

In these circumstances we shall welcome any further line of investigation which promises to throw light on our problem, and turn therefore with some interest to inquire after the relation of Christian baptism to what is known as Proselyte-Baptism or the Rabbinical custom of initiating proselytes into the Jewish faith by a formal and complete ablution. In this, many scholars find the original of Christian baptism, thus tracing the genealogy of the latter through the baptism of John to a well-understood and commonly practiced Jewish ritual. It is argued that there is no evidence from the New Testament notices that Christ was instituting a rite that was new in the sense that its form or mode was a novelty; or that when John called on the people to come to his baptism, he needed to stop and explain to them what this "baptism" was and how they were to do it. On the contrary it appears that Christ and John expected to be thoroughly understood from the beginning, and only implanted a new significance in an old rite, now adapted to a new use. But what could have been the older rite on which baptism was based, it is asked, except the proselyte-baptism which we find in the next age the established practice of the Jews? If, however, Johannic and Christian baptism were thus adopted, so far as the form of the rite is concerned, from proselyte-baptism, a means is opened to us for discovering how baptism was administered in the first age of the church which no one can venture to neglect. If we can determine the mode of baptism in proselyte-baptism, we raise a strong presumption that it was in this mode also that our Lord and his apostles baptized. The path thus

pointed out is certainly sufficiently hopeful to justify our exploring it.¹

It is scarcely possible to overstate the importance which the rabbis attached to baptism, in the reception of proselytes. It was held to be absolutely necessary to the making of a proselyte; and though Rabbi Eliezer maintained that circumcision without baptism sufficed, Rabbi Joshua on the other hand contended that baptism without circumcision was enough, while the scribes decided that both rites were necessary. One might indeed become in some sort a proselyte without baptism; but though he were circumcised, he remained נִי until he was baptized, and children begotten in the interval would still be מְזוּרִים, *spurii*. If he would become a "proselyte of righteousness," "a child of the covenant," a "perfect Israelite," he must be both circumcised and baptized. The regulations required that those purposing thus becoming Jews should first be fully instructed in what it was to be a Jew and what the step they were contemplating meant for them. When the time came for their admission into the number of the covenant people, three things entered into the initiatory rite: *circumcision*, מִילָה, *baptism*, טְבִילָה, and *sacrifice*, קֶרְבָּן. Baptism was delayed after circumcision until the wound was healed, and meanwhile the instruction continued. When the day for it arrived, the proselyte, in the presence of the three teachers who had also witnessed his circumcision and who now served as witnesses

¹ Cf. an interesting discussion in Sabatier's *La Didaché*, p. 84 *seq.* The direct literature on the subject is copious and easily traced. There is an excellent guide to it, for example, in Schürer's *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, § 31, note 302 (E. T. Div. ii. vol. ii. p. 321). Schürer says that no one "has influenced modern opinion on the subject so much as Schneckenburger." This may be accounted a very happy circumstance, as Schneckenburger's book was a very solid piece of work; and we have not been able to discover that anything has been said since which will materially modify his conclusions. His conclusions are briefly summed up in pp. 183-186 of his book (*Ueber das Alter d. Jüdischen Proselyten-Taufe*, u. s. w. Berlin: 1828).

of the baptism under the name of "fathers of the baptized," corresponding to the nature of the baptism as a "new birth," cut his hair and nails, undressed completely, and entered the water until his arms were covered. The commandments were now read to him, and, solemnly engaging to obey them, he perfected the baptism by completely immersing himself. The completeness of the immersion was of such importance that "a ring on the finger, a band confining the hair, or anything that in the least degree broke the continuity of contact with the water, was held to invalidate the act."¹ There remained now only the offering of the sacrifice, and when thus "blood was spilt" for him, the proselyte had ceased to be in any sense a heathen. In his baptism, he had been "born anew," and he came forth from the water "a new man," "a little child just born," "a child of one day." So entirely had his old self ceased, that it was held that all his old relations had passed away, the natural laws of inheritance had failed, and even those of kinship, so that it was even declared that, except for bringing proselytism into contempt among the un-understanding, a proselyte might marry without fault even his own natural mother or sister.²

We cannot fail to see at a glance close similarities between this rite as described in the Gemara and the rite of Christian baptism as contemporaneously administered. There is in both the instruction of the candidate both before and while in the font, the godfathers, the immersion, completed in some cases at least by self-baptism,³ and the effect of baptism as issuing in a new creature. It is very difficult to believe that neither rite owed anything to the other. But the discovery of connection between the two rites is no immediate proof that one owes its existence to the other. It

¹ Taylor, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, pp. 51, 52.

² Edersheim, *Life of Christ*, ii. 743.

³ Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, as quoted above, p. 628.

might be *a priori* possible, indeed, that the Jewish rite was borrowed from the Christian or that the Christian was based upon the Jewish. And we may judge the similarity too close to admit the likelihood of their being of wholly independent origin,—despite the obviousness of a cleansing washing as a rite of initiation and its widespread, independent use as such among pagan religions. Yet the intermediate alternative remains that both rites may have had their roots independently fixed in a common origin, while their detailed similarities were the result of a gradual and only semi-conscious assimilation taking place between similar contemporary rites through a long period, during which each borrowed something from the other.

We will probably agree at once that it is very unlikely that the Jews directly borrowed their proselyte-baptism from the Christians, or even from John the Baptist, as has been maintained,—the latter by Börner and others, and the former by De Wette and others. So immediate a borrowing of so solemn a rite is incredible, when we bear in mind the sharp antagonism which the Jews cherished towards the Christians during this period.¹ Whether, on the other hand, the Jewish rite may not have lain at the basis of the Christian rite requires more consideration. Our decision in the matter will probably depend on an answer to the stubbornly mooted question whether the Jewish ceremony of proselyte-baptism existed when Christian baptism was instituted. The evidence which we have drawn upon for the description of it comes from the rabbinical literature, beginning with the Gemara. Whether this evidence, however, is valid for a period before the destruction of the Temple admits of very serious question. Professor Schürer has recently argued very strenuously for the existence of the Jewish rite in the time of Christ.² On comparison of the actual evidence ad-

¹ Cf. Delitzsch, in Herzog's Encyk. xii. 299.

² Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes in Zeitalter Christi, ii. 571 *seq.*

duced by him, however, with that dealt with, say, by Winer in his "Realwörterbuch"—where the opposite conclusion is reached—it does not appear that it has been substantially increased in the interval. The stress of Schürer's argument is laid not on these items of direct testimony,—which all come to us from the second century and later,—but on general considerations derived from the nature of the case. We require only a slight knowledge of Pharisaic Judaism in the time of Christ, reasons Schürer, to realize how often even a native Jew was compelled by the law to submit to ceremonial washings. Tertullian justly says, "A Jew washes daily, because he is daily defiled." A heathen was, thus, self-evidently unclean and could not possibly have been admitted into the congregation without having subjected himself to a Levitical "washing of baptism." Whatever special testimonies exist to the fact of such a requirement, they are scarcely necessary to support so conclusive a general consideration; against which, moreover, the silence of Philo and Josephus cannot avail, nor the somewhat unintelligible distinction which it is sought to erect between Levitical washings and proselyte-baptism technically so called. Winer on the other hand lays stress on the lateness of the direct testimony to the existence of proselyte-baptism and the silence of Josephus, Philo, and the oldest Targumists, while nevertheless allowing that the proselyte was, of course, compelled to submit himself to a lustration. He only denies that this lustration had already in the time of Christ become fixed, in the case of the proselyte, as no longer an ordinary lustration for the sake of ceremonial cleansing, but a special, initiatory rite, with its time, circumstances, and ritual already developed into what is subsequently known as proselyte-baptism. He thus fully answers in advance Schürer's question of wherein proselyte-baptism differs from ordinary cleansing lustration. In essence and origin, doubtless, in nothing; but very widely when considered as a ritual cere-

mony with its fixed laws, constituting a part, and in the minds of many the chief part, of the initiation into Judaism.

In these few words we have already hinted what seems to us the reasonable view to take of the matter. The facts seem to be that direct testimony to the existence of proselyte-baptism fails us in the midst of the second century after Christ, but that nevertheless something of the nature of a cleansing bath must be presupposed from the very beginning as a part of the reception of the proselyte. Delitzsch calls attention to a point which appears to be of importance for understanding the origin of the rite, when he adverts to the connection of this bath with the sacrifice, so that its prescription must date from a time previous to the cessation of the sacrifices. "Its origin also in itself," he remarks,¹ "presupposes the existence of the Temple, and the cleansings required by its sacrificial services, which were performed by plunge-baths; post-biblical legal language uses the word טביל (cf. 2 Kings v. 14, LXX. ἐβαπτίσαστο) for these cleansings, while the Pentateuchal Priest-code uses for them the older and vaguer term רחצ כשרן כבים (e.g. Lev. xv. 5, 6, etc.). Beyond doubt cleansing by means of a plunge-bath was already from a very early time demanded of the heathen, after he had been circumcised, as a precondition of his participation in the sacrificial services. We see this from the Jerusalem Targum on Ex. xii. 44, according to which the purchased heathen slave, in order to take part in the passover, must not only be circumcised but also receive a plunge-bath. This is also presupposed in the Mishna (Pesachim viii.) as an existing institution, and it is only debated whether the heathen belongs to the class of the simply unclean, who through the plunge-bath became clean by the evening of the same day, or to the class of the unclean-from-a-dead-body whose uncleanness lasted seven days (cf. Lev. xv. 5, 13)." These fruitful remarks seem to us to uncover the origin of prose-

¹ Herzog's Real-Encyk. xii. pp. 298-299.

lyte-baptism in a twofold sense. They point us back to the time when it originated; ¹ but in doing so they point us also back to the thing out of which it originated. Witness to it as an important element in the rite of initiation fails, as we ascend the stream of time, in the midst of the second century: nevertheless, it presupposes the sacrifice, a preparation for which it essentially is; and therefore it must have existed in this form and meaning before the destruction of the Temple. It was on the other hand, however, only after the cessation of the sacrifices that it could become an independent element of the rite of initiation: for this, it must have first lost its reference to sacrifice and have acquired a new meaning as a symbolical "new birth." In other words, in the rite of proselyte-baptism, properly so called, we see the result of a development—a development which requires the assumption of its existence before the Temple services ceased in order that we may understand its origin, but which equally requires the assumption that the Temple services had long ceased, in order that we may understand its existing nature as witnessed to in the rabbinical writings. It could not have come into being except as the prerequisite to sacrifice; it could not have grown into its full form until its original relation to sacrifice had been partially obscured in the course of time.² Although we must discern its roots set in a time before the destruction of the Temple, therefore, we cannot carry the full-grown plant back into that period. It was apparently a growth of the second century after Christ; what existed in the first century, and in the time of Christ and John, was not this elaborate and inde-

¹ Both Delitzsch and Plumtre (in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, p. 2607) suppose that proselyte-baptism existed in the time of Christ in a more developed form than I can admit; but they both accord, in general, with the view presented in the text.

² The proselytes were still required to promise to sacrifice when the Temple was restored,—a survival of the third element in the rite of initiation.

pendent initiatory rite, but a simple lustration not distinguishable and not distinguished from other lustrations.

If, then, we are to seek a point of departure for the rite of Christian baptism in Jewish custom, we cannot find it in the developed rite of proselyte-baptism. Proselyte-baptism and Christian baptism appear rather as parallel growths from a common root. At the base of both alike lie the cleansing lustrations of the Jewish law. It was these, knowledge of which the Baptist counted upon when he came proclaiming his "baptism." This is indeed evident, independently of what has been urged here.¹ "The baptism of John and proselyte-baptism," says Delitzsch with great justice, "stand only in indirect relation to one another, in so far as one and the same idea underlies both kinds of baptism as well as the legal lustrations in general,—the idea of the passage from a condition of moral uncleanness to a condition of purity from sin and guilt. . . . There is no reason to assume that the baptism of John or Christian baptism originated in proselyte-baptism, or even that it derived only its form from it. It was, moreover, unlike the economy of God, to build upon a Pharisaic usage and not rather upon an ancient symbol, already sanctified by the giving of the Law on Sinai. John himself assigns the choice of this symbolical rite to divine appointment (John i. 33). Johannic and Christian baptism have, however, in conformity with the nature of the New Covenant as a fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (Matt. v. 17), over and above their connection with the Law and the Levitical lustrations in general as prescribed in it, also another point of connection in prophecy, in the prediction of a future purification and sanctification through water and the Spirit (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, xxvii. 23, *seq.*; Isa. xlv. 3; Zech. xiii. 1)." ² This cuts to the root of the matter. Christian baptism was not such a new thing that it could not be understood by the disciples to whom it was

¹ Cf. e.g. Meyer and Alexander on Matt. iii. 5. ² *Loc. cit.*

committed. It had its very close connection with precedent and well-known rites. But its connection was not specifically with proselyte-baptism as subsequently developed into a formal rite of initiation into Judaism; but with the cleansing lustrations from which that in common with this sprung, and with the prophetic predictions of Messianic cleansing.

The bearing of this conclusion upon the hope that we might learn something of value as to the mode of primitive Christian baptism from the mode in which proselyte-baptism was administered, is obvious. If proselyte-baptism, as known to us with its established ritual, is of second-century growth, while the roots of Christian baptism are set, not in it, but in the divinely prescribed lustrations and prophetic announcements of the Old Testament, we are left without ground from this quarter for any stringent inferences as to the mode of the first administration of Christian baptism. The idea of the lustrations was bathing for the sake of cleansing; and the "many baptisms" of the Jews were performed in more modes of application of the water than one. The prophetic announcements in like manner run through all possible modes of applying the water. In any mode of application, it was complete cleansing which was symbolized. Beyond that, it would seem, we cannot proceed on this pathway.

Our archæological inquiry as to the mode of Christian baptism leaves us hanging, then, in the middle of the second century. What Christian baptism was like at that point of time we can form a tolerably clear notion of. It was a cleansing bath, usually performed by a form of trine immersion. Exceptions were freely allowed whenever dictated by scarcity of water or illness on the part of the recipient. And the usual mode of administration, certainly at Rome and probably also elsewhere, appears to have been by pouring water on the head of a candidate standing in a greater or less depth of water. A fair presumption may hold that this

rite, common in the middle of the second century, represents more or less fully the primitive rite. But we dare not press this presumption very far. Take, for example, the two points of trine baptism and immersion. Are not both in the line of a natural development? Would there not be reason enough for the rise of a threefold ritual in the Christian church in the fact that they baptized in the Triune name and that the Jews baptized by a single immersion; just as the Catholics in Spain found ground at a later period for baptizing by a single immersion in the fact that the Arians baptized by a trine immersion? Would there not be reason enough for a gradual growth of the rite to a full immersion in the fact that that form of baptism would seem more completely to symbolize total cleansing, was consonant with the conception framed of the river baptism of John, of which our Lord himself partook, and seemed vividly to represent also that death and resurrection with Christ suggested in certain passages of the New Testament? All the materials certainly existed for the development of such a form of baptism as meets us in the second century, from any beginning which would give the slightest starting-point for such a development. Such being the case, we appear to be forbidden to assume that second-century baptism any more certainly reproduces for us primitive Christian baptism, than the second-century eucharist reproduces for us the primitive Lord's Supper or the second-century church organization the primitive bishop-presbyter. Where, then, it may be asked, are we to go for knowledge of really primitive baptism? If the archæology of the rite supplies ground for no very safe inference, where can we obtain satisfactory guidance? Apparently only from the New Testament itself. We are seemingly shut up to the hints and implications of the sacred pages for trustworthy information here. But the conclusion to which these hints and implications would conduct us, it is not the purpose of this article even to suggest.