

(d) Mode and entrance into Christ's Body, the Church

The mode of pouring links us with the symbolism of the language used to describe the action of the Holy Spirit upon men and His distinctive work of baptizing believers into the Body of Christ.

(e) Mode and outward identification with Christ and His Church

Although any mode of any rite or ceremony may be used as an initiatory rite, the question of whether any symbolism is intended should be considered.

If the idea of identification with Christ's baptism by John is stressed, then the question of the mode of that baptism becomes crucial. What hard information as to the mode of John's baptism do we possess?

If the idea of the identification with Christ is linked with Christ's own death burial and resurrection and stressed, then the question of which mode portrays or pictures or symbolizes those events becomes crucial. What mode portrays Christ's crucifixion on a cross? What mode portrays Christ's burial in a rock-hewn cave in the side of a hill? What mode portrays Christ's resurrection out of that cave?

If the idea of identification with Christ is linked with the abstract idea of death burial, and resurrection and stressed, then the mode of immersion could represent that idea; if a second-level identification of the idea of our death to sin and resurrection to life can be made with the idea of Christ's death to sin and resurrection to life, then the mode of immersion could represent both ideas.

3. The Subjects of Baptism

a. Considerations relative to continuity and discontinuity between the previous dispensations and the present dispensation

(1) The continuity of the comprehensive Plan of God for all dispensations

With respect to creation, providence, the Fall and its effects, redemption, and judgment, God has one great overriding Plan, which is spoken of as His decrees.

"God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men."

-- The Westminster *Larger Catechism*, Question 12

(2) The continuity of the Plan of Salvation (or Covenant of Grace) throughout human history

In Chapter VII of the Westminster Confession of Faith we read the following statements: