

While I believe that our Presbyterian heritage is a very wonderful thing, and that it is in line with the Scripture, I rejoice in Christian fellowship with those of Baptist views, even though I feel that they are wrong on these secondary matters.

LETTER 73
1962

THE MODE OF BAPTISM

My own opinion is that the mode of baptism is not particularly important. If God had wished that a particular mode of baptism should be used by all Christians He could easily have made this clear by one plain verse of Scripture. The fact that he did not choose to do so and that honest and sincere Christians differ over the teachings of the Bible about this matter seems to me to be proof that it is not a vital question.

What is vital is the matter of personal acceptance of Christ and of being united with Him by the action of the Holy Spirit. To my mind, sprinkling or pouring illustrates this truth much better than immersing. In ancient times it was customary to bury a man by lifting his body up on a shelf in a tomb rather than by putting it down into a hole in the ground. The usual symbol for burial in ancient times seems to have been sprinkling a little sand or water on something. Since the spiritual significance of baptism is so clear, I personally greatly regret any differences among Christians over a matter that God has not chosen to make clear. Since many people now deny the very heart of the Gospel, I would like to work in harmonious cooperation with all who truly believe in the divine message, and not to have my fellowship with them hindered by differences regarding a matter that is really secondary. It is, of course, my own opinion that sprinkling represents the