

THE ACT

OF

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

By J. R. GRAVES

CHAP. II. THE ACT OF BAPTISM.

1. It is admitted by all that Christ commanded John the Baptist, his Seventy disciples, and his apostles, to baptize all who professed to repent and believed on him as their Savior—Messiah.

2. That he requires his churches, through their officers, now to baptize all who believe on him.

3. That this command will be in force until he comes again.

4. That it is our personal duty, who believe on him, to obey this command of Christ; therefore,

5. It must be evident to every intelligent mind, and is admitted by all jurists, that unless he used a word, when he commanded us to be baptized, the exact meaning of which we can undoubtedly understand, we are free from all obligation to obey the command, since we would not know what to do.

"A law that is hopelessly obscure, has no binding force, and no person can be held responsible for obedience."¹

If Christ used a term of generic signification to indicate the rite of baptism, he did what he has nowhere else done, in either the Old or New Testament, when instituting a rite, civil or divine.

It is the form which constitutes, and is the essence of a rite, human or divine. We must conclude, therefore, that Christ did select a word of specific signification when he instituted the rite of baptism. It is agreed by scholars that the English word "baptize" in our version, is not a definition of the Greek term "**baptizo**," which Christ selected to indicate the act he wished performed.

Our present English Bible was translated—the Old Testament out of the Hebrew and the New Testament out of the Greek—by order of King James, over three hundred years ago, by a company of Episcopalian scholars. They did not translate "baptize," but transferred it with a change of the last vowel. This what Dr. Edward Beecher, an acknowledged Pedobaptist scholar, says:

"At the time of the translation of the Bible, a controversy had arisen as regards the import of the word, so that although it **was conceded to have an import in the original**, yet it was impossible to assign it in English **any meaning** without seeming to take sides in the controversy then pending. Accordingly, in order to take neither side, they did not attempt to give the sense of the term in a significant English word, but merely transferred the word '**baptizo**,' with a slight alteration of termination to our language. The consequence was that **it does not exhibit its original significancy to the mind of the English reader, or, indeed, any significancy**, except what was derived from its application to designate an external, visible rite."—*Import of Baptism*, p. 5.

The reader can see the ignorance manifested by those who refer to Webster for a correct definition of **baptizo** by looking under this word

¹ Pothier, "Smith's Law of Contracts."—p.421.

“baptize,” which is not the English synonym of the Greek word. Webster gives every act which the people call baptism. How, then, are we to ascertain, without a doubt, the literal, real, or true meaning of the word Christ used? Authorities on interpretation tell us that we have five sources of information. The first and highest is the—1. Usage of standard writers in the age the author lived. The definitions we find in the lexicons are derived from this source; 2. The definitions given in standard lexicons; 3. The testimony of historians as to how the term was understood, and the rite performed at the time it was instituted; and, 4. The testimony of acknowledged scholars; 5. Internal evidence—*i. e.*, the manifest sense in which the term is used by the author.

Now let us briefly appeal to these sources of information, and inquire:

I. How did the ancient Greeks use it in the time of Christ and his apostles?

Dr. T. J. Conant, of New York, acknowledged to be one of the best Greek scholars in this continent, spent many years, with the assistance of eminent scholars on both continents, in collating and translating every instance of the use of baptizo in every Greek author whose work is extant. That every one can see the correctness of his translations he gives in his book the text of the authors. His work has been for years before the scholars of the world, and no one has objected to his translations. What is the result?

Every Greek author uses the term in every instance in the sense of to dip, to immerse, plunge, submerge; and in no instance in the sense of to sprinkle.

What must we conclude from this fact? That if Christ used baptizo in the sense the Greeks of his day used and understood it; he used it to signify to dip or immerse in water—this, and no other, meaning.

II. How do the lexicons define baptizo?

All the lexicons examined or quoted in the Carrollton debate² (some fifty in all) gave to dip, to immerse or merse as the primary or literal signification. We have nothing to do with the **figurative** which is based upon the real or primary, and can mean nothing different from it.

In the last few years three Greek and English lexicons have appeared; one in England, of the "Greek Language in General," by Liddell & Scott; and two Lexicons of the New Testament Greek, in Germany, and all by Pedobaptist scholars, and the three works are acknowledged by all scholars as eminently authoritative. The testimony of these three recent lexicons, embodying as they do the results of the ablest scholarship and latest criticism, should settle the meaning of baptize in the mind of every candid reader. I give them here.

1. Liddel & Scott, 6th Edition:

"To dip in or under water."

Giving but this one literal or real definition of baptizo, the few figurative meanings are built upon the idea of an immersion. Thus do they support the declaration of Dr. Chas. Anthon:

"Baptizo, means to dip, to immerse; pouring and sprinkling are out of the question."

2. Grimm's Wilke's Lexicon of the New Testament Greek:

"(1) To immerse, submerge;' '(2) to wash or bathe by immersing or submerging,' which he says is the meaning of Mark vii: 4, and in the cases of Naaman and Judith; **figuratively** to overwhelm as with debts, misfortunes, etc. In the New Testament rite, he says it denotes an immersion in water, intended as a sign of sins washed away, and received by those who wished to be admitted to the benefits of the Messiah's reign. No hint of its meaning any thing else."

Cremer's Biblico-Theological Lexicon of the New Testament Greek:

² See Graves-Ditzler Debate.

He gives us the general meaning—"Immerse, submerge"—and says in the peculiar New Testament and Christian use the word "**denotes immersion**, submersion, for a religious purpose." Not the shadow of the idea of sprinkling water upon an object is justified. According to the united testimony of all Greek lexicographers, Jesus commanded his apostles to **immerse** their disciples in water, and to-day commands his churches to immerse, thus forbidding them to sprinkle water upon them by his authority.

All scholars, all critics and lexicographers are agreed that in **classic Greek** baptizo means nothing else save to dip, to immerse, in or under water. But some few polemics claim that in New Testament Greek, its sacred use took on a different meaning, as to purify by the application of water, to wash or bathe by applying water to a part of the body.

To show how groundless this theory is, I quote a canon of interpretation from Morus, indorsed by Ernesti and Stuart:

"The principles of interpretation are common to sacred and ordinary writings, and the Scriptures are to be investigated by the same rules as other books."

Moses Stuart (Pedobaptist) for thirty years professor in Andover Theological Seminary, upon this subject says,--and with his statement Bible readers and students can not be too familiar:

"If the sacred Scriptures be a revelation to men, then they are to be read and understood by men. If the same laws of language are not to be observed in this revelation, as are common to men, then they have no guide to the right understanding of the Scriptures, and our interpreter needs inspiration as much as the original writer. It follows, of course, that the sacred Scriptures would be no revelation in themselves, nor of any use except to those who are inspired. But such a book the sacred Scriptures are not, and nothing is more evident than that when God has spoken to men, he has spoken in the language of men, for he has spoken by men and for men."

Before quoting the definitions given in all the lexicons of the New Testament, I submit the statement of Dr. Geo. Campbell, president of Marischal College, Scotland, a Presbyterian:

“The word baptizein, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse; and was rendered by Tertullian, and the old Latin fathers, tingere, the term used for dyeing cloth, which was by immersion. It is always construed suitably to this meaning (Note on Matt. iii:11). ‘I should think the word immersion (which, though of Latin origin, is an English noun) a better English name than baptism, were we now at liberty to make choice.’ ‘On the Gospels,’ vol. 2, p. 23, “I have heard a disputant * * in defiance of etymology and use, maintain that the word rendered in the New Testament **baptize**, means more properly to sprinkle than to plunge, and in defiance of all antiquity, that the former method was the earliest, and for many centuries the most general practice in baptizing. One who argues in this manner never fails with persons of knowledge to betray the cause he would defend; and, though with respect to the vulgar, bold assertions generally succeed as well as arguments—sometimes better—yet a candid mind will disdain to take the help of falsehood, even in support of truth.”—*Lec. On Pul. Elo., p. 480.*

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LEXICONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Schleusner’s Lexicon of the New Testament:

“**Baptizo**—Properly to immerse and dip in, to immerse into water, and it answers to the Hebrew, Taval.”—2 k. v. 14.

“**Baptisma**—Properly immersion, dipping into water, washing. Hence it is transferred to the sacred rite, which is called baptism, in which those formerly baptized were immersed in water,” etc.

Leigh:

“If we are willing to observe the import of the word, the term of baptism signifies immersion into water, or the act itself of immersing and washing

off. Therefore, from the very name and etymology of the word, it appears what would, in the beginning, be the custom of administering baptism, whilst we now have for baptism rather rhanism—that is, sprinkling.”

Stokius, an authority of great weight:

“Baptizo.—1. Generally, and by force of the original, it denotes immersion or dipping; 2. Specially, properly, it denotes the immersion or dipping of a thing in water, that it may be cleansed or washed. Hence, it is transferred to designate the first sacrament of the New Testament, which they call of initiation, namely baptism, in which those to be baptized were formerly immersed into water, though, at this time, the water is only sprinkled upon them,” etc.

Wahl’s Clavis of New Testament (1829, Leipsic):

“Baptizo (from bapto, immerse; often to immerse in New Testament)—1. To immerse (always in Joseph. Antiquities, 9, 10, 2 and 16, 3, 3, Plyb., 1, 51,6), properly and truly concerning sacred immersion.

Dr. E. Robinson, American Presbyterian, in his Lexicon of New Testament:

“Baptizo—a frequentative in form, but not in fact; to immerse, to sink.”

Prof. Sophocles (Professor in Yale College), himself a native Greek. His Lexicon covers a period of 110 years before Christ to the year 1100 after:

“Baptizo—to dip, to immerse; sink, to be drowned (as the effect of sinking). **Trop** [figurative meaning], to afflict; soak in liquor; to be drunk, intoxicated. There is no evidence that Luke and Paul, and the other writers of the new Testament, put upon the very meanings not recognized by the Greeks.”

The latest editions of two of the great standard Lexicons of the New Testament Greek, viz.: **Grimm’s Wilkes’** and **Cremers’** “Biblico-Theological lexicon,” give only to dip, to immerse, as its literal and real

sense everywhere in the new Testament (see their definition on page 6 of MS.).

So far as the authority of lexicographers and critics can determine the meaning of a word, they have settled the meaning of baptize and its cognates—the only word Christ or the apostles used in commanding or speaking of Christian baptism; and the verdict I will give in the forceful language of Prof. Stuart, of Andover (Pedobaptist):

“Bapto and Baptizo mean to dip, plunge, or immerse into any liquid. All lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed on this. It is, says Augusti, **‘a thing made out**, viz.: The ancient practice of immersion. So, indeed, all the writers, who have thoroughly investigated the subject, conclude. I know of no usage of ancient times which seems to be more clearly made out. I can not see how it is possible for any candid man, who has examined the subject, to deny this.”—*pp. 55, 149, 150.*

HOW DO STANDARD HISTORIANS SAY THE CHURCHES IN THE APOSTLES' TIME, AND FOR AGES AFTERWARD, BAPTIZED?

I will introduce a few of the representative historians, with a statement of Prof. L. L. Paine, D. D., who occupies the chair of Ecclesiastical History in the Bangor Theological Seminary (Congregational), which is his defense against the charge of teaching the young ministers under his tuition Baptist sentiments, because he teaches them that immersion was the universal practice of the apostolic churches for thirteen centuries after Christ, and the prevailing practice of christendom—sprinkling being the exception:

“It may be honestly asked by some, Was immersion the primitive form of baptism? And, if so, what then? As to the question of fact, the testimony is ample and decisive. No matter of church history is clearer. The evidence is all one way, and all church historians of any repute agree in accepting it. We can not claim even originality in teaching it in a Congregational Seminary; and we really feel guilty of a kind of anachronism in writing an article to insist upon it. It is a point on which ancient, mediaeval and modern historians alike, Catholics and Protestants, Lutherans and Calvinists,

have no controversy; and the simple reason for this unanimity is, that the statements of the early fathers are so clear, and the light shed upon these statements from the early customs of the Church is so conclusive, that no historian, who cares for his reputation, would dare to deny it, and no historian who is worthy of the name would wish to. There are some historical questions concerning the early church on which the most learned writers disagree; * * but on this one—of the early practice of immersion—the most distinguished antiquarians—such as Bingham, Augusti, Coleman, Smith, and historians such as Mosheim, Gieseler, Hase, Neander, Millman, sChaff, and Alzog (Catholic)—hold a common language. The following extract from 'Coleman's Antiquities' very accurately expresses what all agree to:

"In the primitive Church, immersion was undeniably the common mode of baptism. The utmost that can be said of sprinkling in that early period was, in case of necessity, permitted as an exception to a general rule. This fact is so well established that it is needless to adduce authorities in proof of it."

As further testimony that sprinkling is an innovation upon the primitive act, I quote a sentence from Dr. Schaff's "Apostolic Church." he is the highest Presbyterian authority in America:

"As to the outward mode of administering this ordinance, **immersion** and **not sprinkling** was unquestionably the original normal form. * * But while immersion was the universal custom, an abridgment of the rite was freely allowed and defended in cases of urgent necessity, such as sickness and approaching death [for which Christ made no provision]: and the peculiar form of sprinkling thus came to be known as 'clinical' baptism, or the baptism of the sick. * * And hence it is difficult to determine, with complete accuracy, just when **immersion gave way** to sprinkling as the common church practice. The two forms were employed—one as the rule, the other as the exception—until, as Christianity traveled northward into colder climates, the exception silently grew to be the rule."

I will not present two or three only of the representative historians and scholars of the leading Pedobaptist sects, commencing with—

ROMAN CATHOLIC HISTORIANS AND SCHOLARS

It is well known to all scholars that the Catholics claim that their church has the right to change rites and ceremonies and determine doctrines, and that this Mother Church did substitute sprinkling for immersion, and infants for believers. History confirms this alleged fact.

Robinson, in his "History of Baptism," upon unquestioned authority, states this:

"In the spring of the next year (754) in answer to some Monks of Cressy, in Brittany, who privately consulted him—Pope Stephen III—he gave his opinion on nineteen questions, one of which is allowed to be the first authentic law for administering baptism by pouring, which, in time, was interpreted to signify sprinkling. The question proposes was:

"Whether, in case of necessity, occasioned by illness of an infant, it were lawful to baptize by pouring water, out of the hand or cup, on the head of the infant.'

"Stephen answered: 'If such a baptism were performed, in such a case of **necessity**, in the name of the Holy Trinity, it should be held valid.'"

Robinson says:

"The answer of Stephen is the **true origin of private baptism and of sprinkling.**"

The learned Jas. Basnage says:

"That it was not till 557 years after, that the Legislature, in a Council at Ravenna, in the year 1311, declared dipping or sprinkling indifferent."—*History Baptists, p. 429.*

This historical fact will enable the reader to understand the foundation of the claims of Catholic scholars.

The Rt. Rev. John Milner, D. D., in "End of Religious Controversy" (p. 288), says:

"Indeed, Protestants are forced to have recourse to the traditions of the Church [i. e., Catholic] for determining a great number of points which are left doubtful by the Sacred Text, particularly with respect to the **two sacraments**, which they acknowledge. **From the doctrine and practice of the Church alone** they learn that, though Christ, our Pattern, was baptized in a river [Mark i: 9], and the Ethiopian eunuch was led by Philip **into the water** [Acts viii; 38], for the same purpose, the application of it by affusion or aspersion is valid; and that, though Christ says, 'He that **believeth** and is baptized shall be saved,' infants are susceptible of the benefits of baptism, who are incapable of making an act of faith."

If you, my reader, have only been sprinkled for baptism, in your unconscious infancy, will you ponder well where the substitute for what Christ commanded came from? And will you, can you, indorse your baptism, and thus indorse the Romish Apostasy as the true Church of Christ?

But we know that Christ did not originate a rite, or allow his churches to originate one, that would make void his own positive commandment. **Sprinkling** contravenes his command to immerse; and infant baptism contravenes and nullifies his command to immerse believers, which was his express command, as the Catholics themselves admit, as we have seen above. Let us hear Bishop Kendrick (Catholic) on this point:

"When religion [i. e., the Catholic] had consummated her triumphs over Paganism, in the various countries of Europe, and the regenerated parents **were diligently instructed** [by catholic priests] **in the duty of presenting their children to be baptized at the earliest period possible, AGES PASSED AWAY WITH SCARCELY AN INSTANCE OF THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS.** Hence, the necessity of receding from the mode of immersion became still more frequent, since the tender infant

oftentimes could not be immersed without peril of its life. The cases thus multiplying, the more solemn method fell into gradual disuse, until it has, in most places, **been entirely superseded.**"—*Kendrick on Baptism, pp. 175-6.*

Sir John Floyer says:

"The Church of Rome hath drawn short compendiums of both sacraments. In the Eucharist, they use only the wafer, and, **instead of immersion, they introduced aspersion.**"

EPI SCOPALIAN HISTORIANS

Dr. Wall is accounted a standard historian by the Episcopalians of England and America. In his "History of Infant Baptism" (part 2, ch. 2, p.462), he bears this testimony to the apostolic act of baptism:

"Their general and ordinary way was to baptize by immersion, or dipping the person, whether it were an infant or grown man or woman, into the water. This is to plain by an infinite number of passages, that, as one can not but pity the weak endeavors of such Pedobaptists as would maintain the negative of it; so, also, we ought to disown and show a dislike to the profane scoffs which some people give the English **Anti**-Pedobaptists [Baptists]s merely for their use of dipping. It was in all probability the way by which our blessed Lord, and for certain was the most usual and ordinary way by which the ancient Christians did receive their baptism. It is a great **want of prudence**, as well as **moral honesty** to refuse to grant to an adversary what is **certainly true** and **may be proved so**. It creates a jealousy of all the rest that one says. As for sprinkling, I say with Mr. Blake, at its first coming up in England, 'Let them defend it who use it.'"

He further says:

"What is said of this custom of pouring or sprinkling water, in the ordinary use of baptism, is to be understood only in reference to those western parts of Europe, for it is ordinarily nowhere else. The Greek Church does still use

immersion, and so do all other Christians in the world except the Latins [i. e., Catholics]. All those nations of Christians that do now, or formerly did, submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, do ordinarily baptize infants by pouring, or sprinkling; but all other Christians in the world who never owned the Pope's usurped power do, and ever did dip in the ordinary use. All the Christians in Asia; all in Africa, and about one-third of Europe, are of the last sort."—Part 2, chapter ix, p. 376.

As the most scholarly living Episcopalian historian of England, I select Dr. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, who will not only testify to the change of the act from immersion to sprinkling, but will frankly tell us why the divine act was abolished and a human act substituted for it:

"We now pass to the **changes in the form itself**. For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word 'baptize'—that those who were baptized, were plunged, submerged, immersed into water. The practice is still as we have seen continued in Eastern churches. [The Greek Church has always immersed.] In the Western church it still lingers among Roman Catholics in the solitary instance of the Cathedral of Milan. Among Protestants, in the austere sect of the Baptists [Baptists, however austere, are not protestants] it lasted long into the Middle Ages. Even the Icelanders, who at first shrank from the water of their freezing lakes, were reconciled when they found that they could use the warm waters of the Geysers. And the cold climate of Russia has not been found an obstacle to its continuance throughout that vast empire. Even in the Church of England it is still observed in theory. Elizabeth and Edward VI. Were both immersed. The Rubric on the public baptism of infants enjoins that unless, for special cases, they are to be dipped, not sprinkled. But in practice it gave way since the beginning of the seventeenth century. With the few exceptions just mentioned, the whole of the Western churches **have now substituted for the ancient bath, the ceremony of sprinkling a few drops of water on the face**. The reason of the change is obvious. The practice of immersion, apostolic and primitive as it was, was peculiarly

suitable to the Southern and Eastern countries for which it was designed³ and peculiarly unsuitable to the tastes, the convenience and the feelings of the countries of the North and West. [Sprinkling] not beginning till the thirteenth century, it has gradually driven the ancient Catholic [he means general] usage [of immersion] out of the whole of Europe. It [immersion] had no doubt the sanction of the apostles and of their Master. It had the sanction of the venerable churches of the early ages and of the sacred countries of the East. Baptism, by sprinkling, was rejected by the whole ancient church (except in the rare case of death-beds or extreme necessity_ as no baptism at all . . . Perhaps no greater change has ever taken place in the outward form of Christian ceremony with such general agreement. It is a greater change even than that which the Roman Catholic Church has made in administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in bread without the wine. For that was a change which did not affect the thing that was signified; **whereas, the change from immersion to sprinkling has set aside the larger part of the apostolic language regarding baptism, and has altered the very meaning of the word.**"

Of living Episcopalian historians in America, I select B. B. Smith, D. D., Bishop of Kentucky. He testifies:

"We have only to go back six or eight hundred years and **immersion was the only mode**, except in the case of the few baptized in their beds at the real or supposed approach of death . . . Immersion was not only universal six or eight hundred years ago, but it was **primitive and apostolic**. . . The bowl and sprinkling are strictly Genevan in their origin; that is, they were introduced by Calvin at Geneva."—*History of Baptism*.

LUTHERAN HISTORIANS AND SCHOLARS.

I can give but short extracts from a few among a host that press forward to testify. But, first of all, let Luther, the father of Lutheranism, speak:

³ Was not immersion designed for **all** nations?—did Christ in the great commission except any country on account of its **climate**?

“Baptism is a Greek word, and may be translated immersion, as when we immerse something in water that it may be wholly covered, and although it **is almost wholly abolished** (for they do not dip the whole, i. e., children, but pour a little water on them), they ought to be wholly immersed . . . for that the etymology of the term seems to demand.”

Luther confesses that immersion, in his day, had been “almost wholly abolished,” and that sprinkling had taken its place. In the Schmalcalden Articles which he drew up he plainly states that “baptism is nothing else than the word of God with immersion in water.”

Mosheim, whose history is standard in both continents, says that in the first, second, and third centuries, immersion was the unbroken practice of the churches. (See vol. 1, pp. 46, 69, 121).

Neander says:

“The practice of immersion in the first century was beyond all doubt prevalent in the whole church.”—*Letter to Judd*.

Winer:

“Affusion was first applied only to the sick, but was gradually introduced for others [the sick] after the seventh century; and in the thirteenth it became the prevailing practice in the West.”—*Lect. Christ. Antiq.*

Von Collen, in his *History of Doctrines*, says:

“Immersion in water was general until the thirteenth century; among the Latins it was then displaced by sprinkling, but retained by the Greeks.”—Vol. 2, p. 303.

Dr. Gieseler, professor in the University of Bonn and Gottingen:

“For **the sake of** the sick the rite of sprinkling was introduced.”—*Ch. His., Ger. Ed., vol. 3, p. 274*.

Dr. Kurtz, professor in University of Dorpt, author of "Christian History" and "Sacred History":

"Baptism in the first centuries was administered by complete immersion. Sprinkling was only common in case of the rich."—*Ch. His.*, p. 119.

This justifies the declaration of Dean Stanley, that immersion, especially in cold climates, was peculiarly unsuitable to the tastes, the **convenience**, and the **feelings** of this class.

PRESBYTERIAN.

A few witnesses must suffice, and since the founder of this denomination should have the greatest weight with his followers, I first introduce the illustrious Calvin. Commenting on the immersion of the eunuch, he says:

"From this verse we clearly see what was the rite of baptism among the ancients; for they were accustomed to immerse the whole body in water (*totum corpus in aquam*). At the present time (sixteenth century) the practice has gained ground for the minister only to sprinkle water on the body or head." "The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."—*Cal. Inst.*, b. iv, c. xv, ~xix.

Will Presbyterians believe those men among them who will assert on the face of this witness, that the word does not mean immerse, and immersion was not the practice of the primitive church, as not a few are now doing? Calvin declared concerning the baptism of Christ:

"Moreover, from these words of Matt. iii:22,23, we may learn that John and Christ administered baptism by the submersion of the whole body (*totius corpore submersione*)." See his Com. on Matt. iii: 22,23.

Zwingle testifies to the same fact, as do all the great scholars of the seventeenth century.

D. Chamierus, professor at Montauban A. D. 1621:

“Immersion of the whole body was used from the beginning, which expresses the force of the word baptize, whence John baptized in a river. **It was afterward changed into sprinkling**, though it is uncertain when or by whom [we have seen above by **whom** and about the time **when**] it commenced.”—Panstrat. Cathol., tom. iv, 1. V, ch. ii, ~6.

METHODIST TESTIMONY.

John Wesley, the originator of that system of religion called Methodism (1729), (which was called a church in America in 1784), was the most learned man of his order. In his Notes on Romans vi: 4, says:

“‘Buried with him,’ etc., alluding to the **ancient manner** of baptizing by immersion.”

On Colossians ii: 11—

“The **ancient manner** of baptizing by immersion is manifestly alluded to here.”

In his Journal for Georgia, February 21, 1736, he says:

“Mary Welch, aged eleven days, was baptized according to the **custom of the first church**, and the rule of the church of England, by **immersion**.”

I will close this with

THE TESTIMONY OF TEN STANDARD CYCLOPEDIAS.

My extracts must necessarily be brief, but they will indicate the position of each work.

The "Edinburgh Encyclopedia," after stating that in the time of the apostles the one mode was immersion in water, it states:

"It was not till **1311**, that the legislature in council held at Ravenna, declared immersion or sprinkling to be indifferent. In this country (Scotland), however, sprinkling was never practiced in ordinary cases before the Reformation (**1636**). From Scotland it made its way into England, in the reign of Elizabeth, but was not authorized by the Established Church."

"Encyclopedia Britannica" describes the influences by which it was introduced into Great Britain:

"Several of our protestant divines flying into Germany and Switzerland during the reign of bloody Mary, and returning home when Elizabeth came to the crown, brought back with them a great zeal for the Protestant churches beyond the sea, where they had been sheltered and received; and, having observed that at Geneva and other places, baptism was administered by sprinkling, they thought they could not do the Church of England a greater service than by introducing a practice dictated by so great an authority as Calvin."

Thus the reader sees that Pope Stephen first authorized the change; and the Catholic Council at Ravenna, 1311, by law sanctioned sprinkling as equal to immersion. Calvin sanctioned the act and adopted it, and through his influence it was adopted by Protestants.

"Encyclopedia Metropolitan":

"We readily admit that the literal meaning of the word **baptizo**, baptize, is immersion, and that the desire of resorting again **to the most ancient practice** of the church of immersing the body, which has been expressed by many divines, is well worthy of being considered."

"Encyclopedia Americana":

“Baptism (that is, dipping, immersing, from the Greek, **baptizo**), was usual with the Jews even before Christ. In the time of the apostles, the form of baptism was very simple. The person to be baptized was dipped in a river or a vessel, with the words which Christ had ordered; and express more fully his change of character generally adopted a new name.”

“Encyclopedia Ecclesiastica”:

“Whatever weight, however, may be in these reasons as a defense for the present practice of sprinkling, it is evident that during the first ages of the church, and for centuries afterward, the practice of immersin prevailed.”

I will conclude the testimony of lexicographers, and critics, and scholars of all denominations, touching the meaning of the word Christ used in enjoining the act of baptism, and the unbroken practice of the apostolic churches and of Catholics and Protestants until, save in extreme cases, the thirteenth century, when, through the influence of Calvin, sprinkling was introduced among Protestants, by using the language of Moses Stuart:

“I know of no usage of ancient times which seems to be more clearly made out. I can not see how it is possible for any **candid man** who examines the subject to deny this.”

And even with the stronger language of Dr. Paine, of Bangor Theological Seminary (Congregationalist:)

“Any scholar who denies that immersion was the baptism of the Christian church for thirteen centuries betrays **UTTER IGNORANCE** or **SECTARIAN BLINDNESS.**”

The candid reader will admit that if he has only been sprinkled, he has not received the baptism that Christ commanded, but only an act substituted for it by the Church of Rome—an act which he never has and never can approve or bless—since it is no **Christian** baptism at all. Christ said of the wicked ministers of his day: “Ye do make the commandments of God of non-effect by your traditions.” To assist the one wishing to understand the

teachings of the New Testament touching the acts, I will call his attention to the various circumstantial accounts of its administration; since Dr. Beecher informs us that, from the word baptizo, we can learn nothing, . Because it was purposely left untranslated.⁴ (See "Import of Baptism," p. 5.)

⁴ Yet how many advocates of sprinkling boastfully challenge Baptists to find the word immersion in connection with baptism in the New Testament! Do they not know that baptizo and baptismos were left untranslated, so as not to give Baptists the advantage of God's word?