

# LECTURE LXIV.

## BAPTISM.—Continued.

### SYLLABUS.

7. What would most probably be the mode of baptism adopted for a universal religion?  
Ridgley. Qu. 166.
8. What mode is most appropriate to the symbolical meaning of baptism?  
Consult Is. lii: 15; compare Matt. iii: 11; Acts i: 5; ii: 2, 4; ii: 15-18; ii: 33; x: 44-48; xi: 16, 17. Alexander on Isaiah. Armstrong on Bap., pt. i, ch. 7. Review of Theodosia Ernest.
9. What mode appears most probable from the analogy of the figurative and spiritual baptisms of Matt. xx: 20-23; Mark x: 38, 39; Luke xii: 50; 1 Cor. x: 2; 1 Pet. iii: 21; 1 Cor. xii: 13; Gal. iii: 27; Eph. iv: 5; Rom. vi: 3; Col. ii: 12.  
See Armstrong on Bap. pt. i, chs. 6, 8. Commentaries on Scriptures cited.
10. Argue the mode from Jno. 3: 25, 26.  
Armstrong on Bap. pt. i, ch. 2. 9.
11. Discuss the probable mode observed in John's baptisms in Jordan and at Ænon, the Eunuch's, Paul's, the three thousand's at Pentecost, Cornelius, the Philippian jailor's.  
Armstrong, pt. ii, chs. 3, 4. Dr. Leonard Woods on Baptism. Taylor's Apostolic Baptism. Robinson's Researches in Palestine. Commentaries. Review of Theodosia Ernest.
12. What would be the ecclesiastical results of the Immersionist dogma?  
Review of Theodosia Ernest.
13. What was the customary mode of baptism in the early Church, subsequent to the apostles?  
Bingham's "Origines Sacrae," Art. "Bapt." Taylor's Apostolic Baptism. Church Histories. Review of Theodosia Ernest. See on whole, Rice and Campbell's Debate. Fairchild on Baptism. Beecher on Baptism.

**A** CONSIDERATION of some probable weight may be drawn from the fact that Christianity is intended to be a universal religion. Remember that it is characterized by fewness and simplicity of rites, that it is rather spiritual than ritual, that its purpose was to make those rites the reverse of burdensome, and that the elements of the other sacraments were chosen from articles common, cheap, and near at hand. Now, in many extensive countries, water is too scarce to make it convenient to accumulate enough for an immersion; in other regions all waters are frozen over during half the year. In many cases infirmity of body renders immersion highly inconvenient and even dangerous. It seems not very probable that, under these circumstances, a dispensation so little formalistic as the Christian, would have made immersion essential to the validity of baptism, for a universal Church, amidst all climes and habits.

- But we derive an argument of far more importance, from the obviously correct analogy between the act of affusion and the graces signified and sealed in baptism. It is this which Immer-
7. Dipping Impracticable Sometimes.
  8. Grace Symbolized is Always Shed Forth.

sionists seek to evade when they endeavor, contrary to Scripture, to make baptism signify and commemorate primarily Christ's burial and resurrection. (Hence the importance of refuting that dream). The student will remember, that the selection of the element is founded, not upon the resemblance of its nature (for of this there can be none, between the material and spiritual), but on the analogy of its use to the graces symbolized. Water is the detergent element of nature. The great meaning of baptism is our cleansing from guilt by expiation (blood), and our cleansing from the depravity of heart, by the Holy Ghost. Now, in all Bible language, without a single exception, expiation is symbolized as sprinkled, or affused, or put on; and the renewing Spirit, as descending, or poured, or falling. See all the Jewish usages, and the whole tenour of the promises. Levit. xiv : 7, 51 ; xvi : 14 ; Numb. viii : 7 ; xix : 18 ; Heb. ix : 19-22, especially last verse ; ix : 14 ; x : 22 ; Levit vii : 14 ; Exod. xxix : 16, 21, &c. ; Ps. xlv : 2 ; Is. xlv : 3 ; Ps. lxxii : 6 ; Is. xxxii : 15 ; Joel ii : 28, 29, quoted in Acts ii.

Nor is the force of this analogy a mere surmise of ours.

Isaiah, and other Old Testament Instances.

See Is. lii : 15, where it is declared that the Redeemer, by His mediatorial, and especially His suffering work, "shall sprinkle many nations." The immediate reference here doubtless is not to water baptism, but to that which it signifies. But when God chooses in His own Word to call those baptismal graces a sprinkling, surely it gives no little authority to the belief that water baptism is by sprinkling ! Immersionists feel this so acutely that they have even availed themselves of the infidel glosses of the German Rationalists, who to get rid of the Messianic features of this glorious prophecy, render  $\text{וַיִּשְׁפְּרוּ}$ —"to cause to start up," "to startle." The only plea they bring for this unscrupulous departure from established usage of the word is, that in all the other places this verb has as its regimen the element sprinkled, and not the object. This objection Dr. J. A. Alexander pronounces frivolous, and denies any Hebrew or Arabic support to the substituted translation. Again: In Ezek. xxxvi : 25, are promises which, although addressed primarily to the Jews of the Captivity, are evidently evangelical ; and there the sprinkling of clean water symbolizes the gospel blessings of regeneration, remission, and spiritual indwelling. The language is so strikingly favourable to us, that it seems hardly an overstraining of it to suppose it a prediction of the very sacrament of baptism. But this we do not claim.

Our argument is greatly strengthened when we proceed to the New Testament. Collate Matt. iii : 11 ; Acts i : 5 ; ii : 2-4 ; ii : 15-18 ; ii : 33 ; x : 44, 45, 48 ; xi : 16, 17. Here our argument

New Testament Examples of Grace by Affusion.

is two-fold. First: that both John and Christ baptize with water, not in water. This language is wholly appropriate to the application of water to the person, wholly inappropriate to the application of the person to the water. No Immersionist would speak of dipping with water. They do indeed reclaim that the preposition is ἐν here translated "with," and should in all fidelity be rendered "in," according to its admitted use in the large majority of New Testament cases. This we utterly deny; first, because in the mouth of a Hebraistic Greek, ἐν being the established equivalent and translation of כִּי may naturally and frequently mean "with;" but second and chiefly because the parallel locutions of Luke iii : 16 ; Acts i : 5 ; xi : 16 ; Eph. v : 26 ; Heb. x : 22, identify the ἐν ὕδατι, &c., with the instrument. And from the same passages we argue farther, that the mode of the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire, is fixed most indisputably by the description of the event in Acts ii : 2 and 4. The long promised baptism occurred. And what was it? It was the sitting of tongues of fire on each Apostle, and the "descent," the fall, the "pouring out," the "shedding forth," of the spiritual influences. To make the case still stronger, if possible, when the spiritual affusion on Cornelius and his house occurred, which made Peter feel that he was justified in authorizing their water-baptism, he informs his disapproving brethren in Jerusalem (Acts xi : 15, 16) that the "falling of the Holy Ghost on them as on us at the beginning," caused him "to remember" the great promise of a baptism, not with water only, but with the Holy Ghost and with fire. If baptism is never an affusion, how could such a suggestion ever arise?

This reasoning is so cogent, that Immersionists feel the necessity of an evasion. Their Coryphæus, Evasions Answered. Carson, suggests two. No element, nor mode of applying an element, he says, can properly symbolize the essence of the Holy Ghost. It is immense, immaterial, unique. All men are at all times immersed in it. To suppose any analogy between water affused, and this infinite, spiritual essence, is gross materialism. Very true; yet here is some sort and sense in which a baptism with the Holy Ghost occurred; and if it is gross anthropo-morphism to liken His ubiquitous essence to water affused, it is equally so to liken it to water for plunging. If there is no sense in which the analogy between the baptismal element and the influences of the Holy Ghost can be asserted, then it is God's Word which is in fault; for He has called the outpouring of those influences a baptism. The truth is, that here, just as when God is said to come, to go, to lift up His hand, it is not the divine essence which changes its place, but its sensible influences.

The other evasion is, to say that because this baptism is wholly figurative, and not a proper and literal baptism at all,

therefore it can contain no reference whatever to mode. We deny both premise and conclusion: the conclusion, because Immersionists infer mode, with great positiveness, from a merely figurative baptism, in Rom. vi : 4 ; and the premise, because the baptism of Pentecost was in the best sense real, the most real baptism that ever was in the world. It was, indeed, not material : but if its literal reality be denied, then the inspiration of the Apostles is denied, and the whole New Testament Dispensation falls.

Our argument, then, is summed up thus: Here was a spiritual transaction, which Christ was pleased to call His baptism, in the peculiar sense. In this baptism the outward element descended upon the persons of the recipients, and the influences of the Holy Ghost, symbolized thereby, are spoken of as falling. Water baptism, which is intended, like the fire, to symbolize the spiritual baptism, should therefore be also applied by affusion.

This Argument Summed Up.

While we deny that these memorable events formed only a figurative baptism, yet the word baptism is used in Scripture in a sense more properly figurative, and wholly non-sacramental. Immersionists profess to find in all these an allusion to dipping; but we shall show that in every case such allusion is uncertain, or impossible.

9. Argument from Figurative Baptisms.

The first instance is that of Christ's baptism in His sufferings at His death. Matt. xx : 20, 23 ; Mark x : 38, 39 ; Luke xii : 50. Although Luke refers to a different conversation, yet the allusion to His dying sufferings is undoubtedly the same. Now, it is common to say that these sufferings were called a baptism, because Christ was to be then covered with anguish as with an overwhelming flood. Even granting this, it must be remembered the Scriptures always speak of God's wrath as being poured out, and however copious the shower, an effusion from above bears a very questionable resemblance to an immersion of the person into a body of liquid beneath. Some (as Dr. Armstrong) find in this figure no reference to the mode of baptism, but suppose that the idea is one of consecration simply. Christ is supposed to call His dying sufferings a baptism, because by them He was inducted into His kingly office. But this is not wholly satisfactory. The true explanation is obviously that of the Greek fathers. As is well known to students of sacred history, the martyr's sufferings were considered his baptism. And so literal was the notion expressed by this, that the Fathers gravely argue that by martyrdom the unbaptized catechumen, who witnesses a good confession, becomes a baptized Christian, and has no reason whatever to regret his lack of water baptism, supposed by them to be, in other cases,

Christ's Baptism in Sorrow.

essential. To the question why martyrdom is called by them a baptism, they answer with one voice, because Christ was pleased to call His own martyrdom a baptism, and to apply the same to the pious sufferings of James and John. And they say farther, quoting the same texts, that the reason Christ calls His dying sufferings a baptism is, because they cleansed away sin, as the water of baptism symbolically does. Here, then, is no reference to mode of water baptism, and these Greek fathers, if they in any case press the figure to a signification of mode, speak of Christ's body as baptized, or stained with His own blood, a baptism by affusion. And the baptism of martyrdom is explained as a baptism of blood and fire.

1 Cor. x : 2 represents the Israelites as baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, in passing the Red sea. Immersionists foolishly attempt to strain a reference to immersion here, by saying that the Israelites were surrounded with water, having the sea as a wall on the either hand, and the cloud overhead. But unfortunately for this far-fetched idea, it is expressly said that Israel went over dry-shod. And the cloud was not over them, but behind them. Nor is there any proof that it was an aqueous cloud (it was fire by night and luminous); and the allegorizing Greek Fathers currently understand it as representing, not the water of baptism, but God's Holy Ghost. Nor have we any proof that even aqueous vapor can be substituted for the sacramental element. There was an immersion in the case, but it was that of Pharaoh and his hosts. The lost were immersed, the saved were baptized unto Moses! The sense of the passage obviously is, that by this event Israel were dedicated, separated unto that religious service of which Moses was the teacher. The word baptize here carries no reference to mode, but has its proper sense of religious separation.

The same is its meaning in 1 Cor. xii : 13; Gal. iii : 27; Eph. iv : 5, and 1 Pet. iii : 21. When the Believer's Baptism Into Christ. Christ, or into His one body, and thus to have put on Christ, there can be no allusion to mode, because then it would be the preposterous idea of immersing into Christ, or into His mystical body, instead of into water. The exact idea expressed is that of a consecrating separation. Baptism is here conceived by the Apostle as our separation from the ruined mass of mankind and annexation to the Saviour in our mystical union. So in 1 Pet. iii : 21, baptism is called a figure like (*ἀντίτυπον*) to the salvation of Noah's family in the ark. This saving was from water, not by water, and it was effected in the ark. Here again there is no modal reference to immersion, for the parties saved were not dipped, and all who were dipped were lost. The baptism of Noah's family was therefore their separation from a sinful world, effected by

the waters of the flood. If baptism in its most naked, spiritual meaning, carries to Hebrews the idea of a religious separation, it is very evident what mode it would suggest, should they permit their minds to advert to mode. Their separations were by sprinklings. The remaining passage (Eph. iv : 5) could only have been supposed to teach the essential necessity of observing water baptism in only one mode, by a mind insensible to the elevation and sacredness of the passage. It is the glorious spiritual unity between Christians and their Divine Head, resulting from the separating consecration which baptism represents.

The identification of baptism with the purification of the Jews, in Jno. iii : 25, 26, throws some light upon its mode. The question about purifying, agitated between the Jews and some of the Baptist's disciples, (v. 25), is evidently the question which they propound to John himself (in v. 26), viz: What was the meaning of Christ's baptizing. The whole tenour of John's answer proves this, for it is all addressed to the explanation of this point: why Christ, baptized by him, and thus seemingly his disciple, should administer a baptism independent of him. Any other explanation leaves an absurd chasm between verses 25 and 26. Baptism, then, is *καθαρισμός*, a striking testimony to the correctness of our account of its signification, a matter which we found to bear, in so important a way, upon its mode. But farther: Let anyone consider the Septuagint use of this word, and he cannot easily remain in doubt as to the mode in which a Jew would naturally administer it.

My time will not permit me to go into a full discussion of the actual mode indicated by the sacred historian in each case of baptism in the New Testament. Such detail is, indeed, not necessary, inasmuch as you may find the work well done in several of your authors, and especially in Armstrong, Part II, ch. 3, 4. The result of a thorough examination was well stated by a divine of our Church thus: Rule three columns on your blank paper; mark the first, 'Certainly by immersion; the second, 'Probably by immersion; the third, 'Certainly not by immersion.' Then, after the careful study of the Greek Testament, enter each case where it properly belongs. Under the first head there will be not a single instance; under the second, there may be a few; while the larger number will be under the third. Immersionists, when they read that John was baptizing in Jordan, and again at Ænon, "because there was much water there," conclude that he certainly immersed his penitents. But when we note that the language may as well be construed 'at' Jordan, and that the 'many waters' of Ænon were only a cluster of springs; considering also the unlikeliness of one man's performing such a multitude of immersions, and the uninspired

10. Baptism is Purification.

11. Mode of New Testament Baptism.

testimony of the early Church as to the method of our Saviour's baptism, the probabilities are all turned the other way. So, the improbability of sufficient access to water, at Pentecost, and the impossibility of twelve men's immersing three thousand in one afternoon, make the immersion of the Pentecostal converts out of the question. This is the conclusion of the learned Dr. Edward Robinson, after an inquiry on the spot. In like manner, the Eunuch's baptism may possibly have been by dipping, but was more probably by affusion; while the cases of Paul, Cornelius, and the jailer, were certainly in the latter mode.

The odious ecclesiastical consequences of the Immersionist dogma should be pressed; because they form a most potent and just argument against it. All parties are agreed, that baptism is the initiatory rite which gives membership in the visible Church of Christ. The great commission was: Go ye, and disciple all nations, baptizing them into the Trinity. Baptism recognizes and constitutes the outward discipleship. Least of all, can any immersionist dispute this ground. Now, if all other forms of baptism than immersion are not only irregular, but null and void, all unimmersed persons are out of the visible Church. But if each and every member of a pædobaptist visible Church is thus unchurched: of course the whole body is unchurched. All pædobaptist societies, then, are guilty of an intrusive error, when they pretend to the character of a visible Church of Christ. Consequently, they can have no ministry; and this for several reasons. Surely no valid office can exist in an association whose claim to be an ecclesiastical commonwealth is utterly invalid. When the temple is non-existent, there can be no actual pillars to that temple. How can an unauthorized herd of unbaptized persons, to whom Christ concedes no church authority, confer any valid office? Again: it is preposterous that a man should receive and hold office in a commonwealth where he himself has no citizenship; but this unimmersed pædobaptist minister, so-called, is no member of any visible Church. There are no real ministers in the world, except the Immersionist preachers! The pretensions of all others, therefore, to act as ministers, and to administer the sacraments, are sinful intrusions. It is hard to see how any intelligent and conscientious Immersionist can do any act, which countenances or sanctions this profane intrusion. They should not allow any weak inclinations of fraternity and peace to sway their consciences in this point of high principle. They are bound, then, not only to practise close communion, but to refuse all ministerial recognition and communion to these intruders. The sacraments cannot go beyond the pale of the visible Church. Hence, the same stern denunciations ought to be hurled at the Lord's Supper in pædobaptist societies, and at all their prayers and preachings in public, as at the iniquity of

12. The Dogma Un-churches all.

“baby-sprinkling.” The enlightened immersionist should treat all these societies, just as he does that ‘Synagogue of Satan,’ the Papal Church: there may be many good, misguided believers in them; but no church character, ministry, nor sacraments whatever.

But let the student now look at the enormity of this conclusion. Here are bodies of ministers adorned by the Lord with as many gifts and graces as any Immersionists; actually doing the largest part of all that is done on earth, to win the world to its divine Master. Here are four-fifths of Protestant Christendom, exhibiting as many of the solid fruits of grace as any body of men in the world, doing nearly all that is done for man’s redemption, and sending up to heaven a constant harvest of ransomed souls. Yet are they not churches or ministers, at all: Why? Only because they have not used quite enough water in the outward form of an ordinance! What greater outrage on common sense, Christian charity, and the spirituality of Christ’s visible Church was ever committed by the bigotry of prelacy or popery? The just mind replies to such a dogma, not only with a firm negative, but with the righteous indignation of an “*incredulus odi*.” When we remember, that this extreme high-churchism is enacted by a sect, which calls itself eminently spiritual, free and Protestant, the solecism becomes more repulsive. Only a part of the Immersionists have the nerve to assert this consequence. But their dogma involves it; and it is justly pressed on all.

Your acquaintance with Church history has taught you the tenour of the usual representations of the antiquaries, touching the mode of baptism in the patristic Churches. The usual version is, that in the second and third centuries the commonest mode of baptism was by a trine immersion, accompanied with a number of superstitious rites, of crossing, anointing, laying on hands, tasting honey and salt, clothing in a white garment, exorcism, &c. There are several reasons why we do not consider this testimony of any importance.

First, the New Testament mode was evidently different, in most cases at least; and we do not feel bound by mere human authority (even though within a hundred and fifty years of the Apostles; a lapse of time within which great apostasies have often been matured). Second, we do not see how Immersionists can consistently claim this patristic precedent for dipping, as of authority, and refuse authority to all their other precedents for the human fooleries which so uniformly attended their baptisms. And farther, the many other corruptions of doctrine and government which were at the same time spread in the Church, prove the fathers to be wretched examples of the New Testament religion. Third, the usage was not as uniformly by immersion, as the antiquaries usually say. Thus, Cyprian teaches us (among many others) that clinic baptism was usually by pouring or

sprinkling, in the third century ; yet it was never regarded as therefore less valid ; and that father speaks, with a tone nigh akin to contempt of the notion that its virtue was any less, because less water was used. Again, Dr. Robinson teaches us, that the early baptisms could not have uniformly been by immersion ; because some baptismal urns of stone are still preserved, entirely too small to receive the applicant's whole person. And several monumental remains of great authenticity and antiquity show us baptisms actually by affusion, as that of the Emperor Constantine. Again, Mr. Taylor, in his Apostolic baptism, shows us very strong reasons to believe that the immersion of the whole body was not the sacrament of baptism, but a human addition and preliminary thereto. For instance, the connection of deaconesses with the baptizing of women, mentioned by not a few, is thus explained : That an immersion and actual washing *in puris naturalibus*, being supposed essential before baptism ; the young women to be baptized were taken into the part of the baptistery where the pool was, and there, with closed doors, washed by the deaconesses ; for no male clergyman could assist here, compatibly with decency. And that after this, the candidates, dressed in their white garments, were presented to the presbyter, at the door of the Church, and received the actual baptism, by affusion, from him. This view of the distinction between the washing and the sacrament is also supported by what modern travelers observe, concerning the rite among some of the old, petrified, Oriental Churches.

These remarks are designed not for a full discussion : but to suggest the topics for your examination.

In conclusion of the subject of the Mode of Baptism,

Recapitulation. let us review the positions successively established in a somewhat complicated discussion.

I. Having pointed out the superior importance of Hebraistic Greek usage, over the Classic, in determining this question, we separate the usage of the family of words expressing baptism into two questions ; their meaning when expressive of common, secular washings, in either Classic or Hebraistic Greek, and their meaning when expressive of religious, or ritual washings.

II. We show that all common words applied to describe religious rituals, *ipso facto*, undergo some modification of signification. And hence, even if it could be shown that the family of words always mean nothing but dip, in common secular washings, it would not be therefore proved of baptism. But

III. The family of words do not always mean exclusive dipping, either in Classic or Hebraistic Greek, when expressive of common washings.

IV. Nor do they mean exclusive dipping, when applied to describe religious rituals other than the sacrament of Baptism, either in the Old Testament Greek, or in Josephus, or in the New Testament.

V. Nor, to come still nearer, is its proper sacramental meaning in the New Testament exclusive dipping ; as we prove, by its symbolical meaning: From the analogy of figurative baptisms: From the actual attendant circumstances of the instances of the sacrament in the New Testament ; And from the absurd consequences of the dogma. I commend Fairchild on Baptism, as a manual of this discussion remarkably compact, perspicuous, and comprehensive. I regard it as eminently adapted to circulation among our pastoral charges.

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