

ordinance administered in this way is perfectly valid: "Whence it appears that the sprinkling also of water prevails equally with the washing of salvation..."

In cases where the person to be baptized is an invalid or very ill, Immersion would appear to be almost completely ruled out as an expedient mode.

Theological Considerations

Ritual Baptism and Spirit Baptism. It would appear that there is a vital relationship between the external rite of baptism and Holy Spirit baptism. The same term (*baptizo*) is used to express both ideas. Sometimes the external rite is spoken of as if it actually accomplished the effects of the inner baptism. A good example of this may be found in Acts 22:16, where Ananias says:

And now, why are you lingering? Stand up and receive baptism for yourself, and cleanse away your sins, calling upon His name.

The significance of Ritual Baptism. Ritual Baptism can be viewed as a sign and a seal, i.e., as signifying and certifying a relationship. That relationship is not merely an identification; it is a union with Christ. It is a *union* into which we are baptized by the Holy Spirit. Thus, the basic and central import of Ritual Baptism is Union with Christ.

This Union into which we have been brought by the Holy Spirit results in certain benefits. Union with Christ means union in His death and resurrection; thus regeneration. Union with Christ means the application of His blood to our sins; thus cleansing from sin. And Union with Christ means a being brought into vital relationship with His Body; thus initiation into the Church. All of these significances are witnessed to by the Scriptures.

Significance as related to Mode. The questions which must be asked are, "What are we attempting to portray in Ritual Baptism? Which significance are we endeavoring to picture? And which Mode best pictures that significance?"

It would seem that regeneration could be pictured by Immersion, as