

or candidates for ordination to pledge loyalty to the Union between the States. In strong reaction to this extra-Biblical and extra-Constitutional requirement, the southern portion of the Church seceded to form the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (Southern Presbyterian). After some years, the question of Mode was brought to the floor of their General Assembly in 1894:

Question: An overture from a number of individuals, asking whether, "in the discretion granted to sessions to receive members from evangelical immersion churches, it is intended to admit immersion to be the scriptural mode of baptism?"

Answer: Baptism by immersion is not scriptural as to its mode, but the irregularity of this unscriptural mode does not invalidate the sacred ordinance, and persons who have been baptized by immersion, by the authority of an evangelical church, are not required to be rebaptized by the scriptural mode of sprinkling or pouring when received into the communion of our church.

*Minutes of the General Assembly of the
Presbyterian church in the U S., 1894, p 197*

It is with little difficulty that we discern a difference of viewpoint between the Northern and the Southern Church on the question of Mode. And yet there is a unity amidst the diversity, for although they have differed on the question of whether Immersion is Scriptural, these two great Churches have been one in their insistence that Mode is not essential to the validity of the sacrament. One this point they have remained truly Presbyterian and truly Reformed.

It is with some difficulty that we attempt to understand the reasons for the differences between the views of the Northern and those of the Southern Church, especially as we recall the fact that both Churches claim the Westminster Standards as their creedal confession. Is there in those Standards such ambiguity as to warrant this diversity of interpretation?