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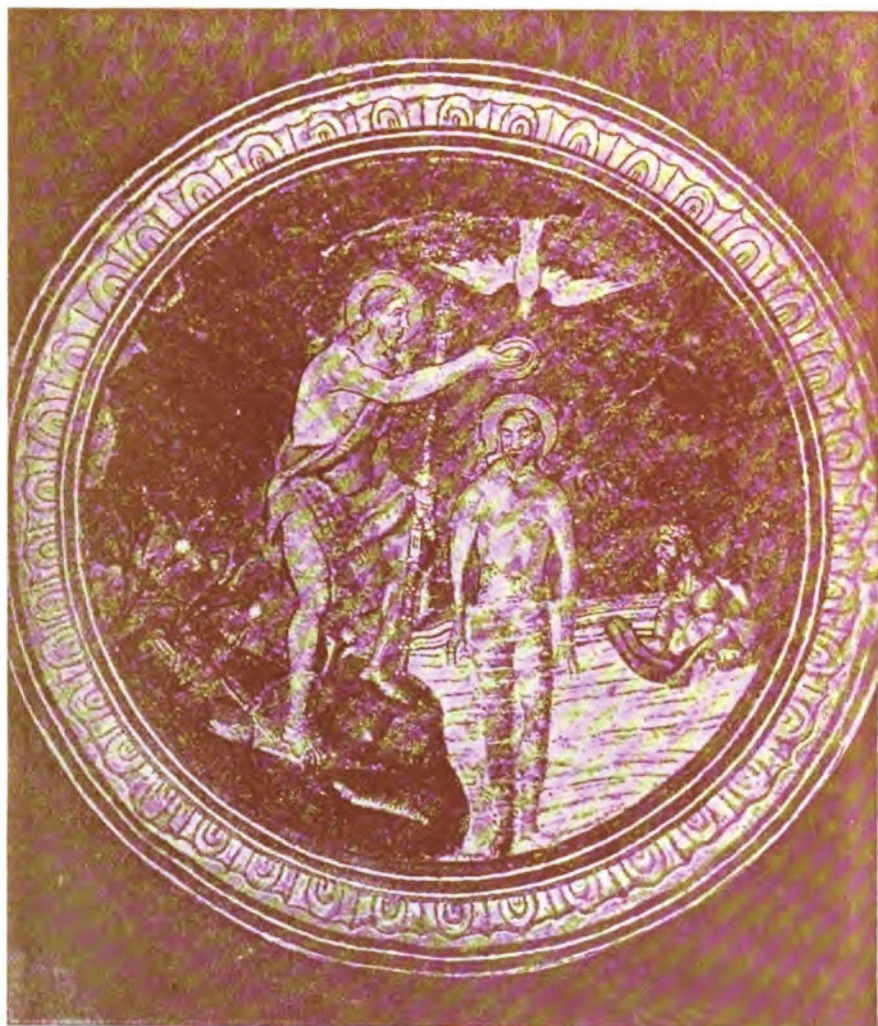
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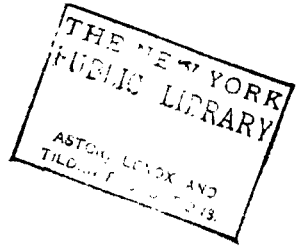
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RICCI'S PHOTOGRAPH. (Pages 15 and 17.)



THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

THE ARCHÆOLOGY OF BAPTISM. ✓

BY HOWARD OSGOOD.

ARCHÆOLOGY is the investigation that is busied with ancient monuments and especially with ancient art. However valuable its search may be, its teachings discredit themselves if they are not in harmony with the plain, unequivocal testimony of the literature and history of the period investigated. The last analysis of the archæology, literature, and history of any age must find all three in agreement, or there is some error in the analysis.

In the archæology of the first Christian rite there have been three points of special dissension among writers of Western Europe and America: the relation of the baptism by John the Baptist to the practice of the Jews; the picture in the catacomb of St. Callistus; the mosaic in the vault of the dome of the orthodox baptistery in Ravenna. We think, when contemporaneous literature and history are used to help and enlighten archæology, that these points especially illustrate the fact that only on the agreement of the three can the truth be found.

As to the baptism by John the Baptist, treatises have been written with great learning drawn from the Talmud. But whatever truth the Talmud may contain, it certainly is

contrary to the present understanding of scientific historical investigation to use documents of much later age as the main proof for facts of a long prior period. The Talmud in its kernel, the Mishna, is from two hundred to four hundred years later than the New Testament; and in its commentary on the Mishna, the Gemara, it is from four hundred to eight hundred years after the period of John the Baptist. The Mishna and the Gemara are good witnesses of Jewish opinion in their day; but they are not proper witnesses for long prior centuries, and for this purpose nothing can be gained from them but probabilities without proof.

Let us see if literature, history, and archæology agree on these points of discussion.

THE BATHS AND JOHN'S BAPTISM.

The laws of Jehovah, as we find them in the Pentateuch, like the laws of Christ, as we find them in the New Testament, were of old truly followed only by those who "with their whole heart" sought to do the will of God. Those who faithfully followed these Pentateuch laws would be scrupulously clean in person, in clothing, in house and all its furniture, especially in utensils for cooking, and in all articles of food. When they went abroad they would seek to avoid everything that would render them ceremonially unclean, and, because they never could be certain that they had not touched some of the very numerous polluting things (Lev. v. 2), the bath for cleansing followed by sacrifice for cleansing was a constant prescription and duty (Lev. v. 2; xi. 8, 24-28; xv. 5-13, 21-27; Num. xix. 11-22; Deut. xiv. 8-20). These laws prescribing cleanness surrounded especially the altar of Jehovah, and barred from it, under penalty of death, the unclean in priest, in Levite, in offerer, in sacrifice (Ex. xl. 12 f.; Lev. viii. 6; xxii. 3-9; Num. viii. 7-21; Ex. xxviii. 36-38; xxix. 37; xxx. 29;

Lev. vi. 18, 27; xxi. 1-8, 17-23; Lev. xv. 1-33; Num. ix. 9-13; xix. 13, 20; Lev. xi. 1-47; xx. 20-25; Deut. xiv. 4-21; xv. 21-23; xvii. 1). Only the clean could come to the altar (Lev. xv. 31; Num. xix. 20); only the clean were to eat of the sacrifice within the temple enclosure (Lev. vii. 19-21); and only the clean were to eat of that sacrifice, the passover, where once a year every Israelite became his own priest (Num. ix. 6-14; comp. 2 Chron. xxx. 17-20).

There were numerous causes for ceremonial uncleanness enduring only for a day. This uncleanness was to be put away by washing the clothes and bathing the flesh and at evening he was clean (Lev. xv. 1-33; xvii. 15). In some instances this procedure is mentioned by only one of its parts (either by "washing the clothes," as Ex. xix. 10, 14; Lev. xi. 25, 28; xiii. 6, 34; or by "bathing the flesh in water," Lev. xxii. 6); while the other part is presupposed as well understood. But there were three uncleannesses which could be put away only by ceremonies lasting through eight days: leprosy (Lev. xiv. 1-10); issue in the flesh (Lev. xv. 13-15, 28-30); touching a dead body or parts of it, and its home, the grave (Num. xix. 11-20). These ceremonies are constantly misunderstood, because a part is taken for the whole; as, for instance, it is said (Lev. xiv. 7, 8) that the healed leper is to be sprinkled with blood and pronounced clean; and he shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh, and be clean; as if either of these constituted his cleansing. But he is only in process of being cleansed, as we see from the following verses (9, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19); and not until the sacrifice had been offered on the eighth day was he fully cleansed. So in the cleansing from contact with a dead body or human bones or a grave, on the third and the seventh day the water for impurity, i.e., with the ashes of the red heifer (Num. xix. 9, 11, 13), was to be sprinkled on the unclean, and afterwards the un-

clean must "wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and he shall be clean at even"; that is, as in the case of the leper, he was so far, but not fully, cleansed, for the sacrifice must be offered for his complete cleansing on the eighth day (Lev. v. 2-6).

It is in this cleansing from contact with a dead body, etc., that is found the only sprinkling with water mentioned in the Old Testament. The leper was sprinkled with blood and the leprous house with blood and water; the unclean from contact with a dead body, etc., was sprinkled with water in which were the ashes of the red heifer. It is to this sprinkling, an initiatory rite that marked one as in process of being cleansed by the following bath and sacrifice, that Jehovah, speaking in the first person, makes reference in Ezek. xxxvi. 24, 25: "The house of Israel had profaned his name among the nations whither they went." For his own name's sake he will bring them back, and "I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and I will bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness [uncleannesses, as in verse 29, and so commonly rendered in Num. xix. and elsewhere], and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." And (ver. 29) "I will save you from all your uncleannesses." That is, Jehovah himself will be the ministrant to cleanse them according to his appointed rites for putting away uncleanness (Num. xix. 1-21), where sprinkling began the ceremonies of eight days, and the bath and sacrifice closed them.

No Israelite was to come to the tabernacle or temple or passover to sacrifice without being first cleansed. The ceremonies of cleansing are specified, and are to be performed under penalty of death. So far all is clear. But it is said that there were no provisions made for initiation of converts from the nations. On the contrary, there were

just as specific directions for the cleansing of the converts as for the born Israelite. Again and again it is prescribed that there shall be one and the same law respecting the passover and the sacrifices for the Israelite and for "the stranger," "the alien," "the sojourner" of other nations (Ex. xii. 49; Num. ix. 14; xv. 13-16, 19). All the males must be circumcised and those coming from the uncleanness of heathenism "to take refuge," like Ruth, "under the wings of Jehovah, the God of Israel," were cleansed by the sprinkling of the water for impurity on the third and the seventh day, followed by the washing of the clothes and the bathing of the flesh on the seventh day, and by the sacrifice on the eighth day. Jehovah himself sets before us this cleansing by his own hand from the uncleannesses of the nations.

The bath, then, was the constant prescription, the frequent duty, of every sincere follower of Jehovah's will. It cleansed one for the following sacrifice. Without it he could not come to the temple. It was so important in the ritual of Israel that on the great day of atonement, the supreme day of the whole year, the high priest, cleansed by the bath before entering the temple, must "bathe his flesh in water" just before putting on the holy linen garments (Lev. xvi. 4), and, again (Lev. xvi. 24), before putting on his usual garments "he shall bathe his flesh in water."

This bath for ceremonial cleansing, in living, running water (Lev. xv. 13), not limited as to place, was far more common in Israel than baptism is with us. Baptism is performed but once, but the bath for cleansing before going to the temple was required frequently of the same person. This bath was to the pious, repentant Israelite the speaking type of the cleansing of the soul, from the uncleanness of sin, by him who alone could cleanse. Listen to the heart repentance of the great sinner of Israel. "Wash [comp. Lev. xiv. and xv.] me thoroughly from

mine iniquity, and cleanse [Num. xix. 19] me from my sin." "Purge [same word as, ver. 2, "cleanse" and Num. xix. 19, 20, where R. V. "purify"] me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash [as ver. 2] me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. li. 2, 7). And Jehovah's exhortation, "Wash you [bathe yourselves], make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 16-18). "When Jehovah shall have washed [bathed] away the filth of the daughters of Zion" (Isa. iv. 4).

What the word translated "bathe" meant to the oriental we learn from Elisha's direction to Naaman, the Syrian, to "bathe in Jordan seven times," and "he went down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan according to the saying of the man of God"; from the Apocrypha (Judith xii. 7), where she dips herself in the flowing water¹ to cleanse herself from the defilement of the heathen camp; from the continued Jewish use and from the innumerable quotations of these baths in the Old Testament by early oriental Christian writers as the precedents of baptism by immersion.

With this bath constantly before the Hebrews, speaking to every thoughtful man of the uncleanness of his sin and of the need and way of his cleansing, it is not at all surprising that, when John was sent by God to call the repentant to the running (living) water of the Jordan to be baptized in it unto the remission of sins (Matt. iii. 2, 8, 11; Mark i. 4; Luke iii. 3, 8), there should have been no astonishment on the part of the Jews either as to the place or mode. Their query was only, "Who art thou?" "Why

¹ It has been suggested that Judith could not find a secluded spot where she might bathe within the camp of the Assyrians. Since the lines of the camp are given as eighteen miles by five miles in a mountainous and well-watered country, the difficulty suggested seems most improbable.

then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?" The baptism of John as to meaning, place, and mode agrees perfectly with what was known before; only it is filled with additional meaning as it pointed to the speedy coming, even through the Jordan, of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world; just as the washing the clothes and the bath for cleansing from uncleanness of the law of Moses was preceded by a similar custom (Gen. xxxv. 2) and filled with a deeper signification.

How the Jews of the Saviour's day understood this washing of clothes and bathing of the flesh we learn, not from the *Mishna* or *Talmud*, which were centuries later, but from the *Targum* on the Pentateuch. Onkelos translates Lev. xiv. 15: "He shall immerse his clothes and bathe [using the Hebrew word signifying to swim] in water."

When we pass on to the *Mishna* (A.D. 200(?)), we find the last twelve treatises are on the laws of purification. Every one unclean even for a day must immerse himself, no part of the body excepted, in living (spring) water, and the least quantity of water sufficing for this purpose was stated at forty seahs, equal to about eighty gallons (*Mikvath*, i. 8; ii. 1-3, 10; iii. 1; viii. 9, 10; *Shabbath*, vi. 1). According to the *Mishna*, from beginning to end, all these baths for cleansing from uncleanness were complete immersions (*Comp. Berachoth*, iii. 4, 5; *Biccurim*, ii. 1; *Pesachim*, viii. 8; *Yoma*, iii. 3-6; vii. 3, 4; *Megillah*, ii. 4; *Chagigah*, ii. 5, 6; iii. 1, 3; *Tamid*, i. 1, 2; *Kelim*, i. 5; *Para*, often; *Toharoth*, ii. 1; v. 3, 4). There is no exception in the *Mishna*, allowing sprinkling or pouring for the immersion.¹

The Jewish baptism of proselytes at the present day is

¹That the typically cleansing bath of the Jews was the same as that of Christians as to mode in the third and fourth centuries, see Tertullian, *Baptism*, § 4 ff.

an exact reproduction of their ancient custom and of the prescriptions of the Mishna. The candidate enters the water sufficiently deep, and, after answering the questions of the rabbi, bows his head beneath the water until his whole body is covered.

“THE TEACHING” AND THE PICTURE.

Of one thing there can be no sane doubt: with two exceptions, the universal testimony of Greek and Latin and Syriac Christian writers of the first five centuries is that baptism was by immersion. From Tertullian (A.D. 220) onwards, the testimony of these writers and the prescriptions of the rituals for baptism, the canons of the Egyptian Church (A.D. 200–300), the Apostolic Constitutions (A.D. 350–400), Cyril of Jerusalem (Catech. Lect., A.D. 386), Ambrose of Milan (On the Sacraments and on the Mysteries, A.D. 397), Dionysius Areopagita (A.D. 450),—all prove that the only baptism taught by the churches of Western Asia, of Asia Minor, Egypt, the lands of the Greeks, Italy and North Africa, was not merely immersion but trine immersion. Trine immersion was prescribed in all cases by these rituals, and nothing less was held to be valid baptism. But in “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles” (A.D. 120–165),¹ there is the following prescription: “Thus baptize ye: having first said [taught] all these things [i.e. the preceding teachings], baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living [i.e. flowing] water. But if thou have not living water, baptize into other water; if thou canst not in cold, [then] in warm. But if thou have not either, pour out water thrice upon the head into the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.” That is,

¹ Philotheos Bryennios, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, etc. (Constantinople, 1883). Text and Commtr. in Greek. Often re-edited by German, English, and American scholars.

only in case of a lack of water is pouring thrice upon the head permitted. If there is plenty of water the pouring is excluded by this "Teaching." There is the first exception. But, by the proof of the numerous writers and rituals, this exceptional provision of this unknown and poorly instructed writer never had the least influence on others, and never modified a single ritual for at least six centuries. Where were the people who followed this exception? No monument or literature gives the least hint of them. Every church of the present day knows its men of exceptions, promising themselves and others great things, whose influence is in the inverse ratio to their wishes. To suppose that this exception, probably born in the Egyptian desert, was acknowledged by Christians in general, is to make a supposition that is denied in positive terms by Christian writers all around the Mediterranean, east and west and north and south.

Wilpert and Parker¹ have proved the folly of those who descant on the paintings in the catacombs of Rome without a personal inspection and a thorough knowledge of their history and of the writers upon them. Otherwise paintings, which no one can interpret so as to gain another's assent, are put in the list of the most simple, with an interpretation absolutely ridiculous when other similar paintings are studied. Paintings and mosaics of the ninth century are gaily made products of the second or third centuries. The mosaic representation of the baptism of Constantine by Sylvester, now in the Lateran Museum, is solemnly quoted as of the fourth century and a true picture. There are two things about that picture which might make the most heedless pause: the priests in the picture wear the beretta, which was unknown before the tenth century; and Constantine was not baptized by Sylvester, for Sylvester

¹I. H. Parker. *The Archæology of Rome. Part XII. The Catacombs.* 1877. W. Wilpert. *Die Katakombengemälde, etc.,* 1891.

died two years before that baptism; and Constantine was not baptized in Rome, but five hundred miles east of Rome, in Nicomedia in Asia Minor, by Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia. Then, too, the vase as the baptistery! All the theories founded on that deceptive basis are not worth the ink that printed them.

One of the most self-contradictory interpretations has been set forth by taking the exception of the writer of the "Teaching," and applying it to explain one of two precisely similar paintings of an early day, probably before A.D. 300, in the catacombs. There are two rooms in the cemetery of St. Callistus, commonly called the Chapel of the Sacraments. In both rooms there is the same very simple series of symbolical paintings representing the water of life, conversion, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. A man (Moses, Peter) strikes the Rock, Christ, from whence flow "the many waters" "like a river" and spread far over the scene. Another man is drawing from that river of the water of life a large fish, that would require a depth of two or three feet at least for its home. In both rooms a small boy, apparently about ten or twelve years old, stands in this river with the water covering his ankles; and a man on the bank has his hand on the head of the boy. Both of these pictures are shown in the accompanying plates, taken from the most authoritative work, De Rossi, *Roma Sotterranea Christiana*, Tomo 1, Tavole xv., xvi. These plates of De Rossi's are not from photographs, but are lithographs. We are therefore far from seeing the pictures just as they are; we see them as De Rossi's draughtsman saw and represented them. One has only to compare De Rossi's lithographs with the representations of Roller and others to feel sure that nothing less than a good photograph can tell us exactly what the pictures are.

On the basis of these lithographs of De Rossi, in both cases the hand of the man is firmly set on the head of the



FROM DE ROSSI, ROMA SOTTERRANEA. (Page 10.)

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boy. With the second boy there are dashes of paint around him, which have been interpreted by Romanists and Protestants as teaching pouring or sprinkling with immersion. But there is no vessel from which water is poured; it certainly is not poured from the hand fast on the head. It is just as difficult to see how these dashes could represent sprinkling, for the sprinkling hand is tight on the head, and there is no mention in any Christian authors of sprinkling in baptism for many centuries after this picture is said to have been made. If it represents sprinkling, it forms the single exception in one thousand years of Christian literature and Christian art. Then, what does the companion picture, the boy without the dashes around, represent?

According to this lithograph, the division of the dashes is not on the head, is not above the top of the head, but at the side and away from the head, and as far from the hand. Did any one ever see water poured or sprinkled on the head start off to the right hand on a level with the head and then break up and down? If we follow De Rossi himself, must we not say that these dashes of paint, which he and others say represent affusion, were added by a very poor hand after the picture was finished? If the picture represents pouring or sprinkling, it preaches what Rome for five centuries regarded as a heresy to be utterly condemned. Cyprian in Africa and some later Western councils allowed pouring in case of sickness unto death, but Rome and the orient rejected it. Still, there is no sickness here. This boy with the dashes of paint around him stands up straight and strong. It is the boy without any dashes about him that totters. If there is pouring on the first, it is pouring in flat contradiction of Cyprian.

When we remember that these catacombs were, for centuries until the later Middle Ages, places of pilgrimage as thronged as Lourdes, is it not the plain teaching of this

lithograph that, centuries after this boy was painted, and when pouring and sprinkling were no longer heresy, some poor limner thought to do the church service by adding these dashes to only one of two precisely similar pictures? That seems the only possible point where literature, history, art, and archæology can meet with agreement over this lithograph.

There is another point of view in judging these exceptional enigmas in single monuments. The Adriatic Sea separates Western Christian churches from the Eastern. West of the Adriatic, by the testimony of all historians and of the early rituals of Rome itself,¹ the earlier practice, immersion, has been superseded by sprinkling for baptism. Romanists and Protestants, except Baptists, sprinkle. It is natural that those who now sprinkle should seek for proofs of it at an early day. But in Eastern Europe, in Asia and Egypt, sprinkling or pouring has never been acknowledged as baptism, except in late centuries by the few parties in impoverished Eastern churches who had sought protection under the ægis of Rome,—Maronites, Jacobites, Armenians, etc.

There are very learned and scientific students of early Christian art in the Greek Church at present. Their works are authorities in their specialties. What would well-informed and fair-minded scholars like Kondakoff, Pokrovskij, the writers in the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, and others, see in these dashes around that boy? What would Ephraem the Syrian, or Origen and Eusebius and Cyril of Palestine, or Basil and Gregory of Asia Minor, or Chrysostom of Syria and Constantinople, or Athanasius and Cyril of Egypt, or Tertullian and Augustine of Africa, or Ambrose of Milan and the bishops of Ravenna, see in those streaks of paint? They with united voice taught that there was one only baptism, which was trine immersion. Personal

¹ Daniel, *Codex Liturgicus*, Vol. i. p. 178 ff.

exceptions there always have been, and always will be, in all churches, as to doctrine and practice; but the exceptions only make the universal rule and custom stand out the clearer. When we consider how far these churches, in many matters of doctrine and practice, and especially as to the miracle-working power of baptism, had veered from the New Testament, it is really astonishing that for so many centuries they preserved the original manner of baptism.

In the picture spoken of, the boy stands in this wide-spreading river, and the Teaching's exception is brought in to prove that this boy is sprinkled. For the Teaching allows "pouring thrice" (not sprinkling), but only when there is a scarcity of water. The boy stands in the river of the water of life from Christ the Rock, and there is abundant water for great fishes to swim and for the immersion of all who would come. If these streaks of paint mean pouring, then there is pouring where the Teaching positively enjoins immersion. There is a still greater contradiction. The Teaching commands immersion in living (flowing) water, and here is the true, illimitable, living water; and where there is this living water, this picture, if it means pouring, sets before us the flat contradiction of the Teaching. Was there ever a greater series of contradictions cited as proofs? We receive the Teaching and similar works, and the pictures of the catacombs, as valuable historical testimonies, to be examined and used for all they can teach us of their times. But we are very far from bowing down to them as our masters or putting our necks in their ill-made yokes. There is another yoke that is easy and another burden that is light.

The only other exception to the universal inculcation and practice of baptism in the first five centuries is found in the pouring water on Novatian, when in the jaws of death, and in Cyprian's letter to Magnus justifying that

course. Cyprian with most writers of his day believed that baptism conveyed salvation, and that without baptism there was no salvation for any one. Hence the anxiety in desperate cases to perform some ceremony as the equivalent of baptism. A few minor councils helped on this view. But this view had not the slightest influence upon the great teachers of the following fourth century, who taught that the only baptism was trine immersion.

The Baptists of the present day believe that none should be immersed, baptized, but those who are already believers in Christ. Hence baptism, immersion, is for them only a speaking type of a union already effected with Christ in his death and resurrection. Still so difficult of eradication from the mind of man is the *opus operatum* view, that, within a few years, in one of the oldest and richest of the Baptist churches of New York city, a Baptist father told how he had poured water upon a dying child to satisfy his wish to be baptized. Here was the case of Novatian over again. While the feelings of the mistaken father were respected, there was, happily, no Cyprian there to darken counsel by words without knowledge, and endeavor to exalt the exception into a custom.

THE MOSAIC OF THE BAPTISTERY.

The last of the series of permanent quotations for the archæological proof of sprinkling or pouring in the early Christian centuries, i.e. before A.D. 500, is found in Ravenna in Italy, in what is known as San Giovanni in Fonte, the baptistery attached to the cathedral.

On the death of Theodosius the Great (A.D. 394), the empire was divided, his ten-year-old son Honorius receiving as his portion the western half, with his capital not Rome but Milan. Ten years after this, Alaric and his Visigoths swept Honorius out of Milan, and he finally took

refuge in Ravenna, swamp surrounded and easily defended, and with a port on the Adriatic. This was the capital of the Western Empire from 405 to 455; under Honorius until 423, and then under his superior sister Galla Placidia, 425–450. From 455 to 493 Ravenna was torn by internal dissensions, then the Goth became master and ruled there in strength and splendor. From 539 to 724 Ravenna was the seat of the Byzantine exarchate, a time of riches and power. When Ravenna was the home of the court and was rolling in wealth (405–455), Rome was left to the cruel mercies of Alaric and his followers and the other warlike peoples that sacked her again and again, ravaged her territory of supply, and left her poor indeed. For one hundred years, old Rome had been visited by the emperors of new Rome only three times.

It was under Honorius and Galla Placidia that some of the costliest and most splendid churches of Ravenna were built. But we are concerned only with the large mosaic in the dome of San Giovanni in Fonte directly over the stone baptistery (ten feet long by three feet six inches deep), and with the bishop's seat carved from the same stone and on a level with the top of the baptistery. The walls and vault of the dome are covered with costly mosaics. The date of the building and its decoration is from 400 to 450,¹ within the period of Honorius and Galla Placidia. The mosaic directly over the baptistery represents the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the river Jordan.² Jesus with a loin cloth stands in the water up to his hips. On a rock to the right of Jesus stands John the Baptist, holding a jeweled cross in his left hand, and in his right hand, extended over the Saviour's head, he holds a plate; directly over this plate the dove is descending. Be-

¹ Agnellus, *Liber Pontif.*, Vitæ Ursi et Neonis; Rahn, *Ravenna*, p. 5; Richter, *Mosaiken von Ravenna*, p. 9; Ricci, *Guida di Ravenna*, 1884, p. 201 ff. ² See Frontispiece.

hind and to the left of the Saviour the river god "Jord" rises from the water to his waist, holding in his left hand a leafy reed, and in his right hand one end of a sea-green cloth, the other end lying on his left arm. It is asserted by Richter, in his classic work on the "Mosaics in Ravenna," that "the bodies of both the chief actors have been somewhat changed by restoration." However this may be, the mosaic as a whole has not been changed; it corresponds very closely to the mosaic in the dome of the Arian baptistery in Ravenna, now Santa Maria in Cosmedin, of date about fifty years later than the orthodox baptistery. "In all essential particulars this composition is the pattern of the numerous Middle Age representations of the baptism of Christ, even for Giotto's fresco in Padua."¹

All writers, Romanist and Protestant, who practice sprinkling, say that John is pouring water from the plate on the Saviour's head; e.g. Richter, "his right hand pours water from a bowl on the head of Christ;" though there is not the first intimation in any of the numerous writers of the first five centuries or in the rituals that pouring was practiced where there were plenty of living water. The Teaching's exception is allowed only where there is not water sufficient for immersion. This is certainly not the case in any of the numerous pictures of the baptism of Christ, which is always represented as in the Jordan.

On the other side, we assert, without fear of thoughtful contradiction, that this picture finds its complete explanation in the literature of the first five centuries, and especially in the matter of the plate held over the Saviour's head, and that there is not the least intimation of pouring water in its use.

De Rossi's successor, the German Wilpert, has done well to bring out the travesties of the pictures in the catacombs found in the illustrated works on the catacombs, of earlier

¹Richter, p. 12.

and of the latest dates, and consequently of the worthlessness of theories or explanations founded upon these professed representations. Nothing but exact photographs tell the true story. Even De Rossi's illustrations are supplemented by his suppositions at critical points, as can be seen by comparing them with Parker's photographs. Even the classical Garucci in his representation of this San Giovanni mosaic has placed between the plate in John's hand and the head of Christ the letters "IXIN." But the large and accurate photograph of the mosaic by Ricci of Ravenna, from which our illustration is taken, shows no letters. The very stones of the mosaic can be distinguished between the plate and the head. The artist set the plate above the head and separate from it, and put nothing but the plain stones between them; no letters, or water, or intimation of anything else. What the plate means can be learned only from the contemporary accounts of baptism.

The most minute, precise, and elaborate description of baptism, closely agreeing with all other writers of the first five centuries, is found in a pseudograph, the "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy" of Dionysius the Areopagite,¹ of about the same date as this mosaic. The other lengthened descriptions are found in the Apostolic Constitutions, book vii.,² in the Canons of the Egyptian Church, Bk. ii., § 45, 46, and the canons of the Church of Alexandria;³ in the Catechetical Lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem;⁴ in the "Sacraments" and in the "Mysteries" of Ambrose.⁵ Here are six full descriptions of baptism as it was known in the churches

¹ Migne, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. iii. Translated by J. Parker, London, 1894.

² Best ed. *SS. Patrum xx. Opera*. J. B. Cotelerius, Amstelodami, 1724.

³ *Analecta Ante-Nicæna*, ed. Bunsen, London, 1854, Vol. ii. p. 465 f., iii. p. 385 f.

⁴ Migne, *Patr. Gr.*, Vol. xxxiii., Oxford Transl., 1872.

⁵ Migne, *Patr. Lat.*, Vol. xvi.

of Palestine, of Egypt, of the Greeks, and of the Latins in Northern Italy. No exceptions to these statements are found in any writers of the first five centuries. What was, then, the practice of these churches? With minor differences on subordinate matters they all agree in these points; the candidate must be instructed; when he is prepared by instruction he renounces Satan and is exorcised; is anointed with oil; confesses Christ; is led into the baptistery by subordinate officers of the church; is baptized by the bishop, who is outside of the baptistery, laying his hand upon the head of the candidate, who thrice sinks beneath the water and thrice emerges. So far this is the negative part of baptism;¹ sin has been washed away, but there is no strength or light yet given for the Christian warfare; or, to use the other figure with Cyprian, one receives existence in baptism, but the Holy Spirit is not given until this existence is obtained. The crowning act in baptism is to follow, and this is the impartation of the Holy Spirit, which takes place in the anointing, not with oil but with the most sacred chrism.² Without that, baptism is only half performed;

¹ Ambrose († 397), Hymn 77: "Here the most sacred waves wash away old sins and destroy crimes, that a race of Christ-worshippers may be created by the true chrism."

Pacian († about A. D. 392), On Baptism: "In the bath sins are cleansed away; but by the chrism the Spirit is poured down, and both of these we obtain from the hand and mouth of the president" (*antistes*, bishop?).

Dionysius: "He dies to Christ—to speak mystically—to sin in his baptism." "But the perfecting anointing with the chrism makes him who has been perfected of sweet savor, for the sacred perfection of regeneration unites the perfected with the most divine Spirit."

Gass, *Symbolik d. Gr. Kirche*, 1872, p. 246 f.

² In the writers of the fourth and fifth centuries there is a plain distinction made between the oil for anointing catechumens to be baptized and the chrism *μύρον* (derived from the Septuagint in Ex. xxx. 25 and the New Test. *μύρον*) for anointing, sealing, perfecting those just baptized. So Gass, *Symbolik der Gr. Kirche*, 1872, pp. 246 ff. Probst, *Sacramente u. Sacramentalien*, etc., 1872, p. 86 ff.; Weiss, *Altkirchliche Pädagogik*, 1869, p. 134 f.

with that, the candidate was "perfected" and he was immediately admitted to the Lord's Supper.

The laying on of the hands of the baptizer upon the head of the candidate is common to all these descriptions, but they differ as to the part or parts of the ceremonies where this shall take place. The following is the order of baptism given by Dionysius: Instruction; laying on of hands by the bishop; renunciation of Satan; confession of Christ; laying on of hands by the bishop; the candidate is sealed with oil by the bishop, and priests anoint his whole body; the water in the baptistery is sanctified by prayer and by pouring in some of the sacred chrism; the candidate is led into the water by priests who also lead him to "the hand of the bishop" beside the baptistery; the bishop baptises him by "three submersions and emersions;" the candidate is led out of the baptistery, is clothed by the priests and his sponsor, and is led again to the bishop who seals him with "the most miraculous chrism," and he passes on to the Eucharist.

The supreme importance attributed to the reception of the chrism by the churches of the early centuries has been lost to sight in the churches west of the Adriatic. There was no separation by the early churches, East or West, between baptism and admission to the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. The first immediately preceded the second. In much later centuries, among Romanists and Protestants, confirmation, or public reception to the church before the Lord's Supper, has been separated by years from baptism, and consequently the crowning, completing, perfecting act of baptism, according to these early churches, sealing with the chrism, which was believed to convey the Holy Spirit, has been regarded in the West as something separate from baptism, as a second sacrament, the original of the later confirmation. But the chrism was considered the most essential part of baptism. Without it baptism in water was

only a death, a washing away of sin, a preparation. The gift of the Holy Spirit by the chrism completed the baptism, and made it the birth "of water and of the Spirit," without which no one could enter the kingdom of God. The Greek Church, the minor churches of Western Asia, the Coptic Church, attach the same importance to the use of chrism, and follow closely the usage of the early churches.¹

Before submitting the testimony of numerous leaders of these early churches to the importance of chrism as the most essential part of baptism, it is well also to see that they acknowledged that exorcism and trine immersion and chrism were not taught in the New Testament, but were matters of tradition only.

TERTULLIAN († A.D. 220):

"When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, his pomp and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the gospel." "For these and similar rules, if thou requirest a law in the Scriptures, thou shalt find none. Tradition will be pleaded to thee as originating them, custom as confirming them, and faith as observing them."—*Crown*, §§ 3, 4.

BASIL († A.D. 379):

"We bless the water of baptism and the oil of unction, him also who receives baptism. By what Scripture? Is it not by a silent and secret tradition? The unction with oil, what text has taught it? Now a man is immersed thrice, whence is it taken? The other things done in baptism, as the renunciation of Satan and his angels, where do we have it in Scripture? Is it not from this private and secret doctrine which our fathers preserved in a discreet and incurious silence?"—*On the Holy Spirit*, Chap. xxvii.

The following authors are placed in their chronological order, to show the very early and continued universal teaching in these Christian churches. Their works are

¹Asseman, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 5 vols. Rome, 1753; Renaudot, *Liturgiarum Orientalium, Collectio*, 2 vols., Frankfurt, 1847. *Catechism of the Coptic Church*, London, 1892.

most easily found in Migne's "Patrologia Græca et Latina."

THEOPHILUS of Antioch († A.D. 181):

"We are called Christians on this account, because we are anointed with the oil of God."—*To Autolycus*, Bk. i. 12.

TERTULLIAN († 220), Africa and Rome:

"When we have come out from the bath [i.e. baptism] we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction; [a practice derived] from the old discipline, wherein, on entering the priesthood men were wont to be anointed with oil from a horn, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses; whence Aaron is called 'Christ' [anointed] from the chrisim which is the unction. . . . Thus, too, in our case the unction runs down our flesh carnally, but profits spiritually."—*Baptism*, Chap. vii.

HIPPOLYTUS († 239), Rome:

"What was the oil but the power of the Holy Spirit, with which believers are anointed, as with ointment, after the laver of washing."—*On Susannah*, iii. 18.

ORIGEN († 254), Palestine:

"The gift of the grace of the Spirit is signified by the figure of oil, so that he who is turned away from sin may obtain not only cleansing, but also be filled with the Spirit."—*On Leviticus*, Hom. viii. 11.

CYPRIAN of Carthage († 258):

"Water alone is not able to cleanse away sins and to sanctify a man, unless he have also the Holy Spirit. . . . There cannot be baptism without the Spirit."—*Letter lxxiii.* or lxxiv.

"It is necessary that he who is baptized should be anointed; so that, having received the chrisim, that is, the anointing, he may be anointed of God, and have in him the grace of Christ."—*Letter lxi.*

Apostolic Constitutions (A.D. 350–400) Syria?

"This baptism is given into the death of Jesus; the water is instead of the burial, and the oil instead of the Holy Spirit; the seal instead of the cross; the chrisim is the confirmation of the confession."—Bk. iii. 17.

Synod of Laodicea (A.D. 343?–381?):

"The baptized shall, after baptism, be anointed with the heavenly chrisim, and be partakers of the kingdom of Christ."—*Canon xlvi.*¹

ATHANASIUS († 373):

"If then for our sake Jesus sanctifies himself, and does this when he becomes man, it is very plain that the Spirit's descent on him in Jordan

¹ See Hefele, *History of Councils*, Vol. ii. 320.

was a descent on us, because of his bearing our body. . . . For when the Lord was washed in Jordan it was we who were washed in him and by him. And when he received the Spirit, we it was who by him were made recipients of it. . . . From him then we have begun to receive the unction and the seal."—*Against Arians*, i. 12, § 2.

EPHRAEM SYRUS († 373), Mesopotamia :

"Oil stands for the sweet ointment whereby the baptized are sealed and clothed with the armor of the Holy Spirit."—*On Joel*, ii.

CYRIL of Jerusalem († 386) :

"The water cleanses his body; the Spirit seals his soul."—*Catech.* Lect. iii. 4. "Perfected by water and the Spirit."—*Ibid.*, 16.

"The water envelopes only outwardly, but the Spirit baptizes also the soul within and that perfectly."—*Ibid.*, Lect. xvii. 14.

"When you are counted worthy of this holy chrism, you are called Christians, verifying also the name by your new birth. For before you were vouchsafed this grace, you had properly no right to this title, but were advancing on your way towards being Christians."—*Ibid.*, Lect. xxi. 5.

"You should know that this chrism has its symbol in the old Scripture. For when Moses imparted to his brother the command of God, and made him high priest, after bathing in water, he anointed him; and Aaron was called Christ or Anointed, from the emblematical chrism."—*Ibid.*, 6.

"Ye are made Christ's by receiving the antitype of the Holy Spirit; and all things are in a figure wrought in you, because ye are figures of Christ. He also bathed himself in the river Jordan . . . and the Holy Spirit in substance lighted on him, like resting on like. In the same manner to you also, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred stream, was given the unction, the antitype of that wherewith Christ was anointed, and this is the Holy Spirit. . . . But beware of supposing this to be bare chrism. For as the bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is mere bread no longer, but the body of Christ, so also this holy chrism is no more bare nor (so to say) common, after the invocation, but the gift of Christ and the active efficient of the Holy Spirit through the presence of his deity."—*Ibid.*, Lect. xxi. 1, 3.

OPTATUS MILEVITANUS († 386), Africa :

"Jesus went down into the water. . . . Heaven is opened, God the Father anoints, the spiritual oil immediately descends in the form of a dove and rests upon his head and pours upon him oil, whence he is called Christ, since he was anointed by his Father."—*Schism of Donatists*, Bk. iv. 7.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN († 390), Asia Minor :

"Signing soul and body with chrism and the Spirit . . . what can happen to thee?" "Satan would denude you of the chrism that he might the more easily overcome you, unarmed and without guard."—*Oration*, xl. 15, 16.

AMBROSE († 397), Milan :

"The Holy Spirit descended in the likeness of a dove, that it might bring the testimony of wisdom, and might complete the sacrament of the spiritual bath, and show himself of one work with the Father and the Son."—*On the Holy Spirit*, Bk. ii. 14, § 96.

PRUDENTIUS (c. 400), Spain :

"Worshiper of God, remember that thou didst pass under the sacred wave of fount and bath; wast stamped with chrism."—*Cathem.* vi. line 125.

CHRYSOSTOM († A.D. 407), Antioch and Constantinople :

"The Spirit is what is chiefly intended in the unction, and that for which the oil is used."—*On Romans*, i. 1.

AUGUSTINE († 430), Africa :

"We are the body of Christ in that we all are anointed. . . . This anointing will perfect us spiritually in that life which is promised us." "We are anointed now in the sacrament."—*On Psalm xxvii.*, Expos. ii. § 2.

"In the Acts of the Apostles it is more plainly written of him [Jesus Christ], 'Because God anointed him with the Holy Spirit.' Certainly not with visible oil, but with the gift of grace, which is signified by the visible ointment wherewith the church anoints the baptized."—*On the Trinity*, Bk. xv. 26, § 46.

"We call people Christians because they are anointed with the sacred chrism."—*Civitate Dei*, xx. 10.

"Christ himself derives his name from the chrism, that is, from the anointing."—*To Petilian*, Bk. ii. § 239.

"Spiritual unction is the Holy Spirit himself, whose sacrament is in the visible unction."—*On 1 John* ii. 20.

CYRIL of Alexandria († 444) :

"Ointment excellently sets forth as a sign the unction of the Holy Spirit. . . . Therefore we are anointed especially at the time of holy baptism, making the anointing the symbol of receiving the Holy Spirit."—*On Isa.* xxv. 6, 7.

PETRUS CHRYSOLOGUS, Archbishop of Ravenna while the orthodox baptistery was being built and decorated (A.D. 433-452) :

"To-day the Holy Spirit hovers in the form of a dove over the waters. . . . But this dove does not, like the first, bear a mere twig of the old olive-tree, but pours the whole fatness of the new unction upon the head of its author, that it may fulfill what the prophet foretold: 'Wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.'"—*Sermon clx.*

THEODORET († 457), Syria:

"Remember the holy mystery in which those who are perfected, after renunciation of the tyrant and confession of the King, received the anointing of the spiritual chrism as a sign and royal seal; as in a type by the chrism receiving the invisible grace of the most Holy Spirit."—*On Canticles i. 2.*

MAXIMUS of Turin († 465):

"When the baptism was accomplished we poured upon your head chrism, that is the holy oil, by which is signified that regal and sacerdotal dignity is conferred by God upon the baptized."—*Migne, Patr. Lat., Vol. lvii. 778.*

DIONYSIUS AREOP.

"The tradition of the sacred symbols" "uses the divine chrism for the perfecting service of every sacred thing."

"The perfecting service, gift and grace of the divine regeneration is completed by the most divine final use of the chrism."

"Never will the priest effect the divine regeneration apart from the most divine chrism."—*Ecl. Hier., Chap. iv. 3, 10.*

The remaining part of this mosaic to be explained is the plate in the hand of John. To one familiar with the representations in Garucci, *Storia della Arte Crist.*, vol. iii., 1873-81; Birch, *Hist. Ancient Pottery*, 1873; Goar, *Euchologion*, 1647; Martigny, *Dict. d. Antiq. Chrét.*, 1877; Kraus, *Real-Encyclopädie d. christl. Alterthümer*, 1882-86; Reusens, *Éléments d'Archéologie chrétienne*, 1885; Pératé, *L'Archéologie chrétienne*, 1892, the plate is at once recognized as the *diskos* of the Greeks, the *patina* or *paten* of the Latins. Of its use and names before Christianity, Birch says: "The *diskos* appears to have been a flat circular plate or dish, similar to the Latin *patina*" (p. 384); "The *patina* was flat and held soup, and was a generic name for a dish" (p. 539); Martigny: "In ancient

times there was a vessel of the same form as the paten made for holding the sacred chrism; it was called the chrismal paten" (p. 172). These patens were made of glass, gold, and silver. Anastasius Bibliothecarius († 879), in his "*Liber Pontificalis, Vita Sylvestri*," founded on earlier records, gives a long list of the patens, that is plates for the communion table, possessed by the early churches. Among those given by Constantine were "a silver chrismal paten enclosed in gold, weighing five pounds, seven gold patens, each weighing thirty pounds." And Augustine says: "We have very many utensils and vessels made of metals of this description [gold and silver] for the purpose of celebrating the sacraments, which, being consecrated by these ministrations, are called holy."¹ Dionysius, after describing the solemn and mysterious services in the consecration of the bread and wine, adds: "But there is another perfecting service that is of the same rank; our leaders name it the perfecting of chrism." "Our divine leaders ordained this as of the same rank and same operation with the sacred perfecting of the eucharist." The chrism was consecrated by the bishop; was then thought to convey the Holy Spirit; was kept with great care in the most sacred vessels, and was treated with the same reverence that was shown to the consecrated bread and wine. The use of the diskos remains in the Greek Church.²

The diskos in the mosaic is held with its convex side to the beholder, in accord with the teaching everywhere at that time in the churches, that the chrism must be kept from the sight of the unbaptized; or, as Dionysius says, "As its contemplation is above the reach of the many,

¹ On Psalm cxiii. (cxiv.) § 6; see also Sozomen († 439), *Hist. Eccl.*, Bk. vii. 21; Evagrius († 560), *Hist. Eccl.*, Bk. vi. 21; *Pseudo-Athanasius*, *Migne*, *Gk. Patr.*, Vol. xxviii. 953, says: "The diskos represents the Holy Spirit"; Sophronius of Jerusalem († 638), *Comm. Liturg.*, § 5; Joannes Moschus († 600), *Pratum Spirituale*, Chap. xxv.

² Bjerring, *Offices of the Oriental Church*, N. Y., 1884.

they [our leaders] reverently conceal it; and, by hierarchic direction, it is kept from the gaze of the multitude."

In Garucci's splendid volumes it is easy to trace the decline and fall of this fine representation of baptism as then observed. In two centuries after its date, when the *ampulla* had become the accredited repository of the chrism, there are pictures of the baptism of the Saviour, with the dove turning the ampulla upon the Saviour's head. And so *ad infera*.

It may well be asked, If immersion and unction with chrism conveying the Holy Spirit are to be represented in picture, how could this be done better than in the San Giovanni mosaic? The very fact that this picture has remained the pattern of similar representations to the present day is a testimony to its high artistic value and power. Until something better for this purpose has been invented, this mosaic will continue to be regarded as the great masterpiece.

There are other facts most important for the judgment of this mosaic. The faces of the Saviour and John are Greek, not Roman. Both the Saviour and John have long hair falling on the shoulders; that was Greek custom, not Roman. As this is the first well-authenticated portrait of the Saviour by an accomplished artist, its influence is shown to the present day in the vicious, unhistorical representation of the Son of David as a long-haired Greek. It is certain that Jesus did not wear his hair long, for it was utterly dishonorable in his day and country to let the hair grow long, and it was forbidden to Greek Christians. Paul, writing to the Greek church of Corinth, says: "Doth not nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him?" Yet for fourteen centuries men have gone on representing Jesus in a fashion that was not his, and that would have dishonored him among Jews and all believers on him in his age. Not only is Jesus represented

in this mosaic as a long-haired Greek, but as a Greek of the delicate, luxurious class of the court at Byzantium, and this John is a minister of that class. And so the faces of the twelve apostles surrounding this mosaic tell of Greek court life. They are neither Jew nor Roman. There is not a single line of vigor, determination, power, in any of these faces. A hundred years at Byzantium, the maelstrom of oriental and western luxury beyond anything we know at present, had brought the court circles, as we learn from many writers, to just such effeminacy as is seen in the numerous mosaics and paintings of this date in Ravenna.

Honorius and Galla Placidia were the children of Theodosius the Great, born in the purple and reared at Constantinople, and always looking to Constantinople for help and instruction. Ravenna, safe on the land side by its vast swamps, was open to the Adriatic and, by its ships, to Constantinople. In this small city for fifty years was gathered the court of the Western Empire. Its power and prestige, its luxuries and dress, were derived from the far richer, stronger Eastern Empire. It was a Greek court residing in an Italian city. From Byzantium came the architects that built, and the artists that adorned with painting and mosaic, the interior of these numerous churches. The form of the buildings, the character of the decorations, the faces, the dress, the pose, are all Greek, pure Greek; as far from Italian or Roman, as Honorius and Galla Placidia and the bishops of Ravenna were from favor to Italy or Rome. So that it is at Ravenna alone, according to all the learned in Byzantine art, that the earliest and best specimens of that art can be seen. The earliest and best of Byzantine art in Ravenna is the mosaic we have studied.¹

¹Rahn, *Ravenna*, Leipzig, 1869; Richter, *Mosaiken von Ravenna*, Wien, 1878; Bayet, *Recherches pour Servir à l'Histoire de la Peinture et de la Sculpture Chrétiennes en Orient*, etc., Paris, 1879; Bayet, *L'Art Byzantin*, Paris, n. d. (1884); Diehl, *Ravenna*, Paris, 1886.

The Greek Church of the present day holds to the absolute necessity of trine immersion and of the unction with chrism in baptism.¹ The Greek Church has always held these as essential parts of baptism. It has never believed that sprinkling or pouring were valid baptism. None of its symbols, therefore, can be interpreted as representing sprinkling or pouring as baptism. Now, one of the common tokens given at baptism in Greece itself is a representation of the baptism of the Saviour by John very similar to that in the mosaic of San Giovanni, as one can see in the accompanying half-tone copy. The striking difference is in the diskos which is turned with its concave side to us and from which there flows a stream upon the head of the Saviour. But this stream is, as we know by the teaching of all Greek authors from the earliest days of Christianity to the last Greek creeds, not water, but the miracle-working chrism whose source is the dove descending from the clouds.

For the reasons stated in this article we believe that literature, history, and archæology agree that there has been but one form of the typically cleansing bath, immersion, prescribed in the Old Testament, observed by the Jews, by John the Baptist, by the apostles, and faithfully kept by all Christian churches for many centuries after Christ.

¹ Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church, Quest. 102 ff.



BAPTISMAL TOKEN COMMON IN GREECE TO-DAY. (Page 28.)