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Chapter 1 : The Spurgeon Center | Christian Baptism

*Christian Baptism its Object Mode and Subjects [Reverend Z. M. McGhee] on blog.quintoapp.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. This scarce antiquarian book is a facsimile reprint of the original.*

Perhaps, indeed, I ought to say that all Christian people without any exception whatever, acknowledge the appointment to which I have just referred; because the Society of Friends, although it rejects the outward and visible signs, nevertheless believes in those great principles which those signs are intended to symbolize, viz. By almost all Christians in every age of the world, the observance of the outward sign as well as the recognition of the inward grace has been regarded as part of the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. On this occasion we have to do only with the ordinance of baptism, and to this I wish to draw your candid and careful attention. I think it may also be asserted that with the exception of the Society of Friends, all Christians regard the ordinance of baptism as one in which water is to be employed in some way or other; and very rightly so, because if baptism be altogether inward and spiritual “the baptism of the Holy Ghost” then we must believe that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a baptism which one man can administer to another. The very fact that the baptism mentioned in the Scripture is a baptism which one man can administer to another, is sufficient to prove that in this baptism there is some outward, visible, material rite, ceremony, or ordinance which Christian people are to observe. Thus far, with the exception of the Society of Friends, I believe we are all agreed that the ordinance of baptism does imply the use and application of water in some way or other. So far we all, or nearly all, travel together, but at this point, the body of Christians to which we belong, feel compelled to pursue a different course from that which is adopted by their brethren. The very name we bear, indicates that there is something or other in connection with the ordinance of baptism in which we do not agree with the great majority of Christian people. The majority of Christian people believe that so far as the outward rite is concerned, the conditions of the ordinance are fulfilled when water, in however small a quantity, is poured or sprinkled upon the candidate; we, on the other hand, believe that the outward conditions of the ordinance are not fulfilled unless the candidate be wholly immersed in water. Again, and this is by far the most important point of difference, the very great majority of Christian people think infant children fit and proper subjects for this ordinance; we, on the other hand, believe that none are fit and proper subjects for the ordinance of baptism, excepting such as really believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and their King. You will perceive that the difference resolves itself into two questions “a question with regard to the mode of this ordinance, and a question with reference to the subjects. Again, let me explain this matter and set in as plain terms as possible. We believe that this ordinance should never be administered apart from the entire immersion of the candidate in water, and we also believe that none should be candidates for this ordinance excepting those who avow their faith in Christ. We do not contend for the baptism of adults; we contend for the baptism of believers. Who are you, that you so pertinaciously maintain these crotchety notions of yours, when all the world is against you, and when there is not only the decision of the Church of Rome, against which we should ourselves rebel, but the voice of the Church of England, the voice of the Church of Scotland, the voice of the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Congregationalists, all against you, and the most able divines of the Christian world, all testifying that you are in error? Who are you, that you should thus set up your opinions against everybody else? Call a solemn assembly; canvass the Christian world; and certainly for one hand held up in favour of your opinions, there will be a thousand held up to their decided and utter condemnation. We have not such entire faith in the infallibility of majorities as to submit our religious convictions to any such tribunal. If the Copernican system of astronomy had been put to the vote two hundred and fifty years ago, it would have had a smaller minority than our views would have if put to the vote now. If the truth of Christianity were now submitted to the vote of the entire world, there would be somewhere about five hundred millions against it. And further, let the voters be all Christian people, let the suffrage be confined to those who really believe in Christ, and then if you as a Church of England man, or you

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as a Methodist, or you as a Congregationalism or you as a Presbyterian, submit your views of Church-government, and some other things, depend upon it you would as certainly be defeated as we should be if we submitted baptism to the decision of such a council as that. I hope that no one is so silly as to suppose that we are necessarily in error because we are in the minority; for let this be borne in mind, especially by the worshipper of majorities, that every great truth was at one time held by a very small minority, if indeed it be not held by a small minority now. Every great truth, whether in the province of religion, or in the domain of science, or in the region of politics, is at first and for a very long time held by small minorities; and in all the currency of proverbs, there is no more pernicious maxim than that "What everybody says must be true. I think we have just as good a right to ask your reasons for maintaining the opposite opinion. Galileo had just as good a right to ask his oponents why they believed the world did not move, as they to ask him why he believed it did. However you ask for our reasons, and I shall endeavour to give those reasons as clearly and as briefly as I can. We ought to have good reasons, because I can assure you it has never been much to our secular comfort and advantage that we hold these views. These views have never done us very much good, considered in a merely secular or worldly sense. We are not bound to them by any golden chain. They have not been made plain and clear and attractive to us by rich benefices and comfortable livings. Our opinions are not endowed with prelacies and prebendal stalls, with manses, and glebes, and royal bounties. Thank God, whatever people may choose to say of us, they cannot say we are Baptists for the love of filthy lucre. We must of course state our reasons, and I say they ought to be somewhat substantial reasons. Well, then, we go on this principle mark you, that the only appeal is to the Word of God. This is a principle in which every honest and sound-hearted Protestant must agree with us; it is his principle as much as ours, and it is the only principle that will save him from all the errors and superstitions of Romanism. And I say to every Protestant here, that he must accept the principle and act upon it. If he begin to refer to fathers, and churches, and councils, well then let him take care; he may rely upon it that on such a principle he will not be able to stand for one moment. If he thinks with such weapons to vanquish us, let him rest assured that he will very soon be vanquished himself by the same. It may be that the charge from such ordnance shall destroy us, but depend upon it the recoil will destroy the man who has the temerity to fire it. This principle then will be agreed in by every Protestant, excepting those who in these days are beginning to protest Scripture itself, but every sound-hearted, honest minded Protestant, will go with us in saying that the Word of God is the only tribunal to which we can go. This being the case, let us see how the matter stands. It is alleged by us, then, that in the ordinance of baptism the candidate should be wholly immersed in water. And now, if we were disposed, and if we recognised any other authority than Scripture, we might refer to the law of the Church of England, which is most distinctly to the effect, that excepting in cases of certified weakness, immersion shall be the mode of administering this ordinance; and the Church of England man, at all events, has nothing to say against the adoption of this practice; it is his practice as much as ours; it is his law as much as ours. His prayer-book tells him we are right; the large fonts, three feet in diameter, which he sees in so many parish churches, tell him we are right; and he knows that in this respect we are the only faithful Church of England people in this land. We might also refer to the testimony of the ancient Church, and the practice of the olden time, with regard to which it may be said with perfect certainty that in the first ages immersion was the commonly accepted mode. This, indeed, is generally admitted by divines who still maintain that this mode is not binding upon Christians at the present time; but surely, if baptism is to be a representation of burial and resurrection there must be something in the ordinance itself which shall be suggestive of such a truth. And if we consult trustworthy authorities for the meaning of this word we shall find that in all cases it either may or must imply the idea of immersion. I lately read a very valuable paper by a most scholarly divine, who tells us that he has thoroughly investigated every instance in which the word can be found whether in the fathers or in the classics. He gives us upwards of two hundred cases, in the great majority of which the word must mean immersion, and in every one of which it may have, and probably really has, that signification. Indeed, almost all scholarly men are agreed that this is the meaning of the word; and not only so, but also that this was the mode that was adopted in the apostolic age. These

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things are not disputed, or are scarcely disputed. Men do ask why should you adhere to this mode? But again, our more important difference with our Christian brethren is that we decline to accept as candidates for the ordinance all but those who avow their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now here, although the practice of Christendom is very much against us, I think that even in that practice there are some points that tell very strongly in our favour. For example, baptism is called a sacrament. This word is scarcely recognised amongst us I believe, but still let us examine it. Baptism is regarded as a sacrament. What is a sacrament? I suppose it is an oath. Now would you administer an oath to an infant child? Is there common sense in such a procedure as that? But you say it is not to the infant that the oath is administered at all; it is to the sponsors. Well then, I want to know to whom the sacrament is administered. The oath is administered to the sponsors; the baptism is then administered to the sponsors, for the baptism and the oath are one. But it would seem as though the ordinance were divided. The water is administered to the child, and the oath is administered to the sponsors. There is something rather like confusion here. If baptism be a sacrament and a sacrament an oath, then in administering baptism to a child, you are administering an oath to a child. But surely every oath ought to be administered to such, and such only as understand the nature of an oath, and also give a solemn assent to the propositions that are embodied in it. And thus if the word sacrament is to be applied to baptism at all, I accept it then, and I submit that it protests, and protests most strongly, against the administration of this ordinance to any except to those who understand and assent to the principles which are connected with it. Although our appeal is to Scripture, our Paedo-Baptist friends must really not suppose that the testimony of the Church is all in their favour, for certainly for two or three centuries if not more, the baptism of infant children was not the general practise of the Christian church. It was opposed by Tertullian at the latter end of the second century or the beginning of the third; and at a far later date than this, we find baptism administered to persons of mature years. I do not wish to press into our service such cases as that of Constantine, who was baptized late in life. He was born a heathen, and he appears to have continued practically a heathen of the very worst stamp to the last. The mistake in his case was, not that he was baptized so late, but that he was baptized at all. As he was baptized during his last illness, his baptism I presume was clinical, and therefore administered by aspersion, and those who are in favour of this mode are perfectly welcome to this sprinkled Pagan; I am very glad that the ordinance in its Scriptural form was never disgraced by having Constantine for a subject. But we find that several of the most eminent and pious fathers of the Church were not baptized until they had arrived at maturity and were thoroughly Christian men. In the fourth century flourished Gregory of Nazianzum, Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine; these eminent men, who were afterwards such great theologians, were all them the sons of Christian parents, at least of Christian mothers, and yet not one of them was baptized until mature age, and until each of them had strong religious convictions; in fact, none of them were baptized until they were truly converted to Jesus Christ. The case of Gregory peculiarly in point, Gregory of Nazianzum, was the son of a Christian bishop; his pious mother Nonna, dedicated him to God from his very birth, and yet when was he baptized? When he was thirty years old! The instance of Augustine is, perhaps, still more remarkable. When he was a grown up lad. Now mark you, I do not say that these cases prove that there was no such thing as infant baptism in the fourth century, and it is for no such purpose I adduce them; but they do prove this, that Christian mothers, such as Nonna and Monica, and Anthusa, Christian women of the very highest intelligence and piety, did not in that age deem it necessary that their infant children should be baptized, but left the matter to be one of personal profession when their children should have a faith to profess. It is true that households were baptized, and it is said that there might have been infant children in those households. It is a sufficient answer to this to say, that there might not have been any infants in those households. And in fact, so far as historical narrative is concerned, there is not a single incident in Scripture that leads us to suppose that any but professed believers in Christ were baptized. These then, are some of our reasons for holding these views. WE have no interest to subserve but the cause of truth. Of course, many objections are urged against these views of ours, and to some of these objections, for we shall not have time to notice them all, I shall now briefly direct attention. I have heard it said by some, and I dare say you have heard

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it too, that the administration of this ordinance by immersion is scarcely consistent with decency. There are some people in the world, who I suppose, would advocate the omission of the first chapter from the Epistle to the Romans; there are some people who must think it would be a very proper thing to blot the seventh commandment from the decalogue, for it is scarcely decent; and they ought to go in for an expurgated edition of the sermon on the Mount, and that I hope would satisfy them. My dear friends, Christ ordained, and his apostles practised this ordinance of immersion; most certainly they did; there is no dispute about that. There is dispute whether the ordinance is obligatory in this form at the present day, but really there is no dispute that this was commanded and that this was done. Do you think that our Lord Jesus Christ would ever have sanctioned anything that bordered in the slightest degree on indecency? But it is a strong point, or supposed to be a strong point, that on the day of Pentecost three thousand people were baptized, and how could they all be immersed? The only objections I can imagine are these, "a lack of water and a lack of time. But to suppose that there was a deficient water-supply, "to suppose this from all that we know, and especially from all that we do not know about time, "if the apostles alone had baptized these three thousand, there certainly would be something rather formidable in the objection; but it would seem that the apostles were not in the habit of baptizing many, and that they often gave this work to baptism, those who were first baptized might have been hundred administrators of administration to the whole three thousand might very easily be accomplished before the sun went down upon the day of Pentecost. Undoubtedly it was a case of immersion. When you think of the cloud, you must not think of a small pillar of cloud suspended high above the people and always going before them.

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Chapter 2 : Baptism in Its Mode and Subjects - Alexander Carson - Google Books

Christian Baptism Its Object Mode And Subjects Catholic encyclopedia: baptism new advent, one of the seven sacraments of the christian church; frequently called the 'first sacrament', the 'door of the sacraments'.

Excavated mikveh in Qumran , Israel Baptism has similarities to Tvilah , a Jewish purification ritual of immersing in water, which is required for, among other things, conversion to Judaism , [38] but which differs in being repeatable, while baptism is to be performed only once. John the Baptist , who is considered a forerunner to Christianity, used baptism as the central sacrament of his messianic movement. Likewise, Tertullian AD 200 allowed for varying approaches to baptism even if those practices did not conform to biblical or traditional mandates cf. *De corona militis* 3; *De baptismo* AD 200 explicitly stated that the amount of water was inconsequential and defended immersion, affusion, and aspersion practices Epistle As a result, there was no uniform or consistent mode of baptism in the ancient church prior to the fourth century. Mode and manner[edit] Baptism is practiced in several different ways. Aspersion is the sprinkling of water on the head, and affusion is the pouring of water over the head. In relation to baptism, some use it to refer to any form of dipping, whether the body is put completely under water or is only partly dipped in water; they thus speak of immersion as being either total or partial. Others, of the Anabaptist belief, use "immersion" to mean exclusively plunging someone entirely under the surface of the water. When "immersion" is used in opposition to "submersion", [62] it indicates the form of baptism in which the candidate stands or kneels in water and water is poured over the upper part of the body. Immersion in this sense has been employed in West and East since at least the 2nd century and is the form in which baptism is generally depicted in early Christian art. In the West, this method of baptism began to be replaced by affusion baptism from around the 8th century, but it continues in use in Eastern Christianity. Submersion is practiced in the Orthodox and several other Eastern Churches. It is seen as obligatory among some groups that have arisen since the Protestant Reformation , such as Baptists Meaning of the Greek verb baptizein[edit] The Greek-English Lexicon of Liddell and Scott gives the primary meaning of the verb baptizein, from which the English verb "baptize" is derived, as "dip, plunge", and gives examples of plunging a sword into a throat or an embryo and for drawing wine by dipping a cup in the bowl; for New Testament usage it gives two meanings: The first is Luke 22:7-11. Zodiares concludes that the washing of the hands was done by immersing them. Deaconesses helped female candidates for reasons of modesty. Do you not know, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? As soon, then, as you entered, you put off your tunic; and this was an image of putting off the old man with his deeds. For since the adverse powers made their lair in your members, you may no longer wear that old garment; I do not at all mean this visible one, but the old man, which waxes corrupt in the lusts of deceit. You were naked in the sight of all, and were not ashamed; for truly ye bore the likeness of the first-formed Adam, who was naked in the garden, and was not ashamed. Then, when you were stripped, you were anointed with exorcised oil, from the very hairs of your head to your feet, and were made partakers of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ. After these things, you were led to the holy pool of Divine Baptism, as Christ was carried from the Cross to the Sepulchre which is before our eyes. And each of you was asked, whether he believed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and you made that saving confession, and descended three times into the water, and ascended again; here also hinting by a symbol at the three days burial of Christ And at the self-same moment you were both dying and being born; [] The symbolism is threefold: For nothing perceivable was handed over to us by Jesus; but with perceivable things, all of them however conceivable. This is also the way with the baptism; the gift of the water is done with a perceivable thing, but the things being conducted, i. For, if you were without a body, He would hand over these bodiless gifts as naked [gifts] to you. But because the soul is closely linked to the body, He hands over the perceivable ones to you with conceivable things. The removal of clothing represented the "image of putting off the old man with his deeds" as per Cyril, above , so the stripping of the body before for baptism

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represented taking off the trappings of sinful self, so that the "new man", which is given by Jesus, can be put on. Long laced gown worn at a typical Lutheran baptism in Sweden in 3. Cyril again asserts above, as Adam and Eve in scripture were naked, innocent and unashamed in the Garden of Eden, nakedness during baptism was seen as a renewal of that innocence and state of original sinlessness. Other parallels can also be drawn, such as between the exposed condition of Christ during His crucifixion, and the crucifixion of the "old man" of the repentant sinner in preparation for baptism. Changing customs and concerns regarding modesty probably contributed to the practice of permitting or requiring the baptismal candidate to either retain their undergarments as in many Renaissance paintings of baptism such as those by da Vinci, Tintoretto, Van Scorel, Masaccio, de Wit and others or to wear, as is almost universally the practice today, baptismal robes. These robes are most often white, symbolizing purity. Some groups today allow any suitable clothes to be worn, such as trousers and a T-shirt—practical considerations include how easily the clothes will dry denim is discouraged, and whether they will become see-through when wet. Meaning and effects[edit] Baptism of Augustine of Hippo as represented in a sculptural group in Troyes cathedral There are differences in views about the effect of baptism for a Christian. Some Christian groups assert baptism is a requirement for salvation and a sacrament, and speak of " baptismal regeneration ". Its importance is related to their interpretation of the meaning of the "Mystical Body of Christ" as found in the New Testament. This view is shared by the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox denominations, and by Churches formed early during the Protestant Reformation such as Lutheran and Anglican. For example, Martin Luther said: To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save. No one is baptized in order to become a prince, but as the words say, to "be saved". To be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil and to enter into the kingdom of Christ and live with him forever. For Roman Catholics, baptism by water is a sacrament of initiation into the life of the children of God Catechism of the Catholic Church, ¶ The Catholic holds that there are three types of baptism by which one can be saved: Through the waters of Baptism those who are born into this world dead in sin are not only born again and made members of the Church, but being stamped with a spiritual seal they become able and fit to receive the other Sacraments. And therefore if a man refuse to hear the Church let him be considered—so the Lord commands—as a heathen and a publican. It follows that those who are divided in faith or government cannot be living in the unity of such a Body, nor can they be living the life of its one Divine Spirit. Reformed and Methodist Protestants maintain a link between baptism and regeneration, but insist that it is not automatic or mechanical, and that regeneration may occur at a different time than baptism. Baptism is not a human work; it is the place where God does the work that only God can do. This particular font was expanded in to include a small pool to provide for immersion baptism of adults. The liturgy of baptism for Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican, and Methodist makes clear reference to baptism as not only a symbolic burial and resurrection, but an actual supernatural transformation, one that draws parallels to the experience of Noah and the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea divided by Moses. Thus, baptism is literally and symbolically not only cleansing, but also dying and rising again with Christ. Catholics believe baptism is necessary to cleanse the taint of original sin, and so commonly baptise infants. In these denominations, baptism is immediately followed by Chrismation and Communion at the next Divine Liturgy, regardless of age. Orthodox likewise believe that baptism removes what they call the ancestral sin of Adam. Most Methodists and Anglicans agree that it also cleanses the taint of what in the West is called original sin, in the East ancestral sin. Baptism Jar, used in Portuguese Ceylon. Eastern Orthodox Christians usually insist on complete threefold immersion as both a symbol of death and rebirth into Christ, and as a washing away of sin. Latin Church Catholics generally baptize by affusion pouring; Eastern Catholics usually by submersion, or at least partial immersion. However, submersion is gaining in popularity within the Latin Catholic Church. In newer church sanctuaries, the baptismal font may be designed to expressly allow for baptism by immersion. According to evidence which can be traced back to at latest about the year, [] sponsors or godparents are present at baptism and vow to uphold the Christian education and life of the baptized. They interpret some Biblical passages concerning

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baptism as requiring submersion of the body in water. They also state that only submersion reflects the symbolic significance of being "buried" and "raised" with Christ. However, they do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation; but rather that it is an act of Christian obedience. The preface of the document states: Those who know how widely the churches have differed in doctrine and practice on baptism, Eucharist and ministry, will appreciate the importance of the large measure of agreement registered here. That theologians of such widely different denominations should be able to speak so harmoniously about baptism, Eucharist and ministry is unprecedented in the modern ecumenical movement. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the Commission also includes among its full members theologians of the Catholic and other churches which do not belong to the World Council of Churches itself. The Ecumenical Implications of Our Common Baptism, gave the views of a commission of experts brought together under the aegis of the World Council of Churches. The vast majority of Christian denominations admit the theological idea that baptism is a sacrament, that has actual spiritual, holy and salvific effects. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the use of the verb "baptize" is essential. A baptism in which some liquid that would not usually be called water, such as wine, milk, soup or fruit juice was used would not be considered valid. This requirement entails merely the intention "to do what the Church does", [] not necessarily to have Christian faith, since it is not the person baptizing, but the Holy Spirit working through the sacrament, who produces the effects of the sacrament. Doubt about the faith of the baptizer is thus no ground for doubt about the validity of the baptism. However, if water is sprinkled, there is a danger that the water may not touch the skin of the unbaptized. As has been stated, "it is not sufficient for the water to merely touch the candidate; it must also flow, otherwise there would seem to be no real ablution. At best, such a baptism would be considered doubtful. If the water touches only the hair, the sacrament has probably been validly conferred, though in practice the safer course must be followed. If only the clothes of the person have received the aspersion, the baptism is undoubtedly void. This teaching was affirmed against the Donatists who practiced rebaptism. The grace received in baptism is believed to operate ex opere operato and is therefore considered valid even if administered in heretical or schismatic groups. It is only possible to be baptized once, thus people with valid baptisms from other denominations may not be baptized again upon conversion or transfer. For Roman Catholics, this is affirmed in the Canon Law, in which it is written that "[e]very person not yet baptized and only such a person is capable of baptism. Specifically, "Methodist theologians argued that since God never abrogated a covenant made and sealed with proper intentionality, rebaptism was never an option, unless the original baptism had been defective by not having been made in the name of the Trinity. In the case of the major Protestant Churches, agreements involving assurances about the manner in which they administer baptism has ended this practice, which sometimes continues for other groups of Protestants. The Catholic Church has always recognized the validity of baptism in the Churches of Eastern Christianity, but it has explicitly denied the validity of the baptism conferred in the LDS Church. However, generally baptisms performed in the name of the Holy Trinity are accepted by the Orthodox Christian Church. If a convert has not received the sacrament mysterion of baptism, he or she must be baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity before they may enter into communion with the Orthodox Church. If he has been baptized in another Christian confession other than Orthodox Christianity his previous baptism is considered retroactively filled with grace by chrismation or, in rare circumstances, confession of faith.

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Chapter 3 : The Mode and Subjects of Christian Baptism; Considered in Two Discourses

*Christian Baptism: Its Object Mode and Subjects [Reverend Z. M. McGhee] on blog.quintoapp.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. This Is A New Release Of The Original Edition.*

Linkedin There are three modes or methods of water baptism used in Christian churches today: Evangelical Christians are divided on the question of which mode or modes are proper forms of baptism. Some Christians typically those who believe that only believers should be baptized think that immersion is the only valid mode, while other Christians usually those who recognize the validity of infant baptism consider all three modes to be acceptable. Some of the main points to consider are the following: To this it is usually pointed out that baptism may also serve as a picture of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit Acts 2: It is true that in Acts, Peter makes a connection between the pouring of the Spirit and the rite of baptism, but the connection is not as direct as the kind found in Romans 6: Whenever the act of baptism is described in the New Testament which is rarely , the one who is baptized actually goes into the water. Furthermore, we are not told in Scripture that we must baptize in exactly the same way as John or Philip. The mode used by the early Church in the first few centuries was immersion, with affusion reserved for occasions when immersion was impossible due to lack of sufficient water, and aspersion used for individuals too sick or weak for either immersion or affusion. Thus, immersion was the norm and the other two modes were substitutes in exceptional circumstances. This situation, however, began to change fairly early and by the 13th century was actually reversed, with aspersion the norm. Even after the Reformation, immersion as the norm became accepted only by a segment of Protestantism and only after a period of transition during which affusion was the norm. Those who believe that all three modes are valid would point out that only in the most ritualistic view of baptism can the amount of water be considered important. The immersion-only view, they say, appears absurd: What if one hair fails to be immersed? What if a finger or a hand? Where does one draw the line? But the opposing argument can be made to appear absurd also: If a small amount of water is permissible, is one drop enough? Where does one draw the line at this end? Therefore, the better approach is to realize that it is the general form of the act and the intention of those involved that matter, not the precise amount of water used. Shall we obey the command of Christ as He intended or shall we obey the command in a way that pleases us? What shall we conclude from these observations? It seems clear to us that immersion is the biblical norm, but that it is not an inflexible norm. That is, Scripture and common sense indicate that the water is not all-important and that, therefore, other modes may be used as substitutes in exceptional circumstances. God accepts the believer on the basis of his faith in Christ and his desire to obey Him, not on the basis of how much water covered his body when he was baptized. The doctrine that immersion is the only valid mode of baptism and that only those so baptized should be admitted into the fellowship of the Church body would, therefore, appear to be a bit extreme and not based on Scripture. The Church should welcome into its fellowship all those whom Christ has accepted

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Chapter 7 : Baptism - Wikipedia

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