

THE ACT

OF

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

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CHAP. III.

THE EVIDENT MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTIZO FROM THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THE ACT.

John the Baptist, the first apostle of Christ, and specially sent to preach and to baptize his converts into the name and authority of Christ the Messiah, resorted to places where there was **much water**—as the River Jordan and to Enon. He at no time baptized where there was any probably lack of water to immerse in.

We know that those who sprinkle never do resort to rivers, or where there is much water, but use a bowl or pitcher in the church, an ordinary pitcher-ful of water being sufficient to baptize the largest assembly every convened in one house or place.

Matthew tells us that John first baptized in the River Jordan. I will translated literally according to the Vatican manuscript:

“Then resorted to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the country along the Jordan; and were—baptized(?)—by him in the River Jordan.”—3:5,6.

John tells us what act he performed in his speech to the people:

"I indeed—baptize(?)—you—**en hudah**—in water, not with, as all scholars will testify. * * He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and in fire."

This latter baptism was certainly an immersion, and so John explained it, v. 12.

Mark describes John's baptism thus:

"John was—baptizing(?)—in the desert, and publishing a—baptism(?)—of repentance for the remission of sins. And there resorted to him all the country of Judea and all those of Jerusalem, and were—baptized(?)—by him **in the River Jordan**. * * I—baptize(?)—you in water, but he will—baptize(?)—you in the Holy Spirit."

Touching the translation of **en** here, which settles the whole question of the act, I remark the Douay version of the Catholics translate it "in water," and in the Jordan; and Dr. Geo. Campbell of Scholand (Presbyterian), says:

"I am sorry to observe that the Popish translators from the Vulgate have shown greater veneration for the style of that version than of the original. For the Latin is not more explicit than the Greek. Yet so inconsistent are the interpreters last mentioned, that none of them have scrupled to render **en too Iordane**, in the sixth verse, 'in Jordan;' though nothing can be plainer, than that if there be any incongruity in the expression 'in water,' this, 'in Jordan,' must be equal incongruous. But they have seen that preposition in could not be avoided there without adopting a circumlocution, and saying 'with the water of Jordan,' which would have made their deviation from the text too glaring."

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

Matthew gives this account:

"Then came Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to be—baptized(?)—by John. And Jesus being—baptized(?)—went up straightway out of the water," etc.

The Douay Bible:

"And Jesus being baptized forthwith came out of the water."

Dr. Geo. Campbell (Presbyterian):

"No sooner arose out of the water."

Mark records his baptism thus:

"And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was—baptized(?)—by John, **eis**, literally into, the Jordan. And as soon as he arose out of the water."—(Dr. Campbell.)

Now if there can be any question as to the act John performed upon Christ in the River Jordan, whether he immersed, **buried him** in the water, or poured or sprinkled water upon him, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, informs us: "Therefore, being **buried with Christ by baptism**" (Rom. vi: 4), and "buried with Christ in baptism" (Col. ii: 12), let us translate baptize by Paul's definition—"And was **buried** by John in the Jordan." "I indeed **bury** you in water—'*i. e.*, immerse you in water." No one certainly was ever buried by sprinkling a few drops of water, or placing a moistened finger upon the forehead. When we **bury** we cover the entire body with earth, and John covered the entire body of Christ with the water, by immersing him in it.

It was recorded of John that he afterwards baptized in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized.—John iii: 23.

An intelligent lawyer of this State told me that these accounts alone thoroughly convinced him that John immersed his subjects, and that Christ was immersed. It is universally conceded by all scholars that John immersed his converts, and that the Blessed Savior was immersed. The reader re-

members the admissions of Calvin and Wall touching the act that John performed for baptism.

THE BAPTISM OF THE EUNUCH.

We have another baptism, minutely described by Luke in Acts viii: 36—the baptism of the eunuch by Philip.

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water, what doth hinder me? And he ordered the chariot to stop, and **they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing."

It is impossible for a candid person to conclude that Philip would have taken the eunuch down into the water to sprinkle a few drops upon his head. See Calvin's comments upon this baptism.