

The Biblical Mode of Baptism

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Introduction

In one sense, there is no need to speak of Christian baptism, for there really never was any other kind. In this sense, the whole Bible is Christian. In another sense, "Christian baptism" is of necessity correct terminology, inasmuch as baptism is distinctively Christian.

Nothing more beautifully illustrates the cleansing of God's elect from all their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, than the sacrament of baptism with water. That is especially clear to anyone familiar with the biblical precedents and patterns for baptism. These exemplars or models, naturally, denote the mode of baptism. The purpose of this pamphlet is to determine what mode is taught in the Word of God. This is done in the firm belief that the Bible is very clear and consistent on this point. In other words, the matter is neither indifferent nor indeterminate. The light of Scripture on the subject is not dim, but as bright as the sunlight.

There are some who have no difficulty in receiving the doctrines of grace, the truth of Calvinism and the doctrine of God's covenant, but who do have trouble with the matter of the mode of baptism. It is for them, too, that we write, that they may carefully read this treatise and see whether the evidence for the above thesis is not as we believe it ought to prove, both irrefutable and irresistible.

The Reformed and Presbyterian churches do not rebaptize members having been previously baptized by immersion. Their baptism is regarded as valid, although not scriptural. For example, a candidate for the ministry went through his entire ordination service without having the laying on of hands. By a strange oversight no one thought of it; it was forgotten and omitted. It could not very well have been added as an afterthought. Instead, it was rightly deemed a valid, though not scriptural ordination. We also heard of a baptism where the subject was not so much as touched by, or came into contact with, a drop of water. The usual baptismal formula in the name of the triune God was pronounced, but somehow the water, not a drop of it, came upon the candidate. This was not adjudged no baptism, and so to be done over; but was regarded as valid, but not scriptural baptism. What follows, then, is answer to the question, What is the Biblical mode of Baptism?

Various Baptisms

Writing to the Hebrews, many of whom lived through that transitional period between the end of the Old and the beginning of the New Testament, it would come to them as no surprise to read the author's words to the effect that "the first tabernacle . . . stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings" ([Heb. 9:10](#), KJV), that is, in various washings, or more literally, "various baptisms." No surprise was it to them that the Old Testament dispensation was milestoned with "various baptisms." No surprise, because they, from the time of Moses, were quite conversant and familiar with the tabernacle and its many baptisms. Therefore, when on the day of Pentecost, three thousand Jews from sixteen different nations were converted, it was not the proclamation of some strange, new thing to hear Peter exhort them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins . . . for the promise is to you and to your children." They knew very well what baptism was, namely a cleansing, and who were to be baptized, namely a people who were priests unto God and their seed. Nor did they fear that now in the New Dispensation the change would be such that their infant children would have nothing to do with baptism. From both the Old Testament and Peter's words, they knew better. This we intend to prove from the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

Baptism, like the gospel, is intended for God's people in every region, whether of polar or tropical zone, whether for arctic or Saharan peoples. Baptism, just as the gospel, exactly suits the one region as much as the other. For in baptism the Lord has appointed a very simple and easy symbolism for the church in every clime. Neither the Lord, nor His Word, makes it any more difficult to administer baptism in Baffin Land, or in Death Valley, than it is to do so in our moderate climes, or lands of perpetual summer, as for example, Jamaica, or comfortably and conveniently, as we do, throughout all of our churches. The Word of God speaks of baptism in terms of "various washings." Paul testified, in keeping with this, that he was commanded, "having arisen, be baptized, and wash away thy sins . ." (Gk.) Then occurred another of the "various baptisms" recorded in Scripture. Washing is a simple and easy matter. Even in countries where water is scarce, the body is washed, cleansed and mollified with olive oil. In fact, oil had been a proper and suitable element used in baptism, particularly in the anointing of the priests.

This is not difficult to prove. Some, who would make the subject a controversial one, question that statement, the more knowing of them challenging us to prove our point from our own confessions and liturgical standards, as though confident that faced with them we shall run into difficulty. First of all, they point to our baptism form, where "the doctrine of holy baptism" is described in its sacramental action as, "This, the dipping in, or sprinkling with water . . ." (Ital. added). Here the charge is that we Reformed cannot make up our minds whether baptism is dipping or sprinkling, or perhaps we even imagine it is, or could be, both. In the light of Scripture, the fact and *truth* of the matter are, that when such a disjunction is made, with dipping set over against sprinkling, you do not have *two* contemporaneous or equally ancient methods of baptism. What you have is rather an instance of custom mixed with biblical pattern.

In the printing of our Reformed standards certain typographical errors become evident. Some, not all of these, have been corrected. One such error appears in a place containing the Apostolic Confession, omitting the word "begotten" from "and in Jesus Christ, His only *begotten* Son, our Lord." Also, there are certain expressions in the Confessions that we prefer

not to use, such as in Canons V, 7, where reference is made to a "reconciled God." We prefer to think that God never needed any reconciling, that man, the sinner, is alone the reconciled, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself"; that Israel's love was estranged from God, never God's love from Israel. Also the Canons speaks of God's "permission" of falling into evil, whereas we rather agree with Calvin that the idea of divine permission is a denial of divine providence and is a heathen dualism. At these points in our standards we make mental corrections, not mental reservations, at the same time always holding them throughout their extent as the most perfect expression and declaration of the truth as humanly can be. These minor points in no wise mar the perfect doctrine of salvation there so indisputably declared with the utmost perspicuity. So, too, the phrase. "This, the dipping in or sprinkling with water," this writer prefers to read (however it may read in the original), "This, the dipping in and sprinkling with water." For the latter alone accords with its context in the baptism form, with the Belgic Confession, and with the abundant, constant and repetitive emphasis of Scripture.

First, look at [Exodus 12:22](#), where the command is "take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood. . . and strike (or sprinkle, according to [Heb. 11:28](#)) the lintel and the two side posts." Notice, infallible Scripture has it, "dip and sprinkle." Second, you have [Exod. 24:6-8](#), the passage referred to in the "various baptisms" of [Heb. 9](#), where Moses "took the blood . . . with . . . water . . . and sprinkled both the book and all the people." "Moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels," which baptisms (according to [Heb. 9:10](#)) or sprinklings (according to 9:13, 19, 21) signified purging and purifying (according to 9:13, 14, 22). Moses effected all these baptisms by the dipping of hyssop in the blood and the following sprinkling action. Third, in [Lev. 4:6](#), "the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle" it. The dipping action of the finger was not the baptism. The priest so doing did not baptize his finger! The dipping was merely preparatory to the baptism, which was effected by the sprinkling. Fourth, in the 17th verse of this chapter the same idea is expressed, "dip and sprinkle." Fifth, in [Lev. 9:9](#), Aaron "dipped his finger in the blood and put (smeared) it upon the horns of the altar." Sixth, in [Lev. 14:6-7](#), it is "dip them . . . in the blood . . . and sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed." Seventh, in v. 16, "the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and sprinkle of the oil." Eighth, in vv. 26 and 27 it is, "the priest shall pour of the oil . . . and sprinkle" it. Ninth, in v. 51, there is the baptism of a house where it is again "dip and sprinkle." Tenth, in [Num. 19:18-21](#), "a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water and sprinkle it" on the tent of an Israelite, his household articles, and the person with him, so baptizing and thus purifying them. Underscore also in this chapter the words "sprinkle" (6 times), "wash" (5 times), "purify" (4 times), and "be clean," all of which point directly to the central meaning of baptism, which is purification.

From these ten passages, it is abundantly evident that Scripture does not allow for two methods of baptism, providing for either a dipping in water, or a sprinkling with water. Nor does Scripture use its prepositions in such an indifferent manner with respect to baptism. Further, if the word "or" must be understood in the referred to liturgical phrase in our baptism form, then so must the word "either." This makes it, "either the dipping in water, or sprinkling with water teaches us . . ." But the phrase in the baptism form is not a combination of either early or gradually adopted custom and plainly evident biblical practice as divinely commanded. The biblical weight of evidence is heavy for "This, the dipping in *and* sprinkling with water."

"Various baptisms" are also on record as not only performed by washing with water, as in [Exod. 29:4](#), but also with oil poured on the head (v.7), and by sprinkling the oil and the blood upon Aaron's sons (20, 21). Here, too, baptism was performed by merely smearing the blood on the lobe of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the great toe of the right foot. The priests were regarded as covered from head to foot with blood, without any necessity of dipping or plunging the entire body into it. So they were viewed as covered with the blood of the cross. The blood on the ear signified the consecration of all the believer's intellectual, mental and spiritual faculties. The blood on the thumb reminded him of the dedication of all his works to God, while the blood on his toe denoted the sanctification of his walk. It is to be noted, in v.12, that there is a baptism of the brazen altar by pouring of the blood. This same washing, pouring and sprinkling is treated again in [Lev. 8](#). Take note also of [Lev. 16](#), and such expressions as "sprinkle the blood because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel," as "wash," "bathe" and "atonement for the holy sanctuary . . . for the altar, for the priests and for all the people." All these persons and things mentioned were baptized. To cleanse them, the water of purifying was ordered to be sprinkled upon them ([Num. 8:7](#)). When any dipping is mentioned, it is not of the person or thing being baptized, but an act performed by the baptizer to administer his baptism.

It must be now quite clear that all these "various baptisms," so familiar to the Jews, really of both testaments, are but types of the true and real baptism accomplished with the sprinkling of Christ's blood and the pouring out of His Spirit. Who does not realize that Jesus taught that His death on the cross was a baptism? In fact, it is the baptism ([Mark 10:38f](#)), of which water baptism is but the sign. Who does not realize that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was a baptism? In fact, it is an aspect of the one true baptism. (Cf. [Acts 2](#) and [1 Cor. 12](#)). Our Heidelberg Catechism comports with this, teaching that the ideal and real baptism is in "the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross," and that baptism with water is a sign of it, signifying our having been "washed by His blood and Spirit." So we are taught that baptism is a figure of regeneration, as we were washed in Christ's blood, which He shed (poured out) for us by His sacrifice on the cross and renewed us by the Holy Spirit (HC, Lord's Day 26). So these "various baptisms" were the Old Testament's adumbrations of the New Testament's "one baptism." [Eph. 4:5](#). Therefore, the New Testament, with its baptismal record, we may be confident, will be found in perfect harmony with the Old Testament just examined.

Various Baptisms Exemplifying One Baptism

According to [Hebrews 9:10](#) (Gk.), the Old Testament dispensation and its worship in connection with the first tabernacle stood in external ordinances and "various baptisms," which were plain types of the New Testament's "one baptism." Also the Old Testament reveals that these baptisms were washings, as the King James Version correctly translates in [Hebrews 9:10](#). As many as ten pentateuchal passages show these baptisms to be cases of "this the dipping in and sprinkling with water . . ." The administration of baptism is neither either/or, that is, either by dipping in, or sprinkling with water, nor a matter of both/and, that is both by dipping and sprinkling. There are neither two allowable modes of baptism, nor did the dipping happen to

the baptized. So that the act of dipping was not the act of baptism, but the act of sprinkling. Old covenant baptisms were performed by anointing with blood, and by the pouring of oil on the head. Baptism was also effected when men did ceremonially wash, bathe, purify and cleanse.

No one seriously questions the fact that circumcision was a sign of God's covenant. Circumcision also clearly revealed who belong to God's covenant, namely, true Israelites ([Rom. 2:28, 29](#)) and their infant seed. (Read Rev. H. Hoeksema's pamphlet, *The Biblical Ground for the Baptism of Infants*). But also these various washings and baptisms were signs of God's covenant certainly of nothing else or less - and reveal that the children no less than the parents belong to God's covenant. That means that they as well as the parents are embraced in

Rev. H. Hoeksema's pamphlet, *The Biblical Ground for the Baptism of Infants*). But also these various washings and baptisms were signs of God's covenant certainly of nothing else or less - and reveal that the children no less than the parents belong to God's covenant. That means that they as well as the parents are embraced in His everlasting love. This is plain from [Deut. 29:9-17](#), where the covenant is said to embrace "all of you your captains, elders, officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, for a people unto himself." Covenant people are clearly identified as "the seed of Abraham," "all Judah with their little ones, their wives and their children" ([II Chron. 20:7, 13](#)).

We know from the New Testament that passing through the Red Sea, the Israelites were baptized. They were also baptized in the wilderness, and that as families. A family baptism took place in a dry land, when "the heavens also dropped at the presence of God . . . Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thy inheritance . . . Thy congregation hath dwelt therein" (Psm. 68:6-10). The families of Israel, by a plentiful rain in the wilderness, were baptized and dwelt (lived) in that baptism, just as we do now in ours. Referring to the baptism that took place passing through the Red Sea, the psalmist praises God that He had so "redeemed Thy people." Then he says, "The waters saw Thee, O God they were afraid . . . the clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound, Thine arrows (missiles: raindrops) also went abroad . . . Thou leddest Thy people as a flock" (Psm. 77:14-20). This throws light on [I Cor. 10:1-2](#), with implications perspicuous and powerful.

Yet these various baptisms all pointed to but one baptism, still to come. "This external washing with water" pointed to the fact, now realized, of our having been "washed by Christ's blood and Spirit." Baptism is a reality and has a sign of the reality. The sign of the real baptism is with the ablution of water. So that, the real baptism, merely signified with water, is actually and only with the blood and Spirit of Christ. (Heid. Catec., Of Holy Baptism, Lord's Day 26, Ques. 69-74). This one baptism, then still to come, was continually put before the minds of God's people, especially by the prophets. A prophecy of it is had, first, in [Proverbs 1:23](#), "Turn you at My reproof: behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you." Second, Isaiah prophesied that Israel would be troubled in heart "until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high" (32:15). Third, through Isaiah the Lord promised, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring" (44:3). Fourth, "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together" (45:8). Fifth, it

is also prophesied how Christ himself should be the baptizer, and how He should effect His baptism: "So shall He sprinkle many nations" (52:15). This was fulfilled in the execution of His great commission, "Go ye, (lit., having gone), disciple the nations, baptizing them and teaching them..." Sixth, God through Ezekiel promised, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you... and I will put My Spirit within you" (36:25, 27). Seventh, in vision the Lord saw the promised baptism as already fulfilled: "for I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel" (39:29). Eighth, Israel was taught that this promised baptism of the Spirit included not only "the people, congregation, elders, priests and ministers, but the children, those that suck the breasts," so that they all, including the infant seed of the congregation, were "Thine heritage." To them the promise was, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh," including sons and daughters. "In those days will I pour out My Spirit" ([Joel 2:16, 17, 28, 29](#)). Ninth, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace ..." ([Zech. 12:10](#)). You see, then, how severely biblical the Heidelberg Catechism is on baptism. It is quite in keeping with the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

The theme we have really been treating is, "Baptism With the Blood and Spirit of Christ" (cf. Heid. Cat., Q. 70). Under that heading the divisions are, I. The Old Testament on Various Baptisms, and II. The New Testament on One Baptism. This brings us to the point where we now give consideration to baptism in the light of the New Testament. Beside the beautiful expression given to the doctrine of baptism as in the Heidelberg Catechism, as noted above, it is also beautifully put in the Belgic Confession of Faith. "Our gracious God and Father has commanded all those who are His to be baptized with pure water . . . signifying to us that as water washes away the filth of the body when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized when sprinkled upon him, so does the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath unto children of God. Not that this is effected by the external water, but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God, who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil Therefore, our Lord gives . . . the . . . washing, cleansing, and purging our souls of all filth . . . Neither does this baptism only avail us at the time when the water is poured upon us and received by us, but also through the whole course of our life" (Art. 34).

When you look at baptism as taught in the New Testament, you may expect that the New Testament doctrine of it will be in perfect harmony with what we have already seen of its Old Testament setting and exemplification. It simply could not be otherwise. According to the New Testament, there were two great historical victories which were typical baptisms, prefigurations of the baptism with the blood ([Mark 10:38](#)) and Spirit of Christ. These events were the Flood ([I Pet. 3:21](#)) and the passage through the Red Sea ([I Cor. 10:1-2](#)). With the Flood there was a baptism of the church in seed form, the baptism of a family, and that on the faith-basis of [Genesis 7:1](#), which see. In this instance, it is plain as can be that although the "world of the ungodly" ([II Pet. 2:5](#)) was immersed, it was not baptized, and that although Noah and his family were baptized, they were not immersed. Paul, writing of the other baptism victory, states, "that all our fathers were ***under the cloud,***" ***not*** underneath it; for the cloud was behind them, making separation between them and the Egyptians. They were under the cloud, under the

dominance of its Presence, under the guidance of the Faces, Persons dwelling in the cloud. "And all passed through the sea," certainly not under the sea; not even in the sea, as we shall see. For they went through the sea dry shod and as on dry land. They "were all baptized unto Moses," that is, in reference to Moses, who as a type of Christ led them through the sea in redeeming power. They were, as the King James Version (the best Bible version in all the world) has it, baptized "in the cloud and in the sea." The preposition is the Greek **en**, used with the dative. It is properly translated *in* when it happens to be a dative of place, as "*in* the Jordan." But when it happens to be a dative of means, as here, it is properly translated **with**. Then it properly reads, they were baptized "**with** the cloud and **with** the sea." So it is in the Greek Testament. The Dutch Bible has exactly literally the same as the Greek New Testament, but the German Bible goes farther to correctly translate the Greek with its, "mit der wolche and mit der meer," that is "**with** the cloud and **with** the sea." It is not the place, but the means of baptism which is emphasized. According to the text, they were not in the cloud nor in the sea. They were under the cloud and through the sea. So that their baptism in this case was with the cloud and with the sea; one baptism with two aspects. Here occurred the baptism of a nation, one of the many nations referred to in [Isaiah 52:15](#). The Egyptians were immersed, but not baptized, whereas the Israelites were baptized, but not immersed. According to Scripture, there is a great deal of difference between immersion and baptism.

The New Testament records eleven cases of baptism, which may be found in [Matt. 3](#), [Acts 2, 8, 9, 11, 16, 18, 19](#) and [I Cor. 1](#). It is remarkably significant that five of these cases were households (or family) baptisms. For the families of Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippian jailer, Crispus and Stephanus were baptized. We may inject the thought here that if, as it may be argued against us, there were no infants in these families, why is it that those who so argue do not practice family baptism? Continuing, among these eleven cases of baptism, three of them were purely individual baptisms, the reason being obvious when it is observed that they were Jesus' baptism, Paul's and the Ethiopian eunuch's.

The Mode of the One Baptism

There were "various baptisms" in the Old Testament dispensation. The Flood was, for the family of Noah, a baptism; so for the congregation of Israel, the passage through the Red Sea, and the clouds pouring out water on the Lord's inheritance in the wilderness were baptisms. Early pictures were these baptisms, continued in the frequent prophecies of the outpouring of the Spirit. The subject as also treated in the Reformed standards has both mode and meaning clearly determined. Mode is there expressed by such terms as poured and sprinkled, implying the also accompanying terms expressing meaning, as purging, cleansing and having been washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ. The actual cases of baptism in the New Testament, about eleven in number, so far from being in conflict with all this, prove to be in unshakable alignment with it.

The Lord's baptism is the first case on record in the New Testament. It is commonly assumed that He was immersed. But if we proceed on the basis of what we have already found in our

investigation of the Old Testament, and believing the unity of the two testaments, we would say that this must be actually impossible. The Old Testament does not countenance it. Yet a superficial reading of Matthew's account might lead one to presuppose immersion, as also a failure to exegete the passage would lead to such an error. Also one might stick at a minor inaccuracy in our confession and so come to suppose this. The last statement is not made in any way of sitting in judgment of the Reformed fathers and their highly esteemed creedal expressions. It is to suggest more accurate statement. That is what development of the truth is, more accurate statement of the truth. Then when the Confession (Art. 9) says, "the Son was seen in the water," it would be more accurate to say that he was "seen at the water." This is especially true when one understands the proper use of prepositions in the Greek New Testament. The same article in the Confession also states that "our Lord was baptized in Jordan." This has the backing of [Mark 1:9](#). But it does not necessarily follow from His being baptized in a certain river area that He "was seen in the water." That He was actually seen in the water is neither a report of an eye-witness, nor a claim of Scripture, explicitly or implicitly. No one is ever going to prove that He was in the water, let alone seen in the water. John says he saw the Spirit descending upon Him. From that sight alone, and so from the manner in which He was baptized with the Holy Ghost, it might be legitimately concluded that also the water of baptism was seen descending upon Him. For there is always something perfectly visible in every case of baptism, and that is, "water . . . is seen on the body of the baptized" (Art. 34). For Matthew in his account says, not that, upon being baptized, He went up out of the water (KJV), but went up from the water.

Here, then, we have one of two interesting words in Matthew's account, the word *apo, from* (v.16). According to this, Jesus was not at all in the water, but by the water. Nor is it anywhere stated in Scripture that He was baptized *in* water, but *with* water. The difference between these two prepositions must not only be maintained, but also appreciated. The Greek preposition **en** has either reference to place or reference to means. When it refers to place, as it does in [Matt. 3:6](#), it is properly translated *in*. When the idea is that of means or instrument, then it is properly translated *with*. The KJV is correct in having "*with* water" and "*with* the Holy Ghost" (3:11). The ASV is correct at this point only in its margin. Mark states, "John did baptize in the wilderness," "baptized in the river Jordan," denoting place. The King James translators properly understood Mark's meaning when they translated the same preposition (**en**) "*with* water" and "*with* the Holy Ghost." These venerable translators show understanding of **en** as it appears twice in the same verse: "in their synagogue . . . a man with an unclean spirit" (1:23). In the synagogue he was, but in the unclean spirit he was not; it was in him! Also we find, "set Him at (**en**) His own right hand in (**en**) the heavenly places" ([Eph. 1:20](#)), and, "is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" ([Heb. 12:2](#)). So, better would be, "the Son was seen at the water." The Confession (Art. 9) merely mentions this by the way. The really important thing seen was not the Son at the water, but "water . . . seen on the body of the baptized . . ." (Art. 34).

The other interesting word in [Matthew 3](#) is *katabainon, descending*. As Jesus was baptized with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit was seen *descending* upon Him, fulfilling the promise, "I will pour out My Spirit." Certainly the Lord's baptism with water must be perfectly congruent to His baptism with the Spirit. [John 1:31-33](#) (KJV) stands in proof of this. According to the KJV, Matthew writes that He went up out of the water, and Mark, that He was coming up out of the

water. Matthew uses **apo**, from the water, and Mark uses **ek**, also, properly, from (the water). Mark cannot contradict Matthew.

Much appeal has been made to two other Greek prepositions, **ek** and **eis**, to support, practically exclusively, the ideas *out of* and *into*, respectively, in order to teach that the baptized went down into the water and came up out of the water, and that in the very act of baptism. But when you examine the usage of **eis** and **ek** in Scripture, you find something different from this claim. In [John 20](#), Mary Magdalene comes "unto (**eis**) the tomb" to find the stone removed "from (**ek**) the tomb." Here it is plain that Mary went *to* the tomb, not into it, and that the stone was taken *from* the tomb, not out of it. Then Peter and John "went toward (**eis**) the tomb" and John "came first to (**eis**) the tomb . . . yet entered not in." Peter arriving, "entered into the tomb . . . Then entered in the other disciple" (vv. 1-8). Here demonstrated is the distinction between "going to" and "going into." By itself, **eis** means to, expressing motion toward, as in [Jn. 20:1, 3, 4](#). To express motion into, the preposition is both prefixed to the verb and added after the verb, as in v.6, **eiselthen eis**. (See [Acts 9:6, 8, 17](#); [Matt. 18:3](#); [Jn. 3:5](#); Mk. 2:1; Mt. 6:20). So then, [Mark 1:10, 11](#) ought to be translated, "coming up from (**ek**) the water" and "a voice came from (**ek**) the heavens," as in [John 20:1](#), "from (**ek**) the sepulchre."

The next case of baptism in the New Testament is that of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. Whereas, in the case of Jesus, His baptism with water (the symbol) took place before His baptism with the Spirit (the reality), it is just the reverse with the disciples at Pentecost. They first experienced the real baptism, then received symbolical baptism. That they "were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (2:4) means not that they were somehow put into the Spirit, but that the Spirit was put into them ([Ezek. 36:27](#)). The Spirit came upon them, appearing like cloven tongues of fire, and "sat upon each of them." So the church was "baptized with the Holy Ghost" ([Acts 1:5](#)). Then Peter commanded them to be baptized with water, and that baptism also took place (2:38, 41). How it was performed, there is no question. That the mode of baptism cannot, one way or the other, be determined from these cases of baptism, is a contention which cannot be maintained in the face of [Acts 1:5, 8](#); 2:3, 4, 17, 18, 33, 38f. Peter explains the supernatural baptism with the Spirit in the words, "saith God, 'I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh,' and, 'I will pour out in those days of My Spirit'." God through Christ "hath shed forth" (*poured out*; same word as in vv. 17 and 18) the Spirit. When Peter exhorted, "Repent and be baptized" and "they were baptized" (41), it could not have been done any otherwise than as graphically delineated in this whole context, and as in every place where is found the promise of the out-poured Spirit.

The next case is the baptism of the people of Samaria ([Acts 8:12-16](#)). It is remarkable, to say the least, that here where you have baptism, water is not mentioned, yet mode is indicated (8:16)! What follows is the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch. Especially verses 38 and 39 are surely to be emphasized. I call attention to "down into the water . . . and . . . up out of the water." The question is, who experienced this action? Also, which is first, in the account, the action of going down, or the action of coming up? In answer, we point out that Philip, as commanded, joined the eunuch as he was traveling by chariot in the desert. Running beside the vehicle, he heard the man reading aloud the prophecy of Isaiah. Keeping up with the lumbering chariot, Philip greeted the man with the sudden, "Doubtless so! yet understandest thou what thou

readest?" (Gk.). Then the man "desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." Then Philip instructed him in the Scripture he had been reading, [Isaiah 53](#). Likely it is that Philip also gave him some insights into the immediately preceding context, 52:13-15. For since the man requested baptism, we would think naturally the baptism of [Isaiah 52:15](#) would be in mind, "So shall He sprinkle many nations." Philip complying with the request, the man "commanded the chariot to stand still, and they both went down 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." Here three things occurred: (1) they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; (2) he baptized him, and (3) they came up out of the water. To be carefully noted is the fact that the going down into the water and the coming up out of the water did not constitute the baptism. The baptism took place between the going down and the coming up. Since the going down and the coming up are said of both of them, the words cannot imply immersion, as Philip obviously would not immerse himself along with the eunuch. That both went down, both Philip and the eunuch, that action sees them now stepping down out of the chariot where casual water immediately confronts them.

Eis is not always translated into. In [Matt. 12:41](#) you read, "they repented at (*eis*) the preaching of Jonah," and Mk 5:19 states, "Go home to (*eis*) thy friends." "She goeth unto (*eis*) the grave . . . she fell down at (*eis*) His feet . . . Jesus . . . cometh to (*eis*) the grave" ([Jn. 11:31](#), 32, 38). Also see again [John 20:1, 3, 4, 8](#). For "up out of (*ek*) the water," compare [Jn. 13:4](#), "He riseth from (*ek*) supper" and "Mary . . . seeth the stone taken away from (*ek*) the sepulchre" (20:1). The stone, not being in the sepulchre, needed not to be removed out of it, simply from it. Both Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, stood at it, where the baptism was then performed; then they came up from the water. Sound exegesis sees neither of them in the water.

The Mode of Baptism Established

So far we have shown and proved that there were many baptisms in the Old Testament, and all, every one of them, were by sprinkling and pouring. None were by immersion. It was also shown that the word dip as related to sprinkle, is never, in that connection, "dip *or* sprinkle," but "dip *and* sprinkle." Ten instances of this action show that the dipping was not the baptism, but was instrumental to baptizing by sprinkling. Whatever dipping there was, it did not happen to the baptized. Also it was shown that always in all dispensations of God's covenant believing parents and their elect infant seed were included in it. The prophets, throughout, proclaim the baptism of the Spirit in the promise that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, including nursing infants. The New Testament doctrine of baptism proves to be in harmony with all this, and sharply distinguishes between immersion and baptism. Our intended aim, all along, is now expressed in the title word **Established**, above, using it in the sense of "put beyond doubt."

Continuing with the recorded cases of baptism in the New Testament, we look at that of Paul's baptism. In [Acts 9:18](#) we read, "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized. And when he had received

meat, he was strengthened." This is interesting. For the brief, concise account has no hint of Paul making a change of clothes, no mention of going out anywhere, no going down or coming up, no mention of Abana or Pharpar, nothing of what one German scholar imagined, a **Badezimmer**, or a **Vollbad**. His rising up, John Gill thought, had to be in order to go out and be immersed, for it was not necessary to arise to be baptized by sprinkling or pouring. But Paul was commanded to arise with a view to being baptized, and to "wash away thy sins" ([Acts 22:16](#)). The King James text is plain enough. However, the original in the commonly received text reveals nicely and at a glance the grammatical structure: "And immediately such as scales fell off from his eyes. He recovered sight on the spot! And having arisen, was baptized; and having taken food, was strengthened." The two participles in the last statement described not an act preparatory to baptism, such as going out to a river, but how, in what manner, he was baptized, and how strengthened. (Cp. how "He emptied himself," Phil. 2:7, "taking the form of a servant.") The meaning is, "having risen and still standing, he was baptized, and having taken food and still partaking, he was strengthened." Just as he was strengthened while and right where he had been eating, so he was baptized right where he rose up ([Acts 5:17](#)) and stood. There is nothing in the text like "having risen" he was taken out to the Abana and immersed. That would be *eisegesis*, not exegesis.

Then there is the case of the baptism of Cornelius ([Acts 10:44-48](#); 11:15-17). The question we raise here is, Does this case throw any light on the matter of mode? Let us see, noting the added emphasis. "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all of them who heard the word. And they of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.... Then answered Peter, 'Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord... And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" After reading this, isn't it rather natural, and not at all surprising, to feel and agree that the passage indeed does seem to throw light on the question of mode! After all, what was it which suggested to Peter that these Gentiles ought to be baptized? Why, it was simply the fact that they, too, had received the Holy Spirit. Then what was the manner of their receiving Him? He fell on them and was poured out on them. When Peter saw the pouring out and the falling on them of the Spirit, he saw that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was the real baptism (of which water baptism is the sign), and it was accomplished by pouring! This pouring out of the Spirit on the people suggested to Peter's mind John's baptism. Remarkable! Would that pouring out of the Spirit suggest to the mind of an immersionist John's baptism? How did John baptize? And how were these baptized, after Peter commanded it to be done? Could it have been in any other manner but in harmony with the outpouring and the falling on them of the Spirit?

The remaining cases are the household baptisms, except for one, which was of some disciples of John the Baptist. Of the Philippian jailer it is said that he 'was baptized, he and all his, straightway.' The last word there means *forthwith* (as in chap. 9), or *on the spot, immediately, instantly!* Not somewhere outside the prison, but right there where he was, the jailer was baptized on the spot. Scripture plainly teaches the unity of the mode and action of baptism.

What is true in this connection of the baptism with the Holy Spirit must also be true of baptism with water. In Scripture you do not find different modes of baptism. How could there be baptism with the Holy Spirit by one mode and baptism with water by another mode? The baptism with the Holy Spirit was by the shedding forth, that is, the pouring out, or falling on, of the Spirit. Nothing is more positively clear in Scripture than that baptism **signifies** the *washing* away of our sins by *the sprinkling* of the blood of Christ and the pouring out of His Spirit, or the cleansing of the soul from sin by His blood, and regeneration of the heart by His Spirit.

There are those eleven cases of New Testament baptism; three are baptisms of single individuals with no children, --Jesus, the Ethiopian eunuch and Paul; three others include the disciples of John, the believers at Pentecost and the Samaritan converts. The remaining five were family baptisms. Since, at Pentecost, the promise was to the families of Israel and their children ([Acts 2:39](#)), then over half of all these cases were family baptisms. That in itself is quite significant. What if we can not prove that in these families there were children? No one can prove that no children were in them. What if we could not prove from these cases that the mode of baptism is sprinkling or pouring? No one will prove on the basis of them that the mode is immersion. But if the immersionist cannot prove his mode from these instances of baptism, what will he do for support of his position on mode? Really nothing at all; it goes lost. He needs these cases for his so called "proof." But the elimination of the eleven cases from the debate does not annihilate the argument for the mode of sprinkling or pouring. That stands intact. That argumentation does not need these eleven instances for its survival. As we have already shown, there is an abundance of Scripture support for it much elsewhere in the Word of God. But if you believe in the unity, continuity and perpetuity of the covenant, you will not need proof that infants were baptized as well as their Christian parents, and in the same manner practiced from old covenant days.

Then there is the passage which is appealed to in support of the "burial theory" of baptism, as in [Rom. 6:34](#) (Cf. [Col. 2:12](#)), which reads, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Church was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The American Standard Version, more exact, reads, "Or are ye ignorant that, all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried, therefore, with Him through baptism into death . . ." The original could be even better translated, "Or are ye ignorant that, all who were baptized in Christ Jesus, in the death of Him were baptized? We were buried, therefore, together with Him through the baptism in the death . . ." Paul is certainly not here taking up the matter of water baptism, a thought which loses sight of the real meaning of the passage. Here the subject is, **The Objective Incorporation of the Entire Church into Christ**, in His crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection. The whole elect church is viewed in its identification with Christ crucified, dead, buried and risen. They all were baptized in Christ Jesus. It was a baptism in His death. It is as plain as can be that His death was a baptism of blood. (Cp. Mt. 20:22-23; Mk. 19:38-39; Lk. 12:50 with Lk. 22:20). When He died, we were incorporated, identified with Him, so that the once-for-all settled fact of the matter is, "We died! We were buried." (Notice the tense of the verbs.) When this took place is perfectly clear. We died with Him on the Cross. We were united together with Him in all His redemptive acts. Our position, then, is one of identification with

Christ. We were, then, positionally buried together with Him through the baptism, that is, the true, historical baptism, of which water baptism is the sign. It is all an accomplished fact for the church through the baptism (there is only the one baptism) in the death (there is only the one atoning death). So then, Paul wrote here not of individual water baptism, nor even of regeneration, but corporately of the Baptism in the Death. The object of Paul's words is not to show that Christians ought to walk in newness of life because figuratively raised from a watery grave in a symbolic ritual, but because spiritually, objectively, historically, unitedly, corporately and representatively raised from the grave through the death. There is nothing of mode here, either, and to introduce it is to weaken the idea of our corporate identity with Christ, central and uppermost in the passage. We were buried with Him through the Baptism in the Death. Peter describes that baptism when he speaks of it as "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" ([1 Pet. 1:2](#)) and the pouring out of His Spirit ([Acts 2:17-18](#)). Baptism is a symbol, not of death, but, of LIFE.

Baptism was always by sprinkling or pouring. The "various baptisms" of the old covenant were always done *with* water, not *in* water; the water being sprinkled on or poured over the body, and never the body plunged into water. The new covenant, knowing nothing different, has the real cleansing from sin in the blood of the Lamb ([Heb. 10:22](#); 12:24) represented in baptism by sprinkling. Also the Lord has given us a mode for the symbolical baptism which perfectly corresponds with the mode of the real baptism. That we have proved. May the Lord use this study to deliver from misconception and error, and to enlighten and bless the serious student of God's Word!