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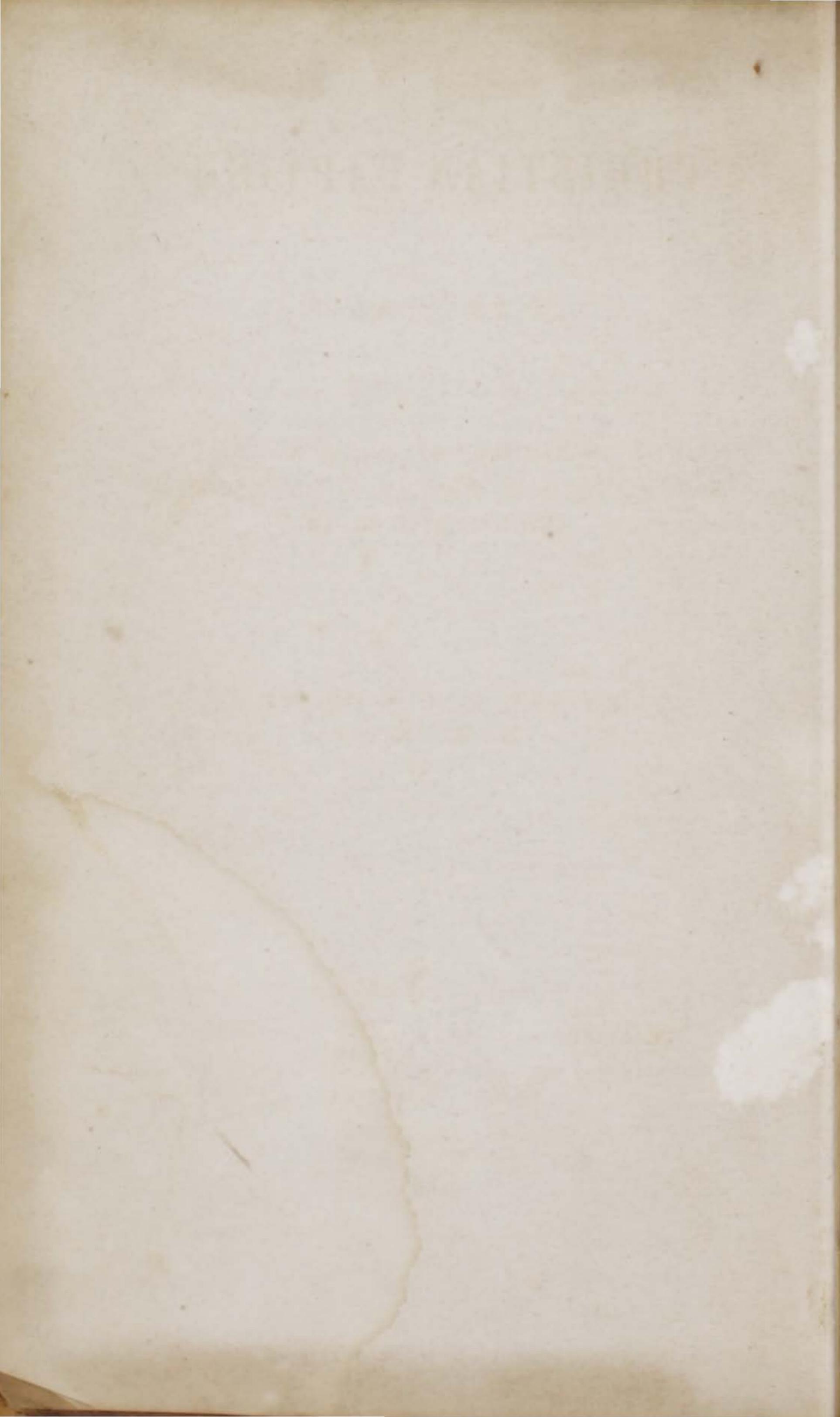
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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM:

IN TWO PARTS.

PART FIRST—ITS SUBJECTS:
PART SECOND—ITS MODE, OBLIGATION, IMPORT,
AND RELATIVE ORDER.

BY REV. F. G. HIBBARD,
OF THE GENESEE CONFERENCE.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY G. LANE & P. P. SANDFORD,
FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AT THE CONFERENCE OFFICE,
200 MULBERRY-STREET.

J. Collord, Printer.

1843.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

IN TWO PARTS

THE FIRST PART CONTAINS

THE HISTORY AND DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENT

OF BAPTISM

BY

WILLIAM BAPTIST

1790

A TREATISE



INFANT BAPTISM.

BY REV. F. G. HIBBARD,

OF THE GENESEE CONFERENCE.

"THEIR CHILDREN, ALSO, SHALL BE AS AFORETIME."—JEREMIAH.

"PRO HOC ET ECCLESIA AB APOSTOLIS TRADITIONEM SUSCEPIT, ETIAM
PARVULIS BAPTISMUM DARE."—ORIGEN.

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TO THE
REV. NATHAN BANGS, D. D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

DEAR SIR,—I could not do justice to my own feelings should I pass this opportunity afforded by the dedication of this humble volume to you, without bearing my public testimony to the high sense I entertain of your personal worth, the efficiency of your public labours, and of your kindness to me.

Your life has truly been one of labour, responsibility, and care; not, however, unrequited by the gratitude and honourable preferments of that growing church, the champion of whose rights and immunities you may justly be called.

When American Methodism was yet in her infancy,—(and, though of rapid growth, she has scarcely yet attained her full vigour,)—when, as yet, her policy and her characteristic tenets were novel to the age; her institutions, her ministry, and her doctrines, were boldly assailed by men who had little else than a gray antiquity to sanction their pretensions, and whose ignorance of Methodism, and envy at her prosperity, inspirited them in their offensive career, you stood up in her defence.

Your early and long association with these unhappy conflicts, your deep paternal sympathy in the protracted struggle, your fearless and generous devotion to the cause

of truth, as connected with these events, are topics of grateful and satisfactory remembrance, and combine to inspire the belief that you will continue to share a liberal solicitude with your worthy compeers in those polemic essays that may, from time to time, be put forth for the defence of truth.

That you may live many days to bless the church and the world in the exalted station to which the providence of God has called you—that your age may be soothed and sustained by the comforts and hopes of the gospel—that the goodliest allotments of Heaven may fall to your domestic and social inheritance during the remnant of your eventful and useful life—and that the approbation of our Master in heaven may be your memorial in death, is the prayer of, dear sir,

Your obliged friend and servant in the gospel,

F. G. HIBBARD.

P R E F A C E .

1. SOME time since a professional friend, being in my study, happened to take up a volume of Mr. Cotton's edition of the celebrated works of Drs. Wall and Gale on Infant Baptism; and perceiving that they contained more than two thousand pages, octavo, mainly on the single argument from church history, laid down the volume, saying, "he was sorry there was anybody in the world so foolish as to write so much on a subject like that of infant baptism." The surprise, and consequent remark of my friend, did not originate in any disrespect for the institutes of Christianity, but simply in not appreciating the just dimensions, and polemic history, of the subject. He felt no surprise at seeing the volumes that have been written with a view to explain the nature and treatment of disease, or the endless Reports that have been made to illustrate the true application of law and evidence, in civil matters. If men would study more the *history* of theology, they would better understand the cost of defending it.

2. The details of argument gone into, in the following pages, may appear to some to be unnecessary; but to such I have only to say, I have not written for the learned, but for the sincere inquirer of humbler capacity, and have aimed to set forth those facts only which are necessary to be taken into account, in order to master the argument, and to feel its force.

Also, the highly controverted state in which every thing is found relating to this subject, as well as the peculiar nature of the argument itself, must be my apology for having said so much. True, the argument might, in its strictest form, have been compressed within a much narrower compass; and to this form it was my first intention to confine it. But, upon further reflection, I could not feel that such a plan would be productive of the greatest good to the reader. Objections to infant baptism are everywhere thrown, from the pulpit and the press, before the minds of young Christians. These they have not learned

to meet and obviate; and though they have not yielded to them an assent, still they exert a disturbing influence upon their faith. Without mentioning all these objections and arguments in detail, it has been my constant endeavour to keep them in view, and to hold them, in all their protean shapes, so steadily before the Bible argument, as to furnish the reader with ample means for detecting and refuting their sophistry. But although the work has swelled beyond the limits I had at first assigned it, still I think it will be found the argument has never been abandoned for foreign or irrelevant speculations. Some trifling repetitions have unavoidably occurred, while some other matters, not deemed important, although treated by other authors, have been omitted. In the following pages the reader is presented with all that information which is strictly important to the subject. He is particularly requested to observe the *order* of the argument; a general syllabus of which he will find in the chapter of contents. This he should attentively scan before reading the work.

3. It is a great calamity to the cause of truth, that its professed advocates are so often men of strong party feeling, who indulge in an unguarded, and, I may say, reckless habit of stating both their own doctrine and also that of an opponent. It is hence, that indefensible positions are often assumed, false issues taken, personal feelings enlisted, and a large amount of vituperation and abuse fabricated. I would not appear invidious in my distinctions, but if the reader have ever read a late work on Baptism by Rev. James J. Woolsey, he will have found a melancholy demonstration of all I have stated. To mention but one instance of many, on p. 244 the author opens a section on the *silence* of the New Testament respecting infant baptism, and gives this statement of the Pedobaptist position:—"The validity of infant baptism is plead for as of divine appointment, because there is no prohibition against it." In a former section he has thus stated a kindred position:—"The validity of infant baptism is urged, and thought to be established, on the ground of its being taken for granted, without any express command in the New Testament." In these sections the author has argued to the principle, that *mere* silence, and *mere* absence of prohibition, cannot afford *authority* for a practice. Now, no one but a mad-

man could be his opponent in this case. He has misstated both the position and reasonings of the Pedobaptists. The peculiar point of the argument, as insisted on by the Pedobaptists, is not once developed, or even alluded to, in any way, through the whole course of his remarks. Is it any wonder that men do not understand each other, or that parties are not reconciled?

4. If the reader would be profited by the investigations which are pursued through the following pages, he must have patience to *examine* before he ventures to decide. The subject is of that nature that it cannot be dismissed with a hasty consideration. The force of the argument does not lie imbodyed in terse, isolated passages, which require but a single effort of the mind to comprehend them, and which leave upon the mind, with scarcely an effort of its own, the lively images of an intuitive conviction. A process of reasoning must be gone through,—a somewhat extended range of observation must be brought immediately under the eye of the mind,—and then the force of the argument must result from these varied premises,—from the coincidence and focal blaze of these collocated facts, which the mind should group and scan at a single synthetic effort.

If I have any doubt of the ultimate satisfaction of the reader's mind as to the reality of the divine institution of infant baptism, that doubt is the offspring, not of any suspicion that there is a want of evidence in the case, but, of a fear that the reader will be deluded into that mental imbecility which rejects all testimony but the most positive and absolute;—which has not patience or courage adequate to the length, and breadth, and depth of an extended argument;—and which, at last, making virtue of its own folly, professes to be guided only by the specific and positive declarations, in so many words, of the word of God.

5. In the following Treatise I have assumed that infants are in a regenerated state. This, I am fully aware, will be likely to provoke controversy, and many will reject all conclusions based upon this doctrine. But who are those who deny this doctrine? First, there is a class who believe that all infants who are “not elected” will finally perish. Such infants, of course, whether baptized or not, cannot be regenerated. Secondly, there are those who

believe that regeneration, in adults and infants, is a concomitant of baptism. Hence, as there can be no regeneration either *before* or *without* baptism, unbaptized infants cannot be in a regenerated state. Thirdly, there are those who profess no settled or specific view of the regeneration of infants; only they believe that all infants, dying in infancy, will be finally saved.

It is well known to the student in church history, that few, very few, since the days of the apostles, have ever openly held to the damnation of any of those infants who die in infancy. The Calvinistic school forms the largest exception. There have been those who have held that all unbaptized infants, dying in infancy, go to a sort of middle state, between heaven and hell, as the reader will see in the fifth chapter of this work. Others, as St. Austin, (see pp. 209-211,) with more consistency, held that where the want of baptism was not the fruit of any wicked and wilful disposition of the individual, he would be saved without it. The Protestant Episcopal Church, it appears, chooses, in regard to the state of unbaptized infants hereafter, to observe entire silence. (See pp. 270, 271, of this work.)

Now, all I wish here to say is, that I do not insist upon any peculiar sense of the word *regenerate*. The term has been adopted, in the following pages, because it conveniently expresses the doctrine of infant salvation. All I mean by it is, that infants are, whether baptized or not, in a state of grace; that they are embraced in the provisions of the atonement; that, if they die in infancy, they will be saved, and if they live, they will come under the gracious economy of Heaven, and receive the free offer of life. I wish not to contend about a word. I take the words of Christ, Matt. xix, 14, to refer to all infants, *as such*,—not to “elect” infants, or to baptized infants, or to the infants of Christian parents, merely. On this point, “if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.”

I have only to add, as greater men have said before me, “If I have done well, and what is fitting the [argument,] it is that which I desired; but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto,” 2 Mac. xv, 38.

F. G. HIBBARD.

Penn Yan, N. Y., Aug. 20, 1842.

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TREATISE ON INFANT BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH.

ITS ANTIQUITY—ITS PROPER AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER
—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COVENANT AND THE
LAW—JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CHURCHES SUBSTANTIAL-
LY ONE AND IDENTICAL.

SECTION I.

1. FIRST of all, in our reasoning upon the subject before us, we must have enlightened views with respect to the real church of God. We are not about to inquire which of all the existing churches professing to be Christian is the true one; much less are we about to set up a plea of exclusiveness, and say, "The temple of the Lord are *we*." We pass by the different Christian sects,—ascending the stream of time beyond their origin,—and ask, When did the church of God begin to display itself? And here we may admonish the reader, that it will be some time before we shall be prepared to draw our conclusions, and directly urge the force of our arguments. Meantime, he must go with us into details and arguments which may appear dry, but which are necessary to establish our premises. If he have not patience for all this, he had better here abandon the investigation.

When we inquire into the proper antiquity of the church of God, we are led far back in the world's history, to a period remote from the age of Christ and his apostles, and even beyond the prophets and Moses. At an early stage in the history of nations, after the flood, God called Abram,

and separated him from his own kindred, and from his own nation, and organized his family into a church proper, bringing them into a visible covenant relation to himself. Jehovah had covenanted with his servants, the patriarchs, at different times, since the days of the first man. These covenants had been distinguished by signs, as that with Noah, by the "token" of the "bow in the clouds;" but never had the covenant of grace and mercy, which was to be ratified by the blood of God's own Son, been so largely revealed to man; and the visible token or mark of this covenant had never before been fixed upon the *persons themselves*, who entered as a second party to participate in its gracious provisions. This covenant, then, which God made with Abraham, differs from all others. The covenant with Noah, alluded to above, related to the perpetual order and harmony of the material world, securing "seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night," &c. But this with Abraham related pre-eminently to spiritual blessings, to be bestowed upon the world through Christ. The *sign* of the covenant made with Noah was a "BOW" set in the clouds; the *sign* of the covenant with Abraham was "CIRCUMCISION,"—a mark set upon the male descendants of that patriarch, and upon all others who voluntarily came under its injunctions. Indeed, in whatever light we view it, we shall find this was the first attempt of Jehovah, on record, to bring man directly into a visible covenant relationship with himself. This transaction forms the first model of a visible church with which the world has ever been acquainted. It is here we date our idea of church. The importance of the subject will justify our detaining the reader a little further on the particular features of this covenant, which we regard as the great charter of the visible church, within whose ample folds are gathered and united both Jews and Gentiles.

2. Let us attend, for a moment, to our just ideas of what constitutes the church of God. We are not now about to bring the test of a *shibboleth* to this stupendous question. We do not propose this inquiry in the spirit of a sectarian. We plant ourselves upon the broad Bible principle, and ask, What is the Bible definition of CHURCH?

The visible church of God, in whatever clime or part of the world it may subsist, is composed of a congregation

of persons, who are distinguished by the following particulars:—1. They hold to the cardinal doctrines of the Bible; those doctrines which are necessary to make a person wise unto salvation. I do not say that these doctrines must necessarily be embraced in all cases with an equal degree of clearness:—they must be received in a manner answerable to the light which distinguishes the particular dispensation under which the church may live. 2. They worship God according to his own will and directions, written or otherwise expressed. 3. They must be separated and distinguished from the world at large by a particular mark or sign, appointed by God as a token of their fidelity to him, and of the divine favour to them.

I know not that any one feature distinguishes the church of God that does not properly fall under one or other of these heads. Descriptions may be given more in detail, and many accidents may attach to the true visible church at one given time, that may not characterize it at another; but it is of the primary character of the church that we speak. Now, it is obvious that all these primary characteristics of the church belonged to those who were united to the covenant of Abraham, and were conferred on them by that covenant. Not that the model of the church was in all respects as perfect in the family of Abraham as it was afterward rendered: on the contrary, it was evidently improved under Moses, and still more under Christ. But, I repeat it, in the family of Abraham was the first germ of a visible church; and the covenant of God with that patriarch was the first charter under which men ever formed themselves into a visible church compact, and the first, of which we have any record, that God ever gave to man for that purpose.

3. The state of the argument renders it necessary that we should enter into proof of this position. It has been stoutly denied that the covenant of Abraham conveyed any grant of church privileges, or, indeed, of any spiritual blessings.* It will be our business to show that it embodied the rudiments of the gospel of Christ, and was the date of church relations. The words of the covenant, as

* See, for instance, Woolsey on Baptism, p. 287; Jewett on Baptism, p. 62, &c.; and Mr. Pengilly's Tract, p. 60.

reiterated and renewed to Abraham, from time to time, run thus:—

“The Lord said unto Abraham . . . I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. . . . Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. . . . Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness. . . . And God talked with Abram, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name be any more called Abram, but Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. . . . And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Gen. xii, 1-3; xiii, 14-17; xv, 1-7; xvii, 1-8; xxii, 15-18; xxvi, 3, 4; xxviii, 14, 15.

Before entering upon a close examination of the several parts of this covenant, it is important that the reader be reminded, first, that it has ever been a prevalent custom among the Orientals to teach by *metaphor* and *allegory*,—by making sensible objects the representatives of spiritual things. It is not needful here to dwell upon the prevalence or the advantages of this mode of teaching; but suffice it to say that, by this means, a twofold sense is attached to almost every part of this covenant,—a *literal* and a *spiritual* sense. This will appear, on Scriptural authority, in the process of our remarks. Secondly, it is

chiefly by the light of other parts of Scripture, and particularly of the New Testament, that we are to interpret the true meaning of the words of this covenant. This remark may apply to a very large portion of the Old Testament Scriptures, especially to their types, and allegories, and prophetic sayings. It is evident that Abraham understood this covenant in a higher sense than merely to refer to temporal good; and it is not improbable that he received explanations of its high spiritual import, of which the text of Moses does not give full intimation. The same inspiration that guided Paul's pen in portraying its exalted character, doubtless shed its illuminations upon the mind of the patriarch.

1.) The first item of this covenant which we notice, is God's promise to bless Abraham: "I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. . . . By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, . . . that in blessing I will bless thee;" that is, I will greatly bless thee.

That this promise includes great temporal prosperity will not be doubted. In this feature also it was abundantly fulfilled. But beyond this it looked forward to, and embraced spiritual things. 1. It included the blessing of justification;—Abraham's faith was accounted to him for righteousness. So Paul, speaking of salvation by faith, calls it "the blessing of Abraham." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;" and this "blessing" he immediately calls "the promise of the Spirit through faith." "So then, they which are of faith, are blessed [after the same manner] with faithful Abraham." Gal. iii, 9, 13, 14.

2. This blessing, also, included the promise that Abraham should be rewarded as a righteous person. This reward was to be such as was suited to the obedience of faith,—the reward of a holy man in this life, and at the general judgment. The apostle says, "BY FAITH Abraham, when tried, offered up Isaac," &c.; after which memorable act of obedience, God says, "By myself have I SWORN, BECAUSE THOU HAST DONE THIS, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee," &c. But that blessing which is the appropriate reward of moral obedience must not stop short at

temporal things; and thus Abraham viewed it, and "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," Heb. xi, 10. Indeed, the whole subject is elevated infinitely above the dignity of a mere commercial or secular transaction.

2.) God promises to Abraham a numerous posterity: "I will make of thee a great nation,—I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth:—thou shalt be a father of many nations," &c.

All admit that these and kindred expressions imply a numerous and powerful natural posterity. But it is the twofold sense of these expressions to which we call attention, and it is in that second and higher sense that they are made to include a promise of gospel blessings. The question is, In what sense was Abraham to become the "father of many nations?" or his seed to be (in the hyperbolical language of the promise) "as the dust of the earth?" The merest tyro in divinity will readily perceive the answer to this question. The New Testament clearly and explicitly establishes the sense of this promise, and proves that, in its grandest import, it looked forward to gospel days, and comprehended gospel blessings. In speaking of the posterity, or "children of Abraham," two kinds are mentioned by Paul,—those who are so by natural descent, and those who are so by imitating, or "walking in the steps" of that patriarch. The true force and meaning of the promise in question are thus clearly established, and the whole matter put to rest by Paul:—"For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. . . . Therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise [of justification and life] might be sure to all the seed: not to that only which is of the law, but to that which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, 'I have made thee a father of many nations.'" "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, *the same are the children of Abraham. . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*" Rom. iv, 13, 16, 17; Gal. iii, 7, 29.

Nothing further need be added in proof of the twofold sense of this part of the covenant, and that the spiritual

was the higher and more important sense. If it be inquired, For what purpose hath God constituted Abraham the father of all believers, and what advantages do they derive from that appointment? we reply: "According to the apostle Paul, Abraham was constituted the father of all believers, for the purpose of receiving, on their behalf, and in their name, the promises of those blessings, which God, of his great goodness, intends to bestow on them. . . . And in thus constituting Abraham the father of all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, for the purpose of receiving on their behalf the promises of the covenant, God accommodated himself to the ideas of mankind, who consider what is promised in a covenant as more binding than the simple declaration of one's intention."*

3.) The third promise of this covenant contains a grant of the land of Canaan: "I will give to thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession."

Here, also, concerning the first and literal meaning of this promise, there can be no dispute, and in this sense also it was faithfully fulfilled to Abraham and his posterity. But it had a higher meaning; namely, that, under the image of Canaan, the possession of a better country, even a heavenly, was promised. This is abundantly proved by the following facts:—When the Israelites had sinned in the wilderness, God solemnly and irreversibly interdicted their admission into the promised land. Num. xiv, 23, 28, 30. Five hundred years after that event, David, the king of Israel, exhorted his countrymen not to harden their hearts like their forefathers, and thus incur a similar judgment. In this exhortation he calls the land of Canaan, in its higher import, a "rest," and exhorts his countrymen not to come short of it. Psa. xcv. Paul, in alluding to this exhortation of David, says: "Again, when speaking by David, so long a time afterward, he [the Spirit of God] designates, or definitely names, a certain day, [in which they should enter into the true rest of faith,] TO-DAY; as it is said, 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,'" Heb. iv, 7. Here, then, we find the psalmist, about four hundred years after the Israelites had been

* See Dr. Macknight on the Covenant with Abraham, whose analysis of the covenant we have mainly adopted.

settled in Canaan, exhorting his countrymen to enter into the promised rest. And Paul justly reasons thus:—"For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he [the Spirit] afterward [by the mouth of David] not have spoken of another time; [when they should enter into the rest which the Scriptures promised.] There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." Heb. iv, 8, 9. I consider Professor Stewart has hit the true sense:—"In David's time, nearly five hundred years after unbelievers in the wilderness were threatened with exclusion from the promised inheritance, the psalmist makes use of the commination which has been quoted, in order to deter those whom he addressed from hardening their hearts as the ancient Israelites did, and so losing the rest (as they did) which God had proffered to the obedient and the believing. The rest, then, could not be merely the land of Canaan, (as the Jews of Paul's time understood it to be,) for this both believers and unbelievers, living in the time of the psalmist, already enjoyed. Consequently, the rest spoken of by the psalmist was of a spiritual nature, pertaining only to believers."* And it was this spiritual and heavenly rest that was typified and set forth in the promise, under the figure of the earthly Canaan. And thus did Abraham understand it; for Paul afterward declares that, "*by faith, he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country . . . for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,*" Heb. xi, 9, 10, &c.

4.) The fourth particular in this covenant is thus stated:—"I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant. And I will be their God."

This promise applies to Abraham and his natural descendants in its literal import. Thus, the chief advantage of being a Jew was summed up in this statement:—"Unto them were committed the oracles of God." "To them," says Paul, more in detail, "pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." Rom. iii, 1, 2, and ix, 4. All the external blessings of the covenant belonged to the Jew. This was the peculiar privilege of Abraham's natural descendants. The spiritual blessings

* Professor Stewart's Comment. *in loc.*

belonged to them not as *Jews*, but as *believers*. Thus was God's covenant ever with Abraham, and with his seed after him. But this is to be taken also in a higher sense. The covenant of the Lord is with the spiritual seed of Abraham,—with all true believers. In this sense it is truly an “everlasting covenant.”

The promise that he would be a God to Abraham and to his seed, implies that they shall know and worship the true God, and that God will protect and save them. This has been fulfilled, in a general sense, in the Jewish nation, but in a higher and more important sense in all genuine believers,—the spiritual descendants of Abraham. In other words, it is the church proper, in all ages, to whom this promise has been, and is to be, in its more eminent sense, fulfilled. The deep meaning, then, of this part of the covenant is sufficiently obvious without further remark.

5.) The last item we shall specify in this covenant is contained in the following words:—“In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

For a full understanding of this part of the covenant we must go, as before, to the New Testament. We are assured by Paul that this refers to Christ, and is a promise that all nations should be blessed through him. His words are: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Gal. iii, 16. Here, then, is an end of all controversy respecting the proper evangelical character of this covenant. The authority of inspiration has settled this question, and is against the Baptists in this matter. But furthermore, the apostle would be, if possible, more explicit. He says, “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (*τα εθνη the nations*) by faith, preached the gospel before unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed,” Gal. iii, 8. Here, then, it is plainly asserted, that when God promised to bless all nations through Abraham and his seed, he preached the gospel to that patriarch; that is, he revealed to him the plan of salvation for all nations through Christ. Our Saviour says to the Jews, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad,” John viii, 56. It was in the light of this covenant, and especially of this

promise, that Abraham obtained a view of the divine Saviour.

Indeed, if we remove Christ, and the promise of pardon and eternal life through faith, from this covenant, we shall array ourselves directly against the entire tenor of Scripture. Paul expressly affirms, that "the covenant was confirmed of God IN CHRIST;" and in another place, "that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS; AND THAT THE GENTILES MIGHT GLO-RIFY GOD FOR HIS MERCY," Gal. iii, 17; Rom. xv, 8, 9.

There is, in Heb. vi, 13-19, a remarkable declaration of the apostle, with respect to the spiritual and evangelical character of the Abrahamic covenant. After having alluded to the oath which God made to Abraham, (Gen. xxii, 16,) and to the general confirmatory nature of oaths among men, he says: "On which account God, willing in the most abundant manner to manifest to the heirs of the promise [made to Abraham] the immutability of his counsel, [in condescension to human ideas and customs,] interposed with an oath: that by two immutable things, [namely, the promise and oath of God,] in [either of] which it was impossible for God to lie, we [the heirs of those promises, which have been thus abundantly attested and confirmed] might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope which [by the promise of this covenant] is set before us." This I conceive to be the true meaning of the passage, as the context, and the scope of the apostle's reasoning, abundantly show.

The strictly evangelical character of this covenant is further proved from the fact, that Abraham's faith, in its several promises, was accounted to him for righteousness; that is, as Paul's reasoning, in Rom. iv, 1-8, most unequivocally proves, by faith in the promises of this covenant, Abraham obtained that justification, or state of pardon before God, that we now obtain through faith in Jesus Christ. And the apostle there concludes his argument in the following manner:—"Now it was not written for his [Abraham's] sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it [faith] shall be imputed, [for righteousness,] if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead," Rom. iv, 23, 24. Now, the plain teach-

ing of this scripture is simply this: that Abraham's faith, and consequent righteousness, were the same as every Christian's at the present day; and if this be so, it need not be said the *objects* of Abraham's faith perfectly answered to those of the Christian's faith now. Clearer testimony could not be adduced in proof of the real evangelical character of the Abrahamic covenant, and of the faith which Abraham had in the promises of that covenant. It was the "gospel preached unto Abraham," and the faith of that patriarch in those particular promises is exhibited for our instruction and imitation. Heb. xi, 8-19. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, THE SAME are the children of Abraham. . . . And if ye be Christ's, THEN are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE." Gal. iii, 7, 29. Such are the views we are taught concerning the Abrahamic covenant by an inspired apostle; and to his writings, and the general light of the New Testament, we further commend the inquiring reader.

This, then, is the first link in the chain of our argument. It is the first position to be taken in defence of infant baptism. By this we ascertain the date of the church of God. It is true, before this time "men began to call on the name of the Lord," or, as it should probably read, "to call themselves by the name of the Lord;" (Gen. iv, 26;) but we have not sufficient intimation that they were organized into a church proper before the time of Abraham. After his day, allusions to the church, or "people of God," everywhere abound.

SECTION II.

1. There is a subject to which the reader's attention must necessarily be directed, and with respect to which his views should be enlightened; and we know not of a more suitable place and time than the present for its discussion. We allude to the true design of the ceremonial law, and the distinction between it and the Abrahamic covenant. We are fully aware that, unless this point be guarded, all our conclusions will be liable to be swept away by a counter current of ignorant prejudice with respect to the design of the former, and the common delu-

sion which prevails among superficial thinkers, that it was identical with the church. Nothing, however, can be more unfounded, or foreign to the truth, than such an impression. The church did not originate with Moses, and its proper identity is not to be sought for in the ceremonial law. It existed before the ceremonial was given; it still exists, though the latter has long since been abolished.

There is a proper theory which belongs to the dispensations of God, which it is of the highest importance to understand. We are not to take their parts separately and independently, or consider them as so many isolated facts, unconnected with one harmonious, comprehensive, and most wise and perfect plan. The reasons for their variety and number are not resolvable into any inscrutable, arbitrary will of Deity, but arise from the condition and relations of men; and though not always obvious to the superficial, the careless, and the skeptical, may yet be scanned, in a great measure, by the diligent and humble inquirer. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that take pleasure therein," Psa. cxi, 2.

We are not to suppose that all the laws enumerated and enjoined in the Mosaical code took their origin at the date of that code. How many of the same were known and practised by the patriarchs we cannot tell; but that many were no more than republications of more ancient, or even primitive laws, handed down by tradition, we have the fullest evidence. Thus it was with the sabbath-day, with bloody and unbloody sacrifices, with the distinctions of clean and unclean beasts, and with circumcision. Moses rather enlarged and improved the church ritual than originated it. The great church charter was first given to Abraham, but for a long time it appeared as a dead letter. The time for its taking effect had not yet arrived. Moses at length executed it so far as its first stage of immunities extended; and, "in the fulness of time," Jesus Christ developed and matured the system.

The ceremonial law is, to this day, an enigma to many. True, we understand many things respecting it; but its true philosophy, its real design, seems not to be penetrated by many. We have room only for a few outlines of thought on this subject. The strict necessity for the superaddition of the ceremonial law to the proper church

charter is to be sought for in the condition of the human mind, and of society, in these early ages.

1.) Paul says, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ," Gal. iii, 24. A *παιδαγωγος* *paidagogos*, translated here *schoolmaster*, was a person who had the care of boys, to train them at home, accompany them to the public school, &c.; so that, when the apostle says the ceremonial law was our schoolmaster, he means that, in the infancy of the human mind, God placed the church under the care and guardianship of the law, in order thereby to receive its elemental instruction and discipline, preparatory to their coming to Christ. Here, then, is the first grand reason for the introduction of the Mosaic ritual,—the human mind needed to be taught the "*elements* of the doctrines of Christ."

The ignorance of men respecting the doctrines of revealed theology, which characterized those ages, and the universal prevalence and power of a lewd, debasing idol-worship, are not generally appreciated, even by the intelligent. It is difficult, now that we are enlightened, to bring our thoughts back to those times, and form a just estimate of the state of knowledge (or rather ignorance) which then prevailed. The modern missionary alone can sympathize fully in this subject, and he feels the need of some such simple, yet imposing economy, as that of Moses, to lift the mind of the heathen from its depth of gloomy ignorance.

Many particular individuals of very ancient times, as Enoch, Noah, the patriarchs, Moses, Job, and others, partook not of the ignorance of the times. But these are only exceptions. Idol-worship annihilates all ideas of the unity, power, wisdom, goodness, and especially of the moral attributes of the Godhead. A late anonymous author of a very ingenious work, entitled the "*Philosophy of Salvation*," has taken the bold ground that the idea of the holiness of God, with those of other doctrines, "*had to be originated*, and thrown into the mind through the senses by a process instituted for that express purpose." This was doubtless the fact with respect to the multitude. True, the patriarchal system contained the elements of truth, but the surrounding prevalence of a base, corrupting, and licentious idolatry, together with the long servitude

in Egypt, had almost effaced the last vestige of divine truth from the mind. I cannot furnish a better specimen of the ignorance of these times, than in the words of the anonymous author above mentioned:—

“At the period of the deliverance from Egypt,” says he, “every nation by which they were surrounded worshipped unholy beings. Now, how were the Jews to be extricated from this difficulty, and made to understand and feel the influence of the holy character of God? The Egyptian idolatry in which they had mingled was beastly and lustful; and one of their first acts of disobedience, after their deliverance, showed that their minds were still dark, and their propensities corrupt. The golden calf which they desired should be erected for them was not designed as an act of apostacy from Jehovah, who had delivered them from Egyptian servitude. When the image was made, it was proclaimed *to be that God which brought them up out of the land of Egypt*; and when the proclamation of a feast, or idolatrous debauch,* was issued by Aaron, it was denominated a feast, not to Isis or Osiris, but a feast to Jehovah; and as such they held it. Exod. xxxii, 4, 5. But they offered to the holy Jehovah the unholy worship of the idols of Egypt. Thus they manifested their ignorance of the holiness of his nature, as well as the corruption of their own hearts.”†

How could such a people be made to understand the holiness of God, and the consequent necessity of being holy themselves? They were acquainted with no words in their language to which the proper idea of *holiness*, as now set forth in the Bible, was attached. Their own

* The meaning of the last clause of Exod. xxxii, 6, “They rose up to play,” is not obvious in our English. The word צַחַק *tsahak*, rendered *play*, “is of ominous import,” like *παιζειν*, *laudere*. It means, in general, *sport, play, &c.*, with singing, leaping, laughing, gambolling; childish sports. But when applied to heathen worship, as here, and often when otherwise applied, includes the idea of *lewdness*. The children of Israel sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to *lewd, debauching* sports. This word is translated “*sporting*” in Gen. xxviii, 8, and “*mock*” in Gen. xxxix, 14, 17. The reader can see in what sense it is there used. See Gesenius on this word, and also on צַחַק ; Dr. Robinson’s Lexicon, Art. *παιζω*; Dr. A. Clarke’s comment on Exod. xxxii, 6.

† Philosophy of Salvation, p. 71.

conceptions had never reached this sublime doctrine in its maturity. All the worship with which they were acquainted, as practised among other nations, was impure; their gods were impure; and their own moral characters, by a natural and inevitable process, assimilated to that of the deities which they worshipped. How, then, could the Israelites learn to form just notions of the holiness of God, the purity of his worship, and the consequent holiness required of his true worshippers?

“The plan to originate the idea must consist of a series of comparisons. . . . In the outset, the animals common to Palestine were divided, by command of Jehovah, into clean and unclean; in this way a distinction was made, and the one class, in comparison with the other, was deemed to be of a purer and better kind. From the class thus distinguished, as more pure than the other, was one selected to offer as a sacrifice. It was not only to be chosen from the clean beasts, but, as an individual, it was to be without spot or blemish. Thus it was, in their eyes, purer than the other class, and purer than other individuals of its own class. This sacrifice the people were not deemed worthy, in their own persons, to offer unto Jehovah; but it was to be offered by a class of men who were distinguished from their brethren, purified, and set apart for the service of the priest’s office. Thus the idea of purity originated from two sources; the purified priest, and the pure animal *purified*, were united in the offering of the sacrifices. But before the sacrifice could be offered, it was washed with clean water—and the priest had, in some cases, to wash himself, and officiate without his sandals. Thus, when one process of comparison after another had attached the idea of superlative purity to the sacrifice,—in offering it to Jehovah, in order that the contrast between the purity of God and the highest degrees of earthly purity might be seen, neither priest, people, nor sacrifice was deemed sufficiently pure to come into his presence; but it was offered in the court, without the holy of holies. In this manner, by a process of comparison, the character of God, in point of purity, was placed indefinitely above themselves and their sacrifices.”*

* Philosophy of Salvation, pp. 75, 76.

Such, then, is a specimen of the processes by which God conveyed to the minds of his people those just conceptions of his character which are so peculiar to the Bible. What we have adduced under this head is offered merely as a *specimen* of the design and adaptations of the ceremonial law; our limits forbid our pursuing this theme at length. By sensible signs Jehovah conveyed to the Jews their ideas respecting their own depravity, their guilt, pardon, sanctification, the divine holiness, justice, mercy, power, wisdom, goodness; in a word, all the sublime truths revealed in the former dispensation. These external symbols and ceremonies originated and assisted their first conceptions of truth; afterward came the long line of illustrious prophets, endowed with supernatural penetration and wisdom, and expounded more fully the spiritual sense of the "law," lifting the mind of the nation through another ascending grade of divine knowledge. And when, finally, by these external means, the *principles* of theology were fully communicated; when the Jews had so associated with other nations, by commerce, travel, wars, but especially by colonizing themselves everywhere, as to incorporate their elemental ideas of religion into other languages, and in some sense to transfuse their own principles into pagan systems of philosophy and religion; when the human mind became thus, in a measure, prepared, and "the fulness of time had come, God sent forth his own Son"—the great "Teacher"—to abolish the elemental system, to mature those conceptions of truth, and to complete the illumination of the human mind.

Thus, the machinery of the Levitical dispensation subserved a most important end; but, having originated just conceptions of God and his worship, of man's character and duty, these elemental principles once mastered by the mind, they could be easily taken and applied to various subjects at will, while the external machinery which was the means of imparting them could be dispensed with. The people of God need be "no longer under a schoolmaster;" they could now "leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on to perfection." Nor could the sublime truths of the Bible have been imparted to the human mind by any other process, unless Jehovah had altered the constitution of the mind. But this has never

yet been done to meet any exigency. All our abstract ideas are derived primarily through the outward senses. Whatever *theories* of philosophy may teach about intuitive ideas, still it remains an unsophisticated fact, that our knowledge all comes, primarily, through the outward senses. Hence, all primary words in all original languages, though many of them may now stand for abstract ideas, originally represented sensible objects. Hence, children can be taught to comprehend abstract principles, at first, only by *sensible* illustrations, and by the most easy and simple processes; "so likewise we, when we were but as children in minority, though we had the promise and hope of the Messiah, were held in bondage under the discipline of the law; in which we were employed in a way suited to the imperfect circumstances of an infant state, about worldly elements, or about those inferior things which are like the letters of the alphabet when compared with that sublime sense which they may be the means of teaching."*

The reader, then, will readily perceive that the ceremonial law was not the church charter, under the former dispensation; but only that temporary discipline and system of elemental instruction under which Jehovah placed the church for a season.

2. The ceremonial law and the Abrahamic covenant are not to be confounded. This will further appear from the following considerations:—

1.) Observe the different times of their institution.

From the date of the covenant, about A. M. 2083, (we reckon from Abram's call, Gen. xii, 1, 2,) to the delivery of the law on Sinai, A. M. 2513, we reckon four hundred and thirty years. This is Paul's statement, Gal. iii, 17.

2.) In the covenant of Abraham, "all nations" were to be blessed. It contained the gospel to the Gentiles (Gal. iii, 8) as well as to the Jews.

On the contrary, the institutes of Moses were rather adapted to a high spirit of nationality, and, I may say, exclusiveness, among the Jews. One grand design of the ceremonial law was to secure the distinct preservation of the Jewish people until Christ should come.† In order to

* Doddridge's Expos. on Gal. iv, 3.

† "The danger of mixing with the rest of mankind was so great,

this, they must be kept from intermarriages with other nations, and from copying their manners, or their religion. To these ends the inexorable ritual of Moses was well adapted. By giving to the Jews a ritual of a peculiar and highly national character, burdensome, rigid, and inflexible, "a middle wall of partition" between Jews and Gentiles would be erected, and a complete separation preserved. The Jews would not be likely to copy after the idolatrous nations around them, nor the heathen after them, while the great diversity of their respective rites rendered them mutually odious to each other. Thus the Roman annalist observes: "Moses established religious ordinances altogether new, and opposite to those of all other men and countries. Whatever we [Romans] esteem holy, is with them profane. Again, they permit many things as lawful, which to us are forbidden and impure." "The Jews," says he, "are inflexible in their faith and adherence one to another; but toward the whole race besides they retain a deadly and implacable hate. . . . Jovial and gay were the solemnities established by Bacchus: the Jewish rituals are preposterous and rueful."* This feature of Judaism might easily and profitably be illustrated by many specific cases, but our limits, and the proper line of our argument, forbid. Well might Paul call the institutes of Moses "the enmity" between Jews and Gentiles, and the abolishment of these institutes the "breaking down of the middle wall of partition between them," Eph. ii, 14, 15. He elsewhere says, that the law "was ADDED" to the covenant, "because of transgression;" that is, on account of the propensity of the people to transgress, and to check that propensity. This accounts for many peculiar severities by which it was characterized. It was intended, among other uses, as a punishment for,† and a cure of, idol-worship.

that God ordered a mark to be made on the bodies of all descended from Abraham, to be *the seal of the covenant*, and the badge and cognizance of his posterity. By that distinction, and by their living in a wandering and unfixed manner, they were preserved for some time from idolatry; God intending afterward to settle them in an instituted religion."—*Bishop Burnet's Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, Art. 6.

* Tacit. Hist., lib. 5, c. 4, 5.

† See Mr. Wesley's Notes on Gal. iii, 19.

3.) The ceremonial law is abolished, but the covenant of Abraham is established in Christ. The former, no Christian will deny. The latter is expressly affirmed in Rom. xv, 8; Gal. iii, 16, 17; and elsewhere.

Our argument does not permit us to pursue this subject further, nor is it necessary. Enough has been said to enable the most unpractised reader to perceive that the establishment, and subsequent abrogation, of the Mosaical law, did not affect the covenant made with Abraham in any sense whatever, further than as a temporary expedient introduced for the better security of the final ends of that covenant. "The law cannot *disannul* the covenant," neither is it "*against* the promises." Gal. iii, 17, 21. The reader should keep before his mind one general fact while reading the epistles of Paul. The Jews had colonized themselves in every part of the civilized world at the time of Christ, so that wherever the apostles travelled they found Jewish synagogues and services, and Jewish influence and prejudices, to oppose. Besides, many of the Ebionite or Nazarene Christians arose in different parts in the first age of the church, and many of the Jews—the deadly enemies of Christianity—travelled into different parts, in order to subvert the infant churches planted by the apostles, and bring the converts back to Judaism. This rendered it necessary, in almost every epistle, to enter into the controversy about the alleged obligation of the ceremonial law. This the reader should keep in view while reading the epistles, and a little care and attention will supply him with correct information on the subjects connected with that controversy.

SECTION III.

The preceding section may be regarded as a parenthetical topic, being partly a digression from our proper line of argument,—a digression, however, rendered necessary by the state of opinion, or rather prejudice, and designed to remove any after objection that might arise in the reader's mind against our conclusions.

Our next proper position relates to the substantial oneness, or identity, of the Jewish and Christian churches. I say *substantial* oneness, because, although in many

secondary and adventitious points they differ, still, in all the essential features of the real church of God, they are one and the same. And here it is proper to admonish the reader of the importance of this position. It is upon this ground that we rest the weight of the Bible argument for infant baptism. This position is the proper basis of evidence on which that institution rests for support, and without which, all other arguments would still be wanting in authority. It is here we stand, as upon a rock, immovable, and plead and contend for the ancient and Scriptural rite of infant dedication to God, and for their special right to the visible mark, or sign of the covenant. We are not, however, as yet, prepared for those important conclusions to which we are tending, and for which we are striving gradually to prepare the mind of the reader.

I am apprised of the fact that some men would totally discard the Old Testament, and others view it as having no necessary connection with the present dispensation of grace to men. An impression seems to have gained ground with many, that, at the appearance of Christ in the flesh, and the establishment of the Christian church, Jehovah passed a broad and final act of nullification upon all his past acts and plans, and, to use a homely phrase, "began anew." Certain it is that some such undefinable impression, that has been imbibed without investigation, and retained without authority or reason, but, in truth, against evidence, has been allowed to operate peculiarly against the conclusions and facts that have been urged in support of infant baptism. A tide of ignorant and absurd prejudice has thus been permitted to bear against the clear evidence of reason and Scripture, which could never be resisted but by such means, but which has thus proved powerless to many minds. It will be our aim to dissipate these mists—to expose the absurdity of these vague, unfounded impressions—to trace the progress and perpetuity of the church as it makes its transit from Moses to Christ—from the ceremonial law to the gospel, and substantiate the present, which, as we have observed, is the main position in our general argument. What was said under the first section of this chapter applies also, with almost equal force, to the proposition under this head. It was our aim, in that place, to prove that the true visible church *originated* in the family

of Abraham, and was formed under the covenant which God made with that patriarch. It is now our business to prove that the same church has been *perpetuated* until this day—that it has been transferred to the Gentiles, or that the latter have been grafted into that original stock.

1. The reader's attention is directed to the *appellations* by which the church was anciently distinguished. We shall not dwell largely upon this point, but it is worthy of a place in the argument. The appellations given to the church anciently are the same as now. God calls them his "people;" his "sheep;" his "vine," or "vineyard;" his "children;" his "elect," or "chosen;" "his own;" his "sons and daughters;" his "church;" and also by various other endearing and peculiar titles.

In Acts vii, 38, Stephen calls the Jewish people "*the church*:"—"This (Moses) is he that was *εν τη εκκλησια εν τε εκκλησια, in, or with, the church* in the wilderness." It is worthy of remark here, that although *εκκλησια ekklesia* is the word by which the Seventy generally translate *קהל kahal*, (*an assembly, congregation,* &c.*), yet the same Hebrew word is also sometimes rendered, by the same authority, by *συναγωγη, a public assembly, convocation, &c.* But in the New Testament there is not the same interchange of these two Greek words. But on the contrary, *εκκλησια ekklesia* is there uniformly used, when applied to a religious assembly, to signify "*church*," meaning the Christian church; and *συναγωγη sunagoge* is as uniformly the word used to mean a Jewish assembly, or *synagogue*. When, therefore, Stephen calls the Jewish congregation in the wilderness "*THE CHURCH*," he uses a word in the original that, according to the *usus loquendi* in the New Testament, conveys the distinct and proper

* "The word '*congregation*,' as it stands in our version of the Old Testament, (and it is one of very frequent occurrence in the books of Moses,) is found to correspond in the Septuagint, which was familiar to the New Testament writers, to *ecclesia*; the word which, in our version of these last, is always rendered—not '*congregation*,' but '*church*.' This, or its equivalent, '*kirk*,' is probably no other than '*circle*;' that is, assembly, *ecclesia*."—*Archbp. Whateley on "the Kingdom of Christ,"* p. 84, note. "The disciples had been brought up in the Jewish *church*, or (as it is called in the Old Testament) the *congregation*, or *ecclesia*."—*Ibid.*, p. 69.

idea of the true visible Christian church. The word *ἐκκλησία* *ekklesia* comes from the verb *ἐκκαλεω* *ekkaleo*, which means *to call out*, and the people of God, or the church, was called *ekklesia*, because they were *called out*, or *separated*, from all the nations, so as to become a distinct and peculiar people. Now, such appellations could not be fitly applied to the Jews, only on the principle of their being the true visible church; and if the same distinguishing appellations which are employed in reference to the Christian church apply with equal fitness to the Jews, it strongly argues a similarity of character. Thus: Psa. xxii, 22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the CHURCH (*כְּהֵן* *kahal*, *ἐκκλησία* *ekklesia*) will I praise thee."

In this passage the triumphs of the Redeemer are celebrated. The Saviour's passion is referred to in this psalm from verse 1 to 21, and then the victories of the resurrection. The apostle quotes the passage Heb. ii, 12, and gives it precisely this application, using the same words. That the church proper, therefore, is here intended, is undeniable. Indeed, it is sufficiently obvious from a comparison of the corresponding members of the passage:—"I will declare thy name unto MY BRETHREN: in the midst of THE CHURCH will I praise thee." Also in verse 25: "My praise shall be of thee in the great *congregation*," that is, *church*. (The same Hebrew and Greek words occur in this verse.) Dr. Coke says, the word *congregation*, and *the great congregation*, (in verses 22 and 25,) "must refer to the whole body of the Christian church."*

Psalm xl, 9: "I have preached righteousness in the great *congregation*," that is, the *church*. (*כְּהֵן* *ἐκκλησία*.) See also verse 10, where the Septuagint have rendered it *συναγωγῆς*, *synagogue*. Here also I apprehend Dr. Coke has the true sense of the passage: "If," says he, "we understand it to refer to Christ, as seems most proper, then it must refer to the *righteousness of God revealed by faith*, and made known by Jesus Christ to his CHURCH." See also Bishop Horne on this psalm. These illustrations of the use of *ἐκκλησία* *ekklesia* we need not extend.

* Vide his Comment. *in loc.*

2. Matt. xxi, 43: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The reader is requested to read the whole parable. He will there find the following doctrines taught, namely, 1. The "kingdom of God," by which we are to understand the visible church organization, with all its spiritual provisions and promises, was given to the Jews. This is illustrated by the figure of the "vineyard," which the "householder planted," and which he "let out to husbandmen." 2. God had sent his servants, the prophets, and finally his own Son, to the Jewish people, to receive the testimonials of their spiritual allegiance, and to encourage fruits of righteousness among them; but the former they ill-treated, and the latter they "slew, and hanged on a tree." 3. In consideration of their extreme wickedness, God declared their church rights and relations null and void—took from them the ordinances—and transferred the church to the Gentiles:—"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Here, then, was a direct transfer of the "kingdom"—the visible church charter—from Jews to Gentiles. Whatever that was, essentially, that distinguished the Jews as a religious body, it was "taken from them," and given to another people. Language could not make the case more clear. The argument is complete and irrefragable; the Jewish and Christian churches are essentially one. The same doctrine is also taught, chap. xxii, 1-10.

3. One principal object of Paul's letter to the Romans, as also of the epistolary writings in general, was, to prove that church privileges were no longer confined to Jews, but were equally extended to Gentiles—that both Jews and Gentiles held their relations to the visible church by the same tenure—and that, therefore, there was no just ground of jealousies, and disputes, and divisions, on this subject.*

* "It is in the Epistles principally that we are clearly taught the calling of the Gentiles *to make one church with the Jews*. Our Lord, indeed, had intimated this glorious event in some general expressions, and also in some of his parables; (see Matt. viii, 1; xx, 1; Luke xv, 11, &c.;) and the numerous prophecies of the Old

The church at Rome was composed of Jewish and Gentile converts. The former considered, that, by reason of their connection with Abraham by lineal descent, and by the bond of circumcision,—their observance of the law of Moses, and their exemption from heathen abominations,—they were, therefore, entitled to higher consideration than the latter. It was hereon that they had formerly based their claims to being the true church, and also their hopes of salvation. On the contrary, the Gentiles justly considered that their own title to church privileges, and their hopes of salvation, were not impaired by the absence of these adventitious circumstances. Other topics are touched and discussed in the epistle, but I have alluded to the principal occasion of its being written.

In meeting and obviating these discussions in the Roman church, Paul first establishes the doctrine of our justification and sanctification through faith in Christ. This is a principle of universal application to both Jews and Gentiles; it excludes boasting on the part of the Jew, and removes despair from the breast of the Gentile. It places all on an equal ground. The establishment of this position occupies the attention of the apostle mainly, from chap. i. to viii. of the epistle.

The second general position taken occupies chapters ix, x, and xi, and relates to the call of the Gentiles, the rejection and future restoration of the Jews. Our present argument does not require us to pursue the analysis of this epistle any further, and we therefore call the reader's attention to the propositions already laid down. The principles laid down in these propositions, (so far as con-

Testament, which foretell the calling of the Gentiles, were sufficient to convince the Jews that, in the times of the Messiah, God would reveal the knowledge of himself and of his will to the world more fully than ever he had done before. But the extraordinary value which they had for themselves, and the privileges which they fancied were peculiar to their own nation, made them unwilling to believe that the Gentiles should ever be *fellow-heirs* with the Jews of the *same body, or church*, with them, and 'partakers of the same promises in Christ by the gospel,' Eph. iii, 6. This, Peter himself could hardly be persuaded to believe, till he was convinced by a particular vision vouchsafed to him for that purpose. Acts x, 28. And Paul tells us that this was a *mystery*, which was but newly *revealed to the apostles by the Spirit*, (Eph. iii, 5,) and therefore not fully discovered by Christ before."—*Horne's Int.*, part vi, ch. iii, § 2.

cerns our present purpose,) and carried out in the discussions, are clearly these:—

1.) The Jews were the true church—the chosen people of God. They were the “elect,” “beloved for their fathers’ sakes.” “To them were committed the oracles of God;”—to them pertained “the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.” Rom. ix, 4, and xi, 28. This is so plain that it needs no further notice.

2.) That God intended the ceremonial law, the rite of circumcision, and the peculiar national blessings which resulted to the Jews on the ground of their “election,” and of the righteousness of their forefathers—in fine, the general exterior form of the church, as it subsisted under the old covenant—to pass away at the coming of Christ, and give place to the introduction of a new exterior model and state of things.

3.) That in consequence of the Jews stubbornly persisting in the observance of their ancient rites, contrary to the first intention of Jehovah, and, in a manner, to “frustrate the grace of God” through Christ; and also of their great and extreme wickedness and impiety, in rejecting the Messiah, and despising the gospel, God took from them their church privileges as a nation, and not only declared their national election null and void, but gave them over to “blindness” and “unbelief”—leaving them without the pale of his visible church. In this God acted judicially, as the head and chief executive of the church.

4.) That in rejecting the Jews as a nation—that is, in unchurching them—God made a distinction between the holy and the unholy. In unchurching the nation, he did not, indiscriminately, “cast away his people”—“a remnant was saved, according to the election of grace,” chap. xi, 1, 5. This “remnant,” called also “the election,” (verse 7,) God formed after the improved model of the New Testament church. This he did not do by taking them out of one church and putting them into another—not by nullifying their old charter, and giving them a new one—not by declaring their former relations void, and forming them on a new basis; but simply by divesting them of a cumbersome ritual—now grown obsolete—which never constituted a primary element of their church com-

pact, and which, indeed, had been superadded to their proper church constitution with a view simply to subserve a temporary, yet important end, and introducing them to new and enlarged privileges. Here, then, is the proper state of the case. The Jews, as a nation, had been unchurched—in plain language, all the disobedient ones had been excommunicated. But the Jewish church was not destroyed. The ceremonial law, and the rite of circumcision, had been abolished; but the Abrahamic covenant—the proper and original ecclesiastical charter—had not been abrogated. Most of the Jews had been rejected personally; but all the Jews, universally, had not been expelled. The branches, many of them, were broken off; but the old stock remained. The apostle argues that the church was no more destroyed by this general expulsion of the Jews, than it was in the days of Elijah, when but “seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal” could be found, while the rest were apostate. Taking away some of the branches of a tree does not impair its proper identity. And what “if some of the branches were broken off” from this “good olive-tree;” is it therefore destroyed? By no means. Here, then, is the proper nucleus of the church left—its original stock remains—its identity is unimpaired; the converted Jews who followed Christ and his apostles, however few in comparison to the body that remained in unbelief, were still the true visible church.

5.) Into this original stock—this primitive church—the Gentiles were ingrafted. Whatever this original stock was, into it, beyond all question, the Gentile converts were ingrafted, and thus was the Gentile church formed. We do not say that they were ingrafted on any limb of the ceremonial law; but we do say that they were ingrafted into the Abrahamic covenant, on which both the Old and New Testament churches stand. Thus reasons Paul:—“For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.” Chap. xi, 16–18.

Let us attend for a moment to these statements. The word *ἅγιος*, *holy*, in verse 16, means *devoted to God, set apart for God*, as by church relations, or religious rites.* The allusion to "first-fruits" and the "lump;" to the "root" and the "branches;" is for the purpose of *illustration*, intended to show that, as the whole harvest, or vintage, or mass of dough, was considered *consecrated*, when a handful of either was first taken and offered, as a first-fruit, unto the Lord; so the Jewish nation was considered consecrated by peculiar relations to God, on account of the devotion of their ancestors. "For if the first-fruit"—that is, Abraham and the heads of the Jewish church—"be holy,"—that is, were devoted to God—set apart by church rites,—*"the lump is also holy"*—the entire mass of the Jewish nation, their descendants, is also ecclesiastically *separated*, and devoted to the service of God; "and if the root be holy, so are the branches,"—that is, if the progenitors of the Jewish family were brought into covenant relation to God, and *consecrated* thus, so are their descendants. The immediate point to which Paul is here arguing is, that although the Jews had generally "fallen," and God had "cast them away," yet it was evident that such was not the first intention of Deity. For as the forefathers of the Jews were *holy*, so also should their descendants be reckoned *holy*, and such God evidently designed them to be; and in view of this obvious claim which they might put forth to church privileges, they ought to hope still for pardon and restoration.

But the apostle proceeds:—"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them," &c. Now, what is the doctrine here taught? We answer, evidently, that the Gentile church was not built up upon a new and separate foundation from that of the Jews—but that they both stood on the same ground. Nay, further, the figure is much

* In this sense the word is often used, merely to express a visible church relation—a *consecration*, without necessarily implying *moral purity*. Thus, Luke ii, 23, "Every male that openeth the womb shall be called *holy* unto the Lord;" that is, *devoted to his service*. The allusion is not made directly to moral character. Thus also the Jews were frequently called a holy nation, and the temple and its utensils holy.

stronger than this. It declares that the pious Jews and the converted Gentiles were both branches of the same stock, supported by the same root, and nourished by the same sap. The Jews are the natural branches, and the Gentiles were the scions cut from a foreign stock, and grafted in among them. But what was this natural stock—this “good olive-tree?” According to Paul’s own phraseology it was the church organization in Abraham’s family. The patriarchs, thus gathered into church relations with God, were the “*root*” that supported both the “natural branches”—their own natural descendants,—and also the ingrafted branches—the converted Gentiles, or spiritual descendants of Abraham. The figure is borrowed from Jer. xi, 16, “The Lord called thy name a green olive-tree, fair, and of goodly fruit.”

Now, I am not aware that language can make the case any plainer. I do not rest the force of the argument on any peculiar construction put upon an obscure figurative expression, but upon the obvious, natural force of the apostle’s argument, and the indisputable scope of his reasoning. His entire argument hinges on the complete, substantial oneness of the Old and New Testament churches, and in defence of this position we may, therefore, with propriety, cite the Epistle to the Romans.

4. The Epistle to the Galatians deserves, in the next place, our candid and critical attention.

At an early day Paul had visited Galatia, and first planted the gospel among the people in that province. Afterward, a certain Judaizing teacher came among them, inculcating the necessity of circumcision and obedience to the ceremonial law. Many of the Galatians were hereby induced to submit to circumcision, and go back to the law of Moses. It should here be remembered, also, that the church at Galatia was composed of Jewish and Gentile converts, as was the case in most places where the apostles founded churches. The Judaizing teacher above mentioned (some suppose there were many of them) aimed to invalidate the apostolic authority of Paul, and to bring him into contempt. The scope, therefore, of the Epistle to the Galatians is, to assert the apostolical authority of its author; the truth of his former doctrine; to rectify the church in regard to errors concerning justifi-

cation by faith alone, the supposed obligation of the ceremonial law, and of circumcision; and to bring back and confirm the Galatians in their allegiance to the gospel of Christ.

The reader will understand that our future remarks on this epistle will be confined to its immediate bearing on the argument before us. The object of the apostle is to prove that salvation, or righteousness, comes not by the law, but by Christ. In order to this,—

1.) He establishes the doctrine of justification by faith, and the impossibility of justification by the works of the law. Chap. iii, 1–14.

2.) Paul asserts the immutability and perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant—its distinct and separate existence from the Mosaic law—and the mere temporary character of the latter.

On the immutable character of the Abrahamic covenant the apostle holds the following language:—“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be ratified, *οὐδεις ἀθετει ἢ ἐπιδιατάσσεται*, *no man setteth aside or superadds;*”—not the least alteration is made to a covenant, or contract, after it is duly signed by the parties. And this rule obtains even among erring men. Let us, then, apply the illustration. “Now, to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, which was ratified before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot make *ακυροι without effect*, so as to render the promise *unproductive, or useless*,” (*καταργησαι.*)

Language could not make it more plain, that the covenant which God made with Abraham, recorded Gen. xvii, remains without the least alteration, and without the least abatement of its original force. It was once “ratified in Christ,” and no one may subtract, or superadd, or set aside. The introduction of the Mosaic law did not at all alter the covenant—did not render it without authority or without action. The law was introduced for another purpose, and was not permitted to infringe upon the covenant, so that, now that it is abrogated, the covenant remains, as it has ever stood, “ordered in all things and sure.” “The

law was not against the promises of God," so as to either nullify or supersede them. Chap. iii, 15-21.

3.) Their church relations, rights, and privileges as well as their hopes of pardon and salvation, were based on the covenant, and not on the ceremonial law. This is a point of so much importance to our general argument, that we bespeak for it a candid and close attention. We had intended to introduce this argument in another place, but it cannot well be passed in this connection, and we shall not attempt further to delay it. The church rights of both Jews and Gentiles, under the New Testament, were predicated of the Abrahamic covenant; and this argument is exactly to our purpose. It is proper to remark, that the extreme involution (so to speak) of the argument renders it difficult to discuss its parts separately, without seeming repetition. The reader will put on patience. The doctrine of the pending proposition is supported by the following proof:—

(a.) This was the core and gist of the dispute between Paul and the Judaizing teachers of Galatia. The drift of Paul's reasoning goes to show, if justification "come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain;" that the true children of Abraham are not those merely who are of his natural posterity, but those who are of faith; that it is by faith in Christ that both Jews and Gentiles become one; that the Abrahamic covenant contemplated this union, and made special provision for it; and that the removal of the ceremonial law gave place to the full development of the gracious provisions of that covenant.

In chap. iii, 18, Paul says, "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." The "*inheritance*" here spoken of is put for church rights and privileges, both spiritual and ecclesiastical. To these the Jews put forth an exclusive claim, in virtue of their natural descent from Abraham, and of their observance of the law of Moses. But Paul says that these do not belong to the "law," but to the "covenant." "God gave them to Abraham by *promise*." If, then, church rights, and spiritual blessings, are to be predicated only of the covenant, and if that covenant contemplated the conversion of Gentiles as well as Jews,—in it the gospel being preached before unto Abraham,—

then it follows that this exclusive plea of the Jews is without foundation. This hits the point of the controversy at that time going on in the Galatian churches; and this proves that church rights are, and ever have been, predicated of the covenant. In order to be "heirs according to the promise," they must, whether Jews or Gentiles, be "Abraham's seed," according to the evangelical import of that phrase; and in order to this, they must "be Christ's." Verse 29.

(b.) By a striking "allegory," illustrative of "the two covenants;" the one, the covenant made with Abraham, and the other the covenant of the ceremonial law, the apostle clearly asserts, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of *promise*." This is a clear and unequivocal declaration of church rights on the ground of the Abrahamic covenant. Gal. iv, 21-28.

(c.) In chap. iv, 1-6, Paul informs the Jewish converts that God had formerly dealt with the church as a parent would with a minor;—he had placed the church under a guardian. This guardian was the ceremonial law. It was called a "schoolmaster," (*παιδαγωγος, a teacher of children, a pedagogue,*) a "tutor" and "governor," (*επιτροπος και οικονομος, a guardian and steward.*) Chap. iii, 24, and v, 2.

It was the custom of the Greeks and Romans to place their children, in early life, under a private tutor, or overseer, whose business it was to instruct them; to direct all their gymnastic exercises; attend them in all their walks; protect them from harm; cultivate and form their manners and habits, &c.; and, in fine, to do all for them that their age, circumstances, and destination required. These pedagogues, or family teachers, are alluded to above. The apostle very properly says, "that the heir, as long as he is a *child*, differeth nothing from a *δουλον slave*, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. EVEN SO WE, WHEN WE WERE MINORS, *ὑπο τα στοιχεια του κοσμου ημεν δεδουλωμενοι were in subjection under the rudiments of the world.*" This last sentence is full of obscurity to a common English reader. The sense is this:—"During the period of our [Jewish] minority we were subjected, by the appointment of God, to that discipline and economy (the

Mosaic law) which, by reason of its feeble light, may be called rudimental, and, by reason of its numerous external and bodily ordinances, may be termed worldly, or terrestrial." The apostle continues:—"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Now, if we analyze this figure, we shall find it to contain the following doctrines:—

[1.] The church relations of the Jews subsisted *antede-*
cedently to the Mosaic law, and independently of it. It must be remembered that the heirship spoken of, verse 1, has strict and special reference to the title of Jews to church privileges. The Jews were brought into a family compact—they were made children—and God himself became their "Father"—long before the giving of the ceremonial law. It was in virtue of these relations that God exercised full paternal authority over them; and by an exercise of this authority he placed them under the law as their tutor. Had not these relations previously subsisted, God had not exercised this control; but as the divine purposes, in reference to the introduction of the gospel, were to be kept "hid for ages and for generations,"—as the full time for the manifestation of God in the flesh was, as yet, far distant—and as the church, till that period, were regarded as in a state of nonage,—it was deemed fit and prudential, by infinite wisdom, to place his children under a "schoolmaster, that he might bring them to Christ."

[2.] The church of God, before the law was introduced, and since it has been abolished, is one and identical. When pious Jews were admitted to New Testament privileges, it made no other change in them, in respect to church relations and rights, than to advance them from the "rudiments" of Christianity, as taught in the law of Moses, to the sublime and perfect developments of that divine science. Under the New Testament, the church is taken from under the guardianship or tutorage of Moses, and put under that of Christ; but it is the same church. It advances from minority to full age—from the state of heirship to the possession of the inheritance. But do

these changes at all affect the identity of the church? By no means. The identity of the heir is not affected by his coming into the inheritance. The identity of the minor is not affected by his coming at full age. The identity of the child is not affected by his being placed under a tutor, and afterward returned again to the direct care and benedictions of the father. The proper oneness of the church is not affected by its being first placed, by parental authority, under Moses, and afterward taken again and placed under Christ. There may be stages in its improvements; changes in its ritual; variations in the external form of its worship, and of its ordinances; but its doctrines, fundamentally, remain the same in all ages of the world, and the same, also, remain the spirit and design of its institutions.

(*d.*) In Acts iii, 25, Peter, in his address to the Jews, uses the following language:—"Ye are the children . . . of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

It is sufficient to remark here, that, by virtue of the Abrahamic covenant, the Jews were placed in an attitude directly to receive all the spiritual blessings of the gospel of Christ; and thus Peter immediately adds, "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." If this be not a declaration of church rights and immunities, on the ground of the covenant of Abraham, then can we not understand the language.

5. In further proof of the substantial oneness of the Jewish and Christian churches, we call the reader's attention to the Epistle to the Ephesians. The design of this epistle is to prove, or rather to illustrate, the fact that Gentiles were entitled to equal privileges with Jews, and that both were one in Christ. Paul was called to be an "apostle of the Gentiles," to "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." In this capacity he firmly stood in defence of their spiritual rights—maintained their equality to the Jews, arguing from the genius and evident design of the Abrahamic covenant, as well as of the law of Moses—and eloquently plead and wrote against the present recognition of all such distinctions as were

involved in Jewish rites. But in this noble work he encountered great persecution. At the time of his writing the Epistle to the Ephesians he was actually a prisoner at Rome, detained there under chains, through the influence of Jewish persecutions, and for asserting the spiritual and ecclesiastical rights of Gentiles. Under these circumstances, it might well be supposed that in his address to the Ephesians he would make some pertinent allusions to Gentile rights. The church at Ephesus was composed mostly of Gentiles, and these, Paul feared, might be tempted to doubt that the strong ground he had taken in their favour was tenable, when they saw him pursued thus fiercely by the persecuting spirit of Jewish bigotry, and suffering in a dismal Roman prison. These facts, we say, prepare us to expect and to explain the many clauses and paragraphs in the epistle relating to the subject of our present discussion. We notice, first,—

Chap. ii, 11–22: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, . . . that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now, in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them which were nigh. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom also ye are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.”

We cannot, perhaps, give the reader a better general view of these passages than by transcribing the paraphrase of Dr. Macknight:—

“ 11. Wherefore, to strengthen your sense of God’s goodness in saving you, and of the obligation he hath thereby laid on you to do good works, ye, Ephesians, should *remember, that ye were formerly Gentiles by natural descent, who are called uncircumcised and unholy, by that nation which is called circumcised with a circumcision made with men’s hands on the flesh, and which esteems itself holy on that account, and entitled to the promises.*

“ 12. *And that ye were at that time without the knowledge of Christ, being by your idolatry alienated from the Jewish nation, which alone had the knowledge of his coming, and of the blessings he was to bestow, and unacquainted with the covenants, namely, that made with Abraham, and that made with the Israelites at Sinai, which promised and prefigured Christ’s coming to bestow these blessings: so that ye had no sure hope of the pardon of sin, nor of a blessed immortality; and were without the knowledge and worship of God, while in the heathen world.*

“ 13. *But now in the Christian church, ye who formerly, after ye had attained the knowledge of the true God, were obliged to worship in the outward court of the temple, far off from the symbol of the divine presence, are brought nigh to God, and to the Israelites, in your acts of worship, through the death of Christ, whereby ye are entitled to all the privileges of the people of God.*

“ 14. *For he is the author of our good agreement, who, by dying for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews, hath made both one people of God, and hath broken down the law of Moses, by which, as by the middle wall of separation in the temple, the Jews were fenced in as the people of God, and all others were excluded from that honour.*

“ 15. *And hath abolished, by his death in the flesh, the cause of the enmity between the Jews and Gentiles, even the commandments of the law, concerning the ordinances of circumcision, sacrifices, meats, washings, and holy days; which being founded in the mere pleasure of God, might be abolished when he saw fit. These ordinances Jesus abolished, that he might create Jews and Gentiles under himself, as head, (chap. i, 23,) into one new man, or church, animated by new principles; thus making peace between them:*

“ 16. *And that he might reconcile both in one body, or*

visible church, *to God, through the cross, having slain the cause of their enmity to God by it*; that is, slain the sinful passions both of the Jews and Gentiles, which were the cause of their enmity to God;* by his death on the cross.

“ 17. *And to accomplish our reconciliation to God, coming by his apostles, he brought good tidings of peace with God, to you Gentiles who were far off from God, and to us Jews who were nigh to him as his people by profession.*

“ 18. *Therefore through him, as our high priest, we, Jews and Gentiles, have introduction, (chap. iii, 12,) both of us, by one Spirit, to the Father of the universe, to worship with the hope of being accepted.*

“ 19. *Well then, being formed into one church with the Jews, ye Ephesians are not now strangers to the covenants of promise, nor sojourners (see ver. 12) among the people of God; but ye are joint citizens in the city of God with the Jews, and belonging to the temple of God, as constituent parts thereof;*

“ 20. *Being built equally with the Jews, upon the foundation of the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, (see chap. iii, 5,) Jesus Christ himself being the bottom corner-stone, by which the two sides of the building are united, and on which the whole corner rests:*

“ 21. *By which chief corner-stone, the whole building being fitly joined together, as the walls of a house by the corner-stone in the foundation, groweth, by the accession of new converts, into a holy temple for the Lord Jesus to officiate in as high priest.*

“ 22. *In which temple, ye Jews also are builded together with the Gentiles, to be a habitation for God, not by any visible symbol of his presence, as anciently, but by the indwelling of the Spirit, who is bestowed on you, in the plenitude of his gifts, both ordinary and extraordinary.”*

The italicised words in the above denote Dr. Mac-knight's translation of the text.

* The “enmity” here spoken of is not merely the natural enmity of the heart against God, but particularly that hatred which subsisted between Jews and Gentiles; each regarding the other with a religious abhorrence. This mutual animosity was a great barrier to the benign purposes of the gospel, and was aggravated by the peculiarities of the Jewish rites.

In further noticing this passage, the reader's attention is solicited to the following particular views which are set forth in it:—

1.) The religious state of Jews and Gentiles, *before* the coming of Christ.

(a.) The Jews are represented as having had a complete ecclesiastical charter; as being brought together in one corporate, religious body. They are called “*της πολιτειας the commonwealth.*” A commonwealth is a community of persons united together under a form of government, and regulated and protected by established laws. No figure, therefore, could set forth the fact of their ecclesiastical incorporation,—or, in other words, of their true visible church constitution, by the appointment of God, more clearly than this. Their ecclesiastical charter, or church constitution, was the “*covenants of promise;*” namely, that made at first with Abraham, which was further illustrated, and secured in its gracious benefits in after days, by that of the law made at Sinai.

(b.) On the contrary, the Gentiles are represented all along as “*απηλλοτριωμενοι being alienated from this commonwealth of Israel.*” At the same time, and in consequence of their being in the state of aliens from the visible church—the spiritual commonwealth—they were also strangers to the gracious promise of life eternal, which was contained in the covenant of Abraham, and adumbrated in that of the law, and were destitute of all hopes of pardon, the resurrection, and eternal life, living in a godless condition. Ver. 12. It is hence, in ver. 17, the Gentiles are denominated *τοις μακραν the foreign*, while the Jews are called *τοις εγγυς the nigh*; that is, citizens.

(c.) Previous to the coming of Christ, the Jews and Gentiles were in a state of mutual enmity. The Jews regarded the Gentiles with deep religious abhorrence; and the Gentiles as cordially hated the Jews, and abominated their institutions. It is not necessary here to enlarge upon this point. But,

2.) What was the religious state of Jews and Gentiles *after* the coming of Christ? We speak more particularly in reference to their visible church rights and privileges, and of their mutual former animosities.

(a.) The Jews, that is, those of them who believed in

the Messiah and embraced Christianity, remained as the true church. No essential alteration was made. They were already "THE NIGH," "THE COMMONWEALTH," "THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD," "THE CITIZENS," &c. No alteration was necessary, when they had embraced the Saviour, save, inasmuch as the ceremonial law was abolished, to so remodel the external form of the church as to suit it to the genius of the new dispensation. The apostle, therefore, speaks of no essential change effected in the condition of Jews in this respect. They still remain upon the same foundation, and are considered as having all along made a portion of the true building.

(b.) Not so the Gentiles. A total and essential change is wrought in their condition, both spiritually and ecclesiastically. They, who once were "*the far off*," are now made "*the nigh*;" they who were once "strangers" and "aliens," are now made "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household, or family, of God." This last clause deserves a special notice. It is said the Gentiles are made *συμπολιται των αγιων* *joint citizens with the saints*. But who are the *saints*? The word *αγιος*, rendered *saint*, is an adjective, and signifies *holy, consecrated, &c.* Of course the noun *εθνος* (or *λαος*) *people* must be understood after it. It would then read, "*joint citizens with the holy people, or nation.*" Now, how clear is this expression! It teaches us that the Jews—"the holy, or consecrated people"—were, beforehand, denizens of the city of God, that is, lawful members of the church; and that the Gentiles were "brought nigh," and made to share with the Jews in these glorious privileges. The apostle's address was to the Gentiles, whom he wished to encourage to steadfastness by the exhibition of these blessed prospects and promises; and the point to be illustrated and settled was, their perfect coequality with the Jews, on the score of church rights and spiritual prospects. This coequality was effected, not by alienating the Jews from their former privileges as the people of God, but by incorporating the Gentiles into their fraternity, and thus naturalizing these "aliens" and "foreigners." So, says Paul, they now *οικειοι του Θεου* *belong to the house, or family, of God*, and are no more strangers. Can any thing be more plain or satisfactory, or more to the point in question? Most un-

deniably there was a city, and to it belonged "citizens;"—a "commonwealth," a "household," a "holy," or "consecrated people," before the introduction of the gospel. And to this city the Gentiles are brought and denizenized; to this commonwealth they are introduced and naturalized; in this household they are incorporated as lawful, integral members; and are made joint participators, with this consecrated people, in the ecclesiastical and spiritual privileges of the gospel.

But if the constitution of the church, as it subsisted under the law, was dissolved—if the Jewish church was taken and planted on a new foundation—if they were thus (as they plainly must have been) disfranchised, and if the old family compact—or "household of God"—was broken up, and a new church formed at the coming of Christ—if this were so, then, we ask, where is the propriety or justness of the above phraseology? In what sense could the Jews be said to be *τοις ἐγγυς* *the nigh*, if they were disfranchised, unchurched, and destitute of any ecclesiastical rights? And how could the Gentiles be called *τοις μακραν* *the far off*, if they were no further off than the Jews, that is, if both Jews and Gentiles were alike destitute of any church character? The entire force of the apostle's reasoning turns upon this view, namely, that the Jews had a church character, which, in the case of all those who embraced Christ, was never lost, while the Gentiles, from immemorial days, were alienated from God and never possessed such a character, till, under the gospel, they were brought and incorporated into the ancient spiritual commonwealth. It should be remembered that what Paul here says of Jews, he says of them *as Jews*, and not merely as individuals. He speaks to the abstract question of Jewish prerogatives. What he says of the Gentiles, also, is in this abstract light, *as Gentiles*, and not merely as Ephesians. The importance of this suggestion need not be reiterated to an intelligent mind.

(c.) The complete, substantial oneness of the Old and New Testament churches, is clearly proved by the figure of a building, employed in verses 20–22. It is there stated that converted Jews and converted Gentiles "are builded together for a habitation of God by his Spirit." The church, thus contemplated under the figure of an

edifice, rests upon the foundation of the doctrine inculcated by "the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." A word of explanation is due here. The prophets were the oral and living expositors of the Old Testament dispensation to the Jews. That dispensation did not originate in the prophets. They were merely the ministers of God to expound and enforce the doctrines of the Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic law. Through them the true light of the Old Testament dispensation displayed itself; and it is hence they are said to be the "foundation," &c. So also the apostles. The New Testament did not originate in them. They were rather sent to explain more in detail the doctrines and precepts of Christ, and to inculcate them upon the people. In them, therefore, the New Testament light was more fully displayed. But between the apostles and prophets there subsisted the most perfect congruity. The foundation of the church, therefore, was not laid in the apostles. It did not commence with them, or in their day. The church of God first rested "upon the foundation of the prophets;" that is, on the doctrines expounded and inculcated by them. This is the foundation that God himself has laid, and which he has enlarged and strengthened under the apostles. The principal corner-stone in this foundation is Jesus Christ; that is, the doctrine of the atonement, or Christ crucified. Here, again, we are brought back to the doctrine of the substantial oneness of the church, as it subsisted under the old, and afterward under the new covenant. Nor can the attentive reader fail, as he passes a candid criticism upon the phraseology and figurative language of Paul, of being convinced of the verity and soundness of this view. In vain do men say the Mosaic law is abolished: this we readily concede, but allege that this was not a dissolution of the charter of the Old Testament church. That charter was the Abrahamic covenant. In vain are we told that the Jewish nation was rejected, and disfranchised. This we concede. As a nation they were unchurched; but the "foundation" was not overthrown; a nucleus of the Jewish stock, namely, those who embraced the Messiah—"the election"—(Rom. xi, 7) still remained, and God built up these, together with converted Gentiles, on the old basis, "the foundation of the

apostles and prophets," Christ being the principal stone in the foundation. Here, then, is the proper unity of Jews and Gentiles. But more on this point in another place.

6. The Epistle to the Colossians was written about the same time of that to the Ephesians; that is, about A. D. 62, while Paul was a prisoner at Rome. The design of both these epistles was the same, namely, to guard the churches against the influence of Judaizing teachers, and confirm them in their adherence to the gospel of Christ. There are, consequently, many points of resemblance between them, particularly in relation to the subject under discussion. The reader is requested to keep these facts in view as he peruses the Epistle to the Colossians, especially the third chapter. He will find the epistle to corroborate our position; but we do not design to notice it at length.

7. We call the reader's attention to the language of the third chapter of Hebrews. We insert only verses 1-6.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him; as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man is counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses was verily faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

1.) The first thing the reader is to notice here is, that the church of God is compared to a house. This same figure is elsewhere employed. So Peter says:—"Judgment must begin at the *house* (*οἶκον*) of God," 1 Pet. iv, 17. Paul also says: "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the *house* (*οικῶ*) of God, which is the *church* (*ἐκκλησια*) of the living God," 1 Tim. iii, 15. This figure came into use according to a very common and a very natural law of language, and is of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament Scriptures. It was very natural to call the Jews, as a religious body, the *house*, or

temple of God, from the circumstance of their necessary connection with, and constant worship in the temple, or house of God at Jerusalem.

2.) There is but one "house" spoken of in the above passage from Hebrews; and in this house Moses acted as a "servant," and Christ as a "son," or Lord. I am aware that the present state of the English text would not be likely to convey this view, while ignorance and carelessness serve to confirm many in what I deem to be a wrong impression. In setting before the reader what I deem to be the true light of this passage, and its just bearing on the question under discussion, I observe,—

(a.) The proper antecedent of the pronoun *αυτου*, "his," in ver. 2, must first be settled. "In all his house." In all whose house? The order of the words in the text might seem to indicate that this intended Moses' house; but this is far from being the truth, as Moses is here contemplated in the light of a servant, not a proprietor or lord. This pronoun, then, evidently refers back to *αυτον*, *him*, that is, God, in the same verse, or else to *Χριστον Ἰησουν*, *Christ Jesus*, in ver. 1, considered as God. This is evident; for ver. 2 is a quotation from Num. xii, 7, where God says, "My servant Moses is faithful in all *בֵּיתִי* *bethi*, MY house." In God's house, or church, then, Moses acted as a servant.

(b.) To the same original noun (God) must be referred the same pronoun *αυτου* *his*, and also the relative *ου* *hou*, *whose*, in ver. 6. It is to be observed that our English is not a fair transcript of the original. It does not read *οικον αυτου* *oikon hautou*, *his own house*, as our version has it, but *οικον αυτου οικον αυτου*, *his house*.* The difference, which will readily be seen by the critical reader, is exactly to our purpose. Indeed, the comparison between Moses and Christ, upon which the argument of Paul is founded, requires the sense we are contending for. Christ is represented as being faithful to the same person, (the Father,) as a son, to whom Moses was faithful as a servant; also Christ is represented as being *επι τον οικον αυτου* *OVER his* (that is, God's) *house*, as master, or ruler; while Moses is represented as being faithful *εν ολω τω οικω* *IN*

* See Professor Stuart's Com. *in loc.*

all his (that is, God's) *house*, as a servant. But it was the same house, or church, for the apostle immediately adds, ver. 6, "ὅν οἶκος ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE." The doctrine, therefore, which we would deduce from this passage may be expressed by giving to verses 5 and 6 the following sense:—"Now Moses truly was faithful in all God's church, as a servant, conforming in every particular to the instructions which he received from God, relative to the formation of the tabernacle, and the Jewish ritual, &c., because these things were to stand for a declaration of those things which were afterward to be spoken by Christ and his apostles; but Christ as a son over this same church, which church are we, provided we hold fast unto the end our confidence and joyful hope."* But the true force and bearing of the 6th verse may not readily be perceived. I understand the apostle as affirming the church membership of his Hebrew brethren, under the gospel, on a certain condition, namely, "if they held fast their confidence," &c. It is, therefore, with great propriety that he breaks off from the subject for a time, to warn and exhort his brethren against failing to attain to this privilege. In this caution he represents the position of the Jews of his day, in reference to the gospel, as being similar to that of their forefathers, when they stood in Kadesh Barnea. They then stood upon the borders of Canaan, and might have entered in, but their "confidence" in God failed them, and they were rejected. Paul's Hebrew brethren now stood in the very borders of the gospel dispensation,—the New Testament privileges being before them. If now they will leave Moses, and come to Christ, they shall retain their membership,—they shall be made "*partakers* of the benefit," for which they have so long hoped. "Therefore," says he, "harden not your hearts, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness;" "for," continues he, "we are made partakers of Christ," that is, we enter into the inheritance of gospel blessings, and become members of the church under its new model, of which he is the Head, or over which he is the son, "provided we hold fast to the end those first-fruits of our faith," which we gathered under the former dispensation, and also (compare verse 6) "retain the confidence and joyful hope now revealed in the gospel." So I under-

* See Stuart's Com. *in loc.*

stand *την ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως*, translated in our English *the beginning of our confidence*. Here *ἀρχὴν* the *beginning*, or *first*, appears to be put for *ἀπαρχὴν first-fruits*, as in the margin of Griesbach's Testament, and as the tenor of the apostle's argument seems to purport. He teaches his Hebrew brethren that they had gathered the *first-fruits* of gospel blessings under the old dispensation.* Now, says he, if we retain these "first-fruits,"—this "beginning of our faith,"—walking according to its true light, we shall be led to Christ, who will mature it, and give us a "confidence and bold rejoicing;" (ver. 6;) all which, if we hold fast, will justify us in the profession of being the house, or church, of God. Those Jews, therefore, who lived up to the spirit and teachings of their dispensation, were thereby brought to Christ; whom, if they embraced, they were still reckoned on as the true visible church; "whose house are we," &c.

Such, then, is a specimen of the evidence afforded to the doctrine of the substantial oneness of the Old and New Testament churches. It is not necessary further to prolong these already lengthy arguments: enough has been said to settle the question. Whoever attends to the teaching of Scripture on this subject, with any degree of candour and intelligence, must feel convinced that the New Testament dispensation is nothing else than a completion of those gracious designs which were sketched in their outlines before the eye of faith, in former ages. Christ

* It is agreeable to the original to read ver. 14, "If we preserve the *first state* of our faith steadfast to the end." It is thus *ἀρχὴν ἀρχὴν* is rendered Jude 6,—“And the angels which kept not *την ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν* their own *first estate*.” And this *first state* of the faith of the Hebrew brethren I take to mean Judaism, not in its ceremonial, but in its spiritual character. In Heb. vi, 1, this same word should be translated "*first principles*," instead of "*principles*;" it being put for *στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς first principles* in chap. v, 12. But most clearly these "first principles of the doctrines of God" are defined to be those simpler and more elemental truths, which, as they belonged to an inferior state of knowledge, characterized an inferior dispensation. True, the Hebrew brethren were exhorted to leave them, and "go on to perfection;" but this does not mean to abandon them,—to cast them away,—as they did the ceremonies of Moses. They were only to advance beyond their limits to more mature knowledge; still holding fast to their light, and "walking by the same rule."—Vide Dr. Peck's Lectures on Christian Perfection, Lecture I.

was then, as now, the grand object of faith and worship, and the end of all their rituals. By symbols, and various external representations, they were taught the same truths by which the Christian disciple is now made wise unto salvation. "To them was the gospel preached, as well as unto us." To them "God spake at sundry times, and in divers manners, by the prophets," but now hath he "spoken unto us by his Son." What the prophets then spoke, is now fulfilled unto us. "Christ came, not to disannul the law, or the prophets," in the true import of their teaching, "but to confirm" our obligations to believe their doctrines, and obey their rules. The high adaptation of the Jewish economy to promote the faith and practice of true religion is everywhere alluded to in the New Testament, and is traceable in the exemplary piety of many of their illustrious progenitors and countrymen, of whom it is said, "They all died in faith,—of whom the world was not worthy." Words need not be multiplied further. God has never had but one visible church in the world, so far as regards identity of doctrine, and similarity of spirit and practice; although in regard to external form, and the degree of light enjoyed, there obtains a distinction.

CHAPTER II.

ORDINANCE OF INITIATION.

THE INITIATORY RITE OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT—ITS APPLICATION TO INFANTS.

1. THE ceremony itself, by which members were inducted into the church under the Old Testament dispensation, was circumcision. "This is [the token of] my covenant," saith God to Abraham, "which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days

old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations. . . . And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii, 9-14.

2. As to the general import of circumcision, it was a mark or sign of inward holiness to the Jew, just as baptism is to the Christian. This does not require extended proof, as few men will deny it. - We direct the reader's attention, first, to the well-known passage of Rom. iv, 11 : "And he [Abraham] received the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." The sense of this clause may be more apparent to some, if we should express it thus :— "And he received the visible mark of circumcision, a token of confirmation of the righteousness by faith which he obtained while in a state of uncircumcision."* This is exactly to the point, and is of sufficient authority, being clear and unequivocal ; and the plain, obvious sense not required to be altered by any other passage, to settle the question of the true spiritual import of circumcision. But we wish the reader to attend to such passages as the following :—"For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God," Rom. ii, 28, 29. Even so, baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, [merely,] but the answer of a good conscience toward God," 1 Pet. iii, 21. God says to Israel, "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart." "We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no [superstitious] reliance [in the merely outward part of the ordinance, which is] on the flesh." Deut. x, 16, and xxx, 6 ; Jer. iv, 4 ; Phil.

* Vide Stuart on Romans.

iii, 3. Nothing can be more satisfactory touching the religious import of circumcision.

Circumcision was not only a sign of inward purity, the Jews thereby denoting that they had "cast off the body of the sins of the flesh," (Col. ii, 11,) but it was a visible mark and sign of relationship to the church of God. We have before shown that the covenant that God made with Abraham was the first great charter of visible church rights and privileges ever granted to man. Circumcision was the rite by which men became annexed to this covenant. "This is [the token of] my covenant . . . every man-child among you shall be circumcised." It was hence called the "covenant of circumcision;" (Acts vii, 8;) that is, the covenant, the token of which was circumcision. It was hence the Jews were called "the circumcised," and the Gentiles "the uncircumcised;"—this mark constituting the visible distinction between their religious states. In all these respects circumcision is shown to have answered the ends of an initiatory church ordinance, answering to Christian baptism.

3. The import of circumcision, as applied to infants, was appropriately that of a spiritual ordinance. It was given to Abraham as a token of the covenant; and when, also, applied to infants, it signified that they had a right to the blessings promised in that covenant. It was a visible mark set upon the male descendants of Abraham, and the male children of proselytes, to designate them as belonging to God by covenant ties, and as being brought into a special, visible relation to himself. This is the exact idea of Christian baptism as an inductive ordinance into the church. It was all the ceremony that was ever used, by which the male descendants of Abraham were brought into covenant, or church relations. If Jehovah had a true church on earth previously to the coming of Christ, circumcision, beyond all dispute, was the appointed ceremony of admission into that church. If the rite of circumcision did not bring the subject into proper church relations to God, then the conclusion is inevitable, that God had no church on earth. The ordinance of initiation, therefore, under the Mosaic law, retained, thus far, in its application to infants, its appropriate signification. It was to them a visible mark,—a token of confirmation of the

promises, by which they were recognised and approved as the rightful members of the covenant.

As an emblem of purity, circumcision applied to infants with equal fitness as to adults. In this, also, it fully answered the purpose of a church ordinance, and is analogous to baptism.

We wish it, moreover, to be borne in mind, that the applicability of circumcision to infants was settled by express command. This is important, as it settles the question of the design of God, with regard to the relation of infants to the church, as it subsisted under the law. The ceremony of circumcision was not only required, but it was required to be performed at *eight days old*. This specified time was an important part of the law, and clearly proves that God intended, not only that men should belong to the church, but that they should be ingrafted into it in infancy. The question of the proper subjects of the initiating ordinance, in the period of the church now referred to, is hence settled beyond dispute. God intended that, as infants were to share in the spiritual blessings of this gracious covenant, so they should bear the *sign* by which they were known and recognised as such participators. The blessings of the Abrahamic covenant were to come upon children, as well as upon adults, and circumcision was to signify their title and right to such blessings. And thus did the Jews regard it. They looked upon their children as joint and equal participators with themselves in the spiritual and temporal blessings of the covenant, and as being equally entitled to the external mark, or ordinance, which attested their mutual claim to these blessings. In these views were they educated; so that from the days of Abraham to those of Christ, every Jew was accustomed to regard his children, while yet in infancy and childhood, as lawfully connected with the visible church, and "heirs, according to the promise," of the common salvation.

CHAPTER III.

THE INITIATORY RITE OF THE CHURCH ALTERED.

THE INITIATORY RITE OF THE CHURCH ALTERED, UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT DISPENSATION, AS TO ITS EXTERIOR FORM, AND SOME OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT NOT CHANGED AS TO ITS APPLICABILITY TO INFANTS.

SECTION I.

1. It is incumbent on us, in order to preserve the proper connection of our argument, to show in this place, first, that Christian baptism answers to, and is instituted in the place of, Jewish circumcision. We are not merely to show that a resemblance is traceable between the two ordinances, but to prove that the one succeeds to the place and office of the other. Remote analogies are not sufficient; an exact unity of purpose and import must be traced between them, and baptism must be shown to come in the place of circumcision. As this is an important link in the general argument, it is not surprising that it has been strongly contested. The reader is admonished of the importance of enlarged views of the divine economy, in treating subjects of this nature. He should bring to the investigation a disciplined and candid mind. Nothing is more pitiful, or unworthy the dignity, or irrelevant to the weakness and dependance of our understandings, than for us, on our first approach to a subject, or on a merely partial knowledge of its connections and bearings, and before we have entered into the wide and extensive designs of God, to demand or expect the same posture of things with respect to clearness and evidence, as if the present had no connection with the past, by which it might receive explanation. The great Author of all things acts upon a wise, established plan, wherein one part has relation to the other. To understand, therefore, any part of the works or ways of God, we must understand others which stand connected with it. God has not seen fit, in the world of nature, or in the dispensations of his moral government, to establish each particular fact upon a separate and inde-

pendent ground of proof, but, by establishing a just connection between all the several parts of his vast economy, one thing is thus made, by the nature of the case, to prove and illustrate the other. Thus, in directing to a certain line of duty, he does not always lay down that formal proof of facts, as if nothing had subsisted in all his former dispensations to establish faith and enjoin obedience touching this particular thing; but evidently takes into account the just amount of information that may be derived from his former acts, and adduces only what may be lacking to complete the revelation. Nothing can be more prejudicial to just views of God and his works, than to suppose his successive acts and dispensations are but so many unconnected and independent efforts, put forth, from time to time, to meet existing exigences, and not constituting a regular, progressive development of one wise, broad, comprehensive plan.

“The wisdom of God, in the arrangement of successive dispensations, seems averse to sudden and violent innovations, rarely introducing new rites without incorporating something of the old. As, by the introduction of the Mosaic, the simple ritual of the patriarchal dispensation was not so properly abolished, as amplified and extended into a prefiguration of *good things to come*, in which the worship by sacrifices, and the distinction of animals into clean and unclean, reappeared under a new form; so the era of immediate preparation [meaning the dispensation of John Baptist] was distinguished by a ceremony not entirely new, but derived from the purifications of the law, applied to a special purpose. Our Lord incorporated the same rite into his religion, newly modified and adapted to the peculiar views and objects of the Christian economy, in conjunction with another positive institution, [the Lord's supper,] the rudiments of which are perceptible in the passover. It seemed suitable to his wisdom, by such gentle gradations, to conduct his church from an infantine state to a state of maturity and perfection.”*

In order to prove that baptism succeeds to circumcision, it is not necessary to adduce any formal, specific declaration of this fact in the New Testament; much less is it

* Robert Hall's Works, vol. i, p. 303.

requisite to trace any resemblance between the merely external forms of the two rites. All that the argument strictly requires is, that it be shown that baptism answers the same ends to the church, under the New Testament, that circumcision did to the same church under the Old Testament. The reader, therefore, has little else to do than recall to mind the various observations and facts which lie scattered through the foregoing pages.

1.) The church under the Old Testament, and that under the New Testament, are, substantially, one and identical.

2.) Circumcision, under the Old Testament, was the initiating rite of the church. The same is baptism under the New Testament.

3.) Circumcision was an indication of purity of heart. As the flesh, which was circumcised, was *cast away*, it indicated the "putting off" all carnal and "fleshly lusts which war against the soul;" or, as Paul says, it was "the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," Col. ii, 11. To this sense baptism exactly answers.

4.) Circumcision attested the right of the person who bore its mark to the blessings of the covenant of Abraham, which covenant embraced the Messiah. So baptism. The New Testament is but the mature and complete developments of the Abrahamic covenant, and baptism attests our connection therewith and our right thereunto. Must not baptism, then, be considered as succeeding to the place of circumcision?

But as if to put this question finally at rest, and satisfy the most pertinacious scruples of the objector, it is decided in direct terms by the voice of inspiration. We call attention to the following passage, Col. ii, 11: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism."

The reader must remember that the Colossian church was in danger of being corrupted by certain false teachers who attempted to bring them back to a corrupted species of Judaism. Paul utters the caution, "Beware lest any man spoil you . . . after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ . . . for ye are complete in him." He then goes on to prove that they are complete in Christ, without

Jewish circumcision and the Mosaic law. As if he had said, "Does any one teach you to be circumcised? I say unto you, that 'ye are circumcised with (or *in*) Christ.'" Now here Paul expressly declares that certain Gentile converts were circumcised. But then it was *περιτομη ἀχειροποιητω* with a *circumcision made without hands*—a "circumcision of the *heart*, in the Spirit," and not outward, in the flesh. It was the substance—the thing signified by outward circumcision—that these Gentile converts had; consisting "in the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." And this, says Paul, is *τη περιτομη του Χριστου* the *Christian circumcision*, which, in the very next clause, he affirms to be accomplished, emblematically, in baptism. The exact argument of Paul we conceive to be this: "The import and design of your Christian baptism, answering, in every respect, as it does, to the import and design of Jewish circumcision, renders it unnecessary that you, who have been baptized, should afterward be circumcised; ye are, in effect, already circumcised, for ye received circumcision, in the Christian sense, when ye were baptized; this ordinance signifying that ye are dead with Christ unto sin, just as circumcision denoted the 'casting off of the body of the sins of the flesh.'"

This is the exact view which the early Christian church took of this subject. Justin Martyr, who lived forty years after the apostles, says, "We, who by him have had access to God, have not received this carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision, which Enoch, and those like him, observed. *And we have received it by baptism.*"* Again Justin says, "We are circumcised by baptism, with Christ's circumcision;" alluding to Col. ii, 11, 12.

St. Basil says, "And dost thou put off the circumcision made without hands in putting off the flesh, *which is performed in baptism*, when thou hearest our Lord himself say, 'Except a man be born of water,'" &c. †

Chrysostom, in one of his Homilies, says, "There was pain and trouble in the practice of circumcision. . . . But *our* circumcision, *I mean the grace of baptism*, gives cure without pain, and procures to us a thousand benefits, and fills us with the grace of the Spirit," &c.

* Dialogue with Trypho.

† Exhortation to Baptism.

Both St. Basil and Chrysostom use the exact words of Paul, and call baptism, in its mystical import, *περιτομη αχειροποιετω* *the circumcision made without hands*.

Now, it is to be remembered that these quotations do not merely give the private opinions of these learned men on the subject, but they express the current opinion of the times, and go to form a strong presumption that as the Christian church had derived this opinion from the very days of the apostles, so it was a doctrine which was taught to them by the apostles. The subject, then, is sufficiently clear, and needs no further argument to place it in a light more satisfactory. The early Christian church believed that baptism takes the place of circumcision.

2. The reasons for changing the initiatory ordinance of the church from circumcision to baptism, it may not become us very curiously to inquire into. Some of them, however, it may not be irrelevant to state.

1.) Circumcision was adapted only to the male sex; baptism is equally adapted to both sexes.

I am not aware that we are positively informed of the reason why God selected an initiatory rite of such partial application, nor is it at all important to our argument to show and vindicate such reason. The fact is all that concerns us. Nor is it incumbent on us to show on what principle females claimed the rights of church members. As a matter of fact, we know that they did claim such rights; and it appears most reasonable to conclude that ablutions and sacrifice answered them in lieu of circumcision, and also *that they were considered as being completely represented in the man*. However, this might possibly be one of the defects to which the church was necessarily subjected in its infantine state.

2.) The figurative, or sacramental use of water, is more obvious and simple than the ceremony of circumcision.

Although, as we have already observed, circumcision imported purity, or "the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh," still, to a great degree, such a meaning seems forced and arbitrary. On the contrary, water is a natural and a beautiful emblem of purity; and the external application of it to the body very fitly denotes the inward "washing of regeneration." The greater *simplicity*, there-

fore, of the sacramental use of water, adapts it, in a higher sense, to the genius of the New Testament dispensation.

3.) The comparative severity of the two rites under consideration yields a preference in favour of baptism.

Circumcision seemed well enough adapted to the tenor of the Mosaic ritual, and to the prevalent taste and habits of the ages in which, and the people among whom, it was in vogue. It seems, too, to have been designed, by its peculiarly oppressive character, to operate as a sort of punishment, as it was certainly a severe rebuke of licentiousness—the prevalent sin of those polytheistic ages. Certain it is that it was “a yoke that neither the later Jews nor their fathers were able to bear.”* Not so with baptism. Its adaptations are more universal, and its extreme mildness every way suited to the new economy.

It should be remembered that the Jewish ceremonies were unadapted to extensive proselyting. The divine intention was sufficiently indicated in the great variety and burdensomeness of these rites; and accordingly it turned out, that after having subsisted on the earth during a period of two thousand years, the Jews had made no important enlargement beyond the bounds of their own nation. Circumcision presented a peculiar obstacle to the extension of their religion among other nations; but in proportion to the hinderance it offered to such an enlargement, it evinced an adaptation to consolidate, by rendering odiously singular the Jewish people, and hence to preserve, with the most perfect entireness, the identity of their religion and of their nation. Thus the purposes of God, in regard to the birth and advent of the Messiah, and the introduction of the gospel plan, were served more perfectly. These considerations are deservedly of great weight. To a religion thus stationary, the severity of the initiatory rite could be no primary objection. But just the reverse is it with the gospel. This is eminently and emphatically a proselyting system. The original command addressed to the apostles, and through them to all Christian ministers, is, “Go ye, *disciple* all nations, baptizing them.” It is obvious, then, that a system professedly adapted and designed for universal propagation, like the gospel of Christ, must adopt a proselytic ordinance as

* Vide Note A., at the end of the volume.

mild and convenient as its own genius and universal adaptation would naturally require. And such is the case with regard to baptism. It offers no practical impediment to the general extension of the gospel, but, wherever the latter may become "the power of God unto salvation" to any people, there baptism may also witness that they are "the children of the covenant."

These are probably some of the reasons for changing the initiatory rite from circumcision to baptism; but whatever may be the peculiar reasons for this change does not affect our argument; the fact is sufficiently obvious, and this is all that directly concerns us.

SECTION II.

That the law of initiation, though changed as it respects its external form, and also its adaptation to females as well as males, is not changed as to its applicability to infants, is proved from several considerations.

We have already observed that the circumstance of the applicability of the initiatory rite to infants, under the Old Testament, was a subject of express precept, and a prominent feature of that institution. The express command directed that circumcision should be performed at eight days old, and the practice of ages had so familiarized the idea of infant consecration to the mind of the Jew, that he must have associated with this point of adaptation in the law the validity of the law itself. A change in this feature of the rite must have been looked upon by the converted Jew under these circumstances with interest, as affecting the radical character of the rite; so that, if such a change has actually taken place, we may reasonably expect to find such obvious reasons for it, and, withal, such notices of the fact, if not such a positive prohibitive command, as will meet all the natural circumstances of the case, satisfy all reasonable inquiry, and settle the faith and practice of the church.

The reader will here perceive, by the posture of the subject, that we claim the entire argument from *prescription*. We place ourselves upon the ground of the ancient usage of the church, and whatever advantage of proof arises from uniform and immemorial practice belongs to

us. If there be any probability that baptism applies to infants, because the initiatory rite of the church has always been thus applied, we are entitled to the benefit of that probability; and if there be any change in the meaning and application of church ordinances from their ancient meaning and application, the entire labour and responsibility of proving such a change devolves on our opponents, and not on us. Until, then, they shall prove that a change has actually taken place in regard to the applicability of the initiatory ordinance of the church to infants, it is not only our privilege to hold to the ancient usage, but we are bound so to do. And they also, if they fail to adduce clear and adequate evidence of such a change of the ordinance, are wholly unauthorized in varying the ancient practice. This, then, is the true position of the question. And here we might, in strict argumentative justice, rest the controversy, until the point in question be fully set forth by our opponents. Until that time, moreover, it is with great propriety that we exhort all to stand by "the ancient landmarks." And here it would not be enough for them to prove that the Mosaic ritual is abolished; circumcision belonged not to the law, but to the covenant: it is not enough for them to prove that circumcision is done away; the ordinance of initiation into the visible church remains. But if the applicability of baptism to infants be shown to be a chimera, it must be proved that this rite does not bear the same relation to the Abrahamic covenant under the gospel, that circumcision did to the same covenant under the law—that the applicability of circumcision to infants was an unimportant feature of that rite, not affecting its general character and design—that the state of opinion and practice among the Jews, touching this point, at the time of Christ, was such as to render it naturally and of course inexpedient and unnecessary to state that this feature of the initiatory rite was to be omitted, but that the converted Jews, who were taught that baptism was the initiatory rite under the New Testament, though they had always been taught to apply this rite to their male children, under the old covenant, yet would, without question or controversy, omit the same application of it now;—in fine, it must be shown that, expressly or impliedly, our Saviour has prohibited Christians from administering the

initiatory ordinance to their children, as the Jews anciently did.

But these things can never be shown; and yet, by an unaccountable stupidity, or a want of candour, many overlook this position of the argument, and seem dead to any just appreciation of its real force.

We would admonish the reader that we are approaching an important branch of the general argument, and we request him to put on candour and patience, and closely and critically weigh the evidence now to be adduced. What we have hitherto advanced must be necessarily imperfect without that which is to follow. All that remains, to render the Bible argument complete on this subject, is to prove that the New Testament makes just such recognition of facts and principles, in relation to infant baptism, as the state of the case required, on the supposition that Christ intended infants should be baptized. Remember, we are not to show that the New Testament commands infant baptism, or even mentions it in so many words; the first was not required by the state of opinion in relation to infant consecration, and the second it is absurd to insist upon as a necessary circumstance; but we are to show that infants are spoken of just as though they were all along considered as being, as a matter of course, entitled to the initiatory rite of the New Testament church, and that this is all we could reasonably expect would be said, in view of very ancient opinion and practice. We repeat it, prescription is in our favour, and positive proof is not required, therefore, to establish the eligibility of infants to baptism; but contrariwise, positive, prohibitory law is required to be shown in order to establish their *ineligibility* to that ordinance. The position we take, then, is this; not to show that there is a new and express law of the New Testament requiring infants to be baptized, but that the ancient right of infants to the initiating ordinance has never been forfeited, and that, consequently, the application of this ordinance to them is a matter of perpetual obligation. We wait for proof that the old law has been annulled before we join with our opponents and call for a new one relating to the same point. And we argue that the ancient law which required the initiatory rite to be applied to infants is not rescinded, on the following grounds:—

1. There is no *assignable reason* for such a change. If infants had a right to the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant anciently, they have the same right now. If they were eligible to the "*token*" of that covenant—circumcision—anciently, they are eligible to the *token* of the same covenant—baptism—now. There is no reason in the nature of the case—in the change or posture of circumstances—that calls for such a change in the application of the initiatory rite. Infants are the same, as it respects their moral condition, as formerly; the covenant of Abraham is the same—it still remains that "in him and in his *seed*," which is Christ's, "all nations shall be blessed." And why should so important a principle as that which relates to the recognition of the lawful "heirs according to the promise" be causelessly altered? If the divine economy was to be so changed as to exclude infants from those privileges, and that relation to the church which they had enjoyed for nearly two thousand years by virtue of a divine charter, ought there not to have existed such a state of things as to render this change expedient and necessary? And if our opponents affirm that such a change has actually taken place in the divine economy toward infants, are we not warranted in demanding of them the proof of the requisite corresponding change of circumstances? But, we repeat it, no such change of circumstances existed. The presumption, therefore, is, that God has not changed the principles of his economy touching the admission of infants to the covenant, or, which is the same, the church.

2. That the divine economy has undergone no change that would prejudice the ancient rights of infants to the initiatory ordinance, is urged from the fact that no *publication* of such change has been made. It has never been registered upon the page of revelation. There are two ways in which a law may constitutionally pass into disuse: First, by a rescinding act of the law-making power; secondly, by the fulfilment of those specified ends for which it was first enacted. That the law in question has never been repealed is evident. No record has been made of such an act. It must be remembered that the abolishment of circumcision does not affect the point at issue. Circumcision only defined the *external form* of the ordi-

nance—this affects its *spirit*. The abolishment of circumcision was not an abolishment of the initiatory ordinance of the church, but only of the ancient *form* of that ordinance; the questions of the *import* and *applicability* of the ordinance, which were entirely distinct, remaining untouched.

The importance of this point is vital to the church. It involves not the mere question of forms and ceremonies, but of the proper and essential character of the church of God. If any importance can attach to any law, human or divine, it must lie in the intended application of such law. The great question, Upon whom, and in what circumstances, is the law intended to operate? involves all the importance that can, in the nature of things, attach to any law. And thus, in regard to any charter, the only possible question that can illustrate the theoretical or practical character of the charter itself, or the concernment that individuals may have in it, is, Upon whom, and under what conditions, are its immunities conferred? These principles are so plain as to appeal at once to the intuitive convictions and practical knowledge of mankind. And in relation to the inductive ordinance of the church of God, we repeat it, if it possessed any one feature of importance above another, that feature did not consist in its external form, but in its import, and the circumstances in which it was intended to apply to men. This question is, and must necessarily be, vital. And this, as we have already seen, was clearly settled by positive and indisputable authority, in the ancient church. If the *form* of the initiatory ordinance—circumcision—was distinctly settled by divine authority, so also were the circumstances and *subjects* of its administration clearly defined.

Now, what we wish the reader here to understand is, that if the abolishment of the external *form* of the initiatory ordinance required an express rescinding act of the Law-giver; so, also, the question of the proper *subjects* of the same ordinance, if it is to be changed, being a still more vital point than that of the form, must also receive the same formal decision from the law-making power. The case appears very clear, but the importance of it will not justify us in dismissing this point while any obscurity remains. We maintain a wide and essential distinction

between the *external form* of an ordinance, and the *essential character* of that ordinance. The former is merely accidental, the latter is the very substance of the thing itself. Take an illustration. An oath of allegiance to any government must have the same essential meaning, or import, in all nations and in all ages. Yet the *form* of such an oath may be made to differ in almost any extent conceivable, without affecting its proper and essential meaning. Indeed, the form of such an oath is wholly unimportant. It may consist of one set of words, or of another order of words, or of no words at all, but only of particular signs. And so long as the government was pleased to establish a connection between the voluntary performance of certain signs and the obligations of allegiance—so long as, by the authority of law, any particular signs were made to import the voluntary assumption of patriotic principles—just so long such signs would embody the essential character of a verbal oath of allegiance. It is the thing intended by the form of words, or the particular signs, that constitutes the substance and character of the oath. It is easy to perceive, therefore, how the form of an oath can be changed, without changing its proper character. It is so with the ordinances of the church: it is so with the initiating ordinance. The form has been changed, but its primary character remains unaltered. And we say that the change of the ancient form of this ordinance does not necessarily, and as a matter of course, draw after it, or imply, any change of its applicability to infants, or of its proper and essential character. The initiating ordinance, as we have already seen, bears the same meaning now as anciently; it is our *sacramentum*, or oath of allegiance still, although the *form* of the oath is changed. And thus must every converted Jew have considered it. When he was taught to leave Moses, and come to Christ—to leave the law, and “go on unto the perfection” of the gospel—to abstain from circumcision, and be baptized—nothing could be more natural than for him to regard his children still, as anciently, the proper subjects of the initiatory ordinance. He would naturally ask, “If we are to be initiated into the gospel church, not by circumcision, but by baptism—if the form of the initiating ceremony is to be thus changed—what is to be the

change, if any, respecting the application of this ordinance to our children? How are they to be henceforward treated? Are we to regard them still, as heretofore, as the ingrafted members of the covenant?" And we hold that, as this point would be regarded with deep interest by every Jew—as very ancient law and practice would teach him to look with concern upon the covenant rights and relations of his offspring—if no prohibitory law appeared to the contrary, he would naturally, and as a matter of course, apply baptism to his children. And to have prevented such an application of this rite, an express prohibition was called for, in the nature of the case, as much as in changing the form of that ordinance.

To feel the full force of this argument one has only to place himself in similar circumstances, and ask himself if he would ever be likely to abandon, naturally, and as a matter of course, any practice that he believed to be right, and of divine injunction, and to which he was almost instinctively disposed by education, and the unvarying usage of his ancestors. Do such practices easily fall into disuse, or become obsolete in a day, like the ephemeral customs that receive their mould by the changing seasons? If any man has so imagined, he has yet to be informed that he has made an erroneous reckoning with human nature. He has constructed his theory without a just estimate of those inveterate principles of conduct which are engendered by immemorial custom—not to say, religious belief. Look, for a moment, at palpable and imposing fact. How difficult it was for the apostles of Christ to convince even those Jews that had received the gospel and submitted to baptism, that circumcision was to be omitted! How difficult to instil into their minds the doctrine that those were the truly circumcised that had become Christians—"that worshipped God in the Spirit, and rejoiced in Christ Jesus, and had no confidence in the [merely outward ceremony which was on the] flesh." But if it was one of the most difficult lessons for a Jew to learn, that he was called upon to give up and omit that outward ceremony which God had anciently instituted, and which his fathers had practised with so much religious, not to say, in many cases, superstitious, veneration; could it have been less obnoxious to his principles and prejudices to be informed that not

only was he called upon to abandon this outward ceremony, to accept another, but that that feature of the ordinance which had always recognised his children to be "fellow-heirs with himself of the grace of life"—which had so largely endeared to him, as to his ancestors, the outward ceremony in question—that that feature, which touched the vitality of the ordinance, was also abolished? And if their attachments to circumcision were so inveterate as to occasion so many controversies among Christians respecting it as are recorded in the New Testament, and also to give birth to a large and powerful sect of half Jews and half Christians—which was the fact, as shown in the history of the Nazarene and Ebionite Christians—is it probable that the converted Jews, while thus, with characteristic obstinacy, contending for circumcision, would be likely to yield up the ancient covenant rights of their children—a fact so prominently recognised in the former dispensation, and imported by circumcision—and submit to the new ordinance with quiet acquiescence? Such a supposition would be characterized with too palpable and glaring improbability, and would too openly contradict all the analogies of the case, to be for a moment entertained by any intelligent mind. Every inch of encroachment on the Jewish law, by the gospel system, was disputed with all the pertinacious obstinacy of a Jewish zealot. The New Testament affords ample testimony of this statement. We sicken at the rehearsal of those puerile controversies which absorbed the intellects, and alienated the hearts of the early Jewish converts. And where analogy sheds its light so largely abroad—discovering the real state of opinion—we are warranted in the opinion, nay, we are compelled by every reasonable consideration to the belief, that had the Jews been called upon to change the relation of their children to the covenant, and in the administration of baptism to wholly pass them by, they would have submitted to this new order with less alacrity than to almost any other change.

If, then, the initiatory ordinance was to be so changed under the New Testament as to wholly omit its application to infants, such a change, being one of primary importance, would have called for an express prohibitory statute. Without such a statute, we maintain that the converted

Jew would naturally, and as a matter of course, have continued to apply baptism, as he had always applied circumcision, to his children. But the fact that no such prohibition is recorded in the New Testament is a strong presumption that it never existed. At least, with our opponents, who are so loud in their demands for positive precept, it must be admitted to possess peculiar weight. If the appeal is to be carried to positive "law and testimony," we demand positive law for changing the ancient covenant rights of children. Where, we ask, is the rescinding act to be found? When and how did children forfeit their eligibility to the initiating ordinance of the Abrahamic covenant? And on what authority do men deny them the rights which God has secured to them by positive law? These are grave questions, and we submit them to the intelligence, the candour, and the consciences, of all whom they may concern.

It becomes, then, an easy task to account for the apparent silence of the New Testament touching the question of infant baptism; and it will at once be perceived that such silence, so far from prejudicing our argument, is itself a powerful argument in our favour. It is an argument of very peculiar force. It not only proves that the initiating ordinance was applied to infants in New Testament times, but it proves much more—it proves that, such was the uniformity of that practice, not even a controversy arose in the church respecting it; and also, such was the state of opinion among converted Jews, (with whom, it is well known, the Christian church took its rise,) that it required no original command to institute and enforce infant baptism, but that the first members of the church adopted and continued the practice as a matter of course. Such, then, is the peculiar force, in our favour, of the particular circumstance of that kind of silence which the New Testament observes on this point.

3. But it may be said, "Although Christ has not prohibited the application of the initiatory rite to infants by any positive law of which we have any account, still, that ancient practice has fallen into disuse, and was designed to fall into disuse, at the 'passing away' of the Mosaic ritual." The force of this objection lies in the supposition that the doctrine of the covenant rights of infants is part

and parcel of the Mosaic economy, which was designed to cease at the coming of Christ. We know, indeed, that the sacrificial rites of Moses, and of primitive times, found their fulfilment in Christ; and that that whole economy, in a general sense, was "a shadow of good things to come," of which "the substance was Christ." This being its character, it ceased to operate, as a matter of course, and without a rescinding act, when Christ came. Still, if the reader will attend to the epistolary part of the New Testament, he will find that almost all the typical and temporary part of the ancient ritual of the church is mentioned in detail, and rescinded. Yet, in none of these specifications is the principle, touching the right of infants to the token of the covenant, infringed. Besides, the point we here insist upon is, that this belonged, not to that temporary and elemental state of policy established by Moses, but to the settled order, and essential character of the church. We have already stated that the *form* of the initiating ordinance was temporary. It was adapted to a *non-proselytic* form of religion, such as was that of the Jews, but not to the gospel plan. But the purpose of God in regard to admitting members into the church by *some* ceremony remained unaltered. The order of the church, in this respect, was perpetual. The great Lawgiver never intended to abolish the practice of admitting members to the church, or annexing them to the covenant, (which is the same thing,) by an external sign or ceremony of some sort. When circumcision was established, it fixed the form of the ordinance for the time; when it was abolished, it left the order of the church, which was in this respect settled and perpetual, unaltered;—it still remained that an external *mark* or *sign*, of some kind, must be put upon all the children of the covenant. And we say that the design of God, in reference to admitting members into his church by some external ceremony, is not temporary, but perpetual. It can no more pass away than the church itself can fail; it involves a principle, that not merely affects the external character of the church, but strikes at its very existence.

Take a perfectly parallel case. Among the Jews there was an institution, called the passover, whose chief merit consisted in its being a lively type of the sacrifice of

Christ. It seemed the design of Jehovah herein to represent and set forth the atonement to the believing Jew, in as distinct features as possible. This rite was also commemorative. Under the New Testament we are furnished with an institution, in all essential respects the same as the passover, save this, the passover celebrated the dying love and atoning merit of a Saviour yet to come, while in the Lord's supper we celebrate the same love and merit in a Saviour already come. Now it is evident that God intended, from the moment of the institution of the passover, to establish a perpetual order—a principle of unchangeable obligation in the church; namely, *that the death of Christ, as an atonement, should be celebrated through all time by the true worshippers of God.* Under the law of Moses it was celebrated in a manner suitable to the genius and character of that dispensation; and under the gospel, the outward ceremony is also adapted to the change of circumstances, and the new and enlarged measure of light. But who will say that, in changing the form of this ordinance, the *principle, the essential thing,* is changed? Much less will any reasonable man affirm that, at the coming of Christ and with the abolishment of the Mosaic rites, this order of the church, in regard to the celebration of the death of Christ, was also abolished, or that it of course passed away. In this we may see the distinction between what belongs to the temporary forms of church ordinances, and the immutable order of the church with respect to them.

Applying these remarks to the case in hand, we say, the principle that respected the admission of persons into the visible church, by some visible ceremony, was one of vital importance to the church, and could not have passed away with the obsolete rites of Moses as a matter of course. And after the abolishment of circumcision, it must be evident that, in whatever form the initiatory ordinance was to be continued, the essential order and settled constitution of the church, in this respect, would remain unchanged. The dress only of the ordinance was changed. And here, were it necessary, we might prove that the abolishment, or the "passing away," of the Mosaic rites, was only a disuse of forms, without any alteration of the principles or doctrine of the church. This the reader will

keep in mind. The final conclusion, therefore, is, that Christ has not rescinded the law touching the application of the initiating ordinance to infants, nor has that law died any natural death, it being not of a nature to pass away in this manner, without a rescinding act.

SECTION III.

But it may be said, "The New Testament must be supposed to say something respecting this point. If Christ intended that baptism should apply to infants, surely he would somewhere have specified such an intention, and not have left so weighty a matter wholly subject to vague conjecture, or uncertain inference." We answer:—We shall presently see that the New Testament has said something on this subject. The Head of the church has not left this matter either to conjecture, or to any dubious inference; but, contrariwise, has made just such mention of it as the state of the case required;—just such mention as proves that the practice of infant baptism was universal in the primitive Christian church, and that God intended it to be so.

1. But how comes the objector to know, with such positivity, that God would have specified his intentions on this subject by any positive law in the New Testament? And how can he feel warranted in drawing a positive inference from the alleged silence of the New Testament, in *favour* of his theory, any more than *against* it? Mere silence, abstractly considered, furnishes no argument, either pro or con, on any question. It is the peculiar posture of *circumstances* in which silence occurs, that lends to it whatever meaning it may possess; and these circumstances may lend to silence a positive or a negative signification. And here we may appeal to the common sense of mankind to decide whether the apparent silence of the New Testament be positive or negative on the question at issue. It is allowed, I believe, by universal consent, where the particular posture of circumstances renders the final decision of a question highly important and necessary, in order to place such question in a clear and undoubted light, and where the interest and wish of the party which is to decide are involved in the negative decision of the question, that

silence, in such a case, is construed affirmatively. Hence, the old and trite adage, "*Malam esse causam silentio confitetur*;" or, as we say,—His silence proves the fact. The rhetoricians say that silence is sometimes more eloquent, and may produce a more powerful effect upon an audience, than any possible form of words. On other occasions silence may be set down to the score of sheer stupidity and ignorance. Mere silence, then, we repeat it, proves nothing, because it *is* nothing. Circumstances only can lend it a meaning and force; and, in the case before us, the only proper question is, What are the circumstances that must be considered as imparting a positive meaning to the alleged silence of the New Testament on infant baptism? These circumstances we have already noticed as being in our favour. It is remarkable that the objectors to infant baptism have always urged, with an air of confident triumph, the supposed silence of the New Testament as an insuperable objection to Pedobaptism. And what is the force of this objection? It is simply this:—The New Testament does not expressly mention infant baptism,—therefore infant baptism is not to be practised. And this, to many, seems unanswerable. But how came our opponents to know that they had a right to put such a construction upon the silence of the New Testament? If the mere fact of silence is to be considered, it proves as much on one side of the question as the other, and we might reason in our turn: The New Testament does not expressly mention infant baptism,—therefore it does not prohibit it,—therefore it may be practised. And thus stand the two parties. The Baptists reject infant baptism for want of a positive New Testament *precept*: we maintain it, because there is no New Testament *prohibition* of the ancient law of infant consecration, and also because the New Testament makes just such recognition of the moral and ecclesiastical state of infants as we suppose the case called for, on the supposition that they were to be baptized.

But what I wished mostly to notice, in this place, is, that our opponents have no right to demand even a positive mention, in so many words, of infant baptism, in order to establish its obligation and its practice. We readily grant, that if the practice of applying the initiatory ordinance of the church to infants had never been known or

heard of before the time of Christ,—if such a practice would have been new, and the principle involved in it new to the church,—under such circumstances an express command would have been clearly necessary. But we have shown, we apprehend, that this was not the state of things at the time of the introduction of the gospel. Furthermore, we know that the apostles must have received many particular instructions from Christ, which, though they carried out in practice, they did not commit to writing. In such cases we must look to their *practice* for a knowledge of what was commanded them. Christ might have commanded them to baptize infants, and still they may not have been commanded to enter this precept upon record with the written canons of the church. The force of early practice and doctrine might have superseded this. And herein analogy is certainly against our opponents.

2. Take a case every way equally involved to the one in question. The practice of applying the initiatory rite to females as well as males, was not authorized by any ancient usage, or even possible, in the nature of the case, before the introduction of the gospel; and, being wholly unknown to the Jews, might seem to require an express direction from the lips of the divine Saviour. Such direction he undoubtedly gave; but, if so, it has never been entered upon record; thus demonstrating that, in the estimation of divine wisdom, this practice would, naturally enough, take the right direction through all successive ages, though left to mere inductions from Scriptural and rational principles; or the requisite instruction might have been given privately. Herein, then, we have an important change in the external applicability of a church ordinance, without any signified, registered intention, that it was the will of the divine Lawgiver that such a change should take place. It is true that, after the introduction of Christianity, the baptism of women was mentioned historically, and as a matter of fact, (Acts viii, 12,) proving that it was the will of God that they should be baptized. But this is proof of the very thing we have stated;—it proves it to have been an apostolic practice, *without* an express command. An historical mention of an act, is not a command to perform that act. It may presuppose a command, but the command itself must have existed prior, and is altoge-

ther another thing. Here, then, we find the apostles applied baptism to females, contrary to the ancient usage of the church, which denied them the initiatory ordinance; while their only authority for so doing was derived from the reasonableness of the case, from inference, or from private instruction that had never been entered upon the sacred record. And have we any just ground to suppose that the Saviour would particularize with greater care on other points which were less likely to be misunderstood? Have we any right to demand a positive precept, or even a mention, in so many words, of the applicability of baptism to infants?—a doctrine clearly pointed out by ancient practice,—when the point of its applicability to females, which seemed to be forbidden by the analogy of all ancient law and practice, was not so much as alluded to in the original commission, and was never expressly commanded? Can we suppose, in the full blaze and vigour of ancient Jewish law and custom, that infant baptism

* The fact that the Jews would have gone on and practised infant baptism, as a matter of course, unless prohibited, being governed in this respect purely, or at least mainly, by the light of ancient usage, has been illustrated by a homely similitude, and yet a similitude so much in point, that I will copy it:—

“A man orders his servants to mark the sheep of his flock with a bloody sign; and is careful to add, ‘See that you apply this sign to *all the lambs also.*’ Afterward he sees fit to dispense with the *bloody* sign, made with a knife in the flesh; and ordains that his servants shall mark his sheep with *paint*: but he says nothing about the lambs. Now, the question is, Will those servants, because the marking is a ‘positive institution,’ argue that the lambs are no longer to be marked, because they are not specified, in so many words, in the second order? As they purchase more sheep, with lambs, will they mark the sheep, but say they have no order for marking the lambs?” Every man must perceive the case would be just the contrary. All the natural force of circumstances would tend to establish the conviction that no change was intended in the *mark*, further than its external character. Its applicability to the lambs, as well as to the sheep, would not be considered as being at all affected by such a change in the mark, or sign. And it is wholly unnatural to suppose that they would reason from such a fact, to the exclusion of the lambs. So in the case before us. The fact of the external form of the initiating ceremony, or mark of discipleship, being changed, is not a sufficient ground for inferring the change of the applicability of that ordinance to infants; and it is wholly unnatural and forced to suppose the apostles would have drawn such an inference.—See Hall on Baptism, pp. 156, 157.

would be any more likely to be misunderstood and neglected by the Jewish converts, in the absence of direct precept, than was female baptism? It is plain that the preponderance of probability which the clear light of analogy throws upon this question, lies against such a supposition. In this estimate we are not to consult modern prejudice and modern practice; but we are to go back to the time of Christ, place ourselves in the situation of a converted Jew, and endeavour to appreciate the influence and operation of circumstances upon his mind. And it is in this manner we have arrived at the above conclusion. How vain, then, is it for men to put forth demands for positive precept on this, or any other subject involved in similar circumstances, as an indispensable condition of their faith and practice!

3. It has been a common practice of Pedobaptist authors to introduce at this stage of the argument the subject of female communion. The use of the argument is this:—That as God has nowhere directly authorized female communion by any express precept; and as, from the reasonableness of the case, we are fully convinced it is the divine will that they should be admitted to the communion table, therefore we are warranted in believing that positive duties are sometimes left to the direction of inference and analogy, without explicit written command: and if such a subject as the right of females to the communion table has been left to inference, analogy, and the reasonableness of things, so also may the subject of infant baptism;—a subject, we repeat it, no more likely than the former to be misunderstood. And all this may serve to show how futile are the claims which some persons put forth to that highest kind of moral evidence—explicit command—as a condition of their faith. This point is so clear and evident, and so obviously parallel to the case of infant baptism, that it needs not to be amplified. But we beg the reader's attention to some further illustrations equally clear and in point.

4. The practice of the Christian church in refusing to rebaptize any person, is far from being based on positive command. No Christian minister will knowingly give baptism to any person the second time. The universal Christian church regard it as a profanation of the ordinance. But why so? Certainly there might seem to be a strong analogy, both from Scripture and reason, to favour

ana-baptism. The Jews often lustrated their bodies. Whenever they had polluted themselves by any means, they were restored by a fresh application of water to the body, in some way, or of water and blood; and why not observe the same rule among Christians? It might seem too, at first sight, to be a reasonable inference, that as apostacy makes baptism to be void, so, upon a renewal of repentance, there should be a new application of the water of baptism. But no: this is not the fact. The church does not thus reason. In the absence of all express command, the church base their practice, in this respect, on the reasonableness of the case, and on church history, but mostly upon the latter. Baptism being a dedication of the person to God, it is understood to continue in full force and vigour while the baptized person remains holy. To repeat the rite would imply a defect in its first administration, or reception, or both. It would be to declare the first administration void. But in case of apostacy and subsequent repentance, we are guided alone by church history. "Finding that the primitive church did reconcile, but not rebaptize apostates, we do imitate that their practice."* Here, then, the Baptists themselves assume authority to direct the administration of a positive institute, without a positive command. They are, with us, governed by inference, analogy, and particularly by church history, in the use of a positive institute of Christianity. Are they consistent?

5. The fact of the change of the sabbath, from the seventh to the first day of the week, rests upon the same kind of evidence as that which we claim for the support of infant baptism. It seems not to have been duly considered by our opponents, that from the earliest records of history God has delivered his commands to men through various means, and in somewhat varied kinds of evidence. If we attentively examine into the ground of evidence that we have for various beliefs, we shall find that, while for some we have the warrant of a divine positive precept or declaration, for others we have only the authority of historical testimony and inductive reasoning. And these remarks, too, apply not merely to forms and accidental usages, but to cardinal and important subjects. We make these remarks, not to intimate a suspicion that there is any want

* Bishop Burnett on the Thirty-nine Articles, Art. xxv.

of evidence in any part of Revelation, but to direct attention to the fact, that all duties are not sustained by the same kind of evidence.

“ Admitting, as we must, that all positive religious rites are originally founded on a divine command, we cannot safely conclude that such a command will be repeated to all those who shall afterward be under obligation to observe such rites, or even that the original command will be preserved and communicated to them in the sacred writings. Neither of these can be considered as indispensable; because sufficient evidence of a divine institution may be afforded in some other way. It may be afforded, particularly, by an *unwritten tradition*. It is unquestionable that the knowledge of some extraordinary events of Providence, or of some divine injunctions, may be as truly and as certainly communicated in this way as in others; and we should, in many cases, consider a man who would refuse to admit the truth and authority of a tradition, to be as unreasonable as if he should refuse to admit the authority of written or printed records.

“ If we should insist upon the repetition of a divine command at different times, or upon a written record of it as indispensable, we should set aside one of the methods which God has manifestly adopted in regard to the positive institutions of religion. For instance, what clear and certain proof have we that the divine command, enjoining the observance of the sabbath, or the offering of sacrifices, was repeated to the successive generations of men from Adam to Moses; or that they had evidence of either of these divine institutions from historical records? And what certain proof is there of the repetition of the divine command, or the existence of any historical records, during the period from Abraham to Moses, respecting the rite of circumcision? And, to come down to later times, what express command has God given to us, or to any Christians since the days of the apostles, requiring the first day of the week to be observed as a sabbath? And what express declaration have we in the sacred records that such a command was ever given by Christ or his apostles? In regard to this, we who observe the Christian sabbath must either say that a divine command has been given directly to us, or that a command originally

given by Christ, has been preserved to us in the sacred records,—neither of which we are able to say;—or we must justify ourselves in observing the Lord's day, because some other considerations show that such is the will of God. On what ground, then, shall we proceed in regard to this subject? We must be sensible that we have no express command from God to us, and no record of any former command, to authorize us to regard the Christian sabbath as a divine institution. Shall we, then, admit that it is proper for us to fall in with the prevailing practice in regard to a religious rite, merely because we judge it becoming and useful? This we cannot admit. We must then rest the Christian sabbath on the ground of the original institution of the sabbath, as enjoined in the fourth command of the Decalogue. And we must, at the same time, admit that the original institution was particularly modified at the commencement of the Christian dispensation, although our sacred writings nowhere expressly require such a modification. It cannot but be evident, therefore, that if we should insist upon the necessity of an express divine precept, either originally addressed to us, or transmitted to us by the sacred records, in order to justify us in observing the rite of *infant baptism*, we should contradict our own practice in regard to another subject very analogous to this.* . . . My object in this place is to remove a mistake as to the kind and degree of evidence which should be deemed conclusive, and to show that demanding an express precept in favour of infant baptism,

* Is it not wholly unaccountable that the Baptists should reject infant baptism on the ground of a want of express precept, and then turn directly about, and advocate the first day of the week as the true sabbath? They are forced to defend their practice in the observance of the first day of the week as the sabbath-day, on exactly similar grounds of evidence to those from which we argue the obligation and validity of infant baptism. Why do they accept this sort of evidence in the one case, and reject it, nay, hoot at it, in the other? The Seventh-day Baptists alone are herein consistent with themselves, and must necessarily possess great advantage of their brethren who keep the first day of the week, in argument on their respective peculiarities. "They must either keep the seventh day," says a Seventh-day Baptist, "or reject the principles on which they reject infant baptism: they must give up their argument, or keep the seventh day, or else determine to act inconsistently and absurdly."—*Rev. E. Hall on Baptism*, p. 124.

that is, demanding a new and explicit command in favour of the dedication of children to God by the Christian rite of baptism, would be unreasonable and inconsistent. I wish every man to settle it in his mind perfectly and for ever, that, in a multitude of cases, other evidence ought to be received, and is received, as satisfactory.

“ Consider a moment how we proceed in regard to so momentous a subject as the authority of some of the sacred writings. Take, for example, the Epistle to the Hebrews, which we receive as having been written by inspiration of God. But why do we thus receive it? What is the kind of evidence we have of its divine inspiration and divine authority? Do the other Scriptures give testimony to this epistle, and require us to receive it? No. Does the author of the epistle inform us that he wrote by divine inspiration? Does he even give us his name? He does neither. We receive this book as of divine authority, *because ecclesiastical history teaches us that it was thus received by the generality of early Christians*, whom we know to have been far better qualified than we are to form a right judgment in regard to its claims. It is primarily on the ground of such evidence as this that we admit the epistle into the sacred canon. The intrinsic excellence of the book, and its correspondence with other parts of Scripture, are, indeed, considerations of great weight in favour of its divine authority. But these considerations are of a very different nature from what we understand by *express, positive proof* from the word of God. The same as to some other parts of the Christian Scriptures. What is the kind of evidence that we have of their divine inspiration and authority? They are sanctioned by no voice from heaven; by no miracle; and by no declaration of inspired writers. But do we, therefore, reject them? No. We receive them as a part of the sacred canon on the ground of *historical evidence*. That is, the testimony of antiquity is in their favour. We rely on that testimony, because it is the testimony of men competent to judge. And why should we not proceed on the same general principles in regard to *infant baptism*? We have at least as good evidence from history in favour of this, as we have that the Apocalypse and the Epistle to the Hebrews, and some

other parts of the Bible, were written by inspired men. How, then, can we consistently reject it?"*

We have ventured upon this somewhat lengthy quotation, because, after carefully weighing the whole subject, we could think of no clearer or more comprehensive view to present to the reader. After what has been said, it is needless, although it were quite easy, to multiply instances for illustration. We flatter ourselves that it is sufficiently plain that men cannot judge beforehand of the kind or degree of evidence which the Almighty may deem fit to offer in support of any particular institution; or as the foundation of our faith and obligation. It is in vain for men to say they will not believe without the most direct and positive proof. It is folly for them to assume this attitude, because it contradicts the grounds of action which they are daily impelled to adopt in reference to a thousand other matters. Thomas might have fancied himself justified in rejecting the testimony of his fellow-disciples, and demanding the palpable evidence of his senses; he might even have imagined himself more noble than the rest on this account; but the Saviour did not commend him, but, on the contrary, plainly intimated that a less skeptical and obstinate mind was not the less reasonable, and far more happy. He also taught him that the same kind of evidence that he enjoyed could not, from the nature of the case, be granted to all, nor was it necessary. He who made man, and constituted the human mind to receive and weigh evidence, he it is that best knows what kind and degree of evidence to afford on moral subjects, and how the probationary interests of man may best be served hereby. We are to take the Bible as it is—ascertain its facts and their supporting evidence—and act according to the force of those rational convictions which such evidence inspires. And if it be regarded as hazardous to adopt a line of conduct without a written testimony, in so many words, of its being duty; it is no less dangerous to the spirit of genuine piety, and offensive to the dignity of right reason, to despise such conduct in others, and spurn it from the catalogue of our acknowledged duties, because it may be sanctioned only by evidence of an inferential and

* Lectures on Infant Baptism, by Dr. Woods, pp. 17-21.

analogical character,—evidence which, in the great majority of cases, in religion, politics, commerce, and all the social walks of life, influences and governs the conduct of men.

For some further illustrations, the reader is referred to the note below.*

SECTION IV.

But the New Testament is not silent on the subject of infant baptism, but makes just such mention of it as, in view of the state of opinion at that time, proves it to have been enjoined, and universally practised. It makes just such mention of the subject as the circumstances of the case required. It is not the ordinance of baptism itself that we now speak of, but it is the application of this ordinance to infants. The institution of Christian baptism required and received an express sanction from the lips of our Saviour; and this command is registered. But the application of this rite to infants is a point that became so obvious to the mind of the Jew, and to all who were conversant with the ancient usage of the church, as to require no direct precept, or, at least, that that precept should be recorded. The light of analogy, and the force of ancient habit, precluded any such necessity. They had only need of being informed what was the initiatory rite of the new dispensation, and the fact of its applicability to infants would follow as a matter of course, unless prohibited; or, at most, would require only private direction. Under these circumstances what mention may we suppose the New Testament would naturally make of this subject? We answer: It is reasonable to suppose that it would merely *recognise* facts and principles in relation to it, in an incidental way, without any intimation of their being new, or controverted, or doubted. And this we find to be the fact in the case. The New Testament makes just such allusion to infants—recognises all those facts and principles in reference to them—as supposes them still to retain their ancient rights to the seal of the covenant, and their ancient relation to the church. Infants are spoken of in a manner wholly inexplicable on any other supposition than that of

* See Note B.

their eligibility to baptism, and in a manner to clearly indicate that there was no controversy on this point in the New Testament times. The reader will readily perceive, therefore, upon a little reflection, the proper distinctive character of our position. He will be at no loss to appreciate the distinction between a *positive command*, directing a certain line of conduct, and a *recognition* of principles and facts which imply such conduct; between an ordinance newly issued under sanction of positive authority, and an ordinance of ancient date, newly recognised in its principles, and in the fact of its existence. Proceed we then to the labour of proof:—

1. Infants are in a gracious state. By this I mean that they are included in the provisions of the gospel, and receive a title to eternal life through the atonement. It is not our present intention to enter upon the proof of this point; if any man doubt it, we must leave him to his opinion, and address our argument to those who allow the statement. We do not, furthermore, wish any controversy respecting the manner in which infants are saved through the atonement. All we insist upon is the fact that they are embraced in the economy of redemption, and, through the grace of Christ, entitled to, and prepared for, eternal life. Now, this fact, which is so fully established by our Lord's words in Matt. xix, 14, and xviii, 2-5, and by Paul in Rom. v, and elsewhere, this fact, we say, is one of primary importance; for unless infants are fit for heaven, or have a title to heaven, it is evident they are not suitable to sustain any relation to the church. All fitness for church relations must be primarily predicated of, and based upon, that moral state that constitutes a fitness for future happiness. The church militant, in its moral features, is designed to be an image and transcript of the church triumphant. In this respect, the two "kingdoms are but one." Baptism is an outward sign of an inward work of grace,—a token of confirmation that the subject belongs to the spiritual family of God, and is an heir of that grace which is promised in the covenant of Abraham. Of course, therefore, all who are the subjects of this grace, which is signified by baptism—all who belong to the spiritual family of God—are entitled to baptism. If they have the thing signified by baptism, they may, and ought

to receive baptism itself also. This principle is fully carried out and established in the Scriptures. For instance, in Acts x, 47, Peter says, concerning Cornelius and his Gentile friends, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" The argument which he urged in favour of their being baptized, and one which he deemed sufficient and conclusive, was, that they had "received the Holy Ghost,"—they had been made the subjects of grace. At first Peter hesitated to go into the house with these Gentiles, because they were regarded as *unclean*, forbidden and rejected of God. But now, when he beholds them really the subjects of saving grace, "he commands them to be baptized." This is clear and unequivocal. "Peter went by this rule," says Mr. Wall, "one that is capable of the ends of baptism should be baptized. Mr. Tombs himself says, 'If it should be made known to us that infants are sanctified, I should not doubt but that they are to be baptized; remembering the words of St. Peter,'"^{*} as above quoted. But one less affected with Calvinism might be more disposed to infant baptism. Now, the New Testament recognises and affirms that moral condition of infants which, in an adult, is regarded as the groundwork of a fitness for baptism and a connection with the church. Our Saviour expressly declares, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," which, whatever else it may mean, clearly proves, in infants, a moral fitness for baptism and church relations. Whatever, then, may be urged against infants, in other respects, on the score of their alleged unfitness for baptism, their moral state can furnish no ground for such a plea. And to this our opponents themselves can find no objection, unless they are of the number of those who believe that "persons (infants included) not elected cannot be saved."[†]

2. Infants are capable of sustaining covenant relations to God. This circumstance also is of primary importance. If it could be proved that children are incapable of being entered into covenant with God, we cannot see but this controversy must be at an end. On the contrary, if it can be proved that children are capable of being entered into

^{*} Wall's Dialogue on Infant Baptism.

[†] Confession of Faith, article "*Effectual calling*."

covenant, and of sustaining covenant relations and inheriting covenant blessings, then, their right to the *sign* of the covenant, and to covenant relations, is easily substantiated. And here the reader will perceive, if children possess a moral fitness for church relations,—as is proved from the fact that they are fit subjects for “the kingdom of heaven,”—and if they are capable of being entered into covenant with God, then, no primary objection can be urged against their baptism; but, on the contrary, these simple considerations would, of themselves, create a powerful presumption of the truth of the doctrine which we advocate. Now, that infants are capable of being entered into covenant with God, and that the Bible so regards them, is put beyond all question.

In Deut. xxix, 10–12, Jehovah thus speaks to the children of Israel: “Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, YOUR LITTLE ONES, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: THAT THOU SHOULDEST ENTER INTO COVENANT WITH THE LORD THY GOD, AND INTO HIS OATH, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.” In this passage the “*little ones*” are enumerated with the same formality, and are made the same account of in the “covenant,” as are the “elders,” the “officers,” and “all the men of Israel.” But if the children were not intended to be entered into covenant equally with the rest, it would have been as much in place to have mentioned their cattle, in this enumeration, as their infants.

In Deut. v, 2, 3, Moses says, “The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not his covenant with our fathers, *but with us, even us*, WHO ARE ALL OF US HERE ALIVE THIS DAY.” Now, this covenant in Horeb had been made with these persons about thirty-eight years previously, when many of them were children and infants, and all of them in nonage.

But it is not necessary to cite particular instances; the simple fact that children were entered into covenant with God by circumcision is sufficient to put this question for ever at rest. And here, be it remembered, the question does not hinge on the spirituality of the covenant. We

are not now speaking of the *moral* qualification of infants to be entered into covenant, but of the *natural fitness* of their being thus entered. The moral aspect of this question must be determined by the fitness of children for heaven; the question now before us relates to the propriety—the natural fitness—of entering them into covenant relations to God; and this, we say, is decided affirmatively by the actual appointment of God, in relation to circumcision.

And here we plead for no principle that is not recognised and sanctioned by Scripture, by all civil governments, and by the reason of mankind. The plain truth in the case is, that if infants have any interest in the benefits of the covenant, that interest ought to be *recognised* in a lawful way. If infants, equally with their pious parents, are sharers in the bounteous provisions of the atonement, (which is the great blessing secured in the Abrahamic covenant,) they obviously possess an equal right with their parents to the visible *mark*, or *token*, of participation in such blessings. Under all civil governments children have rights; it is a law of nature and a dictate of justice that these rights should be recognised and protected. The protection of the laws, the rights of citizenship, and of property, are secured to them, not on the principle of their being of a certain age, or of their being competent to judge of the value of these blessings, but on the principle of their relation to their parents. On this point we shall dwell more at large in another place. This, then, is the principle for which we contend. Children are as capable of sustaining covenant relations to God, so far as the question of natural fitness and propriety is concerned, as they are of sustaining any civil relations to government. They are as capable of possessing spiritual rights and immunities as civil rights; and are as capable of being injured in respect of the former as of the latter. Their spiritual rights are not founded on the circumstance of age or intellectual acquirements, but on the fact of their being human beings, included, equally with their parents, in the covenant of redemption. It is in view of these facts that we may well repeat the caution, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." That the New Testament recognises this view will be made to appear in the process of the argument.

3. The right of infants to the initiatory ordinance is recognised and proved in different places in the New Testament.

[1.] We call the reader's attention to Gal. iii, 29, "And if ye be Christ's, THEN are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE." In this passage it is placed beyond a doubt that the believer in Christ comes exactly under the ancient charter of rights granted to Abraham, and, according to the true spirit of that ancient grant, becomes an heir of life. In other words, a true Christian comes exactly in that relation to the Abrahamic covenant that a pious Jew sustained before the time of Christ. Indeed, it is fully attested that the promise of that covenant was not to the Jews as the natural descendants of Abraham, but to all believers in Christ as the spiritual children of that patriarch. It was according to this spiritual lineage that the inheritance of grace and church privileges was to be reckoned, and not according to natural descent. To the same purport is verse 7 of the same chapter: "Know ye therefore that *they which are of faith, THE SAME ARE THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM.*" Now, the argument is obvious. If the converted Gentile come in the same relation to the covenant as the pious Jew, we must look also, and as a matter of course, for a corresponding application of the ordinances, or institutes of that covenant. For instance, if the initiating ordinance of this covenant, under the law, applied to the Jew, and to his infant offspring, the same application of the ordinance must be made to the Christian and his children, under the gospel, if it be true that the latter comes exactly in the same relations to the covenant as the former. It makes no difference that the external form of this ordinance is changed; whatever it be as to form, it must take the same adaptations as anciently. The ancient privileges of the covenant must be maintained. The rights of the true children of Abraham are unimpaired; and if the children of ancient Jews—who were the "children of the covenant"—were entitled to certain privileges and church relations, the children of believers now—coming, as they do, in the exact relations of ancient Jews to this same covenant—are entitled to the same rights.

It must be remembered that circumcision was the seal

of the covenant, and not, as many seem to imagine, a part of the peculiar institutes of Moses. It is proper that every covenant should have its seal, which may be regarded in the light of the proper signatures of the parties, attesting the validity and binding nature of the contract. It is hence, as we have already observed, Jehovah has always annexed *seals, or tokens*, to his covenants. The seal, or token, of the Abrahamic covenant was to be applied to all the male children of that patriarch. This no one will deny. The question, then, is, Who are the children of Abraham? The text under consideration declares that "if we be Christ's, THEN are we Abraham's seed." Now, if baptism be the seal of the covenant under the present dispensation, as circumcision was under the former; and if Christians now come exactly in the same relations to that covenant that pious Jews sustained anciently—being as truly the "seed of Abraham" and the "children of the covenant" as they—then, does it not follow that, the covenant being the same, our relations to it the same, and the "seal" yet remaining, we are to look for an *application* of the seal corresponding to its ancient use? Would not the apostles, who were Jews, and their converted Jewish brethren, naturally understand it thus? Can any thing be more plain and undeniable than this? Here, then, is a recognition, not of infant baptism by *name*, but of principles that as naturally and necessarily involve the practice of infant baptism, as any process of moral reasoning can involve a sequence in antecedent causes. And herein is infant baptism inculcated, not directly and by name, but by analogy and inference. Antecedent principles are established, and put beyond a doubt, and the mind is left to trace, by an easy, natural, and succinct process, the proximate and obvious result; and that result is, that children of Christian parents now, possess the same covenant rights and relations as did the children of Jewish parents anciently.

[2.] The second passage we cite in proof that the right of infants to the initiatory ordinance is recognised in the New Testament, is Matt. xxviii, 19, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The question to be settled in reference to this passage

is this: "Would the apostles naturally understand the words of this commission as authorizing and directing infant baptism?" We think it is perfectly plain that they would so understand their commission; and would consequently go forward in the practice of infant baptism, unless restrained and prohibited by a special interdict. This, we are aware, the reader may deem gratuitous and unfounded; but if he will follow us with patience and candour a little, we hope to be able to dispel every shadow of obscurity from this important passage. To enable the reader to judge of the argument, we shall be obliged to enter somewhat into detail, and lay before him fully all the circumstances of the case.

1.) We argue that the apostles would understand this commission as authorizing and directing infant baptism, from the fact that the children of proselytes were baptized by the Jews. They were accustomed to make proselytes of infant children, as well as of adults, by baptism. The argument will be fully comprehended by attention to the following:—

(a.) The passage is not happily translated. The text stands thus: "Go ye, therefore, and μαθητευσατε *mathe-teusate, make disciples, or proselytes, of all nations, baptizing them,*" &c.*

* Baptist authors, seeing the importance of this passage, and that, if the translation we have adopted be received, infant baptism would be a very probable and natural inference, have insisted upon the common English version, which merely says, "*teach* all nations." But this is objectionable. The translation we have given is, to say the least, as consistent with the original as the one in our common English version. This the Baptists themselves will not deny. Besides, the specific duty of *teaching* is referred to in the very next verse, and is expressed in another word. Our English presents a perfect tautology, "Go *teach* all nations . . . *teaching* them." It will not be argued that this is either a smooth or forcible sense. The two words are not the same in the original, and certainly cannot be supposed, with any propriety, to bear exactly the same sense here. The first, which occurs in verse 19, enjoins upon the apostles to bring persons over to the Christian profession, which, in an adult, would imply some elementary teaching. But the second word, which occurs in verse 20, enjoins upon them to *instruct* these converts. The former word is more *general*, the latter more *specific*. Doddridge renders it, "Go forth therefore, and *proselyte* all the nations . . . *teaching* them," &c. This makes the same sense as the marginal reading, "Go make *disciples, or Christians, of all nations,*" &c.

(b.) The word DISCIPLE, in the Christian vocabulary, answers exactly to the word PROSELYTE, in the Jewish. A disciple is a proselyte; the only difference consisting in the circumstance that the latter is employed in the Scriptures to designate a Jewish convert, while the former applies to a convert to Christianity. A Jewish proselyte was one that was brought from heathenism and incorporated into the Jewish church; a Christian proselyte, or disciple, was one that was taken either from Jews or heathen, and became a follower of Christ. But the primary idea of both words is *convert*, or *follower*. There was a class of citizens among the Jews from the earliest period of their history, denominated גֵּרִים, and בְּנֵי גֵּר, that is, *strangers, sons of strangers, foreigners, &c.* These were, for the most part, *proselytes* to the Jewish religion who dwelt in the land,* and, though Jews in religion, were distinguished from native Hebrews by the common appellation of *strangers*. This same class of persons was afterward called *proselytes*, from προς *to*, and ελευθω *to come, to come to*, and signifies a person who has *left* his own country and has *come to* another—that is, a *stranger, foreigner*; and also, figuratively, a person who has *left* his former practices and has *come to*, or *embraced*, a new religion; or that has *left* his former teacher and has *come to* a new one,—that is, a *proselyte, a disciple, a follower, a*

Now, it is incontestable that they were commanded to μαθητευσατε *make disciples*, BEFORE they were commanded to διδασκω *teach*. If not, why are these commands enjoined in this *order*? and if both these words mean the same thing in this place, why are the *two* employed, instead of *one* word, which would have been more simple? It is therefore absurd to suppose they mean the same thing. They were to perform the first command, (to make disciples,) *before*, or rather *by*, baptism; they were to perform the second command (to *teach, indoctrinate*) *after* baptism.

Furthermore, the verb bears this sense elsewhere. Thus, Matt. xxvii, 57, "Joseph . . . who was εμαθητευσε *made a disciple* of Jesus." Acts xiv, 21, "And when they had preached the gospel in that city, και μαθητευσαντες ικανους *and having made disciples of many.*" That these persons of Derbe were not only *taught*, but actually *discipled*, that is, *baptized*, and brought under the denomination of *Christians*, is evident, for in verse 22 they are called μαθητων *disciples*, and in verse 23 are spoken of as church members.

* Vide Dr. A. Clarke's Com. on Exod. xii, 43. Robinson's Calmet, art. *Proselyte*.

convert, &c. The word μαθητης *mathetes*, disciple, primarily signifies a *scholar*; that is, one who has placed himself under the tutorage of another. A person who left his idolatry and heathen worship, and came to Moses, adopting him as his authoritative teacher and guide in religion, was called a *proselyte*: a person who "forsook all" and came to Christ, accepting him as his only religious teacher and guide, was called a *disciple*. The primary idea in both words is the same. Our Saviour used the word *disciple* instead of *proselyte*, probably for no other reason than to avoid the confusion that would result from adopting a strictly Jewish vocabulary, although that vocabulary might, otherwise, have equally served his purpose. Thus he has used *church* (ἐκκλησία) instead of *synagogue*, (συναγωγή,) although they both signify the same thing—that is, an *assembly*—merely to distinguish between a Jewish and a Christian *congregation*. Yet, if the word *synagogue* had not already been in use among the Jews, and received by them a specific meaning, it might have been used in the New Testament instead of *ekklesia* with equal propriety. We make these remarks in order to show that the original idea conveyed by the two words, *proselyte* and *disciple*, is one and the same; and also to show the probable reason why the word *disciple* was adopted in the Christian vocabulary, instead of *proselyte*. But we have still higher authority than the mere resemblance of their etymological significations, for making the two words essentially synonymous.

The *descriptions* which are given in the New Testament of a disciple are borrowed from, and answer to, the descriptions of a Jewish proselyte. For instance, "the *first* condition of proselytism among the Jews was, that he who came to embrace their religion should come voluntarily, and that neither force nor influence should be employed in this business. This, also, is the *first* condition required by Jesus Christ, and which he considers as the foundation of all the rest. 'If any man be willing (εἰ τις θελεῖ) to come after me,' Matt. xvi, 24. The *second* condition required in the Jewish proselyte was, that he should perfectly renounce all his prejudices, his errors, his idolatry, and every thing that concerned his false religion, and that he should entirely separate himself from his most intimate

friends and acquaintances. It was on this ground that the Jews called proselytism a new birth, and proselytes *new born*, and *new men*; and our Lord requires men to be born again, not only of water, but by the Holy Ghost. John iii, 5. All this our Lord includes in this word, *let him renounce himself*—*απαρνησασθω εαυτον*. Mark viii, 34. To this the following scriptures refer: Matt. x, 33; John iii, 3, 5; 2 Cor. v, 17. The *third* condition on which a person was admitted into the Jewish church as a proselyte was, that he should submit to the yoke of the Jewish law, and patiently bear the inconveniences and sufferings with which a profession of the Mosaic religion might be accompanied. Christ requires the same condition, but, instead of the yoke of the law, he brings in his own doctrine, which he calls his *yoke* (Matt. xi, 29) and his *cross*, (Matt. xvi, 24; Mark viii, 34,) the taking up of which not only implies a bold profession of Christ crucified, but also a cheerful submitting to all the sufferings and persecutions to which he might be exposed, and even to death itself. The *fourth* condition was, that they should solemnly engage to continue in the Jewish religion, faithful even unto death. This condition Christ also required, and it is comprised in this word, *let him follow me*. Matt. xvi, 24–26; Mark viii, 34–37.”*

(c.) It is not necessary to extend remarks on so plain a case. If, then, *disciple* and *proselyte* signify the same thing—and if the apostles, in their Jewish state, had always been acquainted with a particular mode of proselyting—it is evident that they would naturally understand the command to *make disciples* of all nations as tantamount to a command to *make proselytes* of all nations, and that they would also proceed to make disciples just as they had always been taught to make proselytes, unless otherwise instructed. This is obvious. If any new method of making disciples, or proselytes, was to be adopted, that method must be pointed out. If any alteration of the old method was to be made, that alteration should and must have been clearly defined; otherwise the apostles would have gone on and understood and applied terms according to general usage, and the principles of their religious edu-

* Horne's Introd., part iii, chap. ii, sec. 3. Clarke's Com. on Mark viii, 34.

cation. Our Lord well knew what influence the former education and prejudices of the disciples would exert in the interpretation of the words of the commission,* and he therefore specifies wherein the particular mode of their making disciples was to differ from the Jewish mode of making proselytes, namely, that whereas the Jews received proselytes by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice,† they were to make disciples of all nations only by baptizing them. Baptism,‡ then, to the exclusion of the other ceremonies, was to be the Christian method of making proselytes. So far, then, the apostles understood. But were there any further directions necessary? Was it necessary to give any direction respecting the baptism of infants? Plainly not. The circumstances of the case did not require a distinct command in order that the apostles should thus apply their commission, but just the contrary; they required a distinct *prohibition* of infant baptism if the apostolic commission was *not* to be thus construed and applied. The inquiry which now becomes necessary, in order to set this whole matter in a clear light, is, "What was the Jewish method of proselyting with reference to children?" The answer to this we have anticipated above. It is plain that whatever might have been this method, or usage, the disciples would unquestionably have copied it, and have construed their commission by this usage, unless prohibited by an express command of the Saviour.

The practice of making proselytes, with regard to children, is very well understood by all who have any knowledge of the sacred antiquities of the Jews. It was their invariable practice to proselyte, in the usual way, all the children of converted parents. The children that were born *after* their parents had become proselytes were treated, in all respects, like Jewish children: but the

* I wish the reader to bear in mind the fact, that at the time of Christ, and previously, the spirit of proselyting ran high among the Jews, and great efforts were made to bring over to their faith the Gentile nations. Thus Idumea was wholly brought over as a nation. Josephus, Ant., b. xiii, c. 9, § 1. Thus, also, in every nation the apostles found proselytes. Acts ii, 10; vi, 5; and xiii, 43. See also Josephus, Ant., b. xx, c. 3, § 4. Our Saviour alludes to the universal passion of the nation for proselyting, in Matt. xxiii, 15. Every Jew was familiar with the mode of proselyting.

† See Calmet's Dict., art. *Proselyte*.

‡ See Note C.

children that were born *before* their parents became proselytes were admitted into the church by circumcision, (if males,) baptism, and sacrifice. "Boys under twelve years of age, and girls under thirteen, could not become proselytes till they had obtained the consent of their parents, or, in case of refusal, the concurrence of the officers of justice. Baptism, in respect of girls, had the same effect as circumcision in respect of boys. Each of them, by means of this, received, as it were, a new birth."* Whenever a heathen became a proselyte to the Jewish religion, he thereby became a Jew in every sense, except by birth and early education; he thereby came under obligation to the Mosaic law, and became entitled to all the privileges of the law and of the covenant, just as though he had been born and educated a Jew, or was, as it was called, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews." Consequently it became his duty to consecrate his children to God, as the Mosaic law required of all Jews. But as those children which had been born *before* their parents became proselytes had been born in a state of heathenism, they needed, in the estimation of the Jews, the same process of purification from heathenism as their parents, and were, consequently, subjected to the same ordinances.

2.) But, furthermore, we argue that the apostles would have taken authority from their commission to baptize infants, (and would consequently have instituted the practice, unless prohibited,) from the fact, before alluded to, that infants had always been treated as the proper subjects of the initiating rite. This circumstance need not be dwelt upon here, but it must not be forgotten that its force is necessarily unequivocal and decisive.

In connection with this fact, it should be considered that baptisms were always practised by the Jews in a religious manner. Whenever a Jew had contracted any ceremonial defilement, he was temporarily suspended from the privileges and communion of the Jewish church, until, by purification, or baptism, he was again restored. These purifications were repeatedly called baptisms in the New Testament. They had all the effect of a ceremony of initiation, for they actually *restored* the lapsed Jew to his

* Robinson's Calmet, art. *Proselyte*. See Note C.

regular standing in the church. When Christ commanded to make disciples by baptism, the ceremony was by no means a new one. The baptism of John occasioned no surprise among the Jews, as it would have done had it been a novel practice, only they were a little surprised that any person less than Christ himself should administer it. John i, 25. When, therefore, in connection with this, we consider that the apostles had no idea of a church that did not contain infant members, we are forced to conclude that they would have so understood their commission as to give baptism to infants, unless expressly instructed to the contrary.

To all this it must be added, that Christ had bestowed special consideration upon children, and in a solemn manner taught his disciples also to bestow upon them a religious regard, declaring that "of such the kingdom of heaven is composed." These considerations must have exerted a powerful influence over the apostles' minds, disposing them to the baptism of infants, unless, as we have said, they had been prohibited by a special command.

And here, candid reader, I would have you pause and review the statements under this section—form a just estimate of all the circumstances of the case—and draw your conclusion. Do not mistake the nature and bearing of the argument, particularly that from Jewish proselyte baptism. This has been too often done already, and has occasioned an unreasonable prejudice against the doctrine of infant baptism. I am sorry to find, in Professor Ripley's reply to Professor Stuart on baptism—a work evincing much ability and candour—I am sorry, I say, to find in such a work so unjust a statement as the following:—"I know," says that author, "what use has been made by Pedobaptist writers of the possible, or probable, or, as they have often regarded it, certain fact that proselyte baptism was performed among the Jews before the Christian era; namely, *that it has been used as a starting point in the defence of infant baptism.*" The author then adds, "If any Christians choose thus intimately to connect their proof of what they practise as a divine ordinance with the superstitious practices of the Jews,—practices, too, the antiquity of which is so much a matter of disputation,—on them-

selves be the responsibility of deserting the plain, beaten path of Holy Scripture.”*

We cannot disguise our astonishment and grief at finding such statements from the pen of so amiable and candid an author, calculated as they are to misguide and misinform the uninstructed reader. It takes an entirely erroneous view of the argument drawn from the “apostolic commission,” and of the use made of Jewish proselyte baptism in this connection. We deduce no warrant for infant baptism from the “superstitious practices of the Jews.” Nay, further, we do not deem it an essential point at all, whether the Jews ever baptized proselytes before the Christian era. All that we profess to do is that which Professor Ripley himself, and also every other expositor of the Bible, is bound to do, namely, to so estimate the history of those times, and the particular education and habits of the apostles themselves, as to be able rightly to judge of the manner in which they would naturally construe the words of their commission. And this, it is well known, involves a principle at once the most difficult and important in Biblical exegesis. How large a portion of the Bible would still remain in obscurity, but for the knowledge that has come down to us from foreign sources respecting the religious, social, and domestic habits of the ancients! Indeed, it would be trifling with time, and with the intelligence and good sense of the reader, to dilate upon this topic. Whatever goes to determine the *usus loquendi* of the sacred writings, whether it come from the errors or the orthodoxy of the ancients—their religion or their superstition—must be taken into account. “It is common,” says Mr. Wall, “for a rule or law to be so worded, as that one may perceive that the Lawgiver has supposed, or taken for granted, that the people to whom it was already given did already know some things which were previous to the apprehending of his meaning; so that it was needless to express them. But though these things were ordinarily known to the people of that time and place, yet we, who live at so great a distance of time, do not know them without an inquiry made into the history of the state of that time, as to those things which the law

* Christian Baptism, p. 109. See also Robinson's History of Baptism, p. 37.

speaks of; and, consequently, without such inquiry, the rule or law that was plain to them, will, in many particulars, be obscure to us. So, for example, many of the Grecian and Roman laws, whereof we have copies yet extant, would not be well understood by us unless they were explained to us by such as have skill in the history of the state of affairs in those empires. And so many passages in the books of the New Testament of our Saviour are not rightly apprehended without having recourse to the books of the Old Testament, and other books, wherein the customs of the Jewish nation are set forth, for understanding the state of religion among the people at that time when our Saviour gave his rules.”*

This, then, is the use we would make of the practice and method of proselyting among the Jews. We do not argue that infants are to be baptized now, because the Jews had a practice anciently of baptizing the children of proselytes. We do not, as Professor Ripley would intimate, and which, indeed, he has plainly stated, “intimately connect the proof of what we regard as a divine ordinance with the superstitious practices of the Jews.” If any person supposes this he is wholly in an error, and if he continue to hold and teach such an opinion, he greatly abuses both himself and those who have the misfortune to believe him. But we say, that the early Jewish education of the apostles, in relation to making *proselytes*, must have had a decisive influence over their minds in determining the construction to be put upon that part of their commission which required them to “make *disciples* of all nations;” and that, as the words *proselyte* and *disciple* signified substantially the same thing, in a religious sense, the apostles would have gone forth discipling the nations in the same method by which they had always been accustomed to see proselytes made, unless they had been otherwise instructed. And all this is saying no more than that men will naturally explain language, in any given instance, according to the custom of the age, unless specially instructed to the contrary.

It is a matter of no importance to the present argument, whether the Jews fairly derived their authority for baptizing proselytes from the Bible, or only from their doctors.

* History of Infant Baptism, *Introduction*.

The truth is, they had such a practice, and they quoted the Old Testament Scriptures as their authority. Whether, therefore, the practice were rightly or wrongly founded on the sacred Scriptures, *they fully believed* it to be of divine authority, and hence, it is easy to perceive that it would have the same influence over their minds, in determining the sense of their commission, as though it had been *indisputably* of divine authority: that is, without a prohibition, they would naturally have understood it as authorizing and directing them to baptize infants. The question is not, whether the baptism of Jewish proselytes—infants as well as adults—was right? but, whether the disciples, and all the Jews, *believed* it to be right? for the influence which it would exert over their minds is not to be measured by the absolute fitness or obligation of the practice, but by *their views* of its fitness and obligation.

The argument, then, is plain. “Suppose our Saviour had ordered the apostles to require the nations to keep the Jewish feasts. If he had meant that they should not keep the ‘feast of the dedication,’ (which had no divine institution, but yet, being become customary, was observed by all the Jews, and even by Christ himself,) as well as the passover, and the rest which had been commanded in the law, he would doubtless in that case have excepted that. And there is the same reason in the case before us,”* [to suppose that, if the baptism of infants was to be omitted by the apostles, this exception would have been expressly made in their commission, or elsewhere; otherwise, it being a universal practice among the Jews, in regard to proselytes,—a practice which they regarded as of divine authority,—it would have been retained by the apostles, and through them by the churches.]

We are not to interpret the language of Scripture according to the opinions and usages of *our own* times, but we are to go back to the ages in which the Bible was first delivered to men—search into the opinions and practices of those ages—form a just and natural estimate of the then existing opinions and prejudices, and of the force which they would naturally exert over the interpretation and use of language, and, in view of all these modifying circumstances, we must form our opinion of the meaning

* Wall's Hist., part i, *Introduction*.

of the laws and declarations of holy writ. The principle which I am endeavouring here to define is of fundamental importance in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and I feel authorized, from this consideration, to urge it upon the reader's most candid and mature consideration. I wish him to feel its importance to the present argument, as well as the justness and propriety with which it has been here employed. Vain and fallacious, indeed, must be that method of reasoning on this subject, which makes no account of the pre-existing opinions and prejudices of the apostles themselves, and of the Jews in general. With such a reckless and blind method of constructing theories, it becomes a hopeless undertaking to search for truth.

Long as I have detained the reader upon this particular point, and great as may be the hazard of incurring the charges of prolixity and repetition, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of closing these remarks with the following pertinent statements of Dr. Woods:—

“If, then,” says that author, “it had been the uniform custom of the Jews to baptize proselytes to their religion, as we certainly have much reason to think, it is clear that the baptism of proselytes by John and by Christ was no new thing. It is, at any rate, clear that baptism, *as a religious rite*, had been familiarly known among the Jews from the time of Moses. So that the rite which John the Baptist instituted was not by any means a new rite. The question put to him [John i, 25, ‘*Why baptizest thou then, if thou art not the Christ?*’] plainly implies that baptism was not regarded by the Jews at that time as a new rite. It was this rite, long used for ceremonial purification, and also in the case of proselytes to the Jewish religion, which John applied to those Jews who listened to his instructions, and gave signs of repentance. Afterward Christ ordained, that this same rite, which had thus been used among the Israelites for purification, and thus applied to converted Gentiles, and to Jews who repented under the preaching of John, should, from that time, be applied to all, in every part of the world, who embraced Christianity. The work of proselyting men to the true religion had before been carried on within [comparatively] narrow limits. It was now to be carried on extensively; and baptism, in the Christian form, was now to be administered to all prose-

lytes: 'Go ye, and proselyte all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' In judging of the true meaning and intent of this commission, the apostles would naturally consider in what manner baptism had been administered; and particularly its having been applied to *proselytes* and *their children*. This last circumstance, in addition to the other with which they were so familiar—namely, that of having children as well as parents consecrated to God by circumcision—must have had a direct and decisive influence upon the construction which the apostles put upon their commission, and must have led them to conclude that, under the Christian dispensation, *children* as well as parents were to be devoted to God by baptism, unless some contrary instruction was given to prevent such a conclusion. Knapp says, 'If Christ, in his command to baptize all, Matt. xxviii, had wished children to be excepted, he must have expressly said this. For, since the first disciples of Christ, as native Jews, knew no other way than for children to be introduced into the Israelitish church by circumcision, it was natural that they should extend this to baptism, if Christ did not expressly forbid it. Had he therefore wished that it should not be done, he would surely have said so in definite terms.'* But no such prohibitive terms are recorded; nor have we the least evidence to believe that the apostles ever received such instructions privately; for, as we shall hereafter show, both their subsequent practice, and that of the Christian church, combine to preclude such a supposition.

[3.] The New Testament affirms that relationship of infants to the church which implies their baptism. This is tantamount to asserting their right to baptism. Indeed, it is asserting it, not directly, but by implication. Certain things were predicated of infants anciently, which, when rightly understood, implied their baptism. This is the ground we here take.

1.) The first passage I shall cite under this head is that of Matt xix, 13-15: "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto

* Lectures on Infant Baptism, pp. 50, 51.

me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence." Mark says, (x, 16,) "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

In these passages are several facts stated, to which we will attend in their order.

I understand that those whom they brought to Christ were *infants*. Matthew and Mark both say, "They brought unto him *little children*." The text does not read, "They brought unto him *παιδας paidas, children, or youth*;" but the *diminutive*, *παιδια paidia, little children*, is used. Luke says, (xviii, 15,) "They brought unto him also *βρεφος brephos, infants*;" the same word is rendered *babe* in chap. i, 41, 44; ii, 12, 16; Acts vii, 19; and in a figurative sense, 1 Pet. ii, 2. I make these references that the English reader may see the meaning of the word. Indeed, the facts that they *brought* these children to Christ, (probably in their arms,) and that Christ "took them up in his arms" to bless them, sufficiently show that they were infants. I know not that this is denied.

Our Saviour affirms that infants compose the kingdom of heaven.

Two distinct and important points present themselves, in this place, for investigation. *First*. Does our Saviour intend to say that infants themselves belong to the kingdom of heaven, or only such as in moral dispositions resemble them? *Secondly*. What is intended in this place by "the kingdom of heaven?"

(a.) We deem it perfectly plain that Christ intended to be understood that infants themselves are the lawful members of the kingdom of heaven. We are confident that a plain, common-sense, unvitiated mind, that had no party interests to serve, nor party influence to bias his judgment, would never think of another interpretation of these very clear and comprehensible words. But such is the posture of this subject, that we should be deemed wanting in our argument did we not offer proof of this position.

1. Let the reader, then, consider that Christ was speaking to children directly. They were the exclusive *subject* of his remarks, not merely the *occasion* of them. What he affirms, therefore, he affirms of children. In Matt. xviii, 2, "Jesus called a *little child* unto him, and set him in the

midst," for the purpose of illustrating and inculcating the virtue of Christian *humility*. In that connection, therefore, as might be expected from the occasion, our Saviour; in the process of his discourse, speaks sometimes of little children *as such*, and sometimes of his true disciples as though they were little children; calling them μικρων τουτων *these little ones*, because in moral dispositions they resembled children. The whole discourse of our Saviour, in that connection, turned upon the declaration, "Except ye be converted, and become ὡς τα παιδια *hos ta paidia*, *as little children*," &c. The primary object of that occasion was to inculcate humility upon the disciples, by pointing out the *resemblance* between little children and true Christians. And yet, it is worthy of note, that Mark, in speaking of this occasion, (chap. ix, 37,) says, "Whosoever shall receive ἐν των τουτων παιδιων *one of such children* in my name," &c., evidently meaning *infants* as well as those adults who resemble them in moral dispositions; and Luke expressly says, speaking of the same occasion, (chap. ix, 48,) "Whosoever shall receive τουτου το παιδιου *this little child* in my name." Language could not be more explicit. These children were to be "*received*," as well as adults who resembled them, in Christ's name. But on the occasion before us, they brought little children unto Jesus, not for the purpose, primarily, of using them to inculcate any moral lessons upon others, but that *they themselves* might receive from Christ a blessing. It is true that in the parallel places of Mark x, 13, and Luke xviii, 15, our Saviour again institutes the comparison between little children and his true disciples, but this comparison was a secondary thought—an *accident*, and not the primary *object* of the occasion; and it was made *after* he had affirmed that children composed "the kingdom of heaven."

2. But suppose (which, however, we cannot admit) our Saviour did intend to say, not that children themselves were the subjects of the kingdom, but merely that those who were *like* to them in moral dispositions belonged to this kingdom. What has the objector gained by this supposition? Has he proved that children themselves are not subjects of this kingdom? By no means. Do away the doctrine that children belong to the kingdom of heaven,

and you destroy the ground of the comparison, and the beauty of the metaphor. For instance, if children are not the proper subjects of this kingdom, they must be regarded as *aliens*. But how can an adult become a fit subject of the kingdom of God, by an exact resemblance to persons who themselves are *aliens*? How could our Lord have said, "Except ye be converted and become as *these*, (*aliens*?) ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven?" If children themselves are not members of the kingdom, we see not how they could fitly represent those who are. Our Saviour, we apprehend, might have hit upon a happier metaphor.* It is true that he compares his true disciples sometimes to "doves" and to "*sheep*;" but never in the strong language of the text under consideration. He never said in reference to sheep, "Of *such* is the kingdom of heaven," nor did he ever command us to receive *such* "in his name."

3. But, furthermore, it must be considered that our Saviour adduces the membership of children as a reason why they should be brought to him. This is a most decisive proof that he here intends to affirm that children themselves belong to the kingdom of heaven. If they do not belong to Christ's kingdom—if our Lord only intended to say that certain persons who *resembled* children belonged to his kingdom—then, how could he make this a reason for urging the duty of bringing *little children themselves* to him to be blessed? The sequel shows that Christ took "*little children*" into his arms and blessed them; and he commanded the disciples to "suffer them to come unto him," alleging, as a reason, that "of *such* is the kingdom of heaven." But what propriety can there be in assigning such a reason for bringing little children to Christ, if the pronominal adjective "*such*" refer not to children themselves, but only to those who resemble them in moral dispositions? Take the true statement of this proposition, as our opponents would understand it. It is this: "Suffer little children to come unto me, because believing adults

* "Of such is the kingdom of heaven;" not of such only as were *like* these infants. For if *they themselves* were not fit to be subjects of that kingdom, how could *others* be so, because they were *like* them? Infants, therefore, are capable of being admitted into the church, and have a right thereto."—*Wesley's Works*, vol. vi, p. 18.

who resemble them in moral dispositions belong to the kingdom of heaven." Now, is there any sense at all in this mode of reasoning? If children themselves are not the subjects of the kingdom, our Lord might as well have applied the same phraseology to "*sheep*," and have said, "Suffer *sheep* to come unto me," because believers who resemble sheep in their innocency of temper "belong to the kingdom of heaven." In this passage, "the subject presented before the mind was, *the little children themselves*. They were brought to Christ for his blessing. Upon *them* the attention of all was fixed. To *them* the objection of the disciples related. And surely, what Christ said in the way of reply to that objection must have related to them."

4. To these considerations it is only necessary to add, that *τοιουτος* *toioutos*, rendered *such* in the text, and which is here to be taken in its literal sense, "properly denotes the *nature* or *quality* of the thing to which it is applied. 'Innuit qualitatem rei.'—*Schleusner*. 'Such, of this kind or sort.'—*Robinson's Wahl*."

Take a few examples of the use of this adjective:—

Matt. ix, 8, "And the multitude glorified God, who had given *τοιαντην* *toiauten* SUCH power unto men."

Mark iv, 33, "And with many *τοιαντας* *toiautais* SUCH parables spake he the word unto them."

Mark vi, 2, "That even *τοιανται* *toiautai* SUCH mighty works are wrought by his hands."

Luke ix, 9. Herod said, "But who is this of whom I hear *τοιαντα* *toiauta* SUCH things?"

Luke xiii, 2, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered *τοιαντα* *toiauta* SUCH things?"

John ix, 16, "How can a man that is a sinner do *τοιαντα* *toiauta* SUCH miracles?"

In 2 Cor. xii, 2, 3, this word is used to signify *this same*. Thus Paul says, "Such a one caught up," &c., that is, *this same* one caught up. "I knew *τοιουτου* *ανθρωπου* *such a man*;" that is, *this same man*. The literal and usual idea of this word is, *the same* things before spoken of, *and all like them*. For instance, Paul says, Rom. i, 32, "They which commit *τοιαντα* *such* things are worthy of death;" that is, those who commit *these*

same things that he has been enumerating, and *kindred* crimes, are worthy of death. So also chap. ii, 2, 3, *et alibi frequenter*. In the Septuagint version we find the same use of the term. So Jer. v, 9, "Shall not my soul be avenged on *εθνει τοιουτω* SUCH a nation?" that is, *this same nation and all like it*.

It is unnecessary to multiply citations under this head. The use of the adjective *τοιουτος* *toioutos*, *such*, is sufficiently obvious. It signifies literally, *the things before specified, and all like to them*. When used indefinitely, it signifies *all persons or things of the particular class mentioned, including those which are specified in the context*. Our Saviour says, "And many *τοιειτε* SUCH like things they do;" that is, they do the things before specified, and many others of the same class. Mark vii, 8; also verse 13. So in Gal. v, 23, "Against *such* there is no law;" that is, there is no law against such particular virtues as those specified, or any acts of this class. In Matt. xviii, 5, Jesus says, "Whosoever shall receive one *παιδιον τοιουτον* *paidion toiouton*, *such little child* in my name, receiveth me." Now, the question is, What is the sense of *such*? It has been supposed, as our Saviour intended on this occasion to illustrate the Christian character by the similitude of a little child which he "took and set in the midst of them," that *παιδιον paidion* (*a little child*) is used figuratively, to signify a true Christian—such a one as *resembles a little child* in moral dispositions. This is possible; and at any rate we do not here wish to controvert it. Suppose, then, our Saviour intended to say, "Whoso receiveth one *such disciple* in my name," the question remains unchanged. Who are included in the word *such*? The answer is obvious; namely, THE disciple specified, and *any or all like him*. Or, suppose *παιδιον* (*little child*) is used literally; the word *such* would then include THE *little child* specified, and *any or all like it*. So in Matt. xix, 14; where *παιδια* is unquestionably used in its literal and usual sense, to signify *little children, infants*; it says, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; *γαρ τοιουτων εσιν η βασιλεια των ουρανων* for of SUCH (*παιδιων* *little children* being understood) is the kingdom of heaven." Now here it is to be remembered, that it is an important rule of interpretation that no one word in any particular connection

shall take a more general meaning than the *whole* of the particular subject to which it alludes. What is the subject, then, exclusively under discussion in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses of this chapter? Plainly it is this: "Whether *children*, or *infants*, might with propriety be brought to Christ for his blessing?" Infants, as being the suitable subjects of the Saviour's benediction, were the exclusive subject of remark. Here was no metaphor—no figure of speech. The subject was plain, the occasion important, and words were used in their plain and literal sense. It is obvious, then, that *παιδιον paidion* must modify and restrict the sense of *τοιoutos*. If the former refer to *individuals* of a particular class, the latter must refer to *all* of that particular class; including, as a matter of course, the particular individuals specified. If our Saviour intended little children *literally*, when he said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," he must have alluded to *all* little children *literally*, and *as such*, when he says immediately after, and without giving the least intimation of having changed his subject, "of *such* is the kingdom of heaven." Without, therefore, detaining the reader longer on this point, we may safely conclude that, if we can comprehend the proper use and meaning of language, our Saviour affirms, in Matt. xix, 14, that little children belong to the kingdom of heaven, as its lawful and proper subjects.

(b.) What, then, is intended by "the kingdom of heaven?"

1. It is of great importance, both to our pending argument and to a right understanding of many parts of Scripture, that the reader should definitely comprehend this phrase. It may appear to be used, according to the general practice of the Hebrews, with some variety of signification, but no doubt can ultimately arise as to its entire definiteness, so far as the purposes of our argument are concerned. The language of Jewish theology is, for the most part, figurative, and is borrowed from those sensible objects which seem to impose themselves with the greater boldness and frequency upon the outward senses. From the days of the ancient prophets, the Jews were taught to contemplate the Messiah in the light of a "Prince," and his doctrines, precepts, and authority, in the light of a

regularly constituted government. The Psalms are often to be thus construed. Isaiah foretold that "the government should be upon his shoulders;" and Zechariah exclaims to the "daughter of Zion," "Behold, thy *King* cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation." Isa. ix, 6; Zech. ix, 9. But perhaps no prophet contributed more to the formation of these views among the Jews than Daniel; who, alluding to the very age in which Christ afterward appeared, and to the very circumstance of his mission, says, "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed," Dan. ii, 44. It was to this that the precursor, John, alluded, when he proclaimed, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

2. But this language is not a mere figure of speech; it is the faithful and literal representation of a sublime and glorious reality. The system of redemption is nothing else than a modification of the moral government of God—a special, mediatorial administration—introduced to meet the exigences, and suit the condition, of a rebellious portion of Jehovah's subjects. It was in reference to this special, remedial administration, that "all power was given unto Christ, in heaven and in earth." It is at the head of this administration that he, as Mediator, sits; and it is this authority that he is to exert, and in this kingdom that he must reign, "till he has put down all rule, and all authority and power. And then cometh the end, [of this mediatorial administration,] when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father," 1 Cor. xv, 24.

3. The question that directly concerns us is, What is the meaning of the phrase, "kingdom of heaven," in Matt. xix, 14? In the widest acceptation of this phrase, in the New Testament, I understand it to be synonymous with what I have above called the Mediatorial administration; that is, the provisions, promises, institutions, and laws, constituting the system of human redemption. If the reader will keep this in view, he will spare himself much perplexity on a very plain, comprehensible subject. But sometimes this "kingdom" is spoken of with reference to its Ruler, while at other times it is spoken of with reference to its subjects, or its laws, institutions, provisions, and spiritual privileges. Sometimes it is spoken of as the

system under which men receive grace on earth, and at other times as the medium by which they shall inherit glory and immortality in heaven. Sometimes it is connected with the forgiveness of sins, and at others, with the future and final judgment. Sometimes it is spoken of as being "preached," at other times as being enjoyed; and at others, as being "inherited." It is sometimes compared to a principle of spiritual life within the human heart, and at other times it is spoken of with reference to a community of holy persons, over whom is exercised, by Christ, paternal and kingly authority. These figures of speech, so common in Scripture style, by which a part is put for the whole, or the whole for a part—the subject for the predicate, or the predicate for the subject—will be readily comprehended by all those who have any acquaintance with the formation and structure of language, especially of the genius of Hebrew style.

4. In order to ascertain what is the meaning of the phrase in question, in the passage of Matt. xix, 14, let us first inquire, What is its most general and prevailing acceptation in the New Testament, and especially in the evangelical histories?

In most places in the New Testament where this phrase occurs, it takes a restricted sense; that is, it imports only a *part* of what properly belongs to, or constitutes, the kingdom of heaven. In most places, also, it is spoken of with reference to its effects upon the human heart and character; or as the system of grace and external means by which men are fitted, on earth, for the enjoyment and glory of God hereafter. In this sense it is often synonymous with our idea of *church*. Dr. Robinson says, "Our Saviour designates usually by the phrase, *kingdom of heaven*, the community of those who, united through his Spirit under him, as their Head, rejoice in the truth, and enjoy a holy and blissful life in communion with him."* The word "kingdom," where it means the "kingdom of God," or of "heaven," occurs, in the New Testament, about one hundred and seven times, without counting the parallel places in the Gospels, where it stands in the same connection. In ninety-two places it is clearly used to designate the gospel dispensation, with reference to its

* Robinson's Calmet, art. "*Kingdom of heaven*."

operations, effects, and the circumstances of its continuance among men in this world, including, of course, the idea of the visible church. In fifteen places it appears most probably to refer to the Mediatorial government, or gospel dispensation, with reference to the future destinies of men. It is difficult to assign any general significations to this phrase more definite than the above, which shall be, at the same time, correct. In each particular place where it occurs the discriminating reader will find no difficulty in determining its specific and distinct shade of meaning, without a full enumeration in this place. It is common to generalize the different acceptations of this phrase into "the kingdom of *grace*," and "the kingdom of *glory*;" but this division does not fully meet the case. For the benefit of the more inexperienced reader, I will subjoin a few passages illustrative of the prevailing New Testament use of this phrase.

Matt. iii, 2, "Repent, for *the kingdom of heaven* is at hand." In this place it refers to the gospel, with all its primary accompaniments of means and privileges, including church organization. The same also in chapters iv, 23; ix, 35; xxiv, 14.

Matt. v, 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is *the kingdom of heaven*." See also verse 10. Here, also, the idea of church is included. As if he had said, "All the privileges of my church, both spiritual and external, belong to such."

Verse 19, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in *the kingdom of heaven*;" that is, the least in the community of those who compose my kingdom—or my church.

Verse 20, "Except your righteousness shall exceed, &c., ye shall in no case enter into *the kingdom of heaven*;" that is, ye shall not be reckoned, on any account, as the true subjects of this kingdom. Ye shall not belong to my church, or be entitled to my grace and protection.

In all those passages where it speaks of persons *entering into the kingdom*, or of their *not entering* into the kingdom, or of their *being* in the kingdom of heaven, where the application is evidently to this life, the distinct idea of *church* is strongly marked and clearly set forth. I do not

say that the idea of church is *synonymous* with that of kingdom of heaven, but I say that the former is clearly and necessarily *included* in the latter. See Matt. xi, 11; xix, 24; xxi, 31; xxiii, 13; Mark ix, 47; x, 24; John iii, 5.

Matt. xvi, 19, "I will give to thee the keys of the *kingdom of heaven*." This certainly refers directly to ecclesiastical power and church organization.*

Matt. xxi, 43. Christ says to the Jews, "The *kingdom of God* shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." It is obvious that our Saviour did not here intend to threaten the Jews individually with a dereliction of the spiritual blessings of his kingdom, such as pardon, sanctification, and the hopes of eternal life; but only, as a nation, with the loss of their church organization—their ancient visible church privileges and character. It is easy to perceive, therefore, that the phrase, "*kingdom of heaven*," in this place, as in the last-quoted passage, is as nearly synonymous with "*church*" as two words can well be, and, beyond all question, the visible church is the prominent idea intended in both places.

In Heb. xii, 28, this "kingdom" is contrasted with the external character and privileges of the Mosaic dispensation, and most clearly includes the idea of *church*. But it is not necessary to extend this enumeration. What has been said is intended to aid the critical acumen of the unpractised observer. The point upon which we would fix attention is, that the phrase, *the kingdom of heaven*, wherever it applies to this life, if it be not synonymous

* "Then again, with respect to the 'keys of the kingdom of heaven,' which our Lord promised to give to Peter, the apostle could not, I conceive, doubt that he was fulfilling that promise to Peter and to the rest of them conjointly, when he 'appointed unto them a kingdom,' and when, on the day of Pentecost, he began the building of his church, and enabled them, with Peter as their leader and chief spokesman, to open a door to the entrance of about three thousand converts at once, who received daily accessions to their number. The apostles, and those commissioned by them, had the office of granting admission into the society from time to time, to such as they judged qualified. *And that this society, or church, was that 'kingdom of heaven' of which the keys were committed to them, and which they had before proclaimed as 'at hand,' THEY COULD NOT DOUBT.*"—Archbp. Whateley on "*the Kingdom of Christ*," pp. 78, 79.

with, evidently *includes* the idea of the *visible church*. I have taken the ground that where our Saviour affirms that infants compose the "kingdom of heaven," he affirms what is tantamount to their church membership; that is, he does, by these very words, distinctly and literally affirm their *eligibility*, or *right*, to church membership. This I regard as incontrovertible. For what is the meaning of visible church membership but a mere recognition, a public declaration, or a visible authentication of the fact, that such members possess a saving interest in the atonement, and enjoy the favour of God? And what is the grand object of the visible church but "to gather together in one [community] all things *in Christ*," whether Jews or Gentiles; and thus to erect a separate and distinct government in this sin-disordered world? Whoever, therefore, belongs to Christ, as a redeemed and justified person—whoever has received through the atonement the present forgiveness of sin, and acceptance with God—is a member of Christ's kingdom, and is, consequently, and by virtue hereof, eligible to visible church membership; for the visible church is, according to its original design, only the community of those who are the real subjects of the spiritual "kingdom of heaven," collected together, and designated by external ordinances. God intended, from the first issuing of the church charter in the covenant of Abraham, that all who were the subjects of saving grace should be thereby eligible to, and thereon admitted into, the visible church. It is true that all that are subjects of saving grace are not, as a matter of fact, "received into Christ's holy church, and made lively members of the same;" but this reflects only upon the delinquency of man, not upon the munificent provisions and designs of God.

This view, I am satisfied, is of sufficient weight of authority to decide this controversy. It is not of any *acts* of the mind, abstractly considered, that the New Testament predicates an eligibility to church membership. It is not, consequently, of repentance and faith, considered in themselves, which are acts of the mind, that the right to church membership is predicated. But it is of the *state* of the mind, or of the *moral man*, that this eligibility or right is affirmed. It is the purity of the moral man that is the groundwork of a fitness for church membership;

and this must ever be the fact, so long as the church of God on earth is an image of the family of glorified saints in heaven.

5. The reader, then, will readily comprehend our argument. The phrase, "*the kingdom of heaven,*" in its most usual acceptation, applies to the nature, operations, and the circumstances of the continuance of the gospel, among men on earth. It often alludes directly to, and always, when used with the above application, *includes* the idea of, *the visible church*. To affirm, therefore, that a person belongs to the kingdom of heaven, must import one of the following things: it must mean that such a one belongs to the visible church, as a matter of fact; or that he is a subject of grace and an heir of glory, and, *as such*, is entitled to church relations and character.* Either of these acceptations will sufficiently suit all the purposes of the pending argument. But we have strong reasons for understanding the phrase in question, in Matt. xix, 14, and parallel places, as alluding directly to the visible church. Our Saviour says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, *for of such is the kingdom of heaven*" [composed.] Some have rendered it, "*for to such the kingdom of heaven belongs;*" and have considered it a parallel to Matt. v, 3, 10, where *ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* is rendered, "*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;*" that is, "*the kingdom of heaven belongs to them*"—they have a right to all its privileges and blessings, whether external or spiritual. This makes a good sense, and is equally to our purpose, but we incline to the sense we have given above,—"*of such (that is, children) is the kingdom of heaven*" [composed.] Now,

* "By the 'kingdom of heaven,' in this passage, and the 'kingdom of God,' as it is expressed by Mark and Luke, we are probably to understand our Lord to mean his visible church. And by the phrases *little children, young children, and infants*, those who were literally such can alone be intended. But, if by the phrases, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven,' and 'of God,' we are to understand our Lord to mean, that infants are subjects of his grace and entitled to eternal salvation, which would be using the phrase in a higher sense; then, the lower sense is also included. For it would be absurd to suppose that our Lord would say infants are the subjects of holiness and heaven, but they are unfit to be admitted into my visible church on earth."—*Sermon on Baptism, by Rev. P. P. Sandford, p. 14.*

that our Saviour alludes directly to the visible church in this phrase I think will appear, if we take all the circumstances of the case into consideration. He uses the phrase, "kingdom of heaven," somewhat suited to current Jewish ideas, and with a view to meet and oppose the particular errors of the disciples; that is, to signify a *visible organization of government on earth*. The prevailing Jewish notions of Christ's kingdom were those of a *political* monarchy. They imagined the Messiah would be a secular prince, who would redeem his people from the Roman yoke, and erect a sovereign and independent government amid the nations of the earth. Such were the views of the disciples. It was the prevalence of these views that induced their occasional disputes about precedence—that prompted the doting "mother of Zebedee's children" to solicit beforehand a favourable preferment for her sons—and that spread the gloom of despair over the disciples when the Saviour had been laid in the tomb of Joseph. It was against these views that our Saviour's rebuke was directed, when he said, (Matt. xviii, 3,) "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." It was these secular views of the kingdom of Christ that prompted the disciples to repel those that "brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray." They probably deemed it incompatible with the character of a monarch, and with the sovereign dignity of Christ's person, to allow such familiarity on the part of the people, and such consideration to mere infants. They imagined that children had nothing to do with this kingdom. Their notions were high, and could not bend to take in the lowly maxims of the Saviour's policy. When, therefore, under these circumstances, the Saviour said that children belonged to, or composed the kingdom of heaven, he intended that visible kingdom that he was about to set up on earth, and of which the disciples entertained so unworthy and erroneous views, namely, the church. No other application of the phrase would have suited the circumstances of the case, for the disciples certainly understood *kingdom* in the sense of a *visible organization*. As if he had said, "*These little children, whom you would hinder from being brought to me for my blessing, are objects*

of my kindest regard. They, and such as they, stand in a near relation to my church. The kingdom which I am setting up is not to overlook them, but to embrace and cherish them. Peculiar favour was shown to children under the former dispensation; think not that less is to be shown them under my reign. Look not upon them, therefore, with feelings of indifference. Strive not to deprive them of my blessing. Suffer them to come unto me; for to such children the privileges of the gospel dispensation belong.*

(c.) But this passage, together with that of Matt. xviii, 5, may be seen to favour infant baptism from another view. There is a duty set forth in these places, and enjoined upon parents, guardians, and all who have the responsible, religious control of children, that cannot be fully performed but in dedicating them to God in baptism. Our Saviour commands adults to "suffer little children, and forbid them not to come to him;" that is, he commands them to *bring* little children to him. This command is broad and universal. It applies to all parents and guardians of children, in all ages of the world. This duty, moreover, is enjoined in behalf of infants *as such*, that is, *while they are yet infants*. It cannot refer, specifically, to the duty of parents to *educate* children: this may be a correlative duty, but not the primary one. But children must be brought and presented to Christ *in infancy*, or this command is not fulfilled. But how can they be brought to Christ, and be presented to him, except by an outward ordinance of consecration?—a *visible* presentation? The command evidently contemplates this. Christ says, "*Forbid* them not to come to me." Now, in whatever sense we are to understand the text as enjoining children to be brought to Christ, in that same sense, beyond all dispute, we are capable of *hindering* them. This, the word "*forbid*" clearly implies. But we are not capable of hindering children from participating in the spiritual blessings of Christ's kingdom. We cannot hinder the operations of grace upon them here, or their future salvation, if they die in infancy. We can only hinder them from *visible* covenant relations.

Furthermore: Christ has said, in Matt. xviii, 5, and the parallel places of Mark and Luke, that "whosoever receiveth one such little one *ἐπι τῷ ὀνόματι μου* *in my name*, re-

* Woods on Infant Baptism, p. 69.

ceiveth me," &c. Now, what is it to receive a person in Christ's name, but to receive him *on account, in behalf, and upon the authority*, of Christ himself? This is its meaning in the New Testament. But a person thus received must certainly be reckoned as belonging to the Christian family. This is not the language appropriate to aliens and to sinners; it belongs to the community of God's visible church. "The ordinary meaning of the word *receive*, in the books of the New Testament, even when it stands alone, is well known to all readers of Scripture to be *to receive or admit to a brotherhood, or fellowship in Christianity*; as, (to name one place in forty,) Rom. xv, 7, Paul commands those dissenters of opinion to *receive one another*.*

"But when Christ does, moreover, add here those words, *in my name*, it more plainly still imports that they should be received to be *as his members, his children, belonging to him*." And it is easy to perceive what influence these precepts and principles, laid down by the Saviour, must have had on the minds of the disciples, in construing and applying the powers of their commission afterward. Here, then, is a recognition of the principles involved in infant baptism; and, further than this, the then existing state of opinion did not require any teaching to extend, in order to secure its general practice.

I will close this section by the following from Dr. Wall, which is itself a "picture," and may convey a good idea to some.

"I wish some good man would be at the charge of an impression of a small picture, that might be given to such as need instruction and satisfaction concerning the will and purpose of our Saviour in this matter. The proverb is true, that pictures have with vulgar men the use of books; especially if they represent some useful history of the gospel, such as this which I am going to recommend, is, being recited by three evangelists, Matt. xviii, 5; Mark ix, 37; Luke ix, 48, our Saviour holding a little child in his arms, and saying to his disciples, *Whosoever shall receive this child* (in Matthew and Mark it is, *one such little child*, or, one of such children) *in my name, receiveth me*. If our Saviour be drawn in that posture, holding forth the child in his

* See also Acts xv, 4; Rom. xiv, 1; 2 Cor. vii, 2; Phil. ii, 29; 2 John 10; 3 John 8-10; and other places.

arms, and those words subscribed, *Whosoever shall receive such a child in my name, receiveth me*; and over against him be drawn two men standing by a font, both pretending to be ministers of Christ; and some people offering such a child to them; and one of them reaching out his arms to receive it, and the other thrusting it back: I would fain see what countenance the painter would give to that man, who, seeing our Saviour look upon him, and hearing him say those words, does dare to reject it.*

2.) The second passage which I shall cite under this head is that of 1 Cor. vii, 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

This is an important passage to our present argument. The ground we take in reference to it is, that it affirms that relation of infants to the church, which necessarily implies their right of baptism. Had not the children of Christian parents at Corinth been made subjects of baptism, they never could, with any propriety of language, have been called "*holy*," in the sense in which they were so called by the apostle. Baptism is not affirmed of them, in so many words, but it is asserted by necessary implication. Infants at Corinth were declared to be in a certain *state* in regard to the church: that state necessarily implied their baptism. This is the position we take. The highly contested state of the argument, as deduced from this text, renders it necessary to go into details of proof, that would otherwise be unnecessary.

(a.) We first notice the *occasion* and *scope* of the passage. The Corinthians had written to the apostle, making inquiries respecting several subjects that then agitated their church. In ver. 1, of this chapter, he says, "Now, concerning the things whereof ye *wrote* unto me," &c. He then proceeds to give directions relative to those several "things." One of these questions appears to have been this; namely, whether a believing husband, or wife, may continue to live in conjugal relation with an unbelieving partner, innocently, and without forfeiting church privileges? To this question the apostle replies, from the 10th to the 16th verse.

* Defence, &c., pp. 508, 509.

The uninformed reader will not fully appreciate the true character of this question, or the importance which it assumed in the Corinthian church, unless the nature and occasion of the controversy be fully explained. It was this:—The Jews regarded even the touch of a Gentile as unclean; and as producing such a legal defilement, as to unfit them for any of the solemn ceremonies of their religion.* It was, hence, unlawful for a Jew to company with them in any way. The Pharisees, who were the most rigid in their observance of the law of any of the Jewish sects, adding many superstitions to their religion, always lustrated themselves after having returned home from the market, or any public way, or thoroughfare, lest they should have contracted uncleanness, by having touched some unclean person or thing. They also frequently purified their household furniture. It was this kind of sanctity that led them to complain of Jesus for receiving “sinners and publicans,” and eating with them. It was this scrupulous state of opinion that caused Peter to hesitate, at first, to go with the messengers of Cornelius, they being Gentiles. The whole history of that transaction is a striking illustration of the power which these Jewish notions still held over the consciences of many Christian converts from Judaism.

From very ancient days God had warned his people against intermarriages with idolatrous and unbelieving nations. “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter shalt thou not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son;” and the reason for this prohibition is thus given,—“For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods.” Deut. vii, 3, 4; Exod. xxxiv, 15, 16. This was an important requisition, issued in order to secure the distinct preservation of the Hebrew people, as well as to preserve the purity of their religion. A remarkable instance is recorded in the book of Ezra, (chapters ix and x,) of an extensive breach of this command, when, after the return of the captives from Babylon, “the people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, did not separate themselves from the people of the land, but took of their daughters for themselves and for their sons; so that the holy seed

* Vide Dr. A. Clarke's Comment. on John xviii, 28.

mingled themselves with the people of those lands," chap. ix, 1, 2. The sequel shows that they were obliged to "put away" these heathen partners; although in some instances the dissolution of the marriage union occasioned not only a separation of husband and wife, but of parents and children. Chap. x, 44.

Such were the prevalent notions of the Jews relative to marriage, in the days of Paul. And as they had colonized themselves everywhere before the Christian era, so the apostles found them in all the cities of note, and countries where they travelled. Many of these Jews were converted to Christianity, and incorporated into the Christian church, bringing with them, frequently, their Jewish prejudices, and fomenting controversies among the Gentile converts, on many points of doctrine, which had their origin in the now obsolete forms of the Jewish ritual. Thus was it with the church at Corinth. Jewish controversies had been stirred up among the Jewish and Gentile converts,—the peace of the church had been disturbed by the introduction of these foreign, and now irrelevant, distinctions,—and an attempt had been made to bring back and apply the old law touching marriages, which Ezra had so signally enforced. The question was, Is it permitted, by the law of Christianity, for a Christian to live in marriage relations with an unconverted Gentile? They all very well knew that such a union between a Jew and Gentile was strictly prohibited by the law of Moses, and rigidly enforced by the administrators of that law. But was that law still in force? Were Christians to come under the same rule? Were these distinctions of *clean* and *unclean* to be still observed? These were important questions to the Christian church;—the controversy had spread at Corinth;—a formal appeal had been made to Paul, and the decision from his mouth was to be final.

And here I wish the reader to remark, that the question did not at all relate to the lawfulness of marriage, or the continuance of the marriage covenant, *in a civil sense*. It was a question to be settled by ecclesiastical, not by civil law. It arose purely out of the ancient ceremonial code of Moses, and not out of any condition or forms of society among the Gentiles respecting marriage. Dr. Reed has justly remarked, "If the dispute had been concerning the marriage

of these persons, [in a civil sense,] or the legitimacy of their children, the Corinthians would undoubtedly have applied to the office of the town clerk, or to the public records, for a solution of the question; and not to a Christian casuist, who resided in the remote city of Ephesus.”*

This, then, being the occasion of Paul’s discourse, it is easy to perceive that, unless we are willing to charge the apostle with reasoning most inconclusively, the scope of all his reasoning in that particular connection is to show that it is ceremonially right and proper, on Christian principles, for a believing husband, or wife, to dwell with an unbelieving partner. If, therefore, “any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. . . For the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband,” &c.

(b.) The next point to be ascertained is the meaning of the words *ἡγιασται* *hegiastai*, *ἀκαθάρτα* *akatharta*, and *ἅγια* *hagia*, in the fourteenth verse, and rendered respectively, *sanctified*, *unclean*, and *holy*.

If the reader will attend strictly to the occasion and scope of Paul’s reasoning, as above described, he will find no difficulty in fixing the sense and application of these terms. When we understand the *subject* of which an author is treating, no difficulty can occur in determining the sense in which he employs words, if he employ them according to their usual acceptation. To apply an author’s words so as to make them prove a sentiment which he had not at first intended, and for which he had not himself employed them, is to do him an injustice, that no honest expositor would knowingly do. When we undertake to represent the opinions of another, we assume an obligation, from common honesty and fairness, to use his own words as he used them, and to prove nothing more or less, or different, by them, than he himself intended. Let the reader remember, then, that the subject before the apostle’s mind was not one that related to civil law, or to civil relations, as such, but one which came solely under the cognizance of ecclesiastical law. It was wholly an ecclesias-

* Apology for Infant Baptism, p. 42. Dr. R. resided in New-England, where the town clerk is required, by law, to preserve a record of the marriages. We mention this merely as explaining how such an officer came to be mentioned by him in such a connection.

tical question. The words *sanctified*, *unclean*, and *holy*, therefore, are to be understood, not in a *civil*, or a *moral*, but in a *ceremonial* sense. In order to understand the import of these terms, in this connection, we must go back to Jewish usage, for the apostle uses these words here in their Levitical sense. It is true he was writing to a Christian church in Greece, and that he employed the Greek language, but the subject was one of Hebrew origin, and the terms were employed in strict conformity to Hebrew use. To this use alone, therefore, can we appeal. The question, then, is, What is the Hebrew use of these words?

As I do not consider that our English version gives the right turn to this passage, I shall first give the sense as I understand it, in a free paraphrase. "For the unbelieving husband is made ceremonially clean to the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is made ceremonially clean to the believing husband; so that it is now admissible and proper, according to Christian distinctions, that they should live together in conjugal relation, and not, as under the Mosaic law, be obliged to separate and break up the marriage union. Were it otherwise, that is, did not Christianity regard the unbelieving partner as ceremonially clean to the believing, it would follow that the Christian church would reckon the children of such a marriage among the *unclean*, that is, among those who are not in covenant with God; but the fact that the church regards all such children, as well as all those whose parents are *both* Christians, as holy—they having been baptized, and admitted among the covenanted people*—proves that their parents are reckoned as ceremonially clean to each other." In support of this sense, I adduce the following considerations:—

First. The language of the text allows it. The words *ἡγιασται . . . εν τη γυναικαι hegiastai en te gunaikai*, which we translate, *is sanctified to the wife*, are, to say no more, as susceptible of this turn of the sense, as of the one given in our English version. And so of the phrase, *ἡγιασται . . . εν τω ανδρι hegiastai en to andri*, *is sanctified to the husband*. Our common version says, the unbelieving party is sanctified "BY" the believing. But this certainly makes

* This "*holiness*" is, as we shall presently see, a baptismal holiness. See also p. 294, *note*.

no sense whatever. *How*, we ask, does the believing party sanctify the unbelieving? This is a question that can never be answered. The truth is, God himself, and he alone, sanctified the whole Gentile world at the opening of the Christian dispensation; that is, he abolished those distinctions of *clean* and *unclean*, as they applied to Jews and Gentiles formerly, and as they were now being applied, at Corinth, to believers and unbelievers.

If the reader will turn to the Acts of the Apostles, (chapters x and xi,) he will perceive, in the extraordinary vision of Peter, and in his own exposition of it subsequently, in what manner God was pleased to enlighten that apostle on this subject, and to deliver him from the force of his Jewish prejudices. Peter had doubts of the propriety of "going in to men uncircumcised, and eating with them," or even preaching the gospel to them. He called them "*common*," that is, "*unclean*." He thought it would defile him, unfit him for religious privileges and duties. But God informed him that he had sanctified the Gentile world,—Jewish distinctions were abolished,—it was lawful to have intercourse with Gentiles. "What, therefore, God hath *cleansed*, or *sanctified*, (*εκαθαρισε*,) call not thou *common*," that is, "*unclean*."

But what is the nature of this *sanctification*, or *cleansing* of the Gentile world? Certainly the sanctification of which we now speak gives to the Gentile, or unbeliever, no church privileges without personal holiness. The phraseology is strictly conformable to Jewish usage, and it is here employed in the lowest sense in which the word *sanctify* was used in their religious vocabulary. Yet so clearly defined, and so strongly marked are all the circumstances of the case, that of the real meaning of the term, in the above passage cited from the Acts, and in the place before us, there can be no doubt. *It merely extended so far as to sanction the external intercourse of Christians with unbelievers.* They might now dwell together in any of the natural or civil relations; as parents and children, as husbands and wives, as fellow-citizens, as neighbours, &c., without any detriment to church relations on the part of the believer, so long as his spirit and deportment accorded with the gospel. All the innocent relations of life, whether social or commercial, might now be enjoyed be-

tween the Jew and the Gentile—the believer and unbeliever.* And thus did Peter understand his vision; for afterward, when he stood before Cornelius and his Gentile friends, he says, evidently by way of explanation of so unusual an event, “Ye know how that it is unlawful for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man *common* or *unclean*.” Peter considered that this sanctification of the Gentiles extended so far only as to make it lawful to have company and intercourse with them. This is exactly the sense of the word *sanctify* in 1 Cor. vii, 14, “For the unbelieving husband is *sanctified* to the wife,” &c. The two parties may lawfully live together in this relation, though one be an unbeliever—the conjugal *oneness* is not now disturbed by the distinctions of *clean* and *unclean*, as they were formerly applied.

ἁγιασται *hegiastai* is a conjugated form of the verb ἁγιαζω *hagiazō*, which means *to separate, consecrate, sanctify, make holy, &c.* It answers, in the Old Testament, to the Hebrew קִדַּשׁ *kadash*, which, in the Piel conjugation, signifies *to make holy, to sanctify, to hallow, consecrate.*† Every person or thing among the Jews, devoted to religious use, was deemed sanctified.‡ Thus their priests, their altars, their temple, persons, sacred utensils, &c., were sanctified. But does this sense of ἁγιαζω *hagiazō* apply to the passage under consideration? Could it be said of the unbelieving husband, or wife, that he, or she, was in any sense devoted to religion? Was there any thing approaching the idea of a religious consecration?

* I hope the reader will form a just opinion of this subject. The distinctions of *clean* and *unclean* were at first purely artificial, and were established by the will of God, not in the nature of the things themselves. It is plain, therefore, that to *sanctify* these unclean things to the use of Christians, no positive change was required in the things themselves, but only that the *arbitrary prohibition* of the Lawgiver be taken off. This sanctification, then, was, after all, merely of a negative character. After the abrogation of the Levitical code, all things reverted back to their original character. It then could be said, “Nothing is unclean *of itself*;” “*All things are pure,*” Levitically; “*Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected.*”

† Gesen. Heb. Lex., art. קִדַּשׁ. Robinson's Gr. and Eng. Lexicon, art. ἁγιαζω.
‡ See Note D.

A learned friend suggested to me that he considered the clause, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified to (or by) the wife," &c., to mean, "that, by reason of the connection of the believing party with the church, the unbelieving partner was thereby placed more directly before the religious sympathies of the church—made more especially the subject of prayer and religious concern by them—and that they were obligated more directly to look after his spiritual welfare, than was the case in reference to the general mass of irreligious persons; and that in this sense—the sanctity of the believing partner operating to enhance the religious privileges and prospects of the unbelieving—the latter might be said to be sanctified, or in some sense brought under religious influence by the former."* I cannot feel, however, that this is satisfactory. It appears plausible, but does not meet the point of the apostle's argument, and seems, too, rather foreign and laboured.

The exact point to which the apostle was arguing is this, namely, Whether it is lawful, according to the distinctions of *clean* and *unclean* persons, established by the law of Moses, for a Christian and pagan to dwell together in marriage relations? The apostle decided that such a union was now lawful, in a ceremonial sense. To prove this position he needed only to show that Jewish distinctions touching the case were abolished; or, in other words, God had now sanctified the Gentile world—the unbeliever to the believer. Now, it is perfectly plain that the sanctification here spoken of extends no further than to authorize the continuance of an external relation, innocent in itself, between a believer and an unbeliever. The case was this: A pagan husband becomes converted to Christianity, while his wife remains an idolater. Judaizing teachers step in and say to him, "It is not lawful for you to live with her," and they appeal to the law of Moses, where a Jew is forbidden to live in marriage relations with a Gentile. The apostle comes in and says, "If she be pleased to dwell with you, put her not away, for God has abolished these Jewish distinctions, and has thereby sanctified the Gentile world, and, in doing this, has sanctified your unbelieving

* See also Dr. Woods on Infant Baptism, p. 88.

wife to you." Now, does not every one perceive that the nature and sum of this sanctification was no more, or less, or other, than a mere *sanction* of this external marriage relation?—a rendering it ceremonially lawful for them to live together, so that the church privileges of the believing partner should not thereby be impaired?

And such is often the meaning of the word *sanctify*, whether it is expressed by *ἁγιάζω* *hagiazō*, or *καθαρίζω* *katharizō*, or any word belonging to the same family. Thus:

1 Tim. iv, 5, "For it [the creature of God] *ἁγιάζεται* *hagiazetai*, is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer."

Certain men had arisen in the church, and commanded to abstain from certain meats, as being unclean. Verse 3. The apostle taught that God had made all things alike for man's good, and no creature of his was to be thus rejected, as possessing any innate or natural pollution, but all was to be received with thanksgiving. If, therefore, we received any of his creatures with thanksgiving and prayer, they were thereby sanctified to us; that is, it was made lawful for us to receive and use them. In 1 Cor. x, 23, where the apostle is speaking to the same point, instead of saying, "All things are *clean* to me," he says, "All things are *ἐξεστίν* *exestin*, lawful for me;" that is, I have a *right* to eat all meats. See verse 30, and chap. vi, 12. Those meats which were *unlawful* for a Jew to use were called *unclean*, the same idea being conveyed by both words. See also Titus i, 15; Rom. xiv, 14, 20. In Luke xi, 41, we are taught that by a proper use of the creatures of God all things become *pure* to us; that is, *lawful* for us to use.

This, then, we consider to be the sense of the word *sanctified* in 1 Cor. vii, 14. The unbelieving partner is made *ceremonially lawful* to the believing, so far as the conjugal relation extends.

We next inquire into the meaning of the words *ακαθάρτα* *akatharta*, and *ἅγιος* *hagios*, rendered *unclean*, and *holy*. The question here is, What is the force of these words in the sentence, "Else were your children *unclean*; but now are they *holy*?" What state or condition is described, or alluded to, by the word *unclean*? and what by the word *holy*?

We have already proved, we trust, to the satisfaction of the reader, that the word *sanctified*, in the former part of this verse, is limited by the subject to signify *rendered lawful*. This, also, we have seen, is a common use of this and similar words. We have seen that it does not refer to any church relations conferred in virtue of the faith of the believing party. But I consider the terms *unclean* and *holy* to bear a higher signification than the word *sanctified* in the same verse. I consider these words to refer directly to church distinctions, and I cannot, perhaps, render the sense of the passage more obvious to the reader than by the following: "Else were your children *pagans*; but now are they [reckoned] *holy seed*." I wish the reader to bear in mind that we offer no violence to the text, according to the general use of words, in giving it this turn. Nay, as we shall soon see, it is (we apprehend) the only sense the passage will bear. It is true that the general senses of *ἁγιαζω* *hagiazō* and *ἅγιος* *hagios* are alike, and that *ἀκαθάρτος* *akathartos* is the counter sense of the two. But this is far from proving that their significations are alike in any given connection. It is by no means an uncommon thing to find the same word occurring in different senses in different connections; but here are two words—an adjective, and a verb derived therefrom—and surely it would not be strange to find them occur in somewhat different senses in the same verse. The apostle affirms that certain unbelievers are *sanctified*, and that certain children are *holy*, and this he affirms in the same verse. But does it therefore follow that the sanctification and holiness spoken of are *one and the same*, as to character and degree? The sanctification of the unbeliever may answer one end, while the holiness of the children may refer wholly to another. And this is just the state of the case. The holiness of the children was of a higher order, a more advanced degree, than that of the unbeliever, and described a state, in reference to ecclesiastical privileges, far different from his.* This

* One of the continuators of Poole's Annotations says, with reference to the *sanctification* of the unbelieving party, "I rather think it signifies, *brought into such a state, that the believer, without offence to the law of God, may continue in a marriage state with such a yoke-fellow*." This I consider to be exactly the sense of the apostle.

accords with the general *usus* of these terms in Scripture. Almost every thing pertaining to Jewish affairs was deemed holy, but the holiness of their priests was certainly of a higher order than that of their land, their chief city, and the mountains around, although the same term was employed to describe each.

Besides, the particular subject, and scope of the argument, in 1 Cor. vii, 14, make it incumbent on us to adopt such a distinction. The holiness of the children is alluded to as a well-known and accredited fact; and it is appealed to as an argument in proof of the sanctification of the unbelieving parent, and the consequent lawfulness of the continued union of the parties. But if the holiness of the children was of the same nature and degree of the sanctification of the unbelieving parent, and merely flowed from and depended wholly on the disputed fact of such sanctification, it could never, with any reasonableness, have been made an argument to *prove* that sanctification.

“The general notion of being *sanctified* is first applied to an unconverted heathen, connected in marriage with a Christian; and it is applied in reference to a particular question, that is, whether it is proper and advisable that a Christian should continue to live with an unbelieving

With reference to the holiness of the children, the same commentator says, “These are those that are called *holy*, not as inwardly renewed and sanctified, but relatively, in the same sense that all the Jewish nation were called a *holy people*; and possibly this may give us a further light to understand the term *sanctified*, in the former part of the verse. The unbelieving husband is so far sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife so far sanctified by the believing husband, that, as they may lawfully continue in their married relation, and live together as man and wife, so the issue coming from them both shall be by God counted in covenant with him, and have a right to baptism, (which is one of the seals of that covenant,) as well as those children both whose parents are believers.”—Vide *Poole's Annot., in loc.*

This is exactly the difference between the words *sanctified*, as applied to the unbelieving partner, and *holy*, as applied to the children, which we intend. This we understand to be the real force of the passage. But we do not concur with the author just quoted, in representing children as being *born* in covenant with God, and, by virtue hereof, entitled to baptism. We believe they are in covenant *when* they are baptized; and their right to baptism is not derived by virtue of *natural descent*, but is predicated of their *gracious state*. On this point there appears to be some confusion with some writers.

partner. Now, when the apostle says, in relation to this question, 'The unbelieving husband is *sanctified* by [to] the wife,' it is natural to understand him of a sanctification adapted to the subject under consideration.* Such a sanctification, as we have seen, was but a negative one—the mere abolishment of Jewish distinctions—the absence of any Levitical or ceremonial prohibition to the union of the parties. But would it have been any proof of this fact to assert that their children were in the same state? All parties very well knew that if the parents were Levitically clean to each other, the children would be so of course. But the question was, Are the parents thus clean, when one is an unbeliever? The apostle affirms that they were, and, as proof, cites the well-known and established fact of the holiness of their children. Yet this would be no better than proving a thing by itself, if the holiness of the children were in no wise different from the sanctification of the unbelieving parent.

But let us more directly inquire into the meaning of the words *unclean* and *holy*. *Ακαθαρος unclean*, according to Schleusner, signifies *that which is prohibited by the Mosaic law, or from which the people of God were required to separate themselves*. He represents it as often used to denote *a pagan, an alien from the worship of the true God, or one who does not belong to the people of God, or to the society of Christians*. It is this last sense we attach to the word in the passage in question; namely, *pagan, alien from the worship of God, &c.* So, also, Dr. Robinson says the word is "*spoken of persons who are not Jews, or who do not belong to the Christian community,*"† and cites this very passage, among others, in proof. Groves defines it thus: *Impure, unclean, defiled, unfit for receiving the rites of religion.*‡

In Acts x, 14, 28, *ακαθαρος akathartos* is used to designate *a Gentile*, or "*a man of another nation*" besides the Jews. Thus is it elsewhere used. So Isa. lii, 1, "For henceforth there shall no more come to thee [Jerusalem] the uncircumcised and the *unclean* [אַבְרָם *ακαθαρος*.] Here the words *unclean* and *uncircumcised* are perfectly

* Woods on Infant Baptism, p. 93.

† Greek and English Lexicon.

‡ Ibid.

synonymous, and apply to one and the same description of persons, namely, all who were not Jews—all who were not in covenant with God. So, also, an *unclean*, or *polluted* land, is a land inhabited by pagans, or idolaters. Thus, Amos vii, 17, “And thou [Israel] shalt die in a *polluted*, or *unclean* land.” [אֶרֶץ אִכְאָרִים *akathartos*.] This “polluted land” was Assyria. It was in contradistinction from all such idolatrous, or pagan countries, that Canaan was called the “holy land.” When Paul warned the Corinthians to have no religious intercourse and fellowship with “idolaters,” “infidels,” and such-like persons, who were enemies of God and aliens from the true kingdom, he says, “Touch not the *ακαθαρτου ακαθαρτου*, *unclean* person,” 2 Cor. vi, 17. Our English version reads “*things* ;” but this is unquestionably an error. The apostle was not speaking of *things*, but of *persons* with whom it was not lawful for a Christian to hold any religious fellowship, and he denominates them *unclean*, using the same word that is used in 1 Cor. vii, 14.

It is plain, therefore, that when the apostle says, “Else were your children *unclean*,” it is in perfect accordance with the *usus loquendi* to understand him to say, “Else were your children *pagans—without the covenant*.” This sense, the advance in his argument, and the nature of his subject, require us to understand.

We are confirmed in this sense, further, by the force of the next clause, “Now are they *holy*.” *ἅγιος* *holy* is here used in contrast with *ακαθαρτος* *unclean*. A *holy* person, in the language of the text, is the exact opposite of an *unclean* person, and *vice versa*. If an *unclean* person is the same as a *heathen*, the *holy* person is a *Christian*. We have seen that the word *sanctified*, as applied to an unbeliever, in the former part of the verse, is restricted in its sense by the nature of the subject, to signify merely the abolishment of Jewish ceremonial distinctions, with regard to clean and *unclean* persons, so as to render it now lawful for a believer and unbeliever to dwell together in marriage union, or in any other relation innocent in itself. This is perfectly plain. But the nature of the subject does not bind us to fix the same limited construction on the term *holy* in the concluding part of the passage, and we appeal to the natural force of the apostle’s argu-

ment, and the general Scriptural use of the term, in support of the sense above given. I will give the reader some examples of the use of this word in Scripture:—

Matt. xxvii, 52, “And many bodies of the *ἀγίων* *hagion*, *saints* that slept, arose.”

Acts ix, 13, “Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, (Saul,) how much evil he hath done to thy *ἀγίοις* *hagiois*, *saints* at Jerusalem.” See, also, chap. xxvi, 10.

Acts ix, 32, “Peter came down also to the *ἀγίους* *hagious*, *saints* that dwelt at Lydda.”

Verse 41, “And when he had called the *ἀγίους* *saints* and widows, he presented her alive.”

Rom. i, 7, Grace “to all that be in Rome . . . called to be *ἀγίοις* *hagiois*, *saints*.”

Rom. xv, 25, “But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the *ἀγίους* *saints*.”

Verse 26, “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia . . . to make a contribution for the poor *ἀγίων* *saints* at Jerusalem.” See also verse 31.

Rom. xvi, 2, “That ye receive her (Phebe) in the Lord as becometh *ἀγίων* *saints*,” (that is, *Christians*.)

Verse 15, “Salute . . . all the *ἀγίους* *saints*,” &c.

1 Cor. i, 2, “— to them that are . . . called to be *ἀγίοις* *saints*,” (that is, *Christians*.)

Chap. vi, 1, “Dare any of you . . . go to law before the unjust, and not before the *ἀγίων* *saints*?” (that is, *Christians*, *the members of the church*.)

Chap. xiv, 33, “God is the author of peace, as in all the churches of the *ἀγίων* *saints*,” (*Christians*.)

Chap. xvi, 1, “Now concerning the collection for the *ἀγίους* *saints*,” (that is, *Christians*, *church members*, who are poor.) See also ver. 15; 2 Cor. i, 1; viii, 4; ix, 1, 12.

2 Cor. xiii, 13, “All the *ἀγίοι* *saints* (*Christians*) salute you.”

Besides these passages cited, the word occurs, where it is translated *saints*, about forty-one times in the New Testament; the signification in all these places being substantially the same. Here, also, I wish the reader to understand and appreciate the corroborating testimony drawn from the use of the corresponding Hebrew words. I have before mentioned that, although the apostles spoke for the

most part, and wrote wholly in the foreign Greek dialect, still they were Hebrews; educated in the Jewish religion and customs, and accustomed to think and to speak according to the Hebrew idiom. Hence, they sought out and employed those Greek words that more fitly conveyed Hebrew ideas; and hence we often are obliged to resort to the use of certain Hebrew words that were used to express the same idea, in order fully to establish the sense of the New Testament language. 'Αγιος *hagios*, (*holy*;) says Dr. Robinson, "is used everywhere, in the Septuagint, for קֹדֶשׁ *kodesh* and קָדוֹשׁ *kadosh*. Hence, the ground idea is *pure, clean*."* Take a few examples.

Exod. xix, 6, "Ye shall be to me a *holy* nation;" (קָדוֹשׁ *áγιον*;) that is, *a nation of saints, a consecrated nation*.

Exod. xxii, 31, "And ye shall be *holy* men unto me;" (קֹדֶשׁ *áγιος*;) that is, *Ye shall be saints, consecrated men*. See, also, Lev. xi, 44, 45; Num. xvi, 3; *et alibi*.

The Israelites were declared a *holy people*, not because they were all morally holy; far from it; but because, by profession, they belonged to God, who had separated them from all other nations, and sanctified them unto himself by external rites; because they professed the true religion, which many among them really attained in an illustrious degree; and because "to them were committed the oracles of God," "the covenant," "and the giving of the law and the promises." They ever regarded themselves as holy. Thus they called themselves, as in Ezra ix, 2, "the *holy* seed (קֹדֶשׁ *áγιον*) have mingled themselves with the people of those lands." So, also, Daniel calls them, chap. viii, 24, and xii, 7.

I do not wish needlessly to multiply examples of the use of these words, but I knew not how to lay before the more uninformed reader a just view of the argument, without furnishing at least those above adduced. Nothing can be more plain, as appears from the examples adduced, and from the general face of Scripture usage, that *άγιος hagios*, and its corresponding Hebrew קֹדֶשׁ *kodesh* and קָדוֹשׁ *kadosh*, when used substantively, signify, *a worshipper of God; a*

* Greek and English Lexicon, art. 'Αγιος.

person set apart, or devoted to religion, either by spiritual sanctification, or by external ordinances; a person who belongs to the community of the true worshippers of God, as distinguished from an idolater, or an irreligious person; a member of the church of God; a saint; a Christian. 'Αγίος *hagios*, then, is frequently used in the New Testament in a sense exactly synonymous with *church member*, as every person knows who has examined the subject, and it is a word which is never applied to an unbaptized or uncircumcised person. It is in this sense that I conceive it to be used in 1 Cor. vii, 14. When, in that passage, children are declared to be *ἅγια ἁγία*, they are declared to be in that state which is exactly contrary to paganism, or Gentilism. But what is that state which is exactly opposite to Gentilism? It is *Christian church membership*. The *unclean* person was an alien from the law and the covenant,—a Gentile. The Jews were called *the holy, the clean*; and after them the Christians were also called *the holy, the clean, or the saints*. The members of the Christian church were the *saints*, and the *saints* were the members of the Christian church. When, therefore, Paul affirms that those children who had one parent a believer and the other an unbeliever were not "*unclean*," but *ἅγια saints*, he is unquestionably to be understood as affirming that they were not mere Gentiles,—aliens from the covenant,—“but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” All the parts of the apostle’s argument conspire to establish this meaning; and the antithesis employed and indicated in the word *ἀκαθαρτος akathartos* (*unclean*) demands it, for the contrast here is between a *pagan* and a *Christian*;—“Else were your children *pagans*; but now are they *Christians*”—devoted to God by a Christian rite. When it is said in Luke ii, 23, every first-born male child “shall be called *ἅγιον τῷ Κυρίῳ* *holy, or consecrated to the Lord*,” the meaning of this *holiness, or consecration*, was, that the child was to be devoted to God in the most absolute sense, requiring redemption in order to entitle the parents to resume it, even for protection, support, and education. And although this consecration was of a peculiar kind, evidently higher than the ordinary idea of church membership, still, it illustrates the force of which the word in question is capable, even when

used in a Levitical sense. When the apostle says, "the unbelieving husband is *sanctified* to the wife," he intends only that degree of sanctity that renders it ceremonially lawful for her to live with him; but when he says, "your children are *holy, sanctified, or consecrated*," he means that they belong to the Christian community, and if he does not affirm their baptism directly, he affirms their relation to the church, which implies the *fact* of their baptism;—he recognises, by necessary implication, both the principle and the fact of infant baptism. He says exactly what we might suppose him to say, on the supposition of the universal practice of infant baptism. Every Jew would have understood him as affirming the church membership of infants. He says of the children of Christian parents just what the Jews would have said of their own children, when they would express their covenant, or church relation—he says they are *holy*. It was, to their minds, an explicit declaration of church relation, in contradistinction from the Gentile, or heathenish state; and, I need hardly add, that precisely as the Corinthian disputants, in this Jewish controversy, must have understood these words, in the same manner must we now understand and apply them.

(c.) On the whole, upon reviewing this argument, I cannot but deem it decisive. I have endeavoured to lay before the reader all those facts which are necessary to aid him in forming his judgment of the passage; and if I have seemed to be prolix, I can only urge in my defence the highly contested state in which the text in question is found.* I crave for this argument a most patient and critical attention, convinced, as I am, that it has never been wrested from its powerful, and, I repeat it, decisive bearing in favour of Pedobaptism. But much as has already been said, I should deem the argument deprived of some of its force, did I omit to call the reader's special attention to two things:—

First. The question in the Corinthian church respected the lawfulness of the conjugal relation between a believer and an unbeliever; and one simple circumstance that speaks a volume to our purpose is this: namely, that the apostle, in deciding that the children of such parents were

* See Note E.

ἀγία Christians, plainly intimates that where *both* parents were believers, the children, as a matter of course, were *ἀγία Christians*. I find this argument stated with so much clearness and force by Dr. J. M. Mason, that I am persuaded the reader will be gratified with an excerpt from that author in this place. "The passage thus explained," says he, "establishes the church membership of infants in another form. For it assumes the principle, that when both parents are reputed believers, their children belong to the church of God* as a matter of course. The whole difficulty proposed by the Corinthians to Paul grows out of this principle. Had he taught, or they understood, that no children, be their parents believers or unbelievers, are to be accounted members of the church, the difficulty could not have existed. For if the faith of both parents could not confer upon the child the privilege of membership, the faith of only one of them certainly could not. The point was decided. It would have been mere impertinence to tease the apostle with queries which carried their own answers along with them. But on the supposition that when both parents were members, their children were also members; the difficulty is very natural and serious. 'I see,' would a Christian convert exclaim, 'I see the children of my Christian neighbours owned as members of the church of God; and I see the children of others, who are unbelievers, rejected with themselves. I believe in Christ myself, but my husband, my wife, believes not. What is to become of my children? Are they to be admitted with myself? or are they to be cast off with my [unbelieving] partner?'"

"'Let not your heart be troubled,' replies the apostle, 'God reckons them to the believing, not to the unbelieving parent. It is enough that they are yours. The infidelity of your partner shall never frustrate their interest in the covenant of your God.'

"This decision put the subject at rest. And it lets us know that one of the reasons, if not the chief reason, of the doubt, whether a married person should continue, after conversion, in the conjugal society of an infidel partner, arose from a fear lest such continuance should exclude

* I shall hereafter explain the relation of infants to the church. The *fact* is all that concerns us now.

the children from the church of God. Otherwise it is hard to comprehend why the apostle should dissuade them from separating by such an argument as he has employed in the text. And it is utterly inconceivable how such a doubt could have entered their minds, had not the membership of infants, born of believing parents, been undisputed, and esteemed a high privilege,—so high a privilege, that the apprehension of losing it made conscientious parents at a stand whether they ought not rather to break the ties of wedlock, by withdrawing from an unbelieving husband or wife. Thus the origin of this difficulty on the one hand, and the solution of it on the other, concur in establishing our doctrine, that by the appointment of God himself, the infants of believing parents are born [ceremonially clean, and have a right to be admitted as] members of his church.”*

Secondly. The simple circumstance that Paul cites the relation of infants to the church in proof of another subject, and one, too, of such grave importance as to involve the perpetual union of husband and wife, and the good order of families, clearly proves that the membership of infants was a point which was not only believed, but it was *universally* believed; *there was no difference of opinion, or dispute concerning it, in the Christian church.* The force of this argument I wish the reader to feel. In proving any doubtful point, the only rational method to be pursued is to advance facts, or deductions from principles which are themselves established and undisputed, and which have a relation to the point to be proved. No satisfaction could ever be realized—no approach to truth and certainty could ever be made—by advancing one disputed point to prove or establish another. In a court of justice the witnesses are called upon to state what they do *know*—what is, with them, clear and undisputed, that has a relation to the question pending. In reasoning, no argument can be deemed valid, or as entitled to any importance whatever, unless it be itself drawn from facts and principles well established, and which have a relation to the point at issue. We cannot, by the mere accumulation of doubtful or dis-

* Essays on the Church of God. *Christian Magazine*, ii, 49, 50, quoted by Dr. S. Miller; *Infant Baptism*, pp. 20, 21. See chap. vii. of this work.

puted arguments, add any weight of certainty to the doctrine which we would establish by them. To advance one disputed fact to establish another, is but to shift the ground of the difficulty, not to diminish it. If the testimony itself can be overthrown, it proves nothing. All the proof that arises from any given fact, in any given case, is based on the single circumstance that the fact itself is unquestioned by the parties who are to be the judges; remembering, of course, that it must have a proper relation to the point at issue.

Now, suppose infant baptism and membership had been disputed topics in the early Christian church. Suppose, when Paul declared, "your children are not unclean, but holy"—the precise phraseology which a Jew would employ to assert their membership—that, by this announcement, he had touched a disputed point among the Corinthians. And suppose he had advanced (as he certainly does) the fact that these children were thus clean, or *holy*, (by which the Jewish disciples would understand that they were the covenanted seed, the lawful members of the church,) to prove another point; I ask, Would the argument have had any weight whatever? If they had doubted that children themselves belonged to the Christian community, they certainly could not have received the assertion that they did thus belong, as proof of any other disputed point. They might very properly have said to the apostle, "True, your reasoning is very plausible and forcible to those who admit your premises. We readily grant that IF children of believing parents, or those who have one parent a believer and the other an unbeliever, do really belong to the Christian community, *then*, it must follow that the unbelieving parent was considered as ceremonially clean; but this reasoning takes for granted a disputed and unsettled point. We deny that children are members of the Christian community. And as your whole argument is built upon this mooted point—as it assumes for an axiom that which itself wants proof, at least in our estimation—it can, of course, with us, have no force whatever." But did the Corinthians make any such reply to the reasoning of the apostle? Would Paul have advanced such reasoning had he known that such a reply could have been made? Certainly not. We therefore say, that the manner

of alluding to infant, ceremonial holiness, that is, infant church membership, proves, even more clearly than a direct assertion, that infants were universally regarded by the church as belonging to the Christian community. It proves that their eligibility to baptism was not only believed, but regarded as an established axiom. Had the apostle said, "Your children should all be baptized," it might have implied that some doubted, and neglected the duty. But when he advances the fact of their relation to the church, which necessarily implies their baptism, and uses this fact as the basis of an important argument, it proves that there was no doubt or disputation on the subject,—that it was a settled point of faith, an established axiom in theology.

[4.] The right of infants to baptism is recognised in those words of the apostle, recorded Acts ii, 38, 39:—
 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

In eliciting the force of the argument, from this passage, we call attention to the following particulars:—

1.) The "promise" here spoken of, refers to Gen. xvii, 7:—"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." That the reference is to this passage, appears evident, if we consider, first, the exact similarity of expression between them. The promise made to Abraham says, "*to thee, and to thy seed:*" the promise quoted by Peter says, "*to you, and to your children.*" Secondly, it better suits the analogy of the case, to refer Peter's words directly to those quoted in Genesis. Peter connects the promise with the duty and privilege of submitting to the initiating rite—baptism: the promise of Gen. xvii, 7, also stands connected with the same privilege and duty in reference to the initiatory rite of that dispensation—circumcision. In both cases the subjects of the promise were to be brought into church fellowship by virtue of its provisions and efficacy. Thirdly, the promise here spoken of

includes the blessings of pardon and reconciliation. It regards man as a sinner, and brings him within the provisions of mercy, and the reach of hope. This, primarily, can refer only to the Abrahamic promise:—"I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." The promise of Joel ii, 28, 29, refers to a more mature and perfect development of the system of human redemption; not to the elemental principles of that system, as repentance, pardon, &c. But Peter exhorts to repentance, and encourages the hope of pardon, by virtue of the "promise" of God to which he alludes. It should be considered, moreover, that the promise of Joel is itself based upon the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant, and is one and identical with the promise of that covenant, with this distinction, that the Abrahamic promise included all spiritual blessings—"I will be a God to thee and to thy seed"—while Joel speaks distinctively of the gospel days,—the more glorious period of the covenant. After all, whether the "promise" spoken of by Peter allude to the promise of Joel ii, 28, or to that of Gen. xvii, 7, is not of essential importance to our argument; for, as we shall presently show, whatever may be the original character of this promise, it forms, most unquestionably, the ground of right and obligation to baptism, with respect to all those persons to whom it constitutionally applies.

2.) How would a Jew understand the phrase, "to you and to your children."

To know this, we must first ascertain the meaning of the word *τεκνα tekna*, children. I see no ground of dispute on this point. The *usus loquendi* sheds a perfectly clear and unequivocal light. *Τεκνον teknon* means a child, whether male or female. It sometimes answers to the Hebrew *בן ben*, as, in the plural form, in Gen. iii, 16, "God said to the woman...in sorrow shalt thou bring forth *בָּנִים banim*, *τεκνα tekna*, children." This is the proper meaning of *τεκνα tekna*; but it has also a wider sense, and is used Hebraistically for *descendants*, *posterity*, without any determinate reference to age. But the primary meaning of *τεκνον* is a child; and this is indicated by its etymology, being derived from *τικτω tikto*, to bring forth. So, also, *σπερμα sperma* literally means *seed*, as being

sown, or scattered. But *tropically* it signifies *children, offspring*. It answers to the Hebrew זֶרַע *zera*. Now, the case is this:—The primary meaning of τέκνα *tekna* is *children*; and a primary figurative sense of σπέρμα *sperma* is also *children*. But both words are also sometimes used in a wider sense, to signify *posterity, descendants*, and in a sense which sometimes shows that *adult* descendants are intended, as well as infants. How then can the force of either of these words be determined in any given passage? How can we determine, in any one instance where either of these words occurs, which of the two senses it is to take; that of *posterity*, in its broad application, or that of *children*, in its more restricted meaning? The answer is plain;—*the sense of the particular passage must decide*. For instance, it must be ascertained what is *affirmed* or *denied* of the τέκνα *tekna* or of the σπέρμα *sperma* in the text. If any thing is affirmed of them that does necessarily belong, or may with perfect propriety be ascribed to *children*, and which cannot be properly ascribed to adults, then the word in question may be known to be there used in its literal or more restricted form, to signify *children*. But if the thing affirmed do properly belong to *adults* as well as children, then the word may be understood in its larger application, as denoting *posterity* in general. Now, in the passage before us it is said, “the promise is unto you, and to your τέκνα *children*.” The question is, Does τέκνα mean children proper, or only posterity in general? To determine this, we ask, Is any thing affirmed of the τέκνα *tekna* in the text that is inapplicable to children proper? The answer is certainly in the negative. There is nothing absurd, or unsuitable, in the supposition that children should be made the subjects of a spiritual promise,—in other words, that they should be made the subjects of divine grace. Then, it follows that τέκνα *tekna* may be understood in its literal and more simple acceptation, as denoting *children* proper, although the more general idea of posterity is not excluded.

This is the more probable, because, in Gen. xvii, 7, where Jehovah promises to “be a God unto Abraham, and to his *seed*,” (זֶרַע σπέρματος,) the Jews understood the promise as applying to themselves and their *infant chil-*

dren; and hence, also, the *token* of this covenant—circumcision—was applied to their infant children, as indicating their right to the promise. Every Jew, therefore, would unquestionably understand the words of the apostle Peter as applying to himself and his infant offspring. “The Jews had been accustomed for many hundred years to receive infants by circumcision into the church; and this they did, as before observed, because God had promised to ‘be a God to Abraham and to his seed.’ They had understood this promise to mean parents, and their infant offspring; and this idea was become familiar by the practice of many centuries. What, then, must have been their views, when one of their own community [countrymen] says to them, ‘The promise is unto you, and to your children?’ If the practice of receiving infants [into the church] was founded on a promise exactly similar, as it certainly was, how could they possibly understand him but as meaning the same thing, since he himself used the same mode of speech? This must have been the case, unless we admit this absurdity, namely, that they understood him in a sense to which they had never been accustomed. . . . Certainly all men, when acting freely, will understand words in that way which is most familiar to them; and nothing could be more familiar to the Jews, than to understand such a speech as Peter’s to mean adults and infants. So that if the Jews, the awakened Jews, had apprehended the apostle to mean only adults when he said, ‘to you and your children,’ they must have had an understanding of such a peculiar construction, as to make that sense of a word, which to them was totally unnatural and forced, [and, we may add, altogether unheard of in such a peculiar connection,] to become [all at once] familiar and easy.”*

But if we take *τεκνα tekna* in its broadest application to denote *posterity*, the result will be the same. For what is our idea of posterity but that of a generation, or of generations of human beings, comprising adults and infants? To say that the word posterity means adults only, is to assume a position in the argument too absurd and ridiculous to merit a serious refutation. “How idle a thing it is for a man to come with a Lexicon in his hand, to inform us

* Edwards on Baptism, pp. 67, 68.

that *τεκνα tekna*, *children*, means *posterity*! Certainly it [often] does, and so, consequently, means the youngest infants,"* as being necessarily included in the term.

Whatever method, therefore, we adopt for the explication of the apostle's words, we must, unless we would rush into the most palpable absurdities, understand him as meaning *adults* and *infants*, when he says, "*you, and your children.*" Thus must the Jews have understood him, because this understanding would be according to the most natural and obvious meaning of the words. And thus must Peter have intended to be understood, unless he is to be charged with an unusual and improper use of terms, which no one will pretend. Thus did both Peter, and all the Jews, actually understand an exactly similar phraseology in the promise given to Abraham. The hortatory parts of Scripture are peculiarly simple and natural in their style. All technicalities, and words of difficult or doubtful meaning, were studiously avoided, and the words of common life only were employed. Peter, in the passage before us, uses the style and pathos of exhortation. He is a Hebrew, speaking to Hebrews. He carries them back to the Hebrew Scriptures—points them to a distinguished promise there recorded—uses words in their Hebrew sense, and constructs his argument wholly upon acknowledged principles of the Hebrew theology. To lead them to the spiritual provisions of that ancient promise (Gen. xvii, 7) was his single aim. All the circumstances, and the associations of the occasion, concur in establishing the use of *τεκνα tekna*, in its most obvious and simple sense, as we have above explained, namely, to mean *children* proper.

3.) The relation which the conjunctive particle *γαρ gar*, in verse 39, bears to the preceding part of the discourse, plainly establishes the obligation of infant baptism. The phraseology of this passage is exactly what we might expect, on the supposition that infant baptism was practised by the apostles; exactly what the Jews must have deemed sufficient to establish such a practice; and it becomes impossible fully to account for the force of the apostle's words on any other hypothesis. *Γαρ gar* is what is called,

* Edwards on Baptism.

in the language of grammarians, a "*causal conjunction*," and has the force of the English *for, because*; Latin, *enim, quippe, igitur*.* It always expresses the *reason* of what has been previously spoken, or implied, in the same connection. Now, the question is, to what word, or words, in the preceding part of the discourse, does *γαρ gar* refer? If we can fix its proper causal relation, we shall be at no loss to comprehend the force of Peter's argument. There are but three facts to which it can allude, and of which it can be considered as assigning a reason. Does it refer to either of these facts separately?—and if so, to which one? or does it refer generally to all the preceding part of Peter's discourse, contained in verse 38? After mature reflection, I am inclined to adopt the latter opinion. I will lay before the reader an analysis of the whole argument, so as to enable him to judge for himself. If *γαρ gar* be referred back to *μετανοησατε metanoesate*, (*repent ye*,) then the sense would be indicated by the following grammatical connection:—"Repent ye . . . BECAUSE the promise is unto you," &c. If *γαρ* relate to *βαπτισθητω baptistheto*, (*be baptized*,) then the grammatical connection would stand thus: "Be baptized every one of you . . . BECAUSE the promise is unto you," &c. If *γαρ* refer to the declaration, "*ληψεσθε την δωρεαν του αγιου Πνευματος ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*;" then the grammatical relation would stand thus: "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; BECAUSE the promise is unto you," &c. The first of the foregoing constructions would require *γαρ gar* to be understood as expressing the reason for their *repentance*; the second, the reason for their *baptism*; and the third, the reason why they should expect to *receive the Holy Ghost*. Now, either of these constructions would make a good doctrinal sense; but we consider *γαρ* to refer to ALL that is advanced in the thirty-eighth verse—first, because it better suits the plan of Luke, by giving very *general* statements of Peter's argument; secondly, *γαρ* no more fitly relates to one of the above-mentioned antecedents than another. It is as really a reason for their baptism, or their repentance, as for their receiving the Holy Spirit; and *vice versa*. Thirdly, it better suits all the

* Vide Buttman's Greek Grammar; Robinson's Greek and Eng. Lex.; and Schrevelii Lex.

circumstances of the occasion to fix the causal relation of this conjunction to all the facts mentioned in the thirty-eighth verse. For instance, the preaching of Peter had produced a powerful effect;—"they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest... Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The first emotions of their remorse had produced a temporary despair; truly, they thought, we have forfeited not only church rights, but all hopes of mercy. Peter exhorted them to repentance—to assume church obligations in the Christian form—and encouraged them to look for the gift of the Holy Spirit. All these directions suited the urgency of the moment; and he proves their appropriateness and adaptation to his Jewish brethren by adding, "BECAUSE the [ancient covenant] promise [Gen. xvii, 7, to the fulness of which Joel has referred in chap. ii, 28] is unto you, and to your children, &c. If it were not so—if the ancient covenant promise were not to you and to your children—there would be no propriety in your repentance, (as it would be hopeless,) nor in your baptism, (as you would have no right to church privileges,) nor (much less) in your expecting to receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit." It does not appear that they were in any peculiar need of encouragement in order to enable them to embrace the promise of Joel ii, 28. On the contrary, it does seem plain that their immediate concern was to know whether they might expect pardon, and a restoration to covenant, or church blessings, (for which the Abrahamic promise directly provided;) thinking, probably, (and certainly with much reason,) that if they were not excluded from the covenant, they might yet hope for the Spirit's effusion. If, then, we suppose *γὰρ γὰρ* to refer to the several statements of the thirty-eighth verse, we understand the apostle as assigning a general reason for the exhortations and encouragements therein laid down; which certainly suits the point of the occasion much better than to refer this particle to the last clause of that verse.

But lastly, I remark, if the apostle had intended a direct quotation from, or an exclusive allusion to, Joel ii, 28, he would undoubtedly have adopted a phraseology more closely answering to the words and doctrine of that passage. In describing the persons upon whom the "Spirit"

should be "poured out" in the latter (that is, gospel) days, Joel speaks only of *adults*. He speaks of "sons and daughters," of "old men and young men," of "servants and handmaids." It will not be doubted that the prophet intends only adults by these descriptions; unless the words "sons" and "daughters" should be supposed to include infants. But it is evident that he uses בָּנִים *banim* and בָּנוֹת *banoth*, as they are often used, to designate *age*, just as we would say *youth* and *maidens*, to designate an age advanced from childhood, though yet tender. And so the Seventy understood them, and rendered them by the corresponding Greek *υιοι υηιοι*, and *θυγατερες thugateres*, *sons and daughters*. But Joel determines the question of the *age* of these *sons and daughters*, by immediately adding, "*they shall prophesy.*" This proves that he intended only *adult* sons and daughters. Indeed, theology can sufficiently decide this question. The effusion of the Spirit, under the gospel dispensation, produces no alteration of the moral state of infants. Adults only, who are admitted to greater light and privileges, are directly affected by this event. It is plain, then, that Joel is speaking only of adults; and when he says "*all flesh*," his general terms must be limited by the other specific terms employed, and, above all, by the nature and design of the subject.

But the apostle Peter does not employ a proper phraseology to designate adults *only*, and therefore cannot be supposed to intend a direct quotation from Joel. Peter says, "the promise is *υμιν και τοις τεκνοις* *to you (adults) and to your (infant) children.*" If he had intended adults only, as Joel unquestionably did, he would have employed another phraseology. *Τεκνα tekna*, though it may, and often does, mean adults, yet never means adults *only*, without being connected with qualifying and definitive circumstances. In verse 17, where Peter intends a quotation from Joel ii, 28, he uses the exact phraseology of the prophet, and says, "*οι υιοι υμων και αι θυγατερες υμων* *your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,*" &c. But the intelligent reader need not be informed that *τεκνα children* is not sufficiently explicit to be a quotation of *υιοι και θυγατερες sons and daughters*, and those, too, that are old enough to "*prophesy!*" I have before shown, in

this section, why the words of Peter, Acts ii, 39, may, and should, be regarded as a quotation of Gen. xvii, 7. Every circumstance, save that of a direct assertion, that can exist to determine any passage to be a quotation of another, exists in this case to determine the former to be a quotation of the latter.

It is sufficiently obvious, then, that *γὰρ gar*, in Acts ii, 39, cannot refer exclusively to the promise of Joel ii, 28, or, in other words, to "the gift of the Holy Ghost," and must, consequently, be referred back, as above stated, to *βαπτισθητω baptistheto*, (*be baptized*,) or to *μετανοησατε metanoesate*, (*repent ye*,) or to all these facts in general. There is no grammatical objection to considering the conjunction in question as relating to all the statements of the thirty-eighth verse, and, for the reasons already assigned, we shall thus regard it.

4.) The argument, then, which we derive from this passage, in favour of infant baptism, is easily deduced: "*Because* the covenant promise is unto you, therefore repent and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." But it may be objected, the same promise is unto their *children* also; must they repent, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost? If the "promise" be a valid reason for repentance, baptism, and the bestowment of the Holy Spirit's effusion, in the one case, is it not also equally so in the other? But as infants cannot repent, does not this argument wholly fail? We answer: The analogy of this argument applies as far as the nature of the case allows. That infants are incapable of repentance, is no proof that they are unsuitable subjects of baptism, or of the Spirit's influences. No possible difficulty can arise here to any candid mind, who considers that the use of words, in such a case, is always to be explained according to the nature of the subject, and the analogy of faith. The fact, which I cannot see how to avoid in view of all the circumstances of the case, is, that the "promise" in this passage stands connected, by the causal conjunction *γὰρ gar*, to "baptism," and consequently to church relations. It must, then, follow that all to whom the promise constitutionally applies have a right to baptism, unless they have forfeited it by an infraction of the covenant. But the promise applies to infants; they have never for-

feited it, or any of its external provisions—therefore, they are to be baptized.

Thus was the ancient rite of circumcision connected with the covenant promise. God says to Abraham, “I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, . . . to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. . . THEREFORE thou shalt keep my covenant. . . This is my covenant. . . every man-child among you shall be circumcised.” The point of analogy is this, the “promise” is the *ground* of right and obligation to church relations and ordinances. “When a positive institute is connected with a promise, all who are contained in the promise have a right to the institute. I think any one may be compelled to grant this, as it is certainly an undeniable truth; for if parents must, therefore, be circumcised because they are included in the promise, then, as infants are also included in the promise, they too must be circumcised. All this is evinced by the history of circumcision, and is, indeed, a self-evident case; because, if a promise give a right to an institute, the institute must belong to all who are interested in the promise. And, therefore, we may reason thus: If parents must be baptized because the promise belongs to them, then must their infants be baptized, because the promise belongs to them also. This mode of reasoning is the more certain, as it is confirmed, beyond all doubt, by the divine procedure; for if you ask, Who are the circumcised? the reply is, Those to whom the promise was made. If you inquire again, To whom was the promise made? we answer, To adults and infants. Again, if you ask, Who are to be baptized? the answer is, Those to whom the promise is made. But to whom is it made? The apostle says, ‘To you, and to your children.’ Now, what proof more direct can be made or desired for infant baptism?”*

Bishop Burnett says, “When the apostles, in their first preaching, told the Jews that the promises were made to them and to their children, the Jews must have understood it according to what they were already in possession of, namely, that they could initiate their children into their religion, bring them under the obligations of it, and

* Edwards on Baptism, pp. 74, 75.

procure to them a share in those blessings that belonged to it."*

[5.] In John iii, 5, the Saviour says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

This passage has always been regarded as having a very decisive bearing on the question of infant baptism. So it was regarded by the early fathers in the Christian church, and so it should doubtless be of right considered. That this refers to water baptism is too manifest to require proof. To say that *water* is here used only in a mystical sense, as it is in John iv, 13, 14, and not of the *material element*, is not only to contradict the voice of all antiquity, but, what is of vastly more serious import, it is to contradict reason itself, and the general analogy of Scripture usage. Of this, the intelligent reader, with a little reflection and examination, may soon become convinced. (See chap. v, sec. i, of this work.)

But is it duly considered what our Saviour has here said? Hear him: "Ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος *Except ANY ONE be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*" Is there any exception here? Does it not apply to all alike? to children and to adults? And let the reader turn back and compare this with Matt. xix, 14, where our Saviour affirms that "the kingdom of heaven belongs" to children. It truly belongs to them, and to such as resemble them in moral dispositions, but "none shall enter into it," according to the ordinary appointment of God, "except he be regenerate, and born anew of *water* and of the Holy Spirit;" and if the "kingdom" here means, or implies, the visible church, as it often does, then must all, without any exception, be born of water, as well as of the Holy Spirit, before they can lawfully become its acknowledged members. These awful, and very direct words of Jesus Christ, are too often lost, in their practical effect upon the heart and conduct of the believer, through the application of an allegorizing, and certainly a very dangerous, principle of interpretation. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it," Luke xi, 28.

* Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, Art. xxvii.

[6.] The New Testament recognition of infant baptism is obviously set forth in the mention of "household baptisms."

There are three different places where household baptisms are recorded, namely, Acts xvi, 15, Lydia and her household; verse 33, the jailer "and all *his*;" 1 Cor. i, 16, "the household of Stephanas." The scope of this argument may be comprehended in the two following propositions: First. The *language* employed is such as may be fitly used to represent the baptism of children. Secondly. The *circumstances* concur to establish a decided probability that Pedobaptism is here intended.

1.) Whenever we would understand the meaning of any author, our first effort should be to explain his words according to the common usage, and the obvious design of the particular writer. If it be an ancient author, we must ascertain what was the use of the terms he employed at the time of his writing, and among the people to whom he wrote. The question, therefore, which we are now to decide is, Does *οικος οικος*, (translated *household*,) the word which is used in Acts xvi, 15, and 1 Cor. i, 16, properly include *infants*? The sacred history informs us that certain persons, with their *households*, were baptized; the question is, Does the phraseology properly denote that infants were, or might have been, baptized? I am fully apprized that the more informed reader will deem it wholly unnecessary and gratuitous for me to adduce formal proof of the affirmative of this question; but for the sake of those who may not readily appreciate how terms are used in the Bible, and also that the final argument may not seem to rest barely on assertion, or the mere authority of names, I cannot withhold a few statements. *Οικος οικος* primarily denotes a *house*, that is, a building or edifice, *domus*. But by a very common rule of language it also signifies all that dwell in a house, that is, a *family*; including parents, children, domestics, &c.; all those persons which we range under the general title of *family*, or *household*. The point to be ascertained is, whether infants are naturally, and as a matter of course, included in this phrase. The opponents of infant baptism take the ground that infants cannot be proved to have been included in the "households" which the apostles baptized, because they are not

specified, and it is well known that there are households, or families, without infant children. We take the ground that, although *οικος οικος* does not specify children, yet, children are properly included within the term, as much as parents, or servants; and the presumption is that they are always thus included, unless there is a specification to the contrary. The word *family* does not necessarily specify parents,—a family may be constituted, or subsist, without the relation of parents,—but does this authorize us to infer that parents are never included in this word unless they are specified by a distinct and appropriate appellation? The same may be said of servants. The words *οικος*, *familia*, and *household*, include the idea of servants, as constituting a part of those who live together in the same house. Still, neither of these terms is the proper one to denote a servant distinctively, and there may be families where there are no servants. But are we authorized to infer, hence, that servants are never included in these words, unless they are specified distinctly by some adjunct? For instance, it is said Lydia and her household were baptized. From this we argue that, as children are properly included under the general term household, therefore, the presumption is, children were baptized. “Not so,” says a Baptist; “the term household does not specify infants; there are many households that do not include one infant, therefore the baptism of households does not, in any way, prove the baptism of infants.” Well said! Admirable logic! But hold: will this principle of interpretation hold good in other cases? Let us try. The term household does not specify domestics of any kind. There are many households without any servants whatever. Nor does the term specify children that are grown up. There are many households that are composed of the husband and wife, or only one of them, and the servants; therefore, the baptism of households does not prove the baptism of servants of any kind, or of children of any age, unless they are specified by a distinct and appropriate name;—therefore there were no domestics of any kind, or children of any age, baptized by Paul in the households of Lydia, the jailer, and Stephanas, because no specifications to this effect appear. Finally, as no individuals but Lydia, the jailer, and Stephanas, are specified—as the

term "household" specifies no particular person, or class of persons—therefore, it cannot be proved that any particular persons but those three were baptized on those occasions. And thus endeth the first lesson on the logical use of *οικος*, according to Mr. Pengilly and the Baptists.

But we maintain that we have the same authority for supposing that children were included in these households, and were consequently baptized, as for supposing that any other individuals were included in them and were baptized. Children are as natural a branch of the household as servants, and much more so. Mr. Pengilly says, "From the word 'household,' therefore, to infer the baptism of infants, is completely *begging the question*." Just as much is it begging the question to infer that any other persons were baptized besides those specified; as, for instance, parents, adult children, servants, or any others. It is more properly begging the question to infer that children were *not* baptized in these households, because it assumes the point to be proved without any proof, and exactly against the face of a reasonable probability.

2.) We inquire, Do all the circumstances of the case so concur as to establish a decided probability that infant baptism is here intended?

The reader will understand that we are not seeking for any positive declarations in proof of our position. The nature of the case does not demand such proof, and the principles we have before laid down, by which to direct our inquiries, do not impose upon us this task. I mean by *circumstances*, all those corroborating facts that serve to shed light upon the case in point, which do not appear from a mere philological examination of the word *οικος οικος*. It will be sufficient for our argument to prove that there are no specified circumstances connected with these family baptisms that impair the force of the probability that Pedobaptism was practised, according to the natural indication of the terms employed.

(a.) It is a fact worthy of note, that the faith, or conversion, of Lydia only is mentioned, or even intimated; following which, as if it were a matter of course, was the baptism of her household. It is said the Lord opened HER heart, "that SHE attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul;" but it does not say that the Lord opened

the hearts of her *household*, and that THEY attended unto the same things. Thus, then, stands the account: "SHE" attended unto the preaching of Paul, and "SHE" and her "HOUSEHOLD" were baptized. No more or less can be made of the words of Luke. Now we do not say positively that there were no other adults in her family, but we do say positively that no other adults are specified, and also that infant children are a very usual and natural portion of a household, which throws the force of a clear probability on the side of Pedobaptism. Another point that perhaps is worthy of mention, as indicating that Lydia only, of all the members of her house, believed, is, that when she invites the apostle and Silas to tarry for a time at her house, she says, "If ye have judged ME to be faithful, come into my house," &c. Had there been other believing adults besides herself, it might seem more modest for her to have at least hinted it, and to have said, "If ye have judged us to be faithful," &c. This might seem especially suitable, as there appeared a strong reluctance in Paul and Silas to comply with her entreaties; and if *her* faith was an argument of any strength in favour of their staying, surely the faith of the entire household (supposing them to be adults and converted) would have added weight to the argument. Lydia was a Jewish proselyte before her conversion to Christianity. It is said, verse 14, she "*σεβομενη του Θεου worshipped God*;" that is, was *devout*,—a description that is used to distinguish proselytes from native Hebrews. The probability therefore is, that she and her household had been previously proselyted to Judaism; and as she had given up her household to God in baptism before, according to the Jewish requisition in making proselytes, so now again, according to Christ's requisition in making disciples.

"The great difficulty with the Baptists is, to make a house for Lydia, without any children at all, young or old. This, however, cannot be proved from the term itself, since the same word is that commonly used in the Scriptures to include children residing at home with their parents: as, 1 Tim. iii, 4, 'One that ruleth well his own *οικου house*, having his *τεκνα children* in subjection, with all gravity.' It is, however, conjectured first, that she had come on a trading voyage from Thyatira to Philippi, to sell purple;

as if a woman [who was a native] of Thyatira might not be settled in business at Philippi, as a seller of this article. Then, as if to mark more strikingly the hopelessness of the attempt to torture this passage to favour an opinion, 'her house' is made to consist of journeymen dyers, 'employed in preparing the purple she sold;' which, however, is a notion at variance with the former; for if she was on a mere trading voyage—if she had brought her purple goods from Thyatira to Philippi to sell, she most probably brought them ready dyed, and would have no need of a dying establishment. To complete the whole, these journeymen dyers, although not a word is said of their conversion, or even of their existence, in the whole story, are raised into 'the brethren,' (a term which manifestly denotes the members of the Philippian church,) whom Paul and Silas are said to have seen and comforted in the house of Lydia before they departed!"* There is, therefore, not the least circumstance in this whole history that impairs the force of a reasonable probability that it describes an instance of infant baptism.

(b.) In the case of the jailer, it appears evident that there were other adults besides himself who believed and were baptized; for it is said Paul and Silas "spake the word of the Lord to all that were in the jailer's house," verse 32. But this in nowise militates against the probability that there were children also in the jailer's family, and, if so, that they were baptized. It is said of the jailer, *και εβαπτισθη αυτος και οι αυτου παντες* and he was baptized, he and all who were [*ησαν* being understood] of him. The relative force of *οι hoi* is not brought out in our common English version, although a kindred sense to the above is given to this passage. All I aim to make out of this sentence is, that the phraseology indicates that the jailer had children, (of what age is not specified,) and that they were baptized. But if this be so, the probability is in our favour, namely, that there were young children in his family, and, therefore, that the text is a recorded instance of infant baptism. The reader will understand that all that is claimed from this passage, in favour of infant baptism, is, that it affords a reasonable probability in its favour, and, of course, against our opponents.

* Watson's Theol. Inst., pp. 641, 642.

I am aware that it is said that, in verse 34, the historian informs us that the jailer "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house;" but it is hardly necessary to inform the critical reader that this is far from stating that all his house believed with him. Indeed, it says nothing about the faith of his house. The grammatical order of the sentence is broken by our common version, and, as I think evidently, the sense much obscured, or rather misstated. The sentence stands thus: *και ηγαλλιασατο πανοικι πεπιστευκως τω Θεου* and *he rejoiced in all his house, believing in God*; or, to make better English syntax, it should stand thus: *and he, believing in God, rejoiced with, or in, all his house.* The peculiar turn of the passage I understand to be, that *he*, (the jailer,) *believing in God, rejoiced IN, or, as we would say, OVER all his family.* How natural is it for a man newly converted, and whose children also are newly ingrafted into the covenant of promise, and consecrated to God, to rejoice in this conversion of his family! The jailer now looked upon his family as dedicated to God, and as fellow-heirs with himself of the grace of life. He looked upon his children (for the text certainly indicates that he had children) as subjects of grace, and as those who were honoured and blessed of the Lord. He believed in God—the adult members of his family believed, and all his family had been newly baptized by these faithful servants of God; the change was great—it was glorious. He rejoiced in the conversion of his family. He rejoiced over them just as any Christian father would rejoice in the consecration of his house to God. This I conceive to be the true force of the passage, and it is sufficient to say that no philological objection stands opposed to it. But how do we know that there were any infants in this family? We do not know;—we have not undertaken to prove this. How, then, does it favour infant baptism? We answer, The *presumption* always is that *οικος οικος*, when used in the sense of *family*, and *πανοικι πανοικι*, (*household, all the household, &c.*.) include children. So it is said, Exod. i, 1, "The children of Israel came into Egypt, every man and his *household*." (בְּרֵתָּהּ פָּנֹיִקִי.) But how do we know that *πανοικι πανοικι*, which the Septuagint here employ, includes young children? The word itself does not positively prove that there were any infant

children in these families of the sons of the patriarch. Yet, if we had no other evidence of there having been little children in these households but the mere force of the word, still the presumption would be that there were such children, because it is a proper word to designate the collective body of parents and children. But we know that *πανοικὶ πανοικί* includes infants in this passage, because it is stated, Gen. xlvi, 5, that the sons of Jacob "carried their *little ones* and their wives in the wagons" to Egypt. So also may the same word be presumed to include infants in Acts xvi, 34.

I know that it is said in the English version that the jailer "rejoiced, or believed, *with* all his house;" thus indicating that all the members of his house actively united in his rejoicings, or faith. But there is no such word as "*with*" in the Greek text. It is not in the sentence, and it does not necessarily appear in the composition of *πανοικὶ πανοικί*. The truth is, that *with*, or *in*, or some other particle, is left to be supplied by the sense. "He rejoiced *in* all his house;" that is, "over his entire family." From an attentive observation, therefore, of all the particular circumstances connected with the baptism of the jailer and his household, we find nothing to impair the force of the natural probability that *πανοικὶ πανοικί*, and the phrase *ὅτι αὐτοῦ πάντες* *all who were of him*, imply and include children; and, as they were all baptized, the force of this scrap of history is evidently in favour of infant baptism.

(c.) "The third instance," says Mr. Watson, "is that of 'the house of Stephanas,' mentioned by St. Paul, 1 Cor. i, 16, as having been baptized by himself. This family, also, it is argued, must have been all adults, because they are said in the same epistle, chap. xvi, 15, to have 'addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,' and further, because they were persons who took '*a lead*' in the affairs of the church, the Corinthians being exhorted to 'submit themselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboreth.' To understand this passage rightly, however, it is necessary to observe, that Stephanas, the head of the family, had been sent by the church of Corinth to St. Paul at Ephesus, along with Fortunatus and Achaicus. In the absence of the head of the family, the apostle commends 'the house,' the family of Stephanas, to the

regard of the Corinthian believers, and perhaps also the houses of the two other brethren that had come with him, for in several MSS. marked by Griesbach, and in some of the versions, the text reads, 'Ye know the house of Stephanas and Fortunatus,' and one reads also, 'and of Achaicus.' By the house or family of Stephanas, the apostle must mean his children, or, along with them, his near relations dwelling together in the same family; for, since they are commended for their hospitality to the saints, servants, who have no power to show hospitality, are of course excluded. But in the absence of the head of the family, it is very improbable that the apostle should exhort the Corinthian church to 'submit,' ecclesiastically, to the wife, sons, daughters, and near relations of Stephanas, and, if the reading of Griesbach's MSS. be followed, to the family of Fortunatus, and that of Achaicus also. In respect of government, therefore, they cannot be supposed 'to have had a *lead* in the church,' according to the Baptist notion, and especially as the heads of these families were absent.* They were, however, the oldest Christian families in Corinth, the house of Stephanas, at least, being called the 'first-fruits of Achaia,' and eminently distinguished for 'addicting themselves,' *setting themselves on system*, to the work of ministering to the saints, that is, of communicating to the poor saints; entertaining stranger Christians, which was an important branch of practical duty in the primitive church, that in every place those who professed Christ might be kept out of the society of idolaters; and receiving the ministers of Christ. On these accounts the apostle commends them to the especial regard of the Corinthian church, and exhorts 'ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑποτασσησθε τοῖς τοιούτοις *that ye range yourselves under and co-operate with them and with every one*' also, 'who helpeth with us and laboureth;' the military metaphor contained in *εταξαν etaxan*, (*have set, devoted, arranged, Eng. ver., addicted,*) in the preceding verse, being here carried forward. These families were the oldest Christians in Corinth; and as they were foremost in every good word and work, they were not only to be commended, but

* Thus far the reasoning of our author is ingenious and forcible, on the supposition that Stephanas and his companions did not return to Corinth, as the bearers of the first letter of Paul to that church.

the rest were to be exhorted to serve under them as leaders in these works of charity. This appears to be the obvious sense of this otherwise obscure passage. But in this, or, indeed, in any other sense which can be given to it, it proves no more than that there were adult persons in the family of Stephanas,—his wife, sons, and daughters, who were distinguished for their charity and hospitality. Still it is to be remembered that the baptism of the oldest children took place several years before. The house of Stephanas was 'the first-fruits of Achaia,' in which St. Paul began to preach not later than A. D. 51, while this epistle could not have been written earlier at least than A. D. 57, and might be later. Six or eight years taken from the age of the sons and daughters of Stephanas might bring the oldest to the state of early youth, and as to the younger branches, would descend to the term of infancy, properly so called. Still further, all that the apostle affirms of the benevolence and hospitality of the family of Stephanas is perfectly consistent with a part of his children being still very young at the time he wrote this epistle. An equal commendation for hospitality and charity might be given at the present day, with perfect propriety, to many pious families, several members of which are still in a state of infancy. It was sufficient, to warrant the use of such expressions as those of the apostle, that there were in these Corinthian families a few adults, whose conduct gave a decided character to the whole 'house.'

"Thus the arguments used to prove that in these three instances of family baptism there were no young children, are evidently very unsatisfactory; and they leave us to the conclusion, which perhaps all would come to in reading the sacred history, were they quite free from the bias of a theory, that 'houses,' or 'families,' as in the commonly received import of the term, may be presumed to comprise children of all ages, unless some explicit note of the contrary appears, which is not the case in any of the instances in question."*

3.) The familiar, and, as we may say, matter-of-course manner of mentioning these cases of family baptisms, clearly indicates that it was in perfect harmony with the

* Watson's Institutes, vol. ii, pp. 642-644.

universal custom of the apostles. Had it been any unusual thing—had infant baptism been unknown to the apostolic church, and as abhorrent to God as it is to our Baptist brethren, it is not at all probable that these cases would have been thus registered by the direction of the Holy Spirit, without unequivocal intimations that no infant children were included in the number of the baptized. As it is, however, it leaves upon the mind of the unbiased reader the impression of a strong probability, not only that infants were included in those baptized households which are mentioned, but that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of families were baptized in the same way; which is an advance of the argument that falls little short of the highest Scriptural authority.

It cannot have escaped the observation of the attentive, intelligent reader, that the simple *fact* of the register of household, or family baptisms, as well as the *manner* in which they are registered, is in perfect keeping with the hypothesis that infants were universally baptized with their believing parents in apostolic times. There is a corroborating force to these circumstances that should not be overlooked. Such a record of baptisms certainly never would occur in the same easy, unrestricted, familiar style of history, as that adopted by the author of the Acts of the Apostles, under an anti-Pedobaptist ministration. It is true that our Baptist brethren tell us they have baptized households. Mr. Pengilly tells us, in his work on Baptism, that he “has baptized households; and, among others, a ‘Lydia and her household,’ and yet never baptized a child;” and concludes that “to infer the baptism of infants from the word ‘household,’ is completely begging the question.”* His argument amounts to this: He has baptized households without ever having baptized a child,—therefore, it is begging the question to suppose that there were any children in those households whose baptism is recorded in the New Testament. But the point upon which I wish to fix attention here is, the incongruity of such registers, and such historic accounts, in the easy, familiar, and matter-of-course style of Luke, to the hypothesis that infant baptism was unknown and unpractised

* Scripture Guide, p. 43.

by the apostles. A Baptist disputant, for the sake of giving effect to his argument, may record a household baptism which he himself had performed; but would he be likely, in sending home missionary reports, for instance, to return an account of family baptisms in the same open, unqualified manner as that of Luke, in recording the baptism of Lydia's family? Or, furthermore, were a Baptist writing a history of the Baptist missions, or of the general Baptist denomination,—a history that was to be read by future generations, when its author, and all who now might have any personal knowledge of the facts recorded, would be no more—a history, one prominent object of which was to set forth the validity and true character of water baptism, as held and practised by the Baptists—were a Baptist, I say, to write such a history, would he be likely to mention family baptisms in such an indefinite, familiar, and unqualified manner as to leave the impression upon thousands of minds, that infants, being a natural part of a family, were to be baptized? Does it accord with our knowledge of the Baptists' views on this subject, to suppose that they would be likely to write so unguardedly as to leave the impression on the minds of many of their ingenuous readers that they practised infant baptism? And if the apostles, and the author of the book containing an account of their "Acts," and the primitive church, had all been opposed to infant baptism, or had been wholly ignorant of any such practice, I ask, Would they have been likely to leave such an unguarded account of their baptisms, as to give the impression to thousands that they practised infant baptism? Would an intelligent Arminian, now-a-days, write concerning the doctrine of "free grace" in terms that would be likely, from the natural force of words, to leave the impression that he was a believer in the "five points of Calvinism?" And yet, absurd as would be the affirmative of these suppositions, it would not fully illustrate the absurdity of an anti-Pedobaptist construction of the household baptisms of the New Testament. For here, according to the theory of our opponents, we not only have anti-Pedobaptist authors (for such the Baptists suppose Luke and Paul to have been) writing about baptism in terms exactly calculated to leave the impression that infant baptism was an apostolic practice, but we are

bound to believe that such an absurdity was sanctioned by the authority of the Holy Spirit! for these men wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

To illustrate this subject still further, let us suppose the following case:—"Two missionaries have for a number of years been successfully labouring for the conversion of a particular tribe of savages in the wilderness of America. We have heard of their labours, and of their success, and have rejoiced in it, but have never learned, and have never to this day inquired, whether they practised infant baptism or not. For special reasons, this now becomes a subject of inquiry; and the only means of information which we have at hand is a brief history which those missionaries have published of their labours. In that history, which is now subject to a careful examination, we find that they speak of several instances in which individuals embraced Christianity and received baptism. And they inform us that at such a time they baptized one of the chiefs, and his *family*; and that, at another time, they baptized such a man, and *all his*; and again, another man, and *his household*. This is all the information they give. They mention, without explanation, the baptism of several persons, and their *households*, and so make *family baptisms* a noticeable circumstance in the history of their mission. Would not such a circumstance lead us to think it probable that they practised infant baptism? Be sure, it might be said, that they do not expressly mention the baptism of little children, and that all who belonged to those families may have been *adults*, and adult *believers*. This, I admit, would be possible. But would it be *probable*? Would those who do not baptize children be likely to speak in this manner? Should we not think it very singular to find accounts of *family baptisms* in a history of Baptist missions?"*

The apostles wrote and spoke of them just as the Jews would in reference to household proselyting; the idea of proselyting households among the Jews was perfectly familiar, by which they understood the bringing of the parents and children over to Judaism by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice. The practice of discipling and baptizing households among the early Christians appears equally familiar, and equally common to record. We say,

* Woods on Infant Baptism, pp. 81, 82.

therefore, that family baptisms, as recorded in the New Testament, exactly coincide with, and strongly corroborate, the doctrine of infant baptism.

4.) It has been urged that the paucity of instances in which the mention of household baptism occurs is a powerful presumption against the supposition that the apostles baptized infants. In reply, we can but remark with what amusing facility some people, who are earnest partisans, overrate the comparative importance of their favourite dogma. They have a hobby, and their great wonder is, that it is not mentioned in every page of holy writ. They conceive of nothing more important than the success of their darling theory, and they wonder how the Almighty could pass it by so lightly in his revelation. Some people seem to imagine that infant baptism ought, if true, to have been mentioned with great minuteness and particularity, and with many repetitions. But is this according to the analogy of the divine proceedings? By no means. "The sabbath was instituted at the creation: and though *weeks* are mentioned in the sacred history, the *sabbath* is not again mentioned till Moses: [a period of more than two thousand four hundred years.] Yet, how important the sabbath was considered in the sight of God is well known. Again, it is not mentioned from the time of Joshua till the reign of David, [a period of about four hundred years,] and yet, as says Dr. Humphrey, 'it will be admitted that, beyond all doubt, the pious judges of Israel remembered the sabbath-day to keep it holy.' Moreover, the Bible says nothing of *circumcision* from a little after Moses till the days of Jeremiah—a period of eight hundred years; yet, doubtless, circumcision was practised all the while.

"In like manner, the *Missionary Herald*, each volume of which is twenty times as large as the book of Acts, is now in progress of the thirty-sixth volume. In the whole of these, containing the journals of so many missionaries, narrating every important incident with so much minuteness, and continued for so many years, there are very few instances mentioned of infant baptism. I have not the means at hand of ascertaining how many; but though I have long been familiar with them, and have long observed the fact with some curiosity, and have specially examined

not a little, I am not able to find, or to call to mind, more than a very few instances previously to the last two years. But we know the missionaries of the American Board are all Pedobaptists. The paucity of these records of infant baptisms in their letters does not prove that they do not baptize infants: we know they do; and once in a while the fact is mentioned, but it is rare, though their converts amount to many thousands."* It is unreasonable, therefore, to hold that if infant baptism be true, it must necessarily be a subject of frequent allusion in the history of the apostolic churches.

CHAPTER IV.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE,

DERIVED FROM STRONG COINCIDENCES, AND THE GENERAL FITNESS OF THE PRACTICE.

THERE are several points which merit attention in this stage of the argument, not so much from any direct bearing they may have on the question as furnishing independent proof, as on account of the strong corroborative force of evidence resulting from their natural fitness to the doctrine of infant baptism. After a doctrine or practice is proved to be Scriptural, it is but reasonable and fair that we should expect to find that natural fitness and adaptation to all the circumstances of the case that we so uniformly find in the works and dispensations of God. If we could clearly point out an unfitness and incongruity in it to the circumstances of the case, we are ready to concede that such incongruity would necessarily weaken, if not overthrow, all the arguments that might be brought forward in its support. Revelation is consistent with itself, and with all the other works of God, as well as fitted to the condition of man. God cannot contradict himself. He suits his dispensations to the condition and circumstances of man, no less than to the perfection of his own infinite and unerring mind. All that he has commanded is befitting the

* Rev. E. Hall on Baptism, pp. 168, 169.

occasion, and is in harmony with the other parts of the system. Now, if we could point out, in infant baptism, some strong irrelevancy to other parts of the divine economy, or to other parts of the duty of Christians, it must necessarily jostle all our confidence in the professed Scriptural authority for its observance,—we should, in such a case, be forced to conclude it was not of God. This will be readily admitted on all hands.

On the contrary, if, upon a more minute examination of all the kindred circumstances, we shall find that the practice perfectly coincides with all the circumstances of the case,—if we find that there is a natural fitness in the practice to the other parts of the Christian economy, and to the acknowledged duties of Christian parents and their relation to their offspring; I say, in such a case, the presumption in favour of its divine origin would be powerful, while no objection, either from reason or Scripture, could be urged against it. Thus, then, stands the question; and we ask, Is there any thing unsuitable to all the circumstances of the case in the practice of infant baptism?

1. We have already shown that infant baptism is suitable to the *moral state* of infants. On this there can be here no controversy. Infants belong to the “kingdom of heaven,” and this constitutes the groundwork of a fitness for baptism. If they *are* members of the kingdom, it is unquestionably fit that they should be *declared* such by baptism.

2. It is in perfect harmony with the avowed object for which the Christian church was erected, that infants be baptized. What was the intention of God in having a church upon the earth? Let the apostle answer: “That he might gather together in one [family] ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even *in him*,” Eph. i, 10. Now, the meaning of this is, that all who enjoy a saving interest in the atonement—who are justified in Christ—are to be collected in one community, at the head of which is Christ, and this community, or church, (for they are the same,) in connection with all other holy beings, constitutes God’s family. The same idea is conveyed in chap. ii, 15, where Paul says that Christ abolished the ceremonial law, “for to make *in himself* of twain [that is, of Jews and Gentiles]

one new man," &c. The object was to gather all those who were truly justified in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, into one fraternity—one family, or church—of which Christ was to be the head, or chief. So it is said, also, in chap. iii, 15, that "of Christ the whole family [of holy beings] in heaven and earth is named." This doctrine is largely taught in the New Testament. The only question, therefore, that can possibly arise is, Do infants belong to Christ? Are they "in Christ?" Is he their spiritual Head? their Saviour? If so, it was the intention of God "to gather them together in one" family, even his church, with all other persons who belong to Christ. Although this is a valid, and, as we regard it, a positive argument, still we have chosen to place it under the chapter of *coincidences*. We say, then, that infant baptism is altogether suitable to, and befitting, the nature of the Christian church, and God's original design in forming it.

3. Infant baptism is in harmony with the analogy of Jewish church ordinances. We have already mentioned, somewhat at large, that Jehovah, from the first organization of the church, took infants into covenant relation to himself. We need but mention the fact here. The light of analogy is clear and overwhelming, and the practice of infant baptism is just what we might expect, from a knowledge of all the past.

4. There is a particular mention of children in Eph. vi, 1, that so strikingly coincides with, and seems to corroborate infant baptism, that I deem it worthy of a mention in this place. The apostle commands "children to obey their parents in the Lord." These children were so young as not to have received their elemental instructions, as appears from verse 4. Yet they were said to be "*in the Lord*." For "how could they obey *εν κυριω* in the Lord, if they themselves were not *εν κυριω* in the Lord?"* The phrase, "*in the Lord*," is used to signify church membership in the New Testament. Thus, the "household of Narcissus were *in the Lord*;" Onesimus was "*in the Lord*;" "Andronicus and Junia were *in Christ*." Rom. xvi, 7, 11; Philem., ver. 16. The address of the apostle, in a strain of command and promise, would have been

* Mr. Knox's remarks on Infant Baptism, inserted at the close of Dr. A. Clarke's comment on Mark's Gospel.

unsuitable to any but such as were in covenant with God. If children were not thus in covenant, we see not how they could be addressed as a distinct class, in an apostolic epistle which was professedly addressed to Christians. Mr. Jerram well says, "If children are enumerated among the various classes to whom the epistle is addressed as constituting the church of Christ, they must have been members of it; and if members, they must have been baptized in their infancy."* It is certain that when this same command, "Honour thy father and thy mother," &c., was first issued, it was addressed to children in covenant with God. The "promise," also, which was appended, was a promise included in the covenant. See Exod. xx, 12; Deut. v, 16. Comp. Gen. xvii, 8. The remarks of Mr. Knox, above alluded to, are exactly in point:—"It must not escape attention," says he, "how exactly the sequel of the apostle's address accords with the commencement; the injunction being given as to those in express covenant, 'Honour thy father and thy mother; for this is the first commandment with promise.' Had those addressed been out of the Christian pale, this language would have been inapplicable. In that case they would have been *απηλλοτριωμενοι της πολιτειας του Ισραηλ* [*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*]*—*therefore not within the range of the divine commandment; and *ξενοι των διαθηκων της επαγγελιας* [*strangers from the covenants of promise*]*—*consequently not warranted to assume an interest in the promise. As, then, the pressing of the sacred injunction supposes the persons on whom it is urged to be *συμπολιται των αγιων* *fellow-citizens with the saints*, their acknowledged interest in the promise proves them to be *οικειοι του Θεου* *of the household of God.*" Eph. ii, 12, 19.

This is not only an ingenious, but, so far as I can judge, a valid argument. If the reader can clearly comprehend it, (and it is not obscure,) he will scarcely fail to be strongly influenced by its corroboration of, and its perfect and strong coincidence with, the doctrine and practice of infant baptism.

5. The consecration of little children to God, in baptism, coincides with the feelings of pious parents. The

* Conversations on Infant Baptism, p. 63.

deep and sleepless solicitude of the devout parent for the spiritual salvation of his offspring finds a natural expression in this act; and his anxiety is soothed, and his gratitude awakened, by the reflection that God has affixed to his child the token of his love, and the pledge of his protection. This, indeed, is not advanced as an independent argument for infant baptism, but merely as an important coincidence; showing such an agreement between the practice and our sanctified affections, as proves that it involves nothing impious or absurd. "What pious parent, rightly apprehending the nature and design of infant baptism, would not acknowledge it to be a benevolent appointment of God? Who would not be gratified to find such a doctrine as that of infant baptism true? Who would not deem it a privilege to perform such a duty? And who would not regard it a subject of heartfelt grief to be deprived of such a privilege? It must surely be the wish of pious parents to give up their children to God; and to do this in the temple of God, where the prayers of many will ascend with their own to the Lord of heaven and earth in behalf of their children; publicly to apply to them a sacred rite which marks them for God; which signifies that they are placed in the school of Christ, and in the nursery of the church; that they are to enjoy faithful, parental instruction, and the affections and prayers of Christians; which signifies, too, that they are to come under the influence of a divine economy, fraught with the most gracious promises, and the most precious blessings;—to apply to children a sacred rite of such import, must be inexpressibly delightful to godly parents. . . . Pious parents, I repeat it, who rightly apprehend the doctrine of infant baptism, cannot but wish it true. And it would seem to me that their first inquiry must be, whether they may be *permitted* to devote their dear offspring thus to God, and to apply to them the seal of his gracious covenant. If nothing is found to *forbid* their doing this; especially if they have reason, from the word and providence of God, to believe that he would approve it; I should suppose they would embrace such a privilege with the sincerest gratitude and joy, and hasten to confer such a blessing on their children."*

* Woods on Infant Baptism, pp. 110, 111.

I am sorry to find Mr. Jewett, an anti-Pedobaptist, exceeding the bounds of fairness in his statement of this point. He has overrated it, and thus has done injustice, doubtless without design, to the argument. He says, "The principle on which the reasoning proceeds is this: *Whatever observance is pleasant to the feelings of good men ought to be regarded as an institution of God.*"* This is not the ground of the argument. It is too unguardedly expressed, and it does not develop the point aimed at by the Pedobaptists. The truth is, that the natural agreement of the practice of infant baptism with the best feelings of godly parents, points out a moral fitness in the practice that is calculated to remove any prejudice that may arise against it on the supposition of its impiety or absurdity, but does not prove that therefore it "ought to be regarded as an institution of God." The proof of this fact must, and does, rest on other ground of evidence.

6. Infant baptism is compatible with the obligation of parents to educate their children for the Lord.

This obligation is of a most solemn character, and is binding upon parents at the period of the very tender age of their offspring. As early as the child is capable of forming the most simple distinctions, or of becoming attracted by external perceptions, the parent should apply a method of tuition and cultivation suited to its age and capacity, and thenceforward aim, with unintermitted and tireless diligence, to prepare the child for the duties of religion here, and the enjoyments of glory hereafter. Nor is this course of instruction urged merely in anticipation of the child's moral destiny, but because it is itself now an heir of grace, and, as such, claims, on the score of present fitness, an education suited to its moral state. Children belong to the kingdom of heaven, and therefore it is meet that they should be early dedicated to God. The philosophy of the human mind, and the Scriptures of truth, inculcate upon the parent the duty and importance of an early consecration of the child to God, and a subsequent corresponding course of instruction. If the child is a moral being—is in a state of grace—is to be, from early infancy, trained for religion—the practice of devoting it to God by baptism seems the most consonant to all these

* Mode and Subjects of Baptism, p. 73.

circumstances of any thing conceivable. It seems a most suitable auxiliary and attendant of parental obligation and duties, by yielding to them a divine sanction and encouragement. The Bible is explicit and abundant in its inculcations touching the duty of parents. Very anciently God commanded his people that the words which he delivered to them should be in their hearts: "And thou shalt teach them diligently, saith God, to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," Deut. vi, 7. David says, "God established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments," Psalm lxxviii, 5-7. The obligation of parents to bring up their children according to the religion of the Bible was fully understood by the Jews. The wise man says, "Train up a child in the way he should go;" and adds, for the encouragement of parents, "and when he is old he will not depart from it." Houbigant renders it, "*Initiate, instruct, catechise; lay down the first rudiments,*" &c.

" — Now pliantly inure
Your mind to virtue, while your heart is pure;
Now suck in wisdom; for the vessel well
With liquor seasoned long retains the smell."

So said a heathen. The Hebrew of this passage reads, "Initiate a child at the opening (the mouth) of his path." "חֲנֹךְ *hanak*, which we translate *train up*, or *initiate*, signifies also *dedicate*; and is often used to denote the *consecrating* any thing, house, or person, to the service of God. [So it is used Deut. xx, 5; 1 Kings viii, 63; 2 Chron. vii, 5.] *Dedicate*, therefore, in the first instance, your child to God; and *nurse, teach*, and *discipline* him as God's child, whom he has intrusted to your care. These things observed and illustrated by your own conduct, the child (you have God's word for it) will never depart from the path of life."*

* Dr. A. Clarke's Comment. *in loc.*

And thus Paul commands, Eph. vi, 4, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" or, as Mr. Wesley more properly has it, "*in the instruction and discipline of the Lord*—both in Christian knowledge and practice." Dr. Robinson says, "*παιδεία Κυρίου*, that is, *such training as the Lord approves.*"*

Thus stand the oracles of truth in regard to the religious education of children. Such is the duty of parents, and such their high responsibility, with respect to the early training of their offspring, and their subsequent character and destiny. Great is the authority which God has vested in the parent, in order to secure the moral instruction and happiness of his offspring; and most sacredly and awfully is the obligation of filial submission and fidelity guarded by the word of God, with an unerring aim at the same unspeakable good. Anciently the parent had absolute power of life and death over the child; and long after this power was taken from the parent and vested in the civil magistrate, it was said, "Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death." How solemn are these considerations! How strict and inexorable are the injunctions of Scripture upon parent and child! And thus it must of necessity be, so long as the temporal and eternal interests of the child are so largely lodged in the power of the parent, and so deeply involved in the discipline and instructions of childhood. By the peculiar constitution of our nature, if it be not a necessary result of the structure of mind itself, early impressions constantly grow with our growth, strengthen with our strength, enlarge with the mind's development, and mature with our years. The long and faithful discipline and instruction of childhood and youth, by a wise arrangement of Providence, fits us for the duties of social life, and submission to the authorities of civil government, and prepares us, by the habit of wholesome restraint upon our passions, and salutary influences upon our hearts, "to receive," in after-life, "with meekness, the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls." How suitable, then, to these parental duties, and to these filial obligations, is baptism! How appropriate for the parent thus to "*dedicate* his child to God, in the opening of his way!" How appropos to all the circum-

* Robinson's Lex., art. *παιδεία*.

stances of the case! How effectually must it remind the parent of his duty, and how tenderly must it affect his heart, to know that with prayer and devout supplications he has offered up his little one to the Lord in baptism! And this dedication, so concordant to the moral state and the prospective destiny of the child, shall be a divine pledge of spiritual blessings, which he has promised to the seed of the righteous. But if it were otherwise,—if there were an entire want of correspondence between infant baptism, and the duties, and obligations, and pious solitudes of godly parents, this circumstance certainly would go far—perhaps be of itself sufficient—to invalidate all argument in favour of the ordinance. Such an incongruity, however, never occurs in any of the works or dispensations of God. “It would avail little to say, in the way of objection, that parents would be under all these obligations, and would have sufficient motives to faithfulness, without such an ordinance as baptism. The obvious design of baptism is, to cause these obligations to be felt *more deeply* and *constantly* than they would otherwise be, and to give *greater efficacy* to these motives than they would otherwise have. The influence of public rites and observances has been acknowledged in all ages, both in civil and religious concerns. In our own country, and in other countries, they are kept up, in order to perpetuate the principles of civil government. Among the Israelites they were established for the purpose of giving to one generation after another a knowledge, and a lively impression, of the principles and laws of their religion. The human mind is so constituted, that it is very doubtful whether the truths of religion could be inculcated and impressed with the necessary efficacy without the help of public rites and observances. The utility of the Lord’s supper, which is generally acknowledged to be great, rests on the very same principle as that which gives importance to infant baptism. Thus it was also with the utility of the passover and circumcision. And we may as well say that the principles of religion might have been effectually taught, and impressed, and transmitted from one generation to another among the posterity of Abraham, without the passover, or circumcision, or any of their sacred rites; and that the principles of the Christian religion might be

effectually taught and impressed, and its motives rendered sufficiently powerful, without the Lord's supper, as to say that the influence of such a rite as infant baptism is unnecessary, and that parents will be as likely to feel their obligations, and attend to their duties, without it, as with it. The experience of the world is in favour of visible signs and tokens, of public rites and observances. The human mind requires them, as means of inculcating moral and religious truth. To undervalue them would be a discredit to our understanding; and to neglect them, an injury to our moral feelings,"* and, we may add, a reflection upon the wisdom of the past dispensations of God.

7. Infant baptism is suited to the import and ends of the ordinance of Christian baptism.

It is strange that on so plain a subject as the proper import of baptism there should have been so much diversity of opinion. I cannot see why men should dispute with so much pertinacity over this subject as has been exhibited by many authors. Verily the whole subject is comprised within a limited compass. The difficulty arises wholly from a misapprehension of the phraseology of Scripture; in applying terms which are used in hortatory style, and for the purpose of moral suasion, as if they were elaborated with critical precision and dull correctness, to fit a system of didactical divinity. Baptism is frequently alluded to in the New Testament for the purpose of deducing an argument, or of sanctioning an argument for the fidelity and holiness of Christians, and in such a popular strain of exhortation we must not look for that precision in the use of words, or that critical order and exactness of ideas, as we expect to find in a close argument, or a set treatise. I do not make these remarks with a view to unhinge the mind of the reader, and to create the impression that the language of Scripture is indefinite; on the contrary, I urge them only on the ground of just criticism. The Baptists insist that baptism is "everywhere regarded as *a public profession of faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ"—that by baptism we take upon ourselves a voluntary and "sacred obligation, in the presence of God, to maintain a good conscience, to be watchful against sin, and to strive after holiness." They hold also that "the New Testament

* Dr. Woods on Infant Baptism, pp. 166, 167.

represents baptism to be emblematical of the death and resurrection of Christ;" and also to be "significant of the belief of the subject of it, *in the resurrection of the body,*" &c. And it is asked, "What avails all this fulness of meaning, this richness and preciousness of instruction in the gospel ordinance, if it is to be thrown away upon unconscious infancy? But if *only those who believe* are proper recipients of the ordinance, then indeed can we perceive it to be instructive, impressive, and delightful."*

These views, which are common to Baptist authors, we conceive to result from an erroneous construction of the language of Scripture. The truth is, baptism imports inward purity, and is an external token that the subject belongs to the covenant of grace. In this sense it most fitly applies to infants; and where those persons who have been baptized in infancy attain to years and understanding, and are taught the nature of baptism, nothing can be more natural for them to infer, or obvious, in fact, than that their baptism imports an obligation of voluntary and perpetual devotion to God. To the infant, as to the adult, it primarily denotes that the subject is interested in the gracious provisions of the covenant; and from this generic and primary sense it is easy, and natural, and proper, to make specific deductions to sanction duties that belong to adult age, in an exhortation, or a moral inculcation addressed to an adult. All this would not at all disparage the entire and perfect fitness of baptism to infants.

Take the case of circumcision. That it had a spiritual meaning—that it imported to the adult, "the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh"—I see not how any one can deny. Yet it was applicable to infants. It denoted entire devotion to God: "The Lord will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." To Abraham it was a "seal of the righteousness of faith." Yet infants were circumcised. Could they "love the Lord their God with all their heart?" Could they believe? They were in a state of grace, but it could not be said with propriety that they "loved the Lord"—that they had "put off the body of sin"—or that they believed. But the fact that they were subjects of grace; that they belonged to the covenant; was enough

* Jewett on Baptism, pp. 86-89.

to constitute a fitness for circumcision; and afterward, in adult age, it was easy to perceive that circumcision bound them to a holy life. Nor were their obligations to holiness, arising from their circumcision, less sacred, or less obvious and binding, because their circumcision was performed in infancy. So is it with baptism. The analogy holds perfectly good, and forms an unanswerable refutation of all such objections as those above mentioned. (See my Treatise on the Mode, &c., of Baptism, chap. x.)

It is strange, indeed, that the Protestant Episcopal Church should have heedlessly rushed into this very error, namely, that baptism is a profession of faith; and then have trusted to the strength of their doctrine of sponsors in baptism for their escape from the absurd consequences of this admission. Bishop Hopkins, of the diocese of Vermont, says,—

“But how does this requisition of repentance and faith before baptism apply to the case of infants? We answer, that it does not apply at all; *for infants are baptized upon the repentance and faith of others*, under the solemn obligation, nevertheless, of exercising both these graces, so soon as they attain to years of sufficient discretion. . . . We find, then, that, according to the doctrine of the [Protestant E.] Church, baptism is the ordinance appointed by the Lord for admitting sinners into his kingdom, as his regenerate, adopted children . . . *that in the case of infants they are adopted through the repentance and faith of those who present them to the Redeemer; which is available before God, until they are capable of repenting and believing for themselves.*”*

Nor is the Protestant E. Church alone in this belief. Others have followed the same phantom. It were easy to quote authors, but we adduce but one, and we select him from the modern Calvinistic school. Dr. Miller says,—

“After all, the whole weight of the objection,† in this case, is founded on an entire forgetfulness of the main principle of the Pedobaptist system. It is forgotten that

* Primitive Church compared with the Protestant Episcopal Church, pp. 23, 24.

† The objection which the author is answering is, “That infants are not capable of those spiritual acts or exercises which the New Testament requires in order to baptism.”

in every case of infant baptism faith is required, and, if the parents be sincere, is actually exercised. *But it is required of the parents, and not of the children.* So that, if the parent really present his child in faith, the spirit of the ordinance is entirely met and answered.* Does our author mean to say, that faith is required of the parents *in behalf* of the children?

We would seriously inquire what this vicarious repentance and faith mean? Is it assumed that infants have need of repentance and faith in order to salvation, and that, being incapable of performing these acts themselves, their performance by proxy becomes acceptable to God? What, then, becomes of those children who have no sponsors or pious parents to repent for them? Or are repentance and faith only necessary to baptism, and *not* necessary to the salvation of the infant? Besides, how is it that a being is capable of sinning, who, at the same time, has not the constitutional faculties necessary to repentance? Have infants sinned, that they need to repent? Or do they need some one to repent of Adam's sin, and then transfer such repentance to their account?

But all this theory is singularly at variance with God's word, and the principles of his moral government. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." There is no sinning by proxy, and there is no repenting by proxy. God requires repentance of no being in the universe but the sinner, and he will accept of no repentance, or faith, at the hand of any other being in lieu of the sinner. This idea of the transfer of moral virtues is as absurd in philosophy as it has ever been monstrous in divinity. See Ezek. xviii, 2-4. It is unaccountable that thinking men should have rushed into these delusions—that they should not have scanned the philosophy of baptism with a happier discrimination. One would suppose that their own absurdities would react upon the mind so as to produce conviction of the truth. Baptism, it is said, imports "a profession of faith," "is emblematical of a burial and resurrection," is a profession of "faith in the resurrection of the dead," and signifies the blessings of "pardon," "adoption," and "resurrection to life."† And what else? In thus attempting to prove every

* On Infant Baptism, p. 40.

† See Dick's Theol., vol. ii, pp. 387-389, and Willett on Baptism.

thing, we prove nothing. Baptism truly stands connected with many of these blessings, in the practical exhortations and admonitions of the apostles. But it is easy to perceive that all these significations are deduced from that one pervading, original, generical idea,—*the complete regeneration of the inward man*. We do not, however, believe that baptism ever imports a burial and resurrection; and as to its denoting faith in the resurrection of the dead, founded on that obscure passage, 1 Cor. xv, 29, it is enough to say that *οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν* (translated, *who are baptized for the dead*) is too dubious, as to its real application, to be pressed into this argument.

How, then, can baptism be made to signify, primarily, any of the means, accidents, or consequences of salvation? The moment this liberty is taken, the imaginations and conceits of men are permitted to take their range, and the simplicity, beauty, and certainty of the import of the ordinance are impaired. But if baptism import regeneration—inward purity, and conformity to God—if it be an outward sign of this moral state—then, manifestly it is as applicable to infants as to adults, and cannot be any specific token or profession of “faith.” It is true, faith is implied in this moral state in the case of every adult, and so also are repentance, godly sorrow for sin, and prayer. And faith is no more necessary to the justification of the adult sinner, than prayer, confession of sin, and godly sorrow. Why, then, in the nature of the case, should baptism import, distinctively and exclusively, one of these exercises any more than the other? But is there not the veriest absurdity in the supposition that baptism is a “public profession of faith?”—that applying water to a person, in any form, should be made to represent *an act of the mind*? Water is a natural and fit emblem of *purity*, and moral purity may imply, as it does in the case of adults, an act, or acts of the mind; but is water a natural and fit emblem of any mental act or exercise? It has never been regarded so, and the supposition is too preposterous and absurd to be harboured for a moment. Faith is an act of the mind. It is not in itself a virtue, nor is the profession of it in itself a virtue, but a relative virtue is ascribed to each. They do not, therefore, either of them, deserve to be the grand original, emblematical idea

of baptism. Moreover, faith does not need a separate and solemn ordinance of religion for the mere purpose of *declaring* it to the world. Such a profession is more appropriately made in another form;—"With the *mouth* confession is made unto salvation," and by the "*works*" faith can be clearly attested. But relationship to the church of God, claimed and conceded on the ground of being in a state of grace and reconciliation with God, is not so attested by the appointment of God.

If our opponents use faith as synonymous with regeneration, why, then, the controversy is at an end. It is the *thing* we contend for, *not* the name. And how explicit is the evidence of Scripture on this point! Take a perfectly parallel case. Paul says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. . . . And he received the sign of circumcision, a SEAL of the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the faith which he had." Rom. iv, 3, 11. But why was not circumcision a "sign" and "seal" of *faith* by which he became righteous? This would have been in exact accordance with the hypothesis we are opposing. But God ordained it to be a sign and seal of *righteousness*; which, in Abraham, was obtained through "faith," but in infants is wrought by the agency of God *without* faith. We say, then, that faith is made prominent in the New Testament, in connection with adult baptism, because with all adults it is an indispensable prerequisite to baptism—being, with such, a prominent condition of regeneration. It is its connection with regeneration that gives it all its importance as a prerequisite to baptism. If, therefore, regeneration could be obtained without faith, baptism would be equally appropriate, and faith might be altogether dispensed with as a prerequisite to the consecrating rite. It is by making faith to assume the importance and character of regeneration that it is made, *per se*, a prerequisite to baptism, whereas it is made, in fact, a prerequisite only by circumstances. It is insisted upon, not on its own account, but solely in view of its relative importance, as a condition of regeneration.

CHAPTER V.

HISTORICAL ARGUMENT.

SECTION I.

1. It becomes important to inquire into the ancient usage of the Christian church in reference to baptizing infants; not because this argument is fundamental in the nature of the case, but because of its strong collateral bearing upon the point. We go to the records of church history, not to prove the primary obligation of infant baptism,—this must be proved from the Bible,—but to prove its *antiquity*—its contiguity to the age of the apostles. And if it can be clearly and satisfactorily shown to have been the universal practice of the Christian church from the very times of the apostles,—if it were a doctrine of primitive Christianity,—the presumption is strong, and amounts to evidence almost irresistible, that the apostles themselves authorized the practice. We readily concede that mere antiquity cannot prove any doctrine to be true, or any practice to be binding on us. But if we should find a practice which a candid and close examination of Scripture would lead us to consider obligatory; which at least was not forbidden by the letter or spirit of revelation; and which had been the uniform practice of the church from the earliest times; which the church generally regarded as an apostolic commandment; which many of their most learned doctors had directly declared to be such; which was not contradicted by any heresy or schism—any individual or body of men—for one thousand years after the apostles; which does not necessarily involve an absurdity; I say, if the apostolic antiquity of a practice could be proved under such circumstances, it would be perhaps unreasonable, if it were even possible, for a person to deny its apostolic authority. This is the case with infant baptism, only the Scriptural argument is far more decisive and satisfactory than is here stated.

The force of an argument derived from tradition in support of any doctrine of religion, and the circumstances under which such an argument becomes admissible, are clearly defined by Bishop Henry U. Onderdonk, of Penn-

sylvania, in his charge to the clergy. The principles which he lays down are the following:—"1. If any tradition be in anywise contrary to Scripture, it is void; the greater authority cancelling the less when in opposition to it. 2. If there be an absolutely unquestioned tradition, clearly traceable to the apostolic age, the matter of which is asserted in Scripture also, the authority in the case must be accounted twofold; that of the written word, however, being from its nature the more excellent of the two. 3. If there be an absolutely unquestioned tradition, the matter of which is not found in Scripture, or believed not to be there, yet in no degree contrary to Scripture, and clearly traceable to the apostolic age, it must be regarded as having such authority without Scripture as belongs to the case.* Of this, the substitution of the Lord's day for the old sabbath will probably be deemed the best example, by those who think that they do not find Scriptural warrant for the change," &c.

If, then, a doctrine be sustained by an unquestionable tradition from the apostles, and if that doctrine be not contradicted by Scripture, but on the contrary strong intimations are given of its truth therein, although it may not be expressly declared, that doctrine is to be considered as possessing suitable and adequate authority. Yet infant baptism has far superior authority to this, as the Bible argument is more clear and satisfactory than here stated.

This, then, is the nature of the argument we propose to consider in this chapter. We adduce the testimony of the Christian fathers and early councils to prove the fact of the antiquity of infant baptism; and having fixed the date of the practice coeval with the times of the apostles, we then advance from this ascertained fact to the argument, namely, if it was handed down to us *from the very times* of the apostles, all the circumstances of the case combine to prove that it was delivered to the first churches *by apostolic authority*.

* We cannot follow the bishop in this last particular, if we understand him. We do not believe any doctrine or duty, further than relates to church government, is fully sustained by the sole authority of tradition, however "unquestionable," joined to the mere silence of Scripture. Mr. Cruden on this point is very clear. See his Concordance, Article TRADITION.

2. It will be seen that the testimony of Irenæus, in the following section, turns upon the supposition that *renascor*, *to be regenerated*, means, or implies, *to be baptized*. This, to an uninformed reader, who knows nothing of the use of these words in ancient times, may appear unwarrantable, and may, at first sight, tend to prejudice our argument with such. It is, therefore, proper to state, in this place, that *regeneration* was often used by the fathers to signify *baptism*. It should be recollected that the Scriptures use a language in some sense calculated to bring about such a *usus* of terms. Jesus Christ has said, “*ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος* *except any person be generated, or born by water and the Spirit,*” &c., John iii, 5. Paul calls Christian baptism, “*the washing of regeneration,*” and says we are saved “*διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας* *by the washing of regeneration,* and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,” Titus iii, 5. So the Jews, in conformity to the same law of language, called the water employed in ceremonial rites, the “*water of purification,*” of “*separation,*” &c. The Jews, at the time of Christ, were accustomed to call that proselyte who had been baptized, “*born again.*” The proselyte was required to renounce all his former customs, and even his relations, his parents, and friends, and to assume new ones, more compatible with his new religious profession and character. He was baptized in token of having put off all these, and of having been purified from them. The change was great; it was complete and universal, and they called it “*the new birth,*” or *regeneration*. So says Maimonides, “*The Gentile that is made a proselyte . . . behold, he is like a child newly born.*” So the Christian fathers regarded a person *baptized* as being *newly born*; and this also is an appellation given to disciples in the New Testament. So Peter says, “*As newly born babes,*” &c. It is easy then to perceive how the early church came to use *regeneration* so as to include, by that term, *water baptism*.

Justin Martyr, in his first Apology, describing the manner of making Christian disciples, says, concerning their baptism,—

“*We bring them to some place where there is water, καὶ τροπον αναγεννησεως ὃν καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ ἀνεγεννηθημεν, ἀναγεννῶνται* *and they are regenerated by the same*

way of regeneration by which we were regenerated; for they are washed with water [that is, baptized] in the name of God the Father and Lord of all things, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ says, 'Except ye be regenerated, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' And that we shall obtain forgiveness of the sins in which we have lived, *by or in water*, [*εν τω υδατι*,] there is invoked over him that has a mind to be *regenerated* [*αναγεννηθηναι*] the name of God, the Father and Lord of all things and this washing [or baptism] is called the enlightening," &c.

Irenæus says, "When Christ gave to his apostles the commission of *regenerating* unto God, (regenerationis in Deum,) he said unto them, 'Go and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'"

Gregory Nazianzen says to the baptized person, to deter him from falling back into sin, "*ουκ ουσης δευτερας αναγεννησεως* there is not another *regeneration* afterward to be had, though it be sought with never so much crying and tears;" and yet grants, in the very next words, that repentance may be exercised after baptism; but he means that *baptism* is not to be repeated.

St. Austin being asked, whether a parent carrying his child, which had been baptized, to the heathen sacrifices, does thereby obliterate the benefit of his baptism, says, "An infant does never lose the grace of Christ, which he has once received, but by his own sinful deeds, if when he grows up he proves so wicked: for then he will begin to have sins of his own, quæ non regeneratione auferantur, sed alid curatione sanentur, which are not removed by *regeneration*, [*baptism*,] but will be healed by some other method."

St. Hierom, discoursing in praise of virginity, "Christ was-born of a virgin, and *regenerated* [that is, *baptized*] by a virgin;" alluding to John Baptist, who was unmarried.

St. Austin calls the persons by whose means infants are *baptized*, those by whom they are *regenerated*; *cos per quos renascuntur*.*

Mr. Whiston, a learned Baptist, says, "That regenera-

* Wall's History of Infant Baptism, part i, cap. ii, sec. 4, 5, and cap. iii, iv.

tion is here, [in John iii, 5,] and elsewhere, (generally, if not constantly,) used with relation to baptismal regeneration, is undeniable;" and adds, "not as supposing the bare outward ceremony to deserve that name."*

"The ancient doctors of the church," says Dr. Waterland, "in explaining regeneration, were wont to consider the *spirit* and the *water* under the lively emblem of a *conjugal* union, as the two *parents*; and the new-born Christian as the offspring of both. . . . Whatever aptness or justness there may or may not be in the *similitude*, yet one thing is certain, that the ancients took *baptism* into their notion of *regeneration*."†

In accordance with this sense the reader is to understand the quotation from Irenæus, to be hereafter given.

Dr. Gale, in his Reflections upon Mr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism, has attempted to evade the force of this, by showing that regeneration does not always mean baptism, and also that it is not used in the above particular instances as a perfect synonym of baptism.‡ But it is easy to perceive that he mistook the real question, and Mr. Wall has not failed to discover his vulnerable positions.§ The question is not, whether regeneration is baptism, according to the sense of the fathers? but, whether regeneration necessarily *includes* or *implies* baptism? Dr. Gale, in assuming the former, has missed the mark, and Mr. Wall himself is not always sufficiently careful to keep clear distinctions. Dr. Waterland's statement above is as definite and satisfactory as any thing I have ever met with. The fathers *included* baptism in their idea of *regeneration*, but the two terms are not synonymous.

SECTION II.

We now proceed to lay before the reader a just view of the argument for infant baptism, as derived from the testimony of the Christian fathers, during the first four hundred years of the Christian era.||

* Primitive Infant Baptism, p. 7. † On Regeneration, p. 9.

‡ Reflections, &c., pp. 481-483, 514, &c.

§ Defence, &c., p. 363, &c.

|| As the following summary of the argument from church history is chiefly derived from Mr. Wall's well-known and valuable History

1. Justin Martyr, who was a learned Samaritan, was converted to Christianity about A. D. 133, and wrote about forty years after the death of St. John, who was the last of the apostles. Justin says, "We also, who by him have had access to God, have not received this carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision, which Enoch, and those like him, observed. And we have received it by baptism, by the mercy of God, because we were sinners: and it is enjoined upon all persons to receive it in the same way." Again: "We are circumcised by baptism, with Christ's circumcision."* Again: "Many persons among us, of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were *discipled* (*εμαθητευθησαν*) to Christ in their childhood, (*εκ παιδων*,) do continue uncorrupted."†

The testimony of this most ancient father may be thus summed up:—

1.) He maintains that baptism answers to circumcision. This admission, especially in a dialogue with a Jew, such as Trypho was, and with a professed intention of justifying the Christians in their neglect of Jewish circumcision, can be regarded in no other light than that of an acknowledgment of infant baptism. If baptism succeed to circumcision; if it be fitly called *τη περιτομη του Χριστου* the *Christian circumcision*, or, as Justin here calls it, *πνευματικην*

of Infant Baptism, I deem it proper, for the sake of those who may not be acquainted with this celebrated work, to give the following notice of it. Dr. Wall is regarded as a very correct and judicious historian. He has written with great ability, candour, and impartiality.

"On Feb. 9, 1705, the clergy of England, assembled in general convention, 'ordered, that the thanks of this house be given to Mr. Wall, vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, for the learned and excellent book he hath lately written concerning infant baptism, and that a committee be appointed to acquaint him with the same.' Dr. Atterbury, a leading member in said convention, says, 'that the History of Infant Baptism was a book, for which the author deserved the thanks, not of the English clergy alone, but of all churches.' Mr. Whiston, also, a very learned man, well acquainted with the writings of the fathers of the four first centuries, and a professed Baptist, in his address to the people of that denomination, declares to them, 'that Dr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism, as to facts, appeared to him most accurately done, and might be depended on by the Baptists themselves.'"—*Memoirs of his Life*, part ii, p. 461; quoted by Dr. Ridgeley, *Body of Divinity*, vol. iv, p. 209, *note*. See also Advertisement to Mr. Cotton's edition of Dr. Wall's History, &c., 4 vols., 8vo. Oxford.

* Dialogue with Trypho.

† Apologia Prima.

περιτομην spiritual circumcision, it is plain that its application to infants must be similar now to what it anciently was.

But it must be distinctly kept in mind that Justin is not speaking here either of *external* circumcision, or of *external* baptism, exclusively, but of the *spiritual import* of these ordinances. He speaks of them in their emblematical sense, but of course the external ordinance is implied. If this be remembered, the reader will find a ready solution of all the learned and laboured objections of Dr. Gale.* On this point Mr. Wall's expressions appear sufficiently guarded, who says, that in this place, from Justin, and also in Col. ii, 11, 12, circumcision "refers both to the *inward* and *outward* part of baptism;" whereof the *inward* part is done *without hands*: and accordingly the ancients were wont to call baptism, *περιτομην αχειροποιητον* "*the circumcision made without hands.*"†

2.) Justin predicates the *necessity* of baptism, of the common corruption of our natures. . . . This is more clearly shown in other parts of his writings. This is not only a primitive, but it is a Scriptural doctrine; and it argues equally strong in favour of infant, as for adult baptism.

Here, however, the reader must remember, that the point is not whether Justin conceived a right opinion of the necessity of infant baptism, but the fact that he had such an opinion, argues equally in favour of infant, as of adult baptism; and it is the *fact* of infant baptism, and not its *reasonableness*, that we are now proving.

3.) He expressly declares that many persons in his day, of sixty and seventy years old, were made disciples in childhood. The word rendered *made disciples*, is the same as in Matt. xxviii, 19, where our Saviour commands the apostles to go "*make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them," &c. This shows that children were discipled, (and, if so, baptized of course,) as well as adults; and these persons of whom Justin speaks, being now sixty and seventy years old, might have been baptized by the apostles themselves, as they certainly were baptized long before John died. We merely add, in reference to this

* Reflections on Mr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism, pp. 395, 396, 466-477.

† History of Infant Baptism, part i, cap. ii, sec. 2.

father, in the words of Mr. Waddington, "As Justin flourished only one century after the preaching of Christ, we are not extending the value of tradition beyond its just limits, when we consider his opinions as receiving some additional weight from their contiguity to the apostolical times."*

2. Irenæus was bishop of Lyons (in France) about A. D. 178, and consequently flourished about seventy years after the death of the apostle John. Some suppose he was born four years previous to the death of John, but it was not far from the time of that event, either way, that we are to reckon the date of his birth. Irenæus, though afterward bishop of a western church, was educated in Asia, where St. John had lived and died. In early life he was accustomed to hear Polycarp converse of the apostle John. Polycarp was John's companion, and was appointed by that apostle to be bishop of the church at Smyrna; (see Rev. ii, 8.) In his old age Irenæus speaking of Polycarp, says, "I remember the things that were done then better than I do those of later times, so that I could describe the place where he sat, and his going out, and coming in; his manner of life, his features, his discourse to the people concerning the conversation he had had with John, [the apostle,] and others that had seen our Lord; how he rehearsed their discourses, and what he had heard them that were eye-witnesses of the Word of life, say of our Lord, and of his miracles and doctrine: all agreeable to the Scriptures."† Such was the proximity of this father to the apostles and to Christ. The passage we quote from him is the following:—

"For he [Christ] came to save all persons by himself: all, I say, *qui per eum RENASCUNTUR in Deum; infantes, et parvulos, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores; who by him are REGENERATED [that is, baptized] to God; infants, and little ones, and children, and youth, and elder persons.*"‡

To appreciate the force of this passage the reader must remember,—

1.) The Christian fathers often used the word *regeneration* as synonymous with, or as including, *baptism*. This

* History of the Church, p. 81.

† Wall's History of Infant Baptism, p. 21. See Euseb. Hist., lib. v, cap. xix.

‡ Second Book against Heresies.

no one will doubt who is acquainted with their writings, or who candidly looks at the evidence already adduced in its support, in a previous section of this chapter. It was a common mode of speaking of baptism, and we are authorized, therefore, to take the testimony of Irenæus in the case, as positive.

2.) Consider his proximity to the apostles, and how little probability there is that he has, in this matter, deviated from their rule.

3.) What he says, we are to receive, not as his private opinion merely, but as the doctrine of the church in his time. His private opinion might be more easily questioned, as to its truth or propriety, as he was but a fallible man, though a firm Christian. But his testimony concerning what the church in his age believed, is above impeachment, and cannot be questioned. And it is to this point that we especially direct the attention of the reader.*

3. Tertullian flourished about one hundred years after the apostles. He was made presbyter of the church at Carthage about A. D. 192. He was a man of very irregular and contradictory principles and habits, possessing a sour, monastic spirit. "Tertullian is described by Jerome as 'a man of eager and violent temper;' and he appears to have possessed the usual vice of such a temperament—inconstancy. The same is the character of his writings; they contain some irregular eloquence; much confidence of assertion, and a mixture of good with very bad reasoning. He wrote many tracts against heretics, and then

* The reader will be astonished to learn, that on this single quotation, from Irenæus, Dr. Gale has expended forty-one octavo pages in "Reflections," with a view to wrest it from the hands of Pedobaptists; and Mr. Wall has devoted no less than eighty-four pages, octavo, in his "Defence," in order to restore the passage to the Pedobaptist cause. It will not be expected of me to give even a syllabus of the arguments *pro* and *con* in this small treatise. Mr. Gale, apprized that this passage from Irenæus is important, attempts to invalidate its force, 1. By denying its *genuineness*; 2. By asserting that *regeneration* does not *always* mean, or imply, *baptism*. 3. That *infants*, according to the *usus* of the term by Irenæus, are persons under ten years of age. The arguments on either side are too lengthy to be cited, even in a condensed form, with any satisfaction to the reader. Those who wish to see the subject exhausted, and more than exhausted, and, withal, the entire force of the passage in favour of Pedobaptism fully vindicated, can consult Mr. Wall's Defence, &c., pp. 321-405; Hist., p. 77, &c.

adopted the opinions of the least rational of all heretics, the Montanists, [so called from one Montanus, who gave himself out to be the Paraclete, or Comforter, promised by our Saviour.] But in spite of many imperfections, his genius, his zeal, and his industry, place him at the head of the Latin fathers of that period. His moral writings must have been eminently serviceable to converts who had been educated with no fixed principles of morality; and his 'Apology' is among the most valuable monuments of early Christianity.* I have said thus much for the reader's better understanding of Tertullian's character, and for his better appreciation of his testimony which is to follow. I must add, moreover, that Tertullian imbibed an error, which now began more than ever to prevail in the church, and which gave a peculiar turn to his notions on infant baptism. The error which I refer to was, that baptism removed all previous guilt, and hence, as the newly baptized person was deemed pure, and fitted to enter paradise, so the practice of deferring baptism until just before death grew to be prevalent. Tertullian was a strenuous advocate of this practice, as will appear in the quotation we shall make from his writings, and yet, with characteristic inconsistency, he elsewhere as vehemently urges baptism without delay. He says,—

“But they whose duty it is to administer baptism are to know that it must not be given rashly. ‘Give to every one that asketh thee,’ has its proper subject, and relates to alms-giving: but that command rather is to be here considered, ‘Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine.’ And that [command also,] ‘Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's faults.’ Therefore, according to every one's condition and disposition, and also their age, the delaying of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of little children. For what need is there that the godfathers should be brought into danger? because they may either fail of their promise by death, or they may be mistaken by a child's proving of wicked disposition. Our Lord says, indeed, ‘Do not forbid them to come to me.’ Therefore let them come when they are grown up: let them come when they understand: when they are instructed whither

* Waddington's Church History, p. 52.

it is that they come: let them be made Christians when they can know Christ. What need their guiltless age make such haste to the forgiveness of sins? Men will proceed very warily in worldly things: and he that should not have earthly goods committed to him, yet may he have heavenly. Let them know how to desire this salvation, that you may appear to have given to one that asketh."*

In regard to this testimony of Tertullian, the reader will notice,—

1.) The simple fact that he speaks of infant baptism as a well-known and general practice in his day—proves it to have been instituted long before his day. If Tertullian opposed infant baptism, then it is incontestible that infant baptism existed. This is the best kind of proof we could possibly have. But if the practice of infant baptism existed before the days of Tertullian, that is, within less than one hundred years after the death of the apostle John, when, we ask, did it commence? and with whom did it originate? Can our opponents tell us? Could such a practice, which affects (in the estimation of our opponents at least) the essential character of the ordinance as well as that of the church,—could such a practice, I say, originate in merely human authority, and become general over Europe, Western Asia, and Northern and Eastern Africa, within less than a single century after the apostles, and yet its novelty not be objected to by one who opposed the practice? Tertullian was, as we have seen, opposing, under certain circumstances, infant baptism. Now, whatever would make for his argument, we know he would have had no scruples in using. Many pitiful and puerile things we know he did say, for want of better material to work with. Could he have found more powerful and plausible weapons at hand, unquestionably he would have used them. Suppose, then, infant baptism had been an invention of some doctor, or doctors, in the church, since the days of St. John; such a circumstance, had it been true, could not have escaped the knowledge of such a man as Tertullian, and had he been knowing to such a fact, he certainly would not have failed to urge it. Why, then, did he not come out at once, and say, "First of all, this doctrine of infant baptism is a novel thing, and without

* Tertull. de Baptismo.

any authority whatever from Christ and his apostles; therefore it ought to be abandoned, and baptism deferred to adult age?" Why, I say, did he not urge its *novelty*, and its utter want of Scriptural authority, against its being practised? Why did he not point out the innovator who first introduced the custom, and brand him as a heretic? All this would have been directly to his purpose, and would have weighed a thousand times more in argument than the contemptible puerilities over which he makes a pitiful display of reasoning. Why, then, did he not use these important facts? Why? To this there can be but one answer: Because no such facts existed in truth—because infant baptism bore a date and an authority coeval and coequal to the date and authority of adult Christian baptism.

2.) It is a matter of still further moment to attend to the *principle* on which Tertullian opposed infant baptism. Indeed, strictly speaking, he did not oppose it. Infant baptism, *as such*, he did not oppose. His opposition to it rested, primarily, on the ground that it was better to defer baptism, in all cases, till just before death, or till the individual was beyond the reach of peculiar temptation; and this notion arose out of the prevailing belief that baptism washed away all previous guilt, and not from any objection to infant baptism *per se*. This made sin after baptism appear to them the more terrible, inasmuch as the ordinance could not be repeated. On the same principle Tertullian advises all single persons, widows, &c., to defer baptism until they are either married, or confirmed in continence, lest they, being exposed to temptation, should fall into sin. "They that understand the weight of baptism," says he, "will rather dread the *receiving* it than the *delaying* it." In this connection he is not speaking of infant baptism exclusively, nor of the delay of infant baptism only, but of the delay of baptism in all cases where there is no immediate expectation of death, and where there is any peculiar danger from temptation. Hear him: "Therefore, ACCORDING TO EVERY ONE'S CONDITION AND DISPOSITION, AND ALSO THEIR AGE, THE DELAYING OF BAPTISM IS MORE PROFITABLE." But where there is an approach of death, or a case of necessity, he strongly advocates even lay baptism, and says, if a person "neglects at such

a time to do what he lawfully may, (that is, to baptize, or to discharge the office of a bishop toward the person in necessity,) he will be guilty of the person's perdition." From this view, then, of Tertullian's peculiar notions respecting the ordinance of baptism, the *character* of his far-famed opposition to infant baptism assumes quite another aspect. It is true that he advances arguments (such as they are) against the baptism of infants; but at the foundation of all his objections to this practice lay this primary error, namely, that baptism, in all cases, should be delayed, unless a case of clear necessity urged its prompt administration, and then, even lay baptism was to be tolerated, if a bishop or presbyter could not be procured. It was not infant baptism, in itself considered, that he really opposed, but only an improper *haste* in receiving the ordinance, which infant baptism seemed to him to indicate, but to indicate no more, according to his own showing, than baptism in many cases in adult age, for he says, after laying down his reasons for deferring infant baptism,—“FOR NO LESS REASON unmarried persons ought to be deferred, who are likely to come into temptation,” &c. And in confirmation of this view, we may add that the older editions of Tertullian's writings, instead of the clause above quoted, “For what need is there that godfathers should be brought into danger?” &c., it reads, “What occasion is there, *except in case of necessity*, that godfathers should be brought into danger?” &c.* This, and many other corroborating circumstances, are adduced by Mr. Wall. But enough has been said on this point.

3.) The reader must here also recollect, that it is not the individual opinion of Tertullian that gives an importance to his testimony on this point, but it is his testimony as to what were the opinions and practices of his age that attaches a value to his statements. Even his errors and absurdities are equally to our purpose, for we are not now proving the reasonableness of infant baptism, but its antiquity. This we have now proved. That is, Tertullian's testimony alone proves that it was much older than his day, and if so, it is impossible to date it later than the apostles and Christ. For when, and where, we again ask,

* See a note by Mr. Cotton, in his edition of Wall's History, vol. iv, pp. 412, 413.

did it arise? Where is the account of the controversy in the church, upon the occasion of its first introduction? Could it have been introduced without producing the slightest shock to the previous faith of the Christian church? Nay, without even exciting sufficient attention to secure from some of the historians and writers of that age a bare mention of its origin? Let those who can believe without evidence, or, rather, against evidence, credit this fiction.

4. Origen was born A. D. 185. He descended from a long line of Christian ancestry, and his father suffered martyrdom A. D. 202, when Origen was but seventeen years old. He was a native of Egypt, and was learned in all the knowledge and philosophy of the times. He was early called into the service of the church, and his learning, and the success of his labours, not only revived greatly the suffering church, but procured for himself a first rank in the list of the early fathers. Origen had his errors, as was the case also with all the fathers of the Christian church, but he is not accused of any error on the subject of baptism by the men of his times. He held, on this subject, what was, in his day, the orthodox doctrine. He says,—

“Besides all this [evidence of original sin,] let it be considered what is the reason that whereas the baptism of the church is given for forgiveness of sins, *secundum ecclesiæ observantiam etiam parvulis baptismum dari, infants also, according to the usage of the church, are baptized*: when, if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be superfluous to them.”* Again:—

“Infants are baptized for the remission of sins. Of what sins? or when have they sinned? Or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to that sense we mentioned even now, [namely,] ‘None is free from pollution though his life be but of the length of a single day upon the earth.’ And because by the sacrament of baptism our native pollution is taken away, therefore infants may be baptized. *Parvuli baptizantur in remissionem peccatorum. . . . Et quia per baptismum sacra-*

* Eighth Homily on Leviticus.

mentum nativitatis sordes deponuntur, propterea baptizantur parvuli.”*

In another place, speaking of original sin, and of its affecting infants, he says, “Pro hoc ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam parvulis baptismum dare: *For this [cause] the church received from the apostles a tradition [that is, an order] even to give baptism to infants.* For they to whom the divine mysteries were committed knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by *water and the Spirit.*”†

There are other parts of Origen’s writings which would also serve our purpose, but we have quoted sufficiently to answer our present demand, and to satisfy the reader of the decided bearing of the testimony of this father. In summing up the evidence of the foregoing quotations, the reader will remember,—

1.) Origen was born only about eighty-five years after the death of St. John. At this distance of time many of the events that transpired in the times of Christ and his apostles must have been still measurably fresh. It was a remove of only two generations from the days of the founders of Christianity. It is more than probable that Origen’s grandfather saw and conversed with some of the apostles, or, at least, it is certain he lived in their day. Here, then, is a contiguity that affords this Christian father large opportunity to know from unwritten and uncorrupted tradition, as well as from the written Scriptures, and other documents, many things that the apostles did and taught.

2.) The reader must recollect that Origen was one of the most learned men of his day, and had access to all the writings of his age.

3.) His orthodoxy, with respect to baptism, was never questioned, so that we are to take his statements as a candid expression of the current and prevailing doctrine of the church in his times, and previous. It is not the private opinion of this father that we are searching out, but it is his testimony, as an author, as to the opinions of the church in his day. And to give a clear and intelligent testimony he was amply prepared. He was born and educated at Alexandria, and “had lived in Greece and at

* Homily on Luke.

† Comment on Epistle to Romans.

Rome, and in Cappadocia and Arabia, and spent the main part of his life in Syria and Palestine."

4.) I merely add, Origen was of Christian parentage. Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, enters into this point particularly. He says, "*the Christian doctrine was conveyed to him from his forefathers;*" or, as Rufinus translates it, "from his grandfathers, and his great-grandfathers."* The Christian ancestry, then, of this father gave him a more important proximity to the apostles, in reference to a true knowledge of apostolical doctrine and practice, than that of any of the preceding fathers. When he says that "the church had received from the apostles a custom or tradition to baptize infants," his testimony is clear, important, and above impeachment, for his Christian ancestry gave him uncommon advantages for knowing, and, as he had no controversy with any one on the subject of infant baptism—as he had no possible interest in making a false statement—as his statement was spontaneous and unbribed—so it should be taken without abatement or gainsaying.

5.) We see, then, a great and learned man, and devoted Christian, whose ancestors were Christians from the days of the apostles, within two hundred years from the death of Christ, and a little over one hundred from that of the apostles, bearing repeated testimony to the fact that infant baptism was the prevalent custom of the church in his age, and that this custom had been received direct from the apostles themselves. Now, upon the supposition that infant baptism had been a recent invention of the church—that it was not handed down from the apostles themselves, we again ask, When and where did it originate? This unwelcome question has never been answered.†

* Wall's History, p. 43.

† Dr. Gale has very hotly contested the admission of Origen's testimony, on the ground that it is not authentic, the most of that father's writings having come down to us only through Latin translations of his original works, some of which are deemed faulty by the learned, in many respects, and Dr. Gale has attempted to invalidate his whole testimony in favour of infant baptism, on the ground of these faults in the translations. I cannot here rehearse the arguments pro and contra; the reader can, if he choose, refer to the works of Drs. Wall and Gale. Dr. Wall has fully shown the unfairness of Dr. Gale's attempt. What is of the most importance for the reader to know is, that the translations of Rufinus, which are those complained of, are generally

5. Cyprian was converted from heathenism to Christianity late in life, and was soon after raised to the see of Carthage, in A. D. 250, by the general approbation. This honour, however, he did not long enjoy, as he fell a martyr to Christianity in A. D. 258. Cyprian was a man of learning, and of amiable and irreproachable character; though less remarkable for his learning than for his piety and humility. In A. D. 253, three years after he was raised to the bishopric of Carthage, a council, composed of sixty-six bishops, was held in that city. This council was convened, according to the usual custom, to consult and determine upon any important concerns that might affect the purity and well-being of the church. Fidus, a country bishop, sent a letter to the council, inquiring, among other matters, whether, in case of necessity, an infant might be baptized before it was eight days old? To this they returned the following answer:—

“Cyprian, and the rest of the bishops who are present at the council, in number sixty-six, to Fidus, our brother, greeting.

“We read your letter, most esteemed brother, in which you write of one Victor, a priest, &c. . . . But to the case of infants: Whereas you judge ‘that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born:’ WE WERE ALL, IN OUR ASSEMBLY,

allowed to give Origen’s sense in the main. They contain the *substance* of that father’s writings. Also, there existed no reason why Rufinus should give a false representation of Origen’s views of infant baptism, except, as he denied (though for the most part secretly during his life) the doctrine of original sin, it would have been much to his interest to have denied infant baptism, if he had dared. But this renders his testimony to infant baptism more clear from suspicion. If Origen had not held to it, Rufinus would not have inserted it in the translation, because it was his interest to deny it.

Besides, the Homily on St. Luke was translated by St. Hierome, whose translation is allowed to be a faithful one. He himself says, that in that translation he had “changed nothing; but expressed every thing as it was in the original.” (See Wall’s History, p. 107, &c., and Defence, pp. 426, 427, &c.) So that the reader may turn back and review the quotation from this part of Origen’s writings, and satisfy himself of the reality of that father’s views on infant baptism. These remarks will enable him to perceive what hard toiling our opponents have to breast the torrent of historical evidence which is against them.

OF A CONTRARY OPINION. For as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind, but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born. For whereas our Lord, in his Gospel, says, 'The Son of man came not to destroy men's souls, [or lives,] but to save them;' as far as lies in us, no soul, if possible, is to be lost. . . . So that we judge that no person is to be hindered from obtaining the grace by the law that is now appointed: and that the spiritual circumcision [that is, *the grace of baptism*] ought not to be impeded by the circumcision that was according to the flesh, [that is, Jewish circumcision,] but that all are to be admitted to the grace of Christ; since Peter, speaking in the Acts of the Apostles, says, 'The Lord has shown me that no person is to be called common or unclean.'

"If any thing could be an obstacle to persons against their obtaining the grace, the adult, and grown, and aged, would be rather hindered by their more grievous sins. If, then, the greatest offenders, and those that have grievously sinned against God before, have, when they afterward come to believe, forgiveness of their sins, and no person is prohibited from baptism and grace; how much less reason is there to refuse an infant, who, being newly born, has no sin, save that being descended from Adam according to the flesh, he has from his very birth contracted the contagion of the death anciently threatened? who comes for this reason more easily to receive forgiveness of sins, because they are not his own, but others' sins that are forgiven him.

"This, therefore, most esteemed brother, was our opinion in the assembly, that it is not for us to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and kind, and affectionate to all. Which rule, as it is to govern universally, so we think it more especially to be observed in reference to infants and persons newly born. To whom our help and the divine mercy is rather to be granted, because by their weeping and wailing at their first entrance into the world, they do intimate nothing so much as that they implore compassion.

"Dearest brother, we wish you always good health."*

* Cyprian's Epistle to Fidus.

Other quotations might be given from this father, but the above is all-sufficient, and our limits do not allow of very extended citations. In order fully to estimate the evidence of this quotation from Cyprian, the reader will please observe,—

1.) The exact point to be established by it is, not what were the opinions of these bishops merely, but, what was the universal usage of the church in those times. It is not a question of *opinion* that we are to settle, but a question of *fact*. It is not, whether infant baptism be right or wrong; but, whether, as a matter of fact, the churches generally believed it to be right, and therefore practised it. The doctrinal opinions of these bishops, though deserving much respect, could not be decisive in the case, but their testimony to the state of opinion and practice in their times is to be received without abatement, and is decisive. These bishops were assembled from different and distant parts. Each one would certainly know what was practised in his own diocese, and he also would know whether such practice accorded with the general usage of the church in Europe and Asia. As they were all approved and devoted men, and especially Cyprian, who was revered and beloved by all for his orthodoxy and piety, and as their decision in this case was never revoked or censured by the church, it is absurd to suppose they spoke any thing but the general faith.

Besides, the question was not, whether infants are to be baptized at all. This nobody disputed. But the question was, *May they, in cases of necessity, be baptized before they are eight days old?*

2.) Consider the means of knowing the truth in the case that this council possessed. They not only were competent to tell what was the practice of their own times in reference to infant baptism, but it is clear that they were amply competent to decide whether that practice was according to the apostles' doctrine and usage. This council was convened only one hundred and eighty-eight years after the death of Paul and Peter, and only about one hundred and fifty years after the death of the apostle John. Now, two, or, at the most, three persons, could have sufficed to hand the true practice of the apostles, touching this subject, to the members who composed this council.

Doubtless many of these bishops were aged men, and if seventy or eighty years of age, might have conversed with men that had seen the apostles, or, at least, that had lived in the apostles' day, and were acquainted with their practice in a matter so important as that of infant baptism. Tradition must have been still fresh, and the fathers, or, at least, the grandfathers, of these bishops must have had personal knowledge of apostolic times. Certainly, in the sixty-six diocesses over which they presided, there must have been many old men whose information on these points was ample, and whose recollection was clear. Take sixty-six intelligent and aged ministers, holding high and responsible offices in the church, and whose very offices, as well as ministerial profession, oblige them to study and understand the history, the doctrines, and the usages of the church—take sixty-six men of this class, I say, in this day, and assemble them together in council, and then propose to them a question, whether it be lawful, according to the doctrine and usage of the church, to do a particular thing or not? I say, would not these men be fully competent to expound the doctrine of the church, so as to decide such a question? I allude now only to questions of *fact*. I need not say that they would be fully competent to such a task. And with all the advantages resulting from the extensive personal knowledge of these African bishops—their access to the records of the church, and to the writings of the earlier fathers—and the fresh gushings of the fountain of traditionary information—I say, with all these advantages, this African council could have been at no loss to understand what was the usage of the church then, and what it had been since the days of the apostles. And let it be remembered,—

3.) That the council were *unanimous* in their decision. “*Not one was of Fidus's mind, that infant baptism must be delayed until the eighth day, in conformity to the law of Jewish circumcision. Much less was there any of opinion that it was not to be used at all.*”

4.) The only question, then, that can possibly arise to occasion the shadow of a doubt as to the apostolical character of this decision, is that which respects the moral honesty, or the true Christian integrity, of these bishops. Have they given us the true doctrine of the apostles, or

have they, with all their advantages of correct information, given us only a figment of superstition, which owes its origin to the apostacy and corruption of the church? I know not that I can better shape a reply to this question than in the language of Dr. Milner. Speaking of this council, he says,—

“Here is an assembly of sixty-six pastors, men of approved fidelity and gravity, who have stood the fiery trial of some of the severest persecutions ever known, and who have testified their love to the Lord Jesus Christ in a more striking manner than any anti-Pedobaptists have had an opportunity of doing in our days; and if we may judge of their religious views by those of Cyprian,—and they are all in perfect harmony with him,—they are not wanting in any fundamental of godliness. No man, in any age, more revered the Scriptures, and made more copious use of them on all occasions, than he did; and, it must be confessed, in the very best manner. For he uses them continually for PRACTICE, not for OSTENTATION; for USE, not for the sake of VICTORY in argument. Before this holy assembly a question is brought,—not whether infants should be baptized at all—none contradicted this,—but whether it is right to baptize them immediately, or on the eighth day? Without a single negative, they all determined to baptize them immediately. This transaction passed in the year two hundred and fifty-three. Let the reader consider: If infant baptism had been an innovation, it must have been now of a considerable standing. The disputes concerning Easter, and other very uninteresting points, show that SUCH an innovation must have formed a remarkable era in the church. The number of heresies and divisions had been very great. Among them all, such a deviation from apostolical practice as this MUST have been remarked. To me it appears impossible to account for this state of things, but on the footing that it had EVER been allowed; and, therefore, that it was the custom of the first churches.”*

6. Optatus, bishop of Melevi, in Numidia, was a person of some note, a man of orthodox faith and genuine piety. He wrote against the Donatists—a schismatical, rather than heretical party in the African church—about A. D. 370.

* History of the Church, cent. iii, chap. xiii.

Mr. Wall places him two hundred and sixty years after the apostles. Among other things he refers to baptism. The question, however, was not, whether infants are to be baptized; but, whether a person, coming over from the Catholic Church to their party, should be considered as baptized, or, (as Mr. Wall sarcastically expresses it,) whether they "must be baptized afresh by some such pure men as the Donatists were." This question, therefore, does not prejudice the cause of infant baptism.

The only quotation from this writer which it concerns us to make is the following. Optatus had been comparing a Christian's putting on Christ at baptism to the putting on of a garment; and had compared Christ, so put on, to a garment, &c. He then adds:—

"But lest any one should say, I speak irreverently, in calling Christ a garment, let him read what the apostle says, 'As many of you as have been baptized in the name of Christ, have put on Christ.' O what a garment is this, that is always one, and never renewed; that decently fits all ages and all forms: it is neither plaited for infants, nor stretched for men, and without alteration is suitable to women."*

All I wish to notice, in connection with this citation, is the familiar manner in which infant baptism is referred to. Nothing can more clearly point out the settled unanimity of faith in the church, touching this subject, than that easy, familiar, and matter-of-course way of alluding to it, that seems to take for granted that all parties, whether Catholics or schismatics, orthodox or heretics, believed and practised alike.

7. Gregory, commonly called Gregory Nazianzen, was born at Arianzum, an obscure village in the province of Cappadocia, about A. D. 320. He was a man of great learning, and, though inclined to the ascetic life, was raised in succession to the sees of Sasimi, Nazianzus, and Constantinople. He was an intimate friend of St. Basil. He died in A. D. 389. The testimony of Gregory, in favour of infant baptism, is clear and abundant. In his eulogy upon St. Basil, his intimate friend, (who, though the younger, died before Gregory,) he relates the baptism

* Fifth book concerning the Schism of the Donatists.

of that father in his infancy, as one of the commendable things in his history. With this account we shall not detain the reader. Before citing from this author, it is important to observe, that the practice of deferring baptism from year to year had become alarmingly prevalent. Persons would remain in the state of catechumens until just before death, and then receive baptism, and be admitted into the church. This practice, which had now received the example of the emperor Constantine, had, as we have before mentioned, grown out of a superstitious notion of the saving efficacy of baptism. They considered that it removed all previous guilt; and, as the ordinance could not be repeated, and as they feared they might stain the purity of their baptism afterward, if baptized in early life, they were easily betrayed into the habit of deferring it. This exact view it is important to remember, and against it Gregory levels the artillery of his argument and the polished shafts of his eloquence. He reminds them of the danger of losing baptism by sudden death—that such procrastination is often a mere pretext for living longer in carnal pleasures—that it is a wily stratagem of the devil to cheat souls, which he calls upon them to resist; and then says,—

“Art thou a youth? fight against pleasures and passions with this auxiliary strength: list thyself in God’s army. Art thou old? let thy gray hairs hasten thee. Strengthen thy age with baptism. . . . Hast thou an infant child? Let not wickedness have the advantage of time. Let him be sanctified from his infancy. Let him be dedicated from his cradle in the Spirit. Thou, as a faint-hearted mother, and of little faith, art afraid of giving him the seal, [that is, baptism,] because of the weakness of nature. Hannah, before Samuel was born, devoted him to God, and as soon as he was born, consecrated him, and brought him up from the first in a priestly garment, not fearing on account of human infirmities, but trusting in God. Thou hast no need of amulets, or charms. . . . Give to him the Trinity, that great and excellent preservative. *Δος αυτω την τριαδα, το μεγα και καλον φυλακτηριον.*” Again:—

“Some of them [those who neglect baptism] live like beasts, and regard not baptism. Some have a value for baptism, but delay the receiving it, either out of negli-

gence, or a greediness longer to enjoy their lusts. But some others have it not in their own power to receive it, either because of their *infancy* perhaps, (*ἡ δια νηπιότητα τυχον,*) or by reason of some accident utterly involuntary... And I think of the first sort, [that is, those who despise baptism,] that they shall be punished, as for their other wickedness, so for their slighting of baptism. And that the second shall be punished, but in a less degree, because they are guilty of their own missing it, but rather through folly than malice. But that the last sort, [those who omit baptism involuntarily, as infants,] will neither be glorified nor punished by the just Judge; as being without the *seal*, [that is, baptism,] but not through their own wickedness; and as having *suffered* the loss rather than occasioned it."

" — We must, therefore, make it our utmost care that we do not miss of the common grace," &c. "Some may say, Suppose this to hold in the case of those who can desire baptism: what say you of those that are as yet infants, and are not in capacity to be sensible, either of the grace or the want of it? Shall we baptize them too? Yes, by all means, if any danger make it requisite. For it is better that they be sanctified without their own sense of it, than that they should be *unsealed* and uninitiated. *Και τουτου λογος ἡμιν ἡ οκταημερος περιτομη and our reason for this is circumcision, which was performed on the eighth day, and was a typical seal, and was practised on those who had no use of reason. As for others, I give my opinion that they should stay three years, or thereabouts, when they are able to hear and answer some of the holy words; and though they do not perfectly understand them, yet they form them: οὕτως αγιαζειν και ψυχας και σωματα τῷ μεγαλῷ μυστηριῷ της τελειωσεως and that you then sanctify them in soul and body with the great sacrament of consecration. For though they are not liable to give account of their life before their reason be come to maturity, yet, by reason of those sudden and unexpected assaults of dangers that are by no efforts to be prevented, it is by all means advisable that they be secured by the laver [of baptism.]"**

A few remarks it may be proper to subjoin to this lengthened citation.

* Discourse on Baptism.

1.) The peculiar notions of Gregory, or of his age, concerning the efficacy of baptism, &c., we do not quote with approbation of their moral or theological tendency. These errors do not affect the testimony of this father, in reference to the points upon which we intend his testimony to bear.

2.) The principle upon which persons deferred baptism, in his day, was of such a nature as not to argue in the slightest degree against infant baptism, *as such*. The validity of infant baptism was not called in question, any more than adult baptism. The delay of baptism till just before death was urged by many, purely on the ground of its supposed efficacy in removing past sin, and the danger of losing the grace of the ordinance by subsequent transgression; and on this ground Gregory took up the objection.

3.) Gregory and Tertullian are the only two that speak of delaying infant baptism at all; the latter till the age of reason, the former till three years. Both one and the other, however, are to be understood, where there is no danger of death in the meanwhile: which is plainly expressed in the above extract from Gregory, and in Tertullian is collected from his other speeches.*

4.) According to the testimony of Gregory, then, infant baptism was fully believed to be Scriptural in A. D. 370, and was commonly practised in the Christian church, except where such superstitious notions of the ordinance as those above noted occasioned its delay, which exception is no detriment to our argument.

8. The statements of St. Basil, in his discourse to the catechumens, possess not sufficient importance to merit a full recital here. He does not profess to speak directly to the subject of infant baptism. Mr. Wall says, the most material evidence that can be derived from this father in support of infant baptism is taken from his practice. He then proves it to have been the practice of St. Basil to baptize infants, by citing, from Theodoret, the instance where he (Basil) recommended to the emperor Valens to have his child baptized by a person of the catholic faith. (The word *catholic* distinguishes only from the Arian faction, in this place.) The child, however, was baptized

* Wall's History of Infant Baptism, part i, c. xi, sec. 10.

by an Arian. This child was *an infant son* of Valens, according to Socrates.*

9. Ambrose was born in Gaul about A. D. 338. He was educated in Italy, and his talents and conduct early brought him into notice, and raised him to high civil honours. He was elected bishop of Milan, in A. D. 374, by the unanimous voice of the people. With some weaknesses and equivocal traits of character, he was still a great and useful man. He died in A. D. 397, after enjoying a life of universal celebrity.

After having mentioned the miracle of Elijah, in dividing the waters of Jordan, he adds:—

“But perhaps this may seem to be fulfilled in our time, and in the apostles’ time. For that returning of the river waters backward toward the spring head, which was caused by Elias when the river was divided, (as the Scripture says, *Jordan was driven back*,) signified the sacrament of the laver of salvation, which was afterward to be instituted; per quæ in primordia naturæ suæ qui baptizati fuerint, parvuli a malitia reformantur, *by which those infants who have been baptized are reformed from [their] perverseness, to the primitive state of their nature.*”† Again; he cites those words of our Saviour, “Except any person be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;” and then adds, by way of comment,—

“Utique nullum excipit: non infantem, non aliqua preventum necessitate, *Certainly none is excepted: not an infant, not one that is prevented from necessity.* But,” he adds, “suppose that such have that freedom from punishment, which is not clear, yet, I question whether they shall have the honour of the kingdom.”‡

A few remarks are necessary here.

1.) Ambrose expressly refers infant baptism to the apostles’ times. He says: “Sed fortasse hoc supra nos et supra apostolos videatur expletum, *But perhaps we see the fulfilment of this in our own and the apostles’ times;*” that is, as he immediately adds, it appears to be fulfilled in infant baptism. The contingency expressed in the sentence does not apply to the *fact* of infant baptism being

* Wall’s History, part i, c. xi. † Comment on Luke i, 17.

‡ Ambrose concerning the patriarch Abraham.

practised in the apostles' day, but to the circumstance of the *application* of the figure as made in the passage.

2.) The puerility of the figure here employed, to set forth infant baptism and its efficacy, does not militate against the testimony of Ambrose to the fact that he believed in the doctrine, and that he also believed in its apostolic origin, as also that it was the current doctrine of his day. We know that the Christian fathers employed many silly comparisons and weak arguments to defend Christianity, but that they employed weak and even silly arguments does by no means prove their cause to have been weak. This would be a strange mode of reasoning. We all know that they were given, unhappily, to an allegorical interpretation of Scripture, especially after the days of Origen, which often betrayed them into the most vague and idle conceits, but this does not affect their testimony to the great doctrines of revelation as believed and practised in their day: this does not affect the credibility of their testimony to an unbroken tradition, handed down, through them, from the apostles. The same may be said of their erroneous notion of the saving efficacy of baptism, as we have before stated.

3.) It is proper to state also, for the information of the more uninformed reader, that the last quotation from Ambrose evidently teaches the doctrine of a *middle state*—a place, after death, that partakes not fully of the qualities either of happiness or misery—to which place unbaptized infants, and others, were supposed to go. It is not our business to dwell upon these errors, either to explain or refute them. We simply wish the reader to understand that such errors do not discredit the testimonies of these men to the fact of infant baptism in their day, or the fact of its traditional transmission from the apostles.

10. Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, was born at Antioch about A. D. 354. He died A. D. 407. He was renowned for his eloquence, and the people used to say that they would rather the sun would not shine than that John should not preach. He was a man of great powers of mind, having many imprudences of conduct, and not a well-balanced and tempered zeal. In contrasting the two rites of circumcision and baptism, he says,—

“ But our circumcision—I mean the grace of baptism—

gives cure without pain, and procures to us a thousand benefits, and fills us with the grace of the Spirit: and it has no determinate time as that had, *ἀλλ' ἐξεσι και εν αωρω ἡλικια, και εν μεση, και εν αυτω τω γηρα γενομενος τινα ταυτην δεξασθαι την αχειροποιητον περιτομην*, but *one in immature age, or in middle life, or that is in old age, may receive this circumcision made without hands*; in which there is no trouble to be undergone, but to throw off the load of sins, and receive pardon for all previous offences.*

From a homily of St. Chrysostom's on Baptism, which is not now extant, the following passage is quoted by St. Austin:—

“*Δια τουτο και τα παιδια βαπτιζομεν καιτοι αμαρτηματα μη εχοντα*, for this reason we baptize infants also, although they have no [actual] sins.”

In another place he is censuring the women for “a custom that they had of rubbing the forehead of the child with a sort of dirt, prepared with some magical tricks, which was to preserve it from being bewitched. He tells them that such a practice, instead of guarding and purifying the infant, makes it abominable.” His words are:—

“He that anoints an infant so with that dirt, how can he think but that he makes it abominable? How can he bring it to the hands of the priest? Tell me, how can you think it fitting for the minister to make the sign on its forehead, where you have besmeared it with the dirt?”†

In these quotations from Chrysostom, then, it is expressly declared that baptism is appropriate *εν αωρος ἡλικια* in immature, or newly begun, age,—that is, in infancy;—that the church actually did baptize infants; and he inveighs against the superstitious practice of putting dirt on children's foreheads, as unseemly and improper, because it has no relevance to the consecrating ordinance of baptism which their children received from the priest.

BEFORE THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY.

I shall follow the order of Mr. Wall, and give quotations from the fathers who lived during the Pelagian controversy, distinguishing those quotations which date prior to that controversy from those which date subsequently to its

* Homily xl, on Genesis.

† Homily xii, on I Corinthians.

origin. The reason of this is, that the Pelagian controversy had a direct effect, more than any other event since the days of the apostles until that time, to call forth definite opinions and positions in relation to infant baptism.

11. St. Hierome, in a letter to a lady, about A. D. 380, urges the duty of the right education of her child, from the fact that God will require the sins of children at the hands of their parents. He says,—

“ But he that is a child, and thinks as a child, his good deeds, as well as his evil deeds, are imputed to his parents. Unless you suppose that the children of Christians are themselves only under the guilt of the sin, except they receive baptism; and that the wickedness is not imputed to those also who would not give it them, especially at that time when they that were to receive it could make no opposition to the reception of it.”*

The meaning, or doctrine, of this passage is simply this:—Infants are not chargeable with any sin in the omission of their baptism. Such a delinquency could be imputed only to their parents, or those who withheld baptism from them.

12. Austin, or Augustin, lived three hundred years after the apostles. He was a man of great eloquence; he wrote much, and exerted a powerful influence over all parties in the church during a long life. Our limits do not permit us to go at length into quotations; we shall give all that are necessary to the complete purposes of our present argument. In one of his books against the Donatists, who were a schismatical party of the Christian church in Africa, this father is showing that if a person be baptized in insincerity, like Simon Magus, or, like him, be baptized with erroneous and crude notions of the Trinity, still, having attained better views, and having repented, he is not to be rebaptized—his former baptism is yet to be held valid. He says,—

“ So that many persons increasing in knowledge after their baptism, *and especially those who have been baptized either when they were infants, or when they were youths*; as their understanding is cleared and enlightened, and their ‘inward man renewed day by day,’ do themselves deride, and with abhorrence and confession abjure the former

* Letter to Leta.

opinions which they had of God, when they were imposed on by their own imaginations. And yet they are not therefore accounted either not to have received baptism, or to have a baptism of the same nature of their error. But in their case, both the validity of the sacrament is acknowledged, and the vanity of their own understanding rectified." Again:—

“And as the thief, who by necessity went without baptism, was saved; because by his piety he had it spiritually: so where baptism is had, though the party by necessity go without that [faith] which the thief had, yet he is saved: *quod traditem tenet universitas ecclesiæ cum parvuli infantes baptizantur, which, being handed down to them, the universal church holds, with respect to infants who are baptized*; who certainly cannot yet believe with the heart to righteousness, or confess with the mouth to salvation, as the thief could; nay, by their crying and noise, while the sacrament is being administered, they disturb the holy mysteries; and yet no Christian will say they are baptized to no purpose.

“Et si quisquam in hac re auctoritatem divinam quærat: quanquam quod universa tenet ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate apostolica traditum rectissime creditur, *and if any one do ask for divine authority in this matter, though that which the universal church practices, which has not been instituted by councils, but has always been observed, is most justly believed to be nothing else than a thing delivered [or handed down] by the authority of the apostles*: yet we may, besides, take a true estimate, how much the sacrament of baptism does avail infants, by the circumcision which God's former people received.

“—Therefore as in Abraham the righteousness of faith went before, and circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith, came after; so in Cornelius, [the centurion,] the spiritual sanctification by the gift of the Holy Spirit went before, and the sacrament of regeneration by the laver of baptism came after. And as in Isaac, who was circumcised the eighth day, the seal of the righteousness of faith went before, and (as he was a follower of his father's faith) the righteousness itself, the seal whereof had gone before in his infancy, came after: so in infants

baptized the sacrament of regeneration goes before, and (if they put in practice the Christian religion) conversion of the heart, the mystery whereof went before in their body, comes after.

“ And as in that thief’s case, (alluding to the thief upon the cross with our Saviour,) what was wanting of the sacrament of baptism the mercy of the Almighty made up; because it was not out of pride or contempt, but of necessity, that it was wanting: so in infants that die after they are baptized, it is to be believed that the same grace of the Almighty does make up that defect, that by reason, not of a wicked will, but of want of age, they can neither believe with the heart to righteousness, nor confess with the mouth unto salvation. So that when others answer for them, that they may have this sacrament given them, it is valid for their consecration, because they cannot answer for themselves. But if for one that is able to answer for himself, another should answer, it would not be valid.

“ — By all which, it appears that the sacrament of baptism is one thing, and conversion of the heart another; but that the salvation of a person is completed by both of them. And if one of these be wanting, we are not to think that it follows that the other is wanting; since one may be without the other in an infant, and the other was without that in the thief: God Almighty making up, both in one and the other case, that which was not wilfully wanting. But when either of these is wilfully wanting, it involves the individual in guilt.”*

The reader is particularly requested to notice,—

1.) St. Austin gives the general opinion of the church. All believed in the utility and necessity of infant baptism. He says, *Nullus Christianorum, No Christians* will call infant baptism useless. All who believed in any water baptism at all (and there were a few who denied all baptism) held to infant baptism.

2.) This father directly affirms that no council of the church had instituted the rite—that it was the universal practice—that it had been practised from the first—and that, with the strictest propriety, it was regarded as

* Fourth Book against the Donatists, concerning Baptism.

having been delivered to the church by the authority of the apostles.

3.) He holds, as is common with all the fathers, a strict analogy between circumcision and baptism.

(Besides these references, there are others that belong to about this date, A. D. 408, which we might make equally to our purpose. For instance, a bishop by the name of Boniface writes to St. Austin, propounding questions in relation to infant baptism. Austin answers him at length. In both epistles the utility and divine authority of the practice are taken for granted, and the fact that the church did generally practise infant baptism at that time fully attested. So also, in Austin's book on our Lord's sermon on the mount, and his books on free will, which our limits do not allow us to notice.)

This father further says,—

“*Consuetudo tamen matris ecclesiæ in baptizandis parvulis nequaquam spernenda est, neque ullo modo superflua deputanda nec omnino credenda nisi apostolica esse traditio, Yet the custom of our mother, the church, in baptizing infants, is by no means to be disregarded, nor be accounted needless, nor believed to be other than a tradition of the apostles ;*”* [that is, an institution handed down from the apostles. *Tradition* is something *handed down*, as from father to son ; and when infant baptism is said to be esteemed as a tradition of the apostles, the meaning is, that it is a doctrine and practice handed down from the apostles, and of course by their authority.]

In a letter to St. Hierome, St. Austin says,—

“I ask where the soul contracted that guilt, by which it is brought to condemnation, (even the soul of an infant who is surprised with death,) if the grace of Christ do not relieve it by the sacrament whereby infants are baptized.”

Speaking of the question, whether the soul of man is a new creation of God, or generated in the same way as the body ; and of the different modes of settling this question ; he says,—

“Before I know which of them is to be chosen, this I know, that the one which is true does not oppose that most firm and established faith by which the church of

* St. Austin's tenth book on Genesis.

Christ believes that even the new-born little ones of mankind cannot be freed from condemnation, but by the grace of the name of Christ, which he has commended to us in his sacraments."

In his letter to eighteen Pelagian bishops afterward, being an answer to one they had published, he says,—

"But this I say, that original sin is so plain by the Scriptures, and that it is forgiven to infants in the laver of regeneration, is so confirmed by the ANTIQUITY and AUTHORITY of the Catholic faith, so NOTORIOUS BY THE PRACTICE of the CHURCH, that whatsoever is disputed, inquired, or affirmed of the origin of the soul, if it be contrary to this, cannot be true."

13. In the forty-eighth canon of the third council of Carthage, held about A. D. 397, we find the following:—

"In reference to the Donatists, it is resolved that we do ask the advice of our brethren and fellow-bishops, Siricius and Simplicianus, concerning those only who are in infancy baptized among them; whether in that which they have not done with their own judgment, the error of their parents shall hinder them, that when they, by a wholesome purpose, shall be converted to the church of God, they may not be promoted to be ministers of the holy altar."

It appears that the consent of these bishops was obtained; for four years afterward, in another council held at Carthage, Aurelius, bishop of that city, addresses the council thus:—

"You remember that in a former council it was resolved that they who were, in their infancy, before they were able to understand the mischief of that error, baptized among the Donatists, and when they came to age of understanding, acknowledging the truth, &c., they were received by us. All will grant that such may undoubtedly be promoted to church offices, especially in times of so great need.

"Some that have been teachers in that sect would come over with their congregations, if they might have the same places among us. But this I leave to a further consideration of our brethren. Only that they will consent to our determination, that such as were baptized by them in infancy may be admitted to orders."

In the sixth canon of the fifth council of Carthage, held about A. D. 400, we have the following:—

“It is resolved concerning infants of whose having been baptized there are no positive witnesses that can give certain evidence, and they themselves are not capable of giving any account of that sacrament having been administered to them, by reason of their age; that such be, without any scruple, baptized,” &c. This was the received doctrine of the church in regard to all doubtful cases.

There are many testimonies that might be introduced here, but as they are of a nature to require introductory and explanatory remarks in order to give a full view of their force to the reader, and as our limits do not permit this, and as, also, there are many others directly to the point that are not so involved in circumstances that require lengthy explanation, we therefore omit them. It is enough that we assure the reader that there is no want of evidence, or any *contrary* current of testimony, that induces any omission.

AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY.

We have now arrived at the period of the origin of the Pelagian controversy. Pelagius was a native of Britain, a monk, and a man of the first order of intellect and genius. He associated with him Celestius, a native of Ireland, and a man of talent. The Pelagian heresy began to make its appearance about A. D. 405. In A. D. 410, when the Goths took and plundered Rome, these heresiarchs, who were then residing in that city, fled, Celestius to Carthage, and Pelagius to Palestine, after which they attained more note than ever. Never before had the doctrine of infant baptism been subjected to such a test as by this controversy. Its antiquity, its utility, and its Scriptural authority, were points upon which the event of the controversy largely depended. The hinging point was, original sin,* and the necessity of divine grace in order to salvation. In a council of fourteen bishops, held at Diospolis,* in Palestine, in A. D. 415, the following errors were charged

* This place is called in Scripture, *Lydda*.

upon Pelagius, which he was compelled at the time to abjure, though he did not afterward forsake them:—

1. That Adam, whether he had sinned or not, would have died.

2. That his sin hurt himself only, and not mankind.

3. That infants newly born are in the same state that Adam was before his fall.

4. That neither by the death, or fall, of Adam does all mankind die, nor by the resurrection of Christ does all mankind arise.

These are, in substance, what were charged upon Celestius four years previous, in a council held at Carthage. I have inserted these points from the creed of Pelagius, in order that the reader may the more perfectly comprehend the force of the testimonies soon to be adduced. As Pelagius and Celestius denied original sin, it would seem that they would of course deny the necessity of infant baptism, for all the Christian world believed that baptism was "for the remission of sins." Infants, indeed, were not supposed to have any actual sin, but yet there was that liability to punishment, that unfitness for heaven, that, without the atonement of Christ, is an inseparable property of our nature, and this the ancient Christian church held was removed by, or at, baptism. A denial of the doctrine of this innate depravity, therefore, appeared to carry with it, necessarily, a denial of the fitness and obligation of infant baptism. And so it did. Accordingly the great spirits in the church who opposed Pelagius ceased not to press him with this argument, "If infants are without fault in their nature, as you affirm, why then are they baptized?" Now, any person can at once perceive how it became the interest of Pelagius to invalidate the practice and obligation of infant baptism, if he could. He never met with a more difficult and troublesome argument, in all the circle of this famous and furious controversy, which shook and menaced the church in Asia, Africa, and Europe, than this simple one with which he was constantly beset. In vain did he attempt to shelter himself from the charge of denying the utility and obligation of infant baptism, by holding that infants needed baptism, not for the remission of any guilt, which he denied their having, but in order to fit them for the kingdom of heaven. In vain,

I say, did he urge this distinction. He was met with the argument, "If infants need baptism in order to fit them for heaven, then, previous to their baptism they were *unfit* for heaven, which would argue their sinfulness." "As for infants that die without baptism," says Pelagius, "I know whither they do not go; but whither they do go I know not, that is, I know that they do not go to the kingdom of heaven; but what becomes of them I know not." But why all this difficulty—this hard labour with the argument? Why not cut the knot at once by denying infant baptism? by pointing out its want of Scriptural authority; and by demonstrating the fact that it had crept into the church in an evil hour, under the auspices of ambitious and corrupt men? Let those who deny infant baptism reply to these questions. Meantime we call the reader's attention to the evidence elicited by the history of this controversy.

(12.) St. Austin, in one of his books concerning the guilt and forgiveness of sins, and baptism of infants, says,—

"The whole church has of old constantly held that baptized infants do obtain remission of original sin by the baptism of Christ." "For my part," continues he, "I do not remember that I ever heard any other thing from any Christians that received the Old and New Testaments, non solum in Catholica ecclesia, verum etiam in qualibet hæresi vel schismate constitutis, *neither from such as were in the Catholic church, nor yet from such as belonged to any sect or schism.* I do not remember that I ever read otherwise, in any writer that I could ever find treating of these matters, that followed the canonical Scriptures, or did mean, or did pretend so to do."

In connection with this declaration of St. Austin, we wish the reader to recollect that this father was well versed in the history of the church, and a few years afterward wrote a "history of all sects and opinions" that were or had been in Christendom.

(11.) St. Hierome, in one of his books against Pelagius, after having crowded him hardly with the argument derived from the practice and obligation of infant baptism, as being irreconcilable with the notion that they were without sin, says,—

“ This one thing I will say, that this discourse may at last have an end : Either you must set forth a new creed, and after the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, baptize infants into the kingdom of heaven : or else, if you acknowledge one baptism for infants and for grown persons, you must own that infants are to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.”

14. In a letter of Pelagius to Innocent, bishop of Rome, he complains of his opponents, and says,—

“ Men do slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants,” &c. He further declares,—

“ Nunquam se vel impium aliquem hæreticum audisse, qui hoc quod proposuit de parvulis, diceret : *that he never heard even an impious heretic who would affirm this concerning infants ; [namely, that they were not to be baptized.]*

He still continues :—

“ Quis enim ita evangelicæ lectionis ignarus est, qui hoc non modo affirmare conetur, sed qui vel leviter dicere aut etiam sentire possit ? Denique quis tam impius, qui parvulos exortes regni cœlorum esse velit, dum eos baptizari et in Christo renasci vetat ? *For who is so ignorant of the reading of the evangelists, as to attempt (not to say to establish this [doctrine,] but) to speak of it heedlessly, or even have such a thought ? In fine, who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and thus cause them to miss of the kingdom of heaven ; since our Saviour has said, that none can enter into the kingdom of heaven that is not born again of water and the Holy Spirit ? Who is there so impious as to refuse to an infant, of what age soever, the common redemption of mankind, and to hinder him that is born to an uncertain life from being born again to an everlasting and certain one ?*”

Before we pass to another citation, we beg the reader to pause and consider that this man, (Pelagius,) who affirms his belief of infant baptism, and complains of being slandered when it is reported that he denies it—that declares he never heard of any person so impious or so ignorant of the gospel, not even among heretics, that presumed to deny the doctrine, or even call it in question—this very man, we say, would, as has been mentioned,

have found it greatly to his interest to have been able to cast discredit upon the practice. Could he have proved that infant baptism was of human invention, or any thing short of apostolic authority, it would have made more in favour of his cause than almost any other argument he could have advanced. As it was, he was obliged to maintain the obligation of the practice in connection with his notion of the innate purity of infants, which was an absurdity too gross to be concealed by all the arts of his sophistry. And this letter to Pope Innocent was written in A. D. 417, only three hundred and seventeen years after the apostles. Could not Pelagius have traced out and exposed the spurious origin of infant baptism, if such an origin it really had? To doubt it requires more faith than we can command at the mere challenge of a cavilling objector.

15. Celestius wrote a creed, or book of faith, which, though it differed somewhat from Pelagius's views, sufficiently sets forth his own. The work is not extant, but St. Austin quotes from it, and we take from him. Celestius says,—

“*Infantes autem debere baptizari in remissionem peccatorum, secundum regulam universalis ecclesiæ, et secundum evangelii sententiam, confitemur; quia Dominus statuit regnum cælorum non nisi baptizatis posse conferri; quod quia vires naturæ non habent, conferri necesse est per gratiæ libertatem: But we acknowledge infants ought to be baptized for the remission of sins, ACCORDING TO THE RULE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, and ACCORDING TO THE SENTENCE OF THE GOSPEL, because our Lord has ordained that the kingdom of heaven shall be bestowed upon no person except he be baptized; which, as men do not receive it by nature, it is necessary to confer by the power [or liberty] of grace.*”

Here Celestius plainly admits infant baptism for the remission of sin, which was according to the opinion of the church; but this can hardly be regarded as any thing else than an insincere profession, designed to allay the violence of opposition. And so St. Austin regarded it. Pelagius himself, when pressed hard by friends to renounce his objectionable tenets, at last confessed to them: “*Infantes in remissionem peccatorum percipere baptismum,*

Infants are to receive baptism for the remission of sins." Yet, they denied that infants had any sin. Their most common and plausible argument was, that infants are baptized for admission into the kingdom of heaven, because our Saviour says, "Except a person be born of *water* and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God:" but that they were not baptized for the remission of sins, because they had no sin. The Constantinopolitan creed declared, "*We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.*" So said the whole Christian world. But Pelagius's doctrine of the purity of our nature rendered infant baptism, in this view of it, an absurdity. Why, then, did he not deny the obligation and Scriptural authority of the practice? He never was able to give a rational account of the utility and necessity of infant baptism—he tried every possible way to evade the argument derived from its obligation and import—he was restless under its weight, while it chafed him on every side—but still he did not deny it, and thus take the shorter, and certainly the more consistent way, in the estimation of his opponents, to rid himself of its annoyance. Still, both he and Celestius confess that they never heard of any sect or person who denied infant baptism. Mr. Wall has justly said,—

"If there had been any such church of anti-Pedobaptists in the world, these men could not have missed an opportunity of hearing of them, being so great travellers as they were. For they were born and bred, the one in Britain, the other in Ireland. They lived the prime of their age (a very long time, as St. Austin testifies) at Rome—a place to which all the people of the world had then a resort. They were both for some time at Carthage, in Africa. Then the one [Pelagius] settled at Jerusalem, and the other [Celestius] travelled through all the noted Greek and Eastern churches, in Europe and Asia. It is impossible there should have been any church that had any singular practice in this matter but they must have heard of them. So that one may fairly conclude that there was not at this time, nor in the memory of the men of this time, any Christian society that denied baptism to infants. This cuts off at once all the pretences which some anti-Pedobaptists would raise from certain probabilities, that the Novatians, or Donatists, or the British church of those

times, or any other whom Pelagius must needs have known, did deny it.”*

16. A council, composed of two hundred and fourteen bishops, was held in Carthage, A. D. 418, at which they considered the Pelagian error concerning infant baptism, and also the question, whether infants may be baptized before they are eight days old; which, it seems, some doubted. The violence of the Pelagian controversy was well calculated to elicit definite statements; accordingly we have them. The council thus decree:—

“Also we determine that whosoever does deny that infants may be baptized when they come recently from their mother’s womb; or does say that they are indeed baptized for forgiveness of sins; and yet that they derive no original sin from Adam, (from whence it would follow that the form of baptism for forgiveness of sins is in them not true, but false,) let him be anathema.”

17. That infant baptism was the universal practice of the church, from the days of the apostles, is strongly forced upon our belief from the fact that there was no sect, or schism, in the church that did not hold it. The reader will recollect that we have mainly attended to the practice of the general, or catholic church, in the foregoing pages. But from the body of the church there separated various and numerous disaffected, or heretical parties. These were all distinguished from the church by some peculiar doctrine, or principle. But among all these, during the period through which we have thus far travelled, none are found who denied infant baptism. Let us attend for a few moments to this point:—

1. Irenæus wrote a history of all the sects and heresies that had arisen up in the church before his time, from the history of Simon Magus, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. He wrote his treatise about seventy-seven years after the death of the apostle John. We have before noticed that Irenæus was acquainted intimately with Polycarp, who was the companion and friend of St. John. After having resided in Smyrna during the earlier part of his life, Irenæus was appointed bishop of Lyons, in France. Thus he became conversant with the churches both in Asia and Europe, by actual residence and intercourse

* Wall’s History of Infant Baptism, part i, c. xix, sec. 36.

among them, as well as by his general learning, and his office. Irenæus mentions all the different sects that had sprung up with particularity, but he mentions none that held any doctrine contrary to the general church touching infant baptism—that is, he mentions none that denied infant baptism. Had there been such a sect, or had there been any variety of practice on this subject among the Christians anterior to his day, he must have known it;—if he had known of such a case, he certainly would have mentioned it. “Inasmuch, therefore, as Irenæus, among all these observations, says nothing, *pro* or *contra*, about baptizing infants among the heretics, it may, as I said, be concluded that they had nothing singular in that point, but practised as the catholics [or general church] did;”* that is, baptized their children.

2. Epiphanius, about A. D. 374, wrote an account of all the sects that had appeared until his time. He enumerates, in all, eighty heresies, which, he says, “were all that he had heard of in the world.” “He says nothing of their baptizing or their not baptizing infants,” but, after he has spoken of all the heretical sects, he speaks of the doctrines of the general church, and mentions baptism, stating that it is to us “instead of the old circumcision,” &c. Had there ever been a denial of infant baptism, he would undoubtedly have known it, and, if so, of course recorded it.

3. Philastrius wrote an account of all the heresies up to about A. D. 380. He is very minute, “making a difference of opinion about any trifling matter a heresy,” of which he numbers above one hundred. “He mentions no dispute about infant baptism.”

4. St. Austin wrote his history of all the sects about A. D. 420. He reckons eighty-eight heresies in all, of which that of Pelagius was the last. He expressly declares that he never knew of any sect, or heresy, that denied infant baptism. The Pelagians held to infant baptism on a different ground from that which was held by the church, but the thing itself they did not deny.

5. Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus, in Syria, wrote about the same time. He classifies all the heretics under four divisions. He mentions some, who were of the most

* Wall's History, part i, c. xxi, sec. 3.

impious character, who denied all baptism; but of those who admitted any baptism, he mentions none who denied it to infants. Thus, says Mr. Wall, "they none of them mention infant baptism either as practised, or as not practised, by the sectaries,—a plain proof that they held nothing in that point different from the ordinary practice of the church."*

Thus have we followed the church through the first three hundred and thirty years after the death of the apostles. We might have added many other testimonies, but we have now brought forward the strength of the argument from church history, and we do not wish to embarrass or weaken its force by cumbersome and needless citations. If the foregoing testimonies be not sufficient to settle the question as to the real doctrine which church history teaches, then, verily, it will be trifling to add others. After the time of St. Austin, no one doubts that infant baptism was the general practice of the church. This the Baptists admit, and hence there is no reason why we should pursue the argument down to a later date. Cassander, who wrote in the twelfth century against the novel heresy that had sprung up, and had been propagated by Peter Bruis, who denied infant baptism, aggravates the charge of novelty by stating, that if infant baptism were only a mock baptism, as Bruis alleged, then, "as all France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, and all Europe, has had never a person baptized now for three hundred, or almost five hundred years, otherwise than in infancy, it has had never a Christian in it."† I produce this quotation to show the general and prevailing practice of infant baptism in the middle ages. Dr. Gale gives up the argument from church history, after the time of Cyprian of Carthage. The first body of men, says Mr. Wall, that ever denied baptism to infants were the Petrobrusians, (so called from one Peter Bruis, the founder of the sect,) A. D. 1128, of whom some account is given in the Appendix to this work.‡ "To those who say that the custom of baptizing children was not derived from the apostolic ages, the traditional argument may fairly run, in language nearly Scriptural, 'If any man seem to be contentious, we

* History, part i, c. xxi, sec. 4.

† Wall's Hist., part ii, c. ii, sec. 2.

‡ See Note F.

have no such custom, neither the churches of God:—we never had any such custom as that of confining baptism to adults.”*

If infant baptism was received from the hands of the apostles, then all is clear, and universal history and tradition speak an intelligible language. But if it was introduced at some subsequent period, then, what period was that? Why have we no account of the first person, or persons, who introduced the practice? Why have we not an account of some sect who still held to the old apostolic doctrine of adult baptism during the first four centuries of the Christian era? How came the church to glide into this practice so imperceptibly as not to know the time when it originated; and at the same time so universally as not to occasion the slightest controversy? Can our opponents tell? No: they cannot tell. They have never told. These questions admit of no solution on the principles of their hypothesis. Infant baptism came from the apostles, and if, in after-ages, it became associated with errors, as was the fact,† still, this cannot invalidate the truth and obligation of the ordinance, much less the simple fact (which is all we have aimed to prove in this chapter) that it has been received down from the apostles.

SECTION III.

1. But some ask, Why, then, was it not mentioned more fully and more explicitly in apostolic times, and by Justin Martyr and Irenæus, who followed so soon after the apostles? Also, several very ancient authors do not mention infant baptism at all. This has been urged by the Baptists as being incompatible with the supposition that it was universally practised.

At first blush this objection may appear to have weight. But let it be remembered, infant baptism was not a debated subject in apostolic and primitive times. It is not to be wondered at that a subject which elicited no question or controversy, should be wholly omitted by some writers, and but occasionally alluded to by others. Besides, the church was engrossed in other and more important concerns. The doctrines of the unity of the Godhead, the atonement

* Milner's Church History, cent. iii, ch. xiii.

† See Note G.

by Christ, the fall of man, salvation by faith, the resurrection of the body, and future retribution,—these, with the “great fight of afflictions” that the church was early called to endure, absorbed its attention, and engrossed its powers. The numerous enemies from without gave them little leisure to attend to the minor points of doctrine.

“The same remark, I think, ought to be made upon that objection which the anti-Pedobaptists do so much insist on, namely, that St. Luke, in reciting the lives and ‘Acts of the Apostles,’ does not mention any infants baptized by them. Whoever observes the tenor of that history, and considers the state of those times, will perceive that St. Luke’s aim is to give a summary account of the principal passages of their lives; and of those passages especially in which they found the greatest opposition. And in such a history, (which is but short in all,) who can look for an account of what children they baptized? Suppose the life of some renowned and laborious modern bishop, or doctor, were to be written, (say of Bishop Usher or Stillingfleet,) and that in a volume ten times as long as the book of the Acts of the Apostles, who will expect to find an account there of what children he christened? And yet there is no doubt but he did christen hundreds. [The fact, that no mention is made of his having christened infants, would not prove that he had not christened any; much less would it prove that he was opposed to the practice. So in the case before us.] The main business of an apostle was to preach, [plant churches,] attest the truth of Christ’s resurrection, [doctrines,] and miracles, *and not to baptize*, as Paul says, 1 Cor. i, 17. The baptizing of such as the apostles had convinced, and especially of their children, would of course be left to deputies. Yet of the six baptisms, (which are all that St. Paul is mentioned to have been concerned in,) three were the baptisms of whole households: such a one, *and all his*. And this is as much as can reasonably be expected of so minute a circumstance.”*

2. It has been objected to the argument for infant baptism derived from church history, that infants were introduced to the communion table, and made to partake of the

* Wall’s History, part ii, chap. x, sec. 3. See also closing remarks of chap. ii. of this work.

consecrated elements; and that if history prove infant baptism to have been practised, it also proves infant communion, with other absurdities; and so by proving too much, it proves nothing.

1.) It is easy for an ignorant, cavilling mind, "to darken counsel by words without knowledge;" alias, in modern phrase, "to raise a dust" on any subject. Powerless and unfair as is this pretended objection, we shall give it a brief notice for the sake of those who may not have the information beforehand to detect its fallacy. Let it be reiterated, then, for the last time, that it is not the truth and obligation of infant baptism that we attempt to prove (save in a secondary manner) from church history, but simply *the fact of its apostolic antiquity*. This is a question of *fact*, to be decided by *testimony*, and the testimony we have adduced is not to be invalidated by any doctrinal errors of the witnesses on other, or even kindred topics. Their *testimony* to the existence of certain opinions is unimpeachable, while those opinions themselves may even be absurd.

2.) But the main facts in the case are these:—It appears most probable, says Mr. Wall,* that in Cyprian's time, A. D. 250, the people of the church of Carthage did sometimes bring their children, younger than ordinary, to the communion; and that in St. Austin's and Pope Innocent's time, A. D. 400, in the western church, the communion was given to infants from a belief of its necessity in order to salvation, inferred from the words of Christ, "Except ye eat the flesh, and drink the blood, of the Son of man, ye have no life in you,"—"The bread which I give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world," &c. That the practice continued about six hundred years after this time, namely, till about A. D. 1000, when the doctrine of transubstantiation coming into credit, occasioned the omission of the elements to infants, and the council of Trent, A. D. 1560, finally prohibited the sacrament of the supper to infants formally. The Greek church, being always inferior to the Latin, borrowed the practice from them, and, as they did not receive the doctrine of transubstantiation, and consequently had not the same ground for dropping the practice, they continued it on, and practise it to this day.

* History of Infant Baptism, part ii, chap. ix, sec. 15-17.

Now, what force this absurd practice may have to invalidate the antiquity of infant baptism, and the presumption that, if it came from the very times of the apostles without controversy, and as the universal practice of the church, it came by their sanction and authority, I leave the reader to judge.

Dr. Miller has justly remarked, that "infant communion derives not the smallest countenance from the word of God; whereas, with regard to infant baptism, we find in Scripture its most solid and decisive support. It would rest on a firm foundation, if every testimony out of the Bible were destroyed.

"The historical testimony in favour of infant communion is greatly *inferior* to that which we possess of infant baptism. We have no hint of the former having been in use in any church until the time of Cyprian, about the middle of the third century; whereas testimony more or less clear in favour of the latter has come down to us from the apostolic age.

"Once more: Infant communion by no means stands on a level with infant baptism as to its *universal*, or even *general*, reception."* We have seen what was the prevalence of the latter; the former was manifestly an *innovation*. We can trace out its origin; its spread through the churches; its discontinuance in the Latin church, and the reason for it; but we cannot point to the time when infant baptism originated, nor to the sect who denied it. The two cases, then, have no resemblance to each other.

3. Another attempt to evade the force of the historical argument has been made in the pitiful effort to prove that infants proper are not intended in the earlier mention of infant baptism. Mr. Robinson says,—

"The fact is, infants appear three times, at three different and distinct periods, and the baptism of them is each time claimed for a new and different reason. The first time, *it is an infant in law*, able to ask to be baptized, and accompanied by his sponsor or guardian. This happens in the time of Tertullian. The second is an infant of eight days old. This happened about forty years after the former, [in the time of Cyprian.] The last is a newborn babe," &c.†

* On Infant Baptism, p. 46.

† Hist. of Baptism, pp. 165, 166.

1.) The reader must understand that all the Baptist writers assert that infant baptism was first mentioned by Tertullian, and that he opposed it. This, they say, was the date of the first attempt to introduce the practice. To this, however, it is enough to reply, that Tertullian speaks of infant baptism, of sponsors, &c., as *facts*. He recognises them as *already* known, and not as then *about to be introduced*. Besides, he does not mention the circumstance of *novelty* as an objection to the practice. Perceiving this, and not willing to fully confide in the hypothesis that this was the proper *origin* of infant baptism, our opponents have fitted up a life-boat of the assertion that *infantes, parvulos, &c.*, do not mean *infants* "in the modern popular English sense of that word." Mr. Robinson undertakes to make out that Tertullian and Irenæus speak only of "*minors*"—"infants in law," &c.; and he finally concludes that these infants mentioned by Tertullian might have been *seven* years old.* He says, "they were *boys*, and not *babes*." Dr. Gale had previously taken the same position in regard to the meaning of *infantes, &c.*; and had ventured upon the opinion that those spoken of by Irenæus were children of any age under *ten* years.† Later writers have been pleased to catch at the same straw. So Mr. Hinton, after occupying a section, embracing five pages of his work, to prove that the Greek and Latin words employed to designate *children, youth, infants, &c.*, do not always express a definite sense with regard to age, concludes that we must have something more than the force of these terms to make out a case of infant baptism, or to prove that, where they relate to baptism, a *babe* was baptized.‡

2.) To this it is sufficient here to reply, that Tertullian describes the kind of little children, or infants, which he intends: they are "such as cannot ask;" such as cannot, of themselves, "come to Christ;" such as are of "guiltless age;" "such as know not whither it is that they are brought," when they are brought to baptism; in fine, they are exactly the same description of infants as those which they "brought to Christ" in the days of his flesh, for Tertullian says, respecting them, "Our Lord says, indeed,

* History of Baptism, pp. 159, 167, &c.

† Reflections, &c., pp. 524-527. ‡ Hist. of Bapt., p. 226, &c.

‘do not forbid them to come unto me,’ therefore, continues he, let them come *when they are grown up, when they understand, when they are instructed whither it is that they come, let them be made Christians [baptized] when they can know Christ.*” Are not these infants proper?

The infants of which Origen (who lived at the same time with Tertullian) speaks are those who have never committed any actual sins—who have no need of any forgiveness, except of original sin. The reader can turn back and read the descriptions which these two fathers give of the *parvulorum* of whom they speak. Irenæus lived at the same time with Tertullian and Origen, only he was the oldest of the three, and used words, of course, as they used them. In the same place he enumerates the various stages of life with respect to age, and mentions *infantes, et parvulos, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores, infants, and little ones, and children, and youth, and elder persons.* Yet we are gravely told that *infants* here do not denote *babes* proper, but children under *ten*, (according to Dr. Gale’s conjecture,) or of about *seven* years, (according to Mr. Robinson’s.) And then, these children of *ten* years, and under, are alleged capable of repentance and confession of faith, and hence capable of believer’s baptism. Thus infant baptism, after all, is said not to be proved by the earlier fathers. Will our opponents tell us what word Irenæus should have used to denote an infant proper?

4. 1.) Baptist writers have resorted to another plan to bring the historical argument for infant baptism into discredit,—a plan well calculated to take with the ignorant. It is a favourite method with them to preface all their chapters on this subject with a long, dolorous, piteous complaint concerning the corruptions of the church in the first five, and even the first three, centuries. All the sayings of all the authors that have ever written on the early church, which go to cast a shade upon its reputation, are studiously sought out, and industriously scraped together, to make one appalling picture of corruption and depravity. The ultimate design of all this is, to make people think that the Christian fathers are not worth believing, let them say what they may respecting the primitive and apostolic antiquity of infant baptism. When they affirm that the universal church believed infant baptism to be of Scrip-

tural authority, and practised from the earliest times, lo! they are met with the reply, that the age in which they lived was a very corrupt age, and therefore their testimony is not to be received!

2.) It is stoutly affirmed that infant baptism first made its appearance in Africa—a place, it is said, noted for its fertility in error;—and the country of its alleged nativity, and the times of its alleged origin, are declared sufficient to account for such a corruption of the Christian ordinance. All this is said, merely because it was in Africa that the first *disputes* concerning infant baptism arose. Do not our opponents know that Tertullian and Cyprian, as well as all others who mention infant baptism, speak of it *as an EXISTING* custom? How can it be said to have *arisen* in Africa, when the earliest mention we have of the practice speaks of it as *ALREADY ESTABLISHED*, and as *already being* the *UNIVERSAL* and *UNDISPUTED* faith of the church? The earliest disputes (if such they may be called) concerning infant baptism all recognise the practice to have been *ESTABLISHED*. This is the fact which, all along, we have endeavoured to press upon the attention of the reader. Yet our opponents take these very notices of the practice, which do not relate to its validity, or its Scriptural authority, and which unanimously concur in speaking of it as an *established* custom—they take these notices, I say, as so many proofs of the simultaneous *date* of the practice. And, furthermore, because it happened to be in Africa that these notices were first taken, *therefore* it was in that place that the practice of infant baptism originated.

The most curious part of these truly wonderful arguments is their *logical* conclusiveness:—Infant baptism is first noticed in *Africa*, (instead of Europe or Asia,) therefore it is a corruption of Christianity. Again: Infant baptism was first disputed about in corrupt ages of the church, therefore it is itself corrupt. The major propositions to these syllogisms the reader will readily supply.

3.) But we are far from wishing to slander the early ages of the church. They had their blemishes, their errors, their childish and ridiculous opinions on many topics; yet, the corrupt ages of the church, properly so called—the apostate age—dates after the conversion of Constantine, in the former part of the fourth century. But

how can existing corruptions in the first three centuries affect the credibility of the testimony of the writers of that period concerning a matter of fact? Such corruptions might shake our confidence in the correctness of their *opinions*, but do they invalidate their testimony to an existing *fact*? It is amusing to witness the management of our opponents. No people have ever made a more ostentatious display of the musty records of Christian antiquity to corroborate any doctrine than the Baptists, to set forth their theory of exclusive immersion. Whole books have been written on the "history of baptism," with no other ultimate aim than to set forth the authority of history (as far as possible) in favour of this doctrine among others; and in these compilations no corruptions of the church—no darkness of the age—no heterogeneous, affiliating errors—deter them from taking down whatever of testimony they can find, and wherever they can find it. And yet, if a Pedobaptist cite witnesses from the first three centuries, (the purest ages of the church before the time of Luther,) forthwith a *hue and cry* of CORRUPTION is raised, and a vulgar prejudice is excited against the testimonies thus brought forward.

5. The world, too, have been warned to withdraw their confidence from all traditionary evidence in support of Scriptural doctrine. Long sections have been written in illustration of the Popish character of all reliance upon tradition in matters of Christian faith and practice. Baptist authors have laboured hard to fix the impression upon their readers that Pedobaptists, in this case, exalt tradition to an equal authority with the Scripture canon.* They have openly charged us with *Romanism*—with "preaching another gospel"—with "making void the law of God" by tradition—while for all this they have had no better grounds than the fact that we have insisted upon the real force of the historical argument—not as the basis of authority for, but as strong corroborating evidence of, the apostolic origin of infant baptism. If individual Pedobaptist authors have at any time expressed an undue reliance upon tradition in respect of this or any other subject, still, our opponents should know that this is not a sufficient warrant for the broad allegations they have laid at our door. But the fact

* Dr. Gale's Reflections, &c., p. 243, &c. Hinton's History, p. 209, &c.

is, Baptist writers begin by denying that the Scriptures contain *any* proof of infant baptism, and then, by making the *entire* proof rest upon tradition, they easily fabricate and deal out their uncharitable censures. All their trumpet alarms about Romanism and semi-papacy in the Protestant church, respecting this subject, are but as "sounding brass," the moment it is admitted that the sacred Scriptures do authorize infant baptism. All their charges are predicated solely on the assumption that they are right, and that we are wrong, touching the Bible argument. Modest men! Can they ask for more? Mr. Hinton magnanimously says,—

"In our closing chapter it will be demonstrated that one of the great evils of the unhappy perversion of the ordinance of baptism is, that it tends materially to weaken the attachment of those DELUDED by it to the great Protestant principle, or rather principle of the true church, that 'the Bible, and the Bible ALONE, is sufficient for ALL matters both of faith and practice.' Indeed it is manifest that whenever Pedobaptists engage in a contest with the advocates of Popery, they find their position on the subject of baptism one of great embarrassment, to say the least, and giving great advantage to their opponents."*

How happy it is for the church, and the world, that some pure Protestants yet remain!—Protestants who have not defiled their garments with the corrupting doctrine of infant baptism, or adulterated their faith by the muddy streams of tradition! And how unassuming is it, in our Baptist brethren, to advertise themselves to the world as being this same class of Protestants!

In closing this chapter, I have only to assure the reader that I have not designedly omitted any argument or objection that has any important bearing upon the subject. I have endeavoured so to exhibit the whole evidence in the case as to enable him to judge for himself; and though it were easy to swell this single chapter into a volume, yet I feel confident that he has the just dimensions and real merits of the historical argument before him. Dr. Gale, as we have before stated, gives up the controversy at Cyprian, and acknowledges that afterward infant baptism was practised. Mr. Robinson represents Austin as making

* History of Baptism, p. 214.

“efforts to bring in the baptism of babes.” I have, therefore, carried the subject down to that father’s time. I have seen much to pain me in the process of the investigations necessary to complete this chapter, so that, I confess, I reluctantly throw aside my pen even now, and yet the reader may think, perhaps, that an apology is due for having detained him so long.

CHAPTER VI.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

OBJECTION I. It is urged against infant baptism that the Bible requires “*faith*” in order to baptism; but as infants are incapable of exercising faith, therefore they are not to be baptized.

This is one of the most prominent and specious objections that has ever been urged against the practice for which we contend. It appears, at the first blush, to be fair and unanswerable; and being easy of comprehension, and summary in its logic, it has proved a very successful weapon in the hands of the opponents of Pedobaptism. And here it must be conceded, that if the doctrine of this objection be true,—if the Scriptures do require faith in Christ, in all cases, to precede baptism, then the controversy is at an end; infants are not the fit subjects of the consecrating ordinance. But it is proper to admonish the reader, that after all the evidence which has been adduced in support of infant baptism, no objection can be presumed to be valid against it, before a most careful and rigid investigation of its character. The objector himself is bound to make out a fair and valid objection, of clear and indisputable authority, before it can be admitted to have any weight against arguments of so just and conclusive a nature as the Scriptures furnish in support of the affirmative. Indeed, as we have once before remarked, if a doctrine be fairly proved, no valid objection can possibly lie against it. Truth cannot contradict itself. Either the argument, therefore, or the objection, must fall to the

ground. Proceed we then to canvass the merits of the present objection. And

1. It is based upon a wrong application of the language of Scripture.

The Scriptural authority for making faith an indispensable and an invariable prerequisite for baptism is professed to be derived from the words of the apostolic commission, and from the history of the early Christian baptisms, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, where preaching the gospel to the individuals, and repentance and faith on their part, are mentioned as having taken place before baptism was administered. But

1.) Does the apostolic commission teach any doctrine irreconcilable with infant baptism? The words, as recorded by Mark, chap. xvi, 15, 16, run thus: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This, say our opponents, clearly places "faith" *before* "baptism," and hence excludes infants. But is this a lawful inference? Are we authorized to conclude against infant baptism from any thing that appears in this passage? I must confess I cannot so view it. It is true, that if no other circumstance existed, that would naturally lead the apostles to practise infant baptism, unless expressly prohibited,—if no evidence existed, aside from this text, to render this practice lawful and binding; in such a case we could not infer, or take authority for it from the words of this passage. But even in such a case the text itself could not, so far as I can appreciate, be urged as any *impediment* to the doctrine. For, first, the very general terms of the commission, and its exceeding brevity, forbid us to expect any details, or specifications, that do not strictly belong to a commission to "preach the gospel." Those points on which the apostles might have received instruction previously, or even subsequently, by other means, were here altogether omitted. The grand object of the Saviour seems to have been, simply to authorize them, from his own lips, to promulgate his gospel to all nations. The details of church ordinances, of church government and institutions, were left to be supplied from other sources, or at a future time. The occasion and manifest design, therefore, of this com-

mission do not authorize us to expect great particularity in the settlement of church ordinances. What information we have in this commission, on the subject of church institutions, further than the most general allusion to baptism, seems rather incidental to the main design. The holy supper is not alluded to at all.

Secondly. It being a commission to "preach the gospel" and to administer baptism, comprised in the most succinct and comprehensive form of words, it is, as a matter of course, and as all documents of so public and general a character naturally should be, addressed to adults. The duty of preaching, specifically, has reference to adults, or to persons whose reason is so far developed as to sustain a moral responsibility. To preach, is to *publish, proclaim, announce*; and presupposes persons capable of attending to what is published, proclaimed, or announced. This is a primary and distinctive duty of all the ministers of Christ. Now it is evident that publishing the gospel has relation only to adults; and it is evident also that this specific duty of the ministers of Christ has no exclusive bearing upon the privileges or the condition of children. A command to publish the gospel to those who are old enough to act under a moral responsibility in receiving or rejecting it, is not a command, either expressly or constructively, to exclude children from baptism. Nor is a command to baptize those who believe the published truth any command, either directly or impliedly, to exclude children from that ordinance. But on the contrary, as it is evident that our Lord intended to authorize the apostles, not only to publish the gospel and to baptize, but also to plant churches, administer discipline, and do all other things necessary to the final and most universal success of their ministry; and as these varied powers of their office are not specified, but, so far as respects this passage, are wholly *constructive*; and as infant baptism may be, and is, sustained on other ground of evidence; it follows that this commission may, and must, be so construed as to authorize the practice for which we contend.

It is evident that a command addressed to adults, containing duties appropriate only to adult, or responsible age, cannot conclude either for or against the privileges and condition of infants. So far, therefore, as this commission

is *specific* in the duties it enjoins, or in the powers which it confers, it must be regarded as leaving the question of infant baptism wholly untouched; and in this light, we should not feel authorized, from the text, either to affirm or deny the doctrine. But it is evident that the commission itself confers large constructive powers upon the apostles, while it leaves out, and seems to pass over, the greater amount of church institutions and ministerial functions. It appears to be a general commission to the apostles, and to all ministers of Jesus Christ, to do all things requisite to the existence and purity of the church, and the universal success of the gospel; that is, all those things that are directly, or by necessary construction, taught in the word of God.

I cannot pass from this point without noticing an unfair statement of it, which, as it occurs in a work of somewhat recent date, evinces that the Baptists do not, even now, always appreciate the ground taken by their opponents. The author says: "But it is said, 'The directions of Christ here refer only to those who are capable of believing, and the language does not *forbid* the baptism of infants.' True, these directions command none but believers to be baptized. . . . But the terms of the commission, while they enjoin the baptism of believers, *do, most certainly, exclude the baptism of any but believers.* If I commission my agent to purchase for me a lot of Webster's *large* dictionaries, does he not violate his instructions, if he also buy on my account a lot of the *abridgments*? But, he says, 'You did not *forbid* the purchase of the abridgments.' Did not *forbid* the purchase! I answer, It was not necessary for me to insert in your commission a prohibition against purchasing other books. Your instructions were definite; and when I directed you to buy the *large* books, you must have known that you had no authority to buy *small* books; you have done it at your own risk."* All this shows just how far some authors look into a subject before they pronounce upon it. The analogy, however an unpractised reader may be influenced by it, is an unfair and perfectly puerile statement of the case. For in the first place, Pedobaptists do not take their *authority* for baptizing infants from the mere *absence of a prohibition* of such a

* Jewett on Baptism, pp. 90, 91.

practice, as the pretended analogy teaches. We know not, indeed, how a Christian author could make such a representation of the opinions of his brethren. All we affirm touching this point is, that the total *absence* of a prohibition, in this particular commission, does not *prove* an universal prohibition; it proves nothing at all, either *pro* or *con*. And yet our author attempts to prove that the absence of an express prohibition, in this specific case, *does* directly prove a general prohibition. Furthermore, the analogy is without any just force whatever, because, although a command to buy *large* books, is no authority for the purchase of *small* books; and a command to baptize *believers* is no authority for baptizing *infants*; yet, as such commands contain no prohibition, there may exist circumstances, or there may, in another way, be instructions communicated, to authorize the purchase of the small books, alias the baptism of infants; and this may be such a perfect matter of understanding between the master and the "agent," as to render it wholly unnecessary to specify it. And this, we maintain, is the exact state of the case in relation to infant baptism.

But if we turn to Matt. xxviii, 19, 20, we shall find the directions contained in the apostolic commission so arranged as to exactly suit the practice of infant baptism. The command there reads, "Go ye therefore and *make disciples, or Christians, of all nations, baptizing them, &c. . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you.*" This text we have already noticed.

One incontestable proof that our Lord speaks exclusively of adults, in Mark xvi, 15, 16, and that, therefore, his words cannot be urged as any objection to infant baptism, is, that whatever force this text may be supposed to exert against the doctrine of infant baptism, it exerts in an equal degree, and by perfect parity of reasoning, against the salvation of infants. It is contended that want of faith incapacitates infants for baptism; but it is said also, "he that believeth not shall be *damned.*" Does want of faith incapacitate, and unfit them for salvation? If these words are to be so construed as to bear against infant baptism, on the score of their want of faith, we urge the principle still further, and say, for the same reason they must be "*damned.*" Now, by proving too much from these words

our opponents have proved just nothing at all, and we are brought back to the point from which we started, namely, that the phraseology of the text does not conclude either *for* or *against* infant baptism, the language being intended for, and appropriate to, adults only.

But we have pursued this argument thus far, on the supposition that the text decides the order of baptism, in relation to faith. This, however, is not the case. It does not say, "He that believeth, and *afterward* is baptized;" but, "He that believeth, and is baptized." Two things are here required—*faith* and *baptism*. The requisition is put forth to adults. The questions are, first, Do they believe? Secondly, Have they been baptized? If both precepts have been fulfilled, the claims of the apostolic commission have been fully met. And infant baptism may meet the requisition as fully as baptism in adult age. Nor is this a mere quibble. It is a plain and literal statement of the fact. The verb βαπτισθεις *baptistheis* is in the Aorist passive participial form; and the sentence literally reads, "He that believeth, *having been baptized*, shall be saved," &c. This turn of the passage exactly suits the hypothesis of infant baptism.

Baptist authors have felt the force of the fact, that if children are not to be baptized for want of faith, so neither could they be saved, and for the same reason; and Mr. Carson, one of their most celebrated writers, has boldly attempted to escape from the dilemma by the following extraordinary declaration:—"With reference to Mark xvi, 16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned'—it is said, 'If we infer that a person must actually believe, else he cannot be baptized, we must also infer that he must actually believe, else he cannot be saved; hence, *infants* cannot be saved.' Certainly, if there were no way of saving infants but by the gospel, this conclusion is inevitable. The gospel saves none but by faith. But the gospel has nothing to do with infants, nor have gospel ordinances any respect to them. The gospel has to do with those who hear it. It is good news; but to infants it is no news at all. They know nothing of it. The salvation of the gospel is as much confined to believers as the baptism of the gospel is. None shall ever be saved by the gospel who do not believe

it. Consequently, by the gospel no infant can be saved. Infants are saved by the death of Christ, but not by the gospel, not by faith. They are to be regenerated, but not by the gospel; they must be sanctified for heaven, but not through the truth revealed to man. The position is therefore good; none can be saved by the gospel but such as believe the gospel; none can be baptized with the baptism of the gospel but such as believe the gospel. There is no exception in either case.”*

All this only serves to show how hardly the author was pressed with the difficulties of his position, and into what labyrinths of absurdity men will sometimes plunge, in their vain attempts to escape from the consequences of their untenable and indefensible dogmas. If infants are not saved by the gospel, then, unless the merest quibble is intended on the word *gospel*, have they not been affected by the fall.

2.) And thus also must the history of adult baptism be understood in the Acts of the Apostles. The requisition of faith before baptism, in the case of the eunuch, and others, proves indeed that the apostles did not baptize unbelieving adults—that faith is an indispensable qualification for baptism with reference to all such as can believe; but further than this it does not prove. It does not amount to an exclusion of infants.

2. The objection is founded upon a wrong view of the nature and importance of evangelical faith.

This, I am apprised, may seem bold. What we mean is, that faith is made to assume the place of regeneration, or that work of grace wrought upon the heart by the Holy Spirit, whereby man is created anew in the image of God. Now faith, in an adult, is only the instrument, or medium, of this great work, of which baptism is an outward sign and seal. Why, then, should it be said that baptism primarily, and in its most original sense, is to be “regarded as a public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?”† True, faith is a prominent idea embraced in the import of adult baptism, but it is not the *original* idea. As the *instrument* of our salvation it is the most proximate of all the means, but it is not the salvation itself. “Receiving the END of your *faith*,” says the apostle, “EVEN THE SALVA-

* See Jewett on Baptism, p. 93.

† Ibid., pp. 86-89.

TION OF YOUR SOULS," 1 Peter i, 9. Why, then, should the *means* be so publicly celebrated by a distinct and separate ordinance of Christianity, when the great "END" of this means is not mentioned? Now the idea which we are striving to bring to light here, we apprehend, is quite simple, and is all-important to a right understanding of the ordinance under consideration. When, for instance, the traveller visits Breed's Hill, near Charlestown, Mass., he beholds a towering obelisk. He asks its meaning; and is very properly told that it is designed to commemorate the great battle which was fought there in 1775. The idea is simple, and he readily calls to mind all the circumstances of that great and awful event. The idea of the battle is simple, that is, comprehended by one effort of the mind, though *generic*. It is embraced in one word—in one thought. Yet it comprehends under it a great variety of circumstances—of means and accidents—of causes and effects. But who would be silly enough to suppose that the grand, original intent of the monument pointed to any isolated circumstances? One man might say, The battle never could have been fought without arms and ammunition,—therefore the obelisk commemorates these *means*, without which no stand could have been made against British valour and discipline. Another man might say the battle would not have been fought but for the indomitable prowess of freemen,—therefore the obelisk commemorates the unexampled valour of simple yeomen. And this might seem a plausible account. But no. It is a mistake. The grand, original idea is the *battle*; other circumstances are necessarily included, but they are all subordinate to this. This illustration, though crude, may serve the more unskilful reader a good purpose. Baptism is not, indeed, a *commemorative* ordinance, like the holy supper, but it stands as an outward sign of something unseen, because spiritual. As a *sign* it must, of course, *signify* something, and that which it signifies, or points to, must, according to all analogy, be simple. It may be generic, but the original idea must be *one* and *singular*. That idea is *regeneration*, taken in its broadest sense. Baptism, as we have before mentioned, is not an emblem, or a representative of faith, or of repentance, or of godly sorrow, or of prayer, or of any of the *means* of salvation,

but of THE SALVATION ITSELF—the regeneration of the entire man. If, therefore, children be the subjects of regenerating grace, they may be, and are, in virtue of this state, entitled to baptism. And if faith be, as it is in the case of adults, required before baptism, it is solely because it is necessary to place the adult in a justified and regenerated state before God, in which state he is on a perfect parity of standing with the child, in respect of a moral fitness for baptism. Faith, then, is mentioned, not on its own account, but simply as being an immediate and indispensable condition of justification, which alone is the groundwork of fitness for baptism, both in adults and infants.

OBJECTION II.—It is objected to infant baptism that it is opposed to the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom.

Mr. Jewett has thus stated the objection, which he quotes from the *Christian Review*:—"The ecclesiastical constitution which commenced in the family of Abraham, and was fully organized by the ministry of Moses, was not only religious, but political. Church and state were then one, for the civil government was then a theocracy. It embraced all who were natives of Judea. To be a member of the Jewish church and a subject of the civil government was the same thing; for to the church God held a political relation. But to the Christian church God holds no political relation. Though the Son is king in Zion, and wields a mighty sceptre, yet he rules by a spiritual, not a civil sway. If, then, the kingdom of Christ is strictly spiritual; if the subjects of it 'are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;' if they are not to say within themselves, We have Abraham for our father, because God is able, of the very stones, to raise up children unto Abraham,—then how incongruous is it with the nature of that kingdom, to give one of its sealing rites to those who can furnish no evidence of a spiritual regeneration, and who are connected with the subjects of it only by ties of natural or civil relationship! What a confounding is this of the relations of nature and of grace, of the claims of the flesh and of the Spirit, of the immunities of the church and of the world!"*

* Jewett on Baptism, pp. 85, 86.

Such loose, and yet somewhat plausible, reasoning has had its effect upon many minds. But it is sophistry, and adapted only to mislead. What if Moses gave to the Jews a political code? Does this corrupt, or in the least degree modify, their proper church character? It is true that the civil and the ecclesiastical laws of the Hebrews emanated from the same divine authority, but does this prove that they were one and identical? or that the plan of the Jewish church was half spiritual and half political? The church was in its state of minority, or nonage, (Gal. iv,) but it was the church of God—it was the Christian church in *fact*, but not in *maturity*. It is easy to perceive that the above objection calculates on making capital out of the very obnoxious word "*political*." In this respect it is a mere *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, and will weigh only with the ignorant. We have already fully vindicated the proper church character of the Jews. If children were ingrafted into a spiritual covenant by an ordinance of spiritual import anciently, surely they may be ingrafted into the same covenant by an ordinance of exactly similar import now. If the spirituality of the covenant was no impediment to their membership then, so neither is it at the present time. If children are in a state of favour with God, they are spiritually fit for baptism; and if so, the spirituality of the church presents no obstacle to their being baptized.

But there are statements in the above extract that are strange indeed. With what propriety or evidence it is asserted that the Jewish "church and state were one," is not easy to perceive. Their magistracy and their priesthood were totally separate; the ruler, the judge, the king, had no sort of control over the ecclesiastical affairs, except sometimes, as in the case of the Sanhedrim, to settle questions judicially. The king was not regarded as the spiritual head of the nation, nor was the high priest, or prophet, endowed with political sovereignty. The priest was not appointed or deposed by government,* nor were the functionaries of government elected or removed by the priests. Circumcision did not make a man a member of the nation of the Hebrews, or a subject of the Jewish

* It is true, this was the fact in the corrupt and degenerate ages of the nation, but we speak only of what the Mosaic law enjoined.

government, as is ignorantly asserted in the above objection. It gave him no title to an inheritance in the Holy Land. Hundreds, and probably thousands, were circumcised among the Gentiles who never saw the Promised Land, and who never submitted to the political code of Moses. Yet they were Jews in their religion, and of the spiritual seed of Abraham. How, then, could the Jewish religion be so mixed up with politics as to destroy the proper spirituality of the Old Testament church? The truth is, our opponents aim to make out that the Jewish church was a sort of ecclesiastico-political constitution—not a church—a something, they know not exactly what; but any thing to make it dissimilar to the New Testament church, so as to make all reasoning from the former to the latter without foundation, and without force. In this they will never succeed. They might as well attempt to convince the world that the Church of England is not a branch of the true church of God, because it is a national establishment, as to convince men that the political code of Moses annihilated their proper church character, or destroyed its spirituality. Indeed, it appears that the church to which Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, and Daniel belonged, is not spiritual enough for our opponents! The genius of those doctrines and church institutions which fostered such exalted piety in them, and in innumerable others, does not meet the high requisitions of their more enlightened views. All these things are of no avail. It is of no avail that God himself has declared that “he is not a Jew which is one *outwardly*; . . . but he is a Jew which is one *inwardly* ;” that circumcision is not that which is *outward on the flesh*, but circumcision “*is of the heart, in the spirit* ;” it is in vain that God has declared, all along, to his ancient people, that “the sacrifices of God are a broken and a contrite heart”—that God requires truth “*in the inward parts*”—that it was of no avail that they, at any time, “drew nigh unto him with their *mouths*, and honoured him with their *lips*, while their *hearts* were far from him ;”—in vain, I say, hath all this, and a thousand times more testimony, been borne to the spirituality required and expected, and in many instances illustriously attained, in God’s ancient church ; all, all is in vain. It was *not* a spiritual church! It was an “ecclesiastico-

political" one! *Such a church as might admit infant members!* I would not be sarcastic, but really, what reply could be made to such assuming ignorance?

The hinging point of the present objection, however, is this: Are infants in a state of grace? If so, which we affirm, the spirituality of the church is no objection to their baptism; unless the church is too pure to admit all of God's redeemed ones.

OBJECTION III.—Infant baptism implies no exercise of reason, or of choice, and therefore forms no presumption of the truth or excellence of Christianity.

I find this objection stated in the following language by Mr. Robinson; and as it bears so general an endorsement by the Baptists, it is worthy of an insertion here:—"When the subject [of writing a history of baptism] first darted into my mind," says that author, "I own I was not thinking of baptism, but of the evidences of Christianity. I was entering on that argument, which is taken from its rapid progress, and the multitude of its professors; and I was the more struck with it by observing that the first ecclesiastical historian, Luke, in the book of Acts, makes frequent use of it; but I could not help at the same time observing, that the same argument is not valid now, because a profession of Christianity doth not now imply an exercise of reason and assent, but is put upon infants by extrinsic force. The conduct of a multitude of wise, free, and virtuous men forms a presumption in favour of the reasonableness of their actions; but a multitude of beings of no character cannot form even the shadow of a presumption. The first are the thousands of whom Luke wrote; the last are the modern professors of the Christian religion."*

We do not deem this objection as meriting a formal notice; but as its high endorsement invests it with a borrowed importance, we think it should not be wholly omitted. It may appear plausible to some, but, after all, what is its real force? All the force it can possibly possess is derived from the assumption that baptism is, primarily, a profession of faith in the Christian religion. Destroy this notion, and the objection falls to the ground. Now,

* History of Baptism, *Preface*.

we readily grant that, in the case of an adult, baptism implies both the fact and the obligation of faith in the Christian religion. But is this its primary and leading signification? By no means. Nor does this admission at all militate against the fitness of applying the ordinance to infants. The principle is the same as that involved in circumcision. But as we have so fully explained this principle already, we forbear any further remarks in this place. The whole difficulty originates in a very common blunder with respect to the import of baptism. If this point were set right, the others would correct themselves. Baptism, like circumcision, is, primarily, a seal of *righteousness*, not an emblem, or a profession of *faith*. If faith, and a declaration of doctrine, be necessary to salvation, they are then and there necessary to baptism. But if not necessary to salvation, they are not necessary to baptism. The true philosophy of this subject is astonishingly misapprehended by many.

OBJECTION IV.—Infant baptism is incompatible with those natural rights of man by which he is entitled to choose for himself the religion he professes.

Mr. Robinson says,—“Nor doth infant baptism appear less incongruous with the natural rights of mankind, than it is with the wisdom and equity of Christianity. Of personal liberty, one of the dearest branches is liberty of conscience, the liberty of choosing a religion for one’s self, of which none is capable during infancy. It is the parent, or the magistrate, who chooses what religion the infant shall profess, and this is depriving him of a natural birth-right.”*

Mr. Woolsey, a Baptist, in his *Treatise on Baptism*, has a section (p. 322) under the following caption:—“INFANT BAPTISM DEPRIVES THE SUBJECT OF THE RIGHTS OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT, AND THEREFORE IS CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD.”

“Who but admires,” says he, “those noble and evangelical sentiments of the framers of the Declaration of American Independence, ‘That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, *liberty*, and the

* *History of Baptism, Preface.*

pursuit of happiness!"—“Our parents,” continues he, “have not the right to *take advantage of our infancy*, and then and there impose upon us what shall fetter our conscience when come to years of accountability.”*

I have known some sincere Christians to take this ground. “Children,” say they, “should grow up, and choose for themselves; then they will be satisfied. But if we cause them to be baptized without their choice, and they grow up and become dissatisfied with their baptism, and at the same time do not wish to become Baptists, they will be subjected to many unpleasant, and even painful circumstances. They will either be obliged to join the Baptist church, which may not be the church of their choice, in order to receive ‘believer’s baptism,’ or else remain in a Pedobaptist church, with the painful conviction of having never received what they believe to be Christian baptism, for no Pedobaptist minister would re-baptize them. Thus their liberty of conscience is restricted, and we therefore prefer that our children should grow up and choose the form and kind of baptism that their own consciences approve. Then they will be satisfied, and will not have to reproach us.” This is the substance of the objection we wish here to meet. In reply we observe,—

1. This is not the principle upon which the question of our duty in the premises is to turn. If it be a Christian institution, enjoined by divine authority, we are to practise it, without reference to any such future contingencies as are contemplated in the objection; but if the Bible has not sanctioned or enjoined it, then we are to omit it, not because it may have a supposed repugnance to the rights of conscience, but because the Bible does not require or sanction it. This is the principle by which our conduct is to be governed. Yet, if infant baptism, or any other practice or institution, plainly and really trenched upon the natural rights of conscience, or the moral liberty and right of choice which God has given to every man as an inalienable property, and constituent part of his moral nature, I could not doubt but such a practice, or institution, must be plainly and essentially antisciptural.

2. But the same objection is equally conclusive against

* Vide Rev. E. Hall on Baptist Errors, p. 101.

all religious training, and especially that education in a particular system of doctrine which it is the pious concern of every conscientious and devout parent to impart to his child.

The moment the parent engages to instruct the child in the Christian religion—or to pre-engage its faith and affections in favour of any particular system of doctrine—that moment he undertakes to commit the child, by the strongest principles that govern human conduct—namely, those of early associations and religious habit—in favour of one particular faith, to the exclusion of all others. The parent uses his own superior reason and experience, to control the pliant sensibilities and docile intellect of the child, and to mould them according to a model that, in after-life, it may disdain and utterly renounce. The child is not consulted—it has no option—it is wholly submissive and obedient to the authority of the parent, whose instructions it is taught to receive without gainsaying, and to regard as infallible. The child, in such a case, cannot be said to have chosen its own religion. It may, in after-life, approve it, and be willing to lay down his life for it, but it is a religion which the parent first chose for the child, and in which, availing himself of all the advantages which nature and Providence had put in his hands, he had taken unwearied pains to establish the child, before it should arrive at that period wherein it could be said to be capable of choosing for itself. Now, what is all this but choosing a religion for another? What is it but abridging the rights of conscience, according to the notion of the objection aforesaid? If infant baptism be repugnant to the natural freedom and rights of conscience, so also, on the same principles, is the religious education of children.

It may be supposed, however, that the two cases are not parallel. But wherein do they differ? Are the obligations of Christian *institutions* in any wise different from those of Christian *doctrine*? Have the former a binding force upon the conscience different in kind or degree from the latter? Is it any more the duty of parents to pre-engage their children in the belief of the one, than in the practice of the other? Or is it any easier to break away from the restraints of one than of the other, in after-life? The principle is involved in this simple question, whether

a child, before the period of personal choice, may be committed in favour of any one religious doctrine or institution, to the exclusion of its opposite, without impairing its natural liberty of choice. Infant baptism, if true, is no more binding than any doctrine of revelation; and if false, is as easily thrown off, in after-life, as the force of any particular doctrinal education. The natural liberty of conscience is affected no more in the former case than in the latter. Is it not plain, therefore, that

3. This objection is based on a licentious interpretation of the natural rights of conscience? Nothing is more clear, as a dictate both of revelation and nature, than that the responsibility of giving a right direction to the mind and conscience of the child devolves wholly on the parent. But could there exist such a responsibility, in the absence of a power and a right, both to choose for the child and to enforce instructions? The thought is absurd. Where, then, is the right of the infant to choose for itself? Or, which is the same, where is their right to claim to be left alone and neglected, as to their religion, until they can choose for themselves? If the infant is endowed with such rights, then, plainly, the parent can claim no antagonistic right. Nature cannot contradict herself. If the infant has a right to remain without a religious education, or a religious bias, previous to the period of personal choice, then it is clear that the parent can have no right to impart and enforce such instructions during all the term of immature reason. But is this a doctrine of the Bible? Is it a dictate of nature? Is it in accordance with reason? Is it not rather a latitudinarian construction put upon the doctrine of our natural rights?

A cognate principle to the above, and one which is often assumed by our opponents, in this controversy, is, that infant baptism confers no obligation upon the child, because the latter does not become a subject of the ordinance, or a party to the covenant, by personal, voluntary choice. Such objections appear the more plausible to some, because they seem to coincide with the full and unrestrained moral freedom of the actor. But how fallacious are all such reasonings! Are moral beings under no obligation to obey their Creator previously to their voluntarily engaging to obey him? Does the voluntary choice

of duty make it any more sacred, or truly obligatory? Baptism originates no obligation. It is, at most, merely the sign, or recognition, of a pre-existing obligation. It is the pledge and memorial of our devotion to God; but can it make the obligation of that devotion more sacred than it was before? Was the duty of the "son," to "go and work in his father's vineyard," any more sacred after he had said, "I go, sir," than at the moment that he uttered the undutiful words, "I go not?" Did his own personal choice in the matter alter the nature of his obligation, or modify or enhance it in the slightest degree? Who does not see that it did not? So neither can the want of personal choice in infants affect the binding nature of their baptism. They are obligated, if they grow up, to lead holy lives, according to the import of their baptism, no less than as if they had chosen their own baptism in adult age.

"Consent is not necessary; for infants receive inheritances. This is by force of municipal laws. But are not the laws of God of equal force? 'Baptism [it is said] implies obligations, which can be founded only on consent.' Then it will follow that infants are not bound by human laws, for they have not assented to the social compact. They are [moreover] under no obligations to obey parents, guardians, or masters, because they either did not choose them, or were incompetent to make such choice. [Nay, further,] they are not bound by the laws of God himself, because they have not consented to his authority; and if they never consent, they will be always free equally from all obligations and all sin. Such are the consequences of the above objection."*

It is folly to pursue this point further. Reason and piety revolt at such doctrines. Why, then, have our opponents descended to such things, and consented to employ such sophisticated weapons against the doctrine of infant baptism? In this their zeal has betrayed them into consequences which they no more believe than we ourselves. If Christian parents believe it to be their duty to consecrate their children to God in baptism, they ought to do it, and no fancied rights of conscience on the part of the infant should deter them. The mature reason and con-

* Ridgeley's Divinity, vol. iv, p. 187.

science of the parent must act for the child, while its own remain undeveloped ; and whatsoever the parent judges to be right, according to the best means of information in his power, it is his duty and his prerogative to do. If, after all this, he errs, it is the child's misfortune—the parent's infirmity—and to God alone is he held amenable. The whole subject, then, resolves itself back into the question, Is infant baptism a divine institution ?

4. It is obvious, therefore, that the objection assumes, as an established principle, the very point to be proved. It assumes that infant baptism is an antisciptural institution. If it be a divinely authorized institution, there can be no doubt but it ought to be practised ; if not, it ought not, on any ground, to be allowed in the churches.

5. As to the fact that some persons, who have been baptized in infancy, having grown up, become dissatisfied with their baptism, this can never be made a valid objection to the practice. The dissatisfaction that an adult may feel with regard to his baptism in infancy can form no conceivable objection to the truth and validity of the ordinance. How many persons become dissatisfied, in after-life, with their early religious education ! Men are constantly shifting their position, in regard both to doctrine and to church government. And if this circumstance might be urged as a proof of the truth of their new faith, the world would be confused more than ever with the heterogeneous testimony of conflicting partisans. That a man abjures his former faith is no evidence of its being an error ; and that he becomes a willing martyr to his new doctrines is no evidence of their truth. The circumstances of the case may fully attest his *sincerity*, but can furnish no proof whatever of his *infallibility*. And what if some persons renounce their baptism, because it was received in infancy. Is this an argument to prove that infant baptism is an error, and not to be administered ? We have known persons to become dissatisfied with their baptism, though received, by their own choice, in adult age ; but does this prove the ordinance void, and that it ought not to be administered ? Must we wait until a man has shifted his opinions for the last time, before we may venture to administer to him the ordinances, and then administer them in a way to suit the final state of his opinions ? We

cannot forestall what changes the faith of an individual may undergo, nor are the ordinances at all affected by these things. The only fact that it concerns the administrator to know, as the guardian of the purity of the ordinance, is, that it fitly applies to the candidate, according to its true spirit and intent, *at the present time*. His duty is then obvious—the administration is then fully authorized, and completely guarded.

But the point we are now considering is of small importance. The broadest dimensions of this objection are too insignificant to beget any alarm among Pedobaptists, or to justify any flattering expectation of triumph on the part of their opponents. The probability that children will become dissatisfied with their baptism, in after-days, on the supposition of their having been properly educated in religion, and instructed in this particular topic, is so small, as to be wholly unworthy of a special consideration. If parents do not seriously intend to train up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”—if they do not intend to instruct them in the nature of baptism, and in the obligations of which it is a recognition, as well as the fact that they themselves have been early dedicated to God by this solemn rite; if, I say, they do not teach their children these things, it would doubtless be better that they should wholly omit their baptism. It would be trifling with sacred things, and with the awful mysteries of religion, to consecrate a child to God by a divine ordinance, and then neglect to educate and bring it up in a manner suited to such a solemn dedication. But if proper pains were taken with children, to inform them as to the fact and nature of their baptism, and their obligation to answer its holy and mystical import, there is no reasonable probability that they would ever become dissatisfied in after-life. Few, very few, even now, indulge any doubt of the entire sufficiency of their early consecration, notwithstanding the too prevalent irregularities perceptible in the plan of religious education generally adopted in reference to children.

OBJECTION V.—It is objected to infant baptism, that it can do no good. It is often asked, “What good can it do to baptize an unconscious babe? Does it confer any spi-

ritual benefit? Will it make its salvation more sure, if it should die in infancy, or its manhood more exemplary and pious, if it attains to years? Is the infant conscious of any advantage received, or capable of appreciating or receiving any personal good through this means? And, if not, where is the benefit of infant baptism?"

There is, to this objection, such an air of impertinence, that I have hesitated long on the question of noticing it. But when it is considered that it has its influence over many sincere minds, who are not much accustomed to argumentation, and who, therefore, do not always appreciate what belongs to a valid objection, the prominence we here give it will be the more readily excused. Our object is to attain to truth, and to disabuse the minds of sincere inquirers after truth of all erroneous impressions, as far as it may be discreet and obligatory upon us to pursue the evasive forms of error. In attempting to seize, and detain before the mind of the reader, the Protean shapes of this objection, we remark,—

1. It assumes to judge of divine institutions by the test of utility. The moment a man brings the institutes of religion to this test, he is in the greatest danger. True, the institutes of religion are all useful; and if any one could be pointed out and clearly demonstrated not to be subservient to a useful end, one could not reasonably doubt that it emanated from some human source. But the question is, Is it our prerogative to subject the truth and authority of the Christian institutes to such a test? Are we at liberty to receive or reject them, according to our notions of their utility, or their inutility? That all divine institutions are useful, we doubt not; but is our opinion of their usefulness to be the *ground* on which we are to receive them? I think no Christian is prepared to assume this position. If evidence is afforded sufficient to produce a rational conviction that a certain act, or course of conduct, is required of God, it doubtless becomes our duty to obey, without calling in question the utility of the requirement. Human wisdom is ever rife with suggestions for the improvement of the divine economy. Adam might have questioned the wisdom and fitness of the prohibition laid on the tree of knowledge. Abraham might have plead eloquently for the privilege of remaining in his parent

country; and human wisdom would have suggested an emigration of the patriarch at that time eastward, instead of westward, although after-history has demonstrated that such a movement would have defeated the great objects of his "call." How numberless are the dangers that beset such a course of reasoning! The mind would soon be led into the wilderness of skepticism, and left to "stumble upon the dark mountains" of unbelief. If we are satisfied God has required of us any particular act, we should cheerfully obey, not doubting its ultimate utility, or questioning its propriety, or, above all, cavilling where we ought to acquiesce.

2. We have not the slightest objection to meeting our opponents on this ground, and, as far as it is permitted to man to judge of the divine commands by his perceptions of their utility, to rest the fate of this subject on the issue of this argument. But our opponents must remember that they cannot hold us to any principle, or rule of judging, in this case, that does not hold equally good, and that they themselves will not cheerfully abide, when applied to doctrines *ex confesso* of divine origination.

The Romish doctrine, as expressed by the council of Trent, declares the sacraments to confer grace *ex opere operato*, that is, by the external administration of them. This the Protestant principle contradicts. We do not hold that an inherent efficacy resides in the external ordinances themselves, that by the mere act of administration is made over to the recipient. In this sense, according to Protestant principles, baptism could be of no service either to adults or infants. How, then, can infants be benefited by baptism? We answer, Their gracious interest in the covenant is thereby attested; the pledge of the divine blessing is thereby given; their own gracious state is recognised; and they are thus, by divine direction, made members of the Christian family, according to the rules of which they are required to be brought up, and to live. This subject will be fully noticed in another chapter.

But the important feature of this objection, to which we invite particular attention, is, that it assumes that an infant is incapable of being benefited by a religious ordinance, because it cannot now reflect, and reason, and comprehend the nature of things, like persons of maturer years.

The phrase, "*unconscious* babe," is a favourite expression with our opponents, to which they often give a peculiar emphasis. But what is the force of this objection? What force ought to be conceded to it, when it openly contradicts established facts, and empties its contempt upon usages which Jehovah himself has sanctioned! What good did it do to the "*unconscious* babes" that were brought to Jesus, that "he took them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them?" Were they *conscious* of the deed performed by our Saviour? Could they reason upon it? Could they at all comprehend it? We hope our Baptist brethren will answer these questions. But whether it availed any thing or not, the Saviour said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me;" and this command is as binding on us now as on the disciples anciently.

But stranger still. God commands Abraham, and his natural descendants, to circumcise their male infants. Can any person inform us what good this ever did them? I know our opponents would escape by saying that circumcision was a mere mark of Jewish descent, and served only a political purpose; although it unfortunately happens that God himself has declared that that is *not* circumcision which is merely outward, on the flesh, "but circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, whose praise is not of men, but of God;" and also that Abraham's circumcision was "a seal of the righteousness of faith," Rom. ii, 29, and iv, 11. These are all-important facts for our opponents to account for, on the principle that an "*unconscious* babe" can derive no benefit from a religious ordinance, before they approach us with this same principle, and claim the privilege of applying it to the disproof of infant baptism. If they urge the application of the principle in the latter case, we shall certainly urge it in the two former; and if they hold it to be an objection to infant baptism, we shall hold it to be an objection to the wisdom and fitness of circumcision, and a reason why our Lord ought not to have taken up little children in his arms and blessed them. Strange that the Saviour did not know that "*unconscious* babes" *could not be* blessed! Will not our Baptist brethren count the cost of their own arguments before they adopt them? But let them beware. The Saviour may rebuke

them, as he did the disciples, with the significant words, "FORBID THEM NOT."

OBJECTION VI.—An objection to infant baptism is founded on the omission of a word in Acts viii, 12. It is there stated that the Samaritans, "when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, were baptized, both men and women." Here, it is said, if but a single word had been added, this whole controversy about infant baptism might be brought to a close, or, rather, would never have occurred. If it had read, "men and women, and *children*," the text would have furnished a clear precedent for infant baptism, and all doubt of its Scriptural authority would be removed.

Great use is made of this trifling circumstance by Baptist writers; and their appeals, *ad ignorantiam*, (for they are no better,) are not without their effect. The circumstance of so trifling an omission, where so much depended upon explicitness; and also the total omission of the mention of children, where the historian professes to be very explicit, and where, according to the Pedobaptist theory, it is supposed infants must have been baptized; these circumstances are dilated upon with great seriousness, as possessing vast weight in the present controversy. But let us examine this matter:—

1. We call in question any man's right to assume what the Scriptures ought to say on any given subject, and then construct an argument, *pro* or *con*, on the mere authority of that naked assumption. With such a license a man could decide any controversy whatever. It is well known that in former days a great controversy raged in the church as to whether the earth moved round the sun, or the sun round the earth; whether the earth was round, or flat; whether it had a *foundation*, or was pendulous, &c.; and many carried their appeals directly to the Bible. These controversies gave rise to severe persecutions, and lasting disgrace to religion. A few words, direct to the point, had they been inserted in the Bible, had prevented all this scandal.

The geological age of the earth has been asserted to contradict the chronology of Moses; and the enemies of revelation have, for many years past, exulted in the sup-

posed discovery, at last, of arguments drawn from the solid framework and superficial strata of our globe itself, sufficient to destroy the credibility of our sacred writings. Many Christians have felt their confidence shaken for a time, and long and painful has been the suspense of many minds respecting the issue. Science has never made so formidable an attack upon revelation as by the skeptical geology of modern days. The event, with many minds, is not yet decided. Yet, if Moses had added *two words* to the second verse of Genesis,—if he had written, “And *ages afterward* the earth was waste and desolate,” (or “without form, and void,”) no apparent ground of difference between the Mosaical and geological antiquity of the earth could ever have existed. How much, apparently, would have been spared to the cause of truth! But are we at liberty to reject revelation on the ground of such an omission?*

So is it with the doctrines of the Trinity, of the divinity of Christ, of vicarious atonement, and indeed of every other doctrine which has ever been a subject of dispute among men. If certain express words had been *added* to the present text, touching them severally, painful controversies had been spared the world. Every man who doubts any doctrine of Scripture imagines he has found a radical defect in the present Scriptural proof of that doctrine, and that if the Holy Spirit had ever intended to teach it at all, he would have taught it in a particular form of words, which he has now, at length, discovered to be the only suitable method of conveying the doctrine. Thus, every man proposes to the Author of revelation his own condition of faith. It would be endless to enumerate all the demands, of a perfectly kindred character to the one in question, which have been made upon revelation for additions here, and additions there. So it is. After all the miracles of Christ's spotless life, yet some cannot believe on him; an important item of evidence is omitted; “*If he be Christ, the chosen of God, let him now come down from the cross.*” How easy it is to make converts!

* I would not seem to betray any doubt, in my own mind, of the sufficient clearness of the Mosaic account, and of its entire harmony with the real facts of geological science. I merely allude to the controversy as an existing fact, and an evil that might have been prevented by a few express words, had they been inserted in the Mosaic narrative.

2. The phraseology of the text in question does not, as the objection assumes, preclude infants. We are not to suppose that infants are excluded, merely because they are not specified; this would involve us in difficulty when we came to apply the same principle to the explanation of other texts. If our opponents assume that children were not included in the number of baptized Samaritans, *merely because they were not expressly mentioned*, then we understand them, and they must not complain if we hold them to the same principle of interpretation in all similar cases. Now, let us try the principle.

It is said that Joshua and the Israelites destroyed the city of Ai, and that "Joshua drew not his hand back . . . until he had utterly destroyed ALL the inhabitants of Ai." Now, the question is, *Were there any infants destroyed in this city?* The sacred historian says, "And so it was, that ALL that fell that day, BOTH OF MEN AND WOMEN, were twelve thousand, EVEN ALL THE MEN (*population*) OF AI," Josh. viii, 25, 26. Here, then, it is stated that ALL the population of the city was destroyed, and *men and women* are enumerated, just as they are in Acts viii, 12. But no mention whatever is made of *infants*. Were there, then, any infants in this city? And remember, the question is not, whether, judging from other causes, the city probably contained infants; but, whether the mere *omission* of infants, in the enumeration of "men and women," &c., *proves* that there were no infants. And I believe, if any man should assert that, because "men and women" are expressly mentioned, and infants are wholly omitted, in this enumeration, therefore we are to infer that this city of twelve thousand inhabitants contained no infants; I believe, I say, that such a man would be commiserated by every Baptist in the land, as one that had lost his senses. Why, then, will they continue to urge upon us such a sheer puerility in the shape of an argument? Is it because they are in want of valid arguments?

The reader may also turn to Judges ix, 49, 51. He will there find, in verse 49, an account of the destruction of "about a thousand *men and women*" in the tower of Schechem. Infants are not enumerated. Is this proof that there were none? In verse 51 he will find an account

of the flight of "all the *men and women*" of the city of Thebez to the tower within the city. Children are not mentioned. Had this city *no* children? According to the principle of interpretation which our opponents have applied to Acts viii, 12, we are to infer that Thebez, the tower of Schechem, and the city of Ai, contained *no children*, because, after an express enumeration of "men and women," as composing their population, no infants, or children, are *mentioned*. If the principle hold good in one case, it holds equally good in all the rest.

We see, therefore, that nothing can be gained by our opponents from the circumstance of the omission of infants in the enumeration of Acts viii, 12; and the most we can make of that enumeration is, that it is a mode of expression merely tantamount to "*male and female*"—"they were baptized, both *male and female*."

3. But finally, if the text in question had read, "They were baptized, *men, women, and children*," still, we have no reason to believe our opponents would have been satisfied. Doubtless they would have gone to work to prove that it meant an "*infant in law*"—a "*minor*"—and not an infant proper. This they have done already in a case where far less depended on the argument than would be the case in the passage before us, if the word *children* were added. Tertullian, in the second century, speaks of the baptism of children, and not only calls them *little children*, (*parvulos*,) but *describes* them as such. (See page 227, &c., of this work.) Yet page after page has been written by Baptist authors, to prove that the Greek and Latin words for *children, infants, &c.*, meant, often, only *minors—infants in law*. So we apprehend it would be if the word *children* had been inserted in Acts viii, 12. It is in vain that men call for Lazarus to convince them, when they reject Moses. They would not receive him.

OBJECTION VII.—An objection to infant baptism is founded on 1 Peter iii, 21, "Baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.)"

The stress of the objection lies on the supposition that infants are incapable of the ends of baptism. Baptism

imports the "answer of a good conscience toward God;" infants are incapable of this; therefore they are improper subjects of baptism.

1. The word *επερωτημα* *eperotema*, translated *answer*, is supposed to refer to the answer to questions propounded to the candidate at baptism, or to those questions themselves—as the word sometimes means *demand*, as well as *answer*—or to the whole *examination*, including both question and answer. Dr. Robinson says, "The word is spoken in the New Testament of *a question* put to a convert at baptism, or rather of the whole process of question and answer, that is, by implication, *examination, profession,*" &c.* The word occurs in no other place in the New Testament, and but once in the Septuagint, in Dan. iv, 17, (Sept. iv, 14,) where it is rendered in the English, *demand*. The verb *επερωταω* *eperotao*, from which it is derived, signifies to *ask, inquire, demand,* &c. So, also, its corresponding Hebrew *שאל* *shaal*. See Gen. xxiv, 47; Judg. iv, 20; *et alibi*.

Now, it is plain that the apostle here intends the spiritual import—the essence itself—of baptism; namely, that it is not merely an outward washing, but a washing of the mind, or purity of conscience. He speaks of baptism here, just as it is natural to speak of it—as it applies to adult age, and as obligating to a holy life. As if he had said, "Baptism doth now save us; however, the ends of baptism are not answered when the person has answered certain questions of doctrine, but when the conscience gives a right response to God." I say, the address of the apostle is made to adults, and to such his words are particularly applicable. But this does by no means exclude the idea of infant baptism. Infants are placed under the same obligations by baptism, to profess sound doctrine and lead holy lives, as age and reason shall render them capable.

But the particular point I would notice here is, that subjects are often spoken of as if they had an application only to adults, when, at the same time, they have an equal application to infants; or as having an application only to males, when they equally apply to females. The point to

* Greek and English Lexicon.

which we allude is what is called speaking of a subject *in the abstract*. Baptism is often thus spoken of in the New Testament; and a grievous error with many persons in ordinary, who reason on this and other topics, is, that they take the language which was used only as applicable to an abstract question, and apply it to a specific case. For instance, to illustrate the principle, in Gen. vi, 5, it is said, "And God saw the wickedness of *man* that it was great," &c. Here the masculine gender only is employed. But will any one argue that the female sex were excepted in the divine mind from participating in this general wickedness, merely because this wickedness is affirmed of *man*? Every one sees that it is the *fact, in the abstract*—the fact of general depravity of morals—that is asserted, without any attempt to distinguish between the comparative corruption of the sexes. And when Jehovah threatens that his "Spirit shall not always strive with *man*," and that he will "destroy *man* from the face of the earth," does not the dereliction in the one case, and the visitation in the other, apply to *human beings*, of whatever sex? And so of a thousand other cases we might mention, where a distinction is to be made between a general question and a given case; and where the language is to be explained accordingly.

Saving grace is often mentioned as coming "through faith." "By grace are ye saved through faith." "He that *believeth*, shall be saved; and he that *believeth* not, shall be damned." "Whosoever *believeth* on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Here grace is limited to the exercise of faith. Infants are not excepted. No intimation is given here of any special adaptation of the atonement to infants. And this, too, is in harmony with the tenor of Scripture phraseology. Yet, does the Saviour exclude infants from heaven for want of faith? What I wish the reader to notice is, that language is often addressed to adults which seems appropriate only to them, and yet that same language does not imply an exclusion of infants from sharing an equal interest in the things thus set forth. The reader can easily apply these remarks to circumcision, which was often spoken of as applicable only to adults: thus, "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." "Circumcision is

not that which is outward on the flesh . . . but circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Deut. x, 16; Rom. ii, 28, 29. This high spiritual and practical import of circumcision was as impracticable to infants then, as "the answer of a good conscience toward God" is to the same class of persons now. Yet, the Jewish child, as he grew up, was taught his duty to assume these obligations; (which, indeed, God had already devolved upon him, and which did not, and, in the nature of things, could not, *originate* in baptism,) and to carry out the purport and meaning of his circumcision. So with the baptized child now. But

2. The scope of this passage from Peter is most decidedly in favour of infant baptism. Here we have presented to view a *family* saved by the operations of the faith of its head. "By faith NOAH, being moved with fear, prepared an ark TO THE SAVING OF HIS HOUSE," Heb. xi, 7. "In like manner baptism doth also now save us." As *Noah and his family* were anciently saved by water, so now also may *believers and their families* be saved by baptism. Let every believing parent, then, receive the ancient admonition and command of Jehovah, which was addressed to Noah, "Come thou, AND ALL THY HOUSE, into the ark." For a further illustration of this passage, I beg to refer the reader to my treatise on the Mode, &c., of Baptism, chap. vii, sec. 2.

CHAPTER VII.

BENEFITS OF INFANT BAPTISM.

SOME observations which might properly fall under this head we have already forestalled, and shall endeavour not to repeat them here. The subject of the present chapter has this indication of truth and merit, that it has drawn down upon itself the sneer and ridicule of such as could oppose to it no better weapons. The reader will understand that we have no compliment to pay to such illiberal and grovelling attempts, and, passing them by, shall address our remarks to his candour and his understanding.

The errors that have been held in connection with infant baptism by its friends, as well as the prejudices that have been enlisted against it by its enemies, make it incumbent on us, before we commence our enumeration of its benefits, to state what it does not accomplish for the subject.

SECTION I.

1. Baptism does not, in any peculiar sense, accomplish the *regeneration* of the infant; nor do we consider that the child is regenerated AT baptism any more than *before*, or *after*. We do not consider that baptism accomplishes any more for a *child* than for an *adult*.

It is well known to the student in church history, that the Christian fathers associated a saving efficacy with this ordinance. Their ideas, however, do not appear to be always clear, or satisfactory to themselves. A general tendency existed to overrate the virtues of baptism, although their expressions are often such as an ultra Protestant himself could not hesitate to adopt. We are far, however, from adopting, without exception, either their style, or their sentiments, touching this point. But whatever excess, and tendency to superstition, might have marked the progress of opinion on this subject during the first three centuries after the apostles, it is evident that the extravagant dogmas of Romanism, in after-ages, were far in advance of the theology of the fathers.

The Church of Rome not only associate a saving virtue with the administration of baptism, but derive that virtue directly from the administration of the external ordinance itself. (See Objection V, of the chapter on "Objections," &c., in this work.) It is not easy to define this idea. "This barbarous phrase, *opus operatum*, which is utterly unintelligible without an explanation, signifies the external celebration of the sacraments. It has been defined by Popish writers to be the performance of the external work, without any internal motion; and sacraments have been said to confer grace *ex opere operato*, because, besides the exhibition and application of the sign, no good motion is necessary in the receiver. All that is required is, that no *obstacle* shall be opposed to the reception of grace, and the only obstacle [which they admit] is mortal sin. But as sins of this class are reduced by Roman casuists to a very small number—all others being accounted venial—the exceptions to the efficacy of the sacraments which are made by this negative qualification are quite inconsiderable. . . . It is in vain to ask any proof of this doctrine from Scripture, for none is to be found."*

Another dogma of the Church of Rome respecting the efficacy of sacraments is, that the priest who administers the sacrament "must *intend* to do what the church does." The meaning of this is, that the intention of the priest is essential to the efficacy of the rite. If he intend the sacrament to be efficacious, it is efficacious; but if he intend it otherwise, it is then a mere external symbol, without any accompanying grace. This absurd and impious doctrine invests the priest with absolute power to lock up or unlock, at will, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But it is not our intention to pursue this error. It bears its own refutation upon its forehead.

Baptismal regeneration is a doctrine that has been charged upon the Protestant Episcopal Church, and other branches of the Protestant family.

It is difficult to affirm that the Church of England believes this or that respecting this doctrine; and it is difficult because, while one party in the Church affirm, and the other deny it, and while both alike hold to the Liturgy, and while both these parties are large and re-

* Dick's Theology, vol. ii, p. 360.

spectable, it is not an easy matter to say which is the Church. The Church of England certainly could not be supposed to hold to both sides of this question. Doubtless one of these parties holds the doctrine of *the Church*, while the other holds a *dissenting* opinion. The present state of opinion on this and other topics, in the English Church, is thus alluded to by Dr. Pusey, in a letter to "Richard, lord bishop of Oxford:"—"I own, my lord, I have myself shrunk from stating fully the degree of evidence which there is, that baptismal regeneration is the doctrine of the Church of England, lest in these days, when men hold so laxly by their Church, and are ready to quit her upon any ground of difference,—ready to suspect her, and very slow to suspect themselves,—the result of proving that baptismal regeneration is the doctrine of our Church, would be that men would rather forsake their Church than embrace her doctrine. . . .

"Not as if I entertained any doubt, my lord, that *we speak with our Church* on this point, and that every syllable of her teaching in her services for baptism, confirmation, and the catechism, goes the same way; and that her Articles imply the same thing; but that it seems useless and ungracious for us to press upon them, that their Church holds the doctrine, until their prejudices against it shall first be, as those of many are being, somewhat softened."*

But what is meant by baptismal regeneration? The doctrine of the Church of England (we speak of what is called the "high-Church party") is, that the child is, ordinarily, regenerated AT baptism, and BY baptism, *as a means*. This is according to the ordinary appointment of God. Regeneration, they hold, is the result of two concurrent causes,—the outward washing of baptism, and the Holy Spirit. The outward ordinance is the *instrument*—*the means of conveyance*—the Holy Spirit is the *agent*. They do not believe that regeneration is always *necessarily* confined to baptism, but that it is ordinarily so; that by the appointment of God men are thus to be regenerated, although salvation is not necessarily dependant on baptism. On this subject, however, we are constrained to say, their language is often strong.

Dr. Waterland says,—“Every one must be born *of water*

* Letter, pp. 79, 80.

and of the Spirit: not *once* born of water, and *once* of the Spirit, so as to make *two* new births, or to be regenerated *again* and *again*, but to be once new born of *both*, once born of the Spirit, in or by water; while the Spirit primarily and effectively, and the water secondarily and instrumentally, *concur to one and the same birth*, ordinarily the result of *both*, in virtue of the divine appointment." . . . "Regeneration is the work of the *Spirit*, in the use of *water*; that is, of the Spirit *singly*, since water really *does* nothing, is no *agent* at all." . . .

"If we look either into the New Testament, or into the ancient fathers, we shall there find that the sacrament of baptism, considered as a *federal rite*, or transaction between God and man, is either declared or supposed the ordinary, necessary, *outward instrument* in God's hands of man's *justification*: I say, an instrument in *God's* hands, because it is certain, in that sacred rite, God himself bears a part, as man also bears his," &c.*

Immediately afterward the same author proceeds to show from Scripture, (according to his understanding of Scripture,) that "baptism is, ordinarily, the necessary *outward mean, or instrument, of justification, the immediate and proximate form and rite of conveyance*" of that blessing.

Dr. Hook says,—“So, again, with respect to the sacraments. On this subject all must admit that the language of the Church of England is peculiarly strong. . . . She declares the sacraments to be generally necessary to salvation, and she defines a sacrament thus necessary to salvation ‘as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof,’—*a means to convey grace, a pledge to assure the worthy recipient of its illation.* Of

* On Regeneration, pp. 9, 15, 48. “Few names,” says Bishop Van Mildert, “recorded in the annals of the Church of England, stand so high in the estimation of its sound and intelligent members as that of Dr. Waterland. His writings continue to be referred to by divines of the highest character, and carry with them a weight of authority never attached but to names of acknowledged pre-eminence in the learned world.” It is proper here to state that I quote from an American edition of Dr. Waterland's work, entitled “Regeneration stated and explained according to Scripture and Antiquity: with a summary View of the Doctrine of Justification. Philadelphia, 1829.”

baptism she states the inward grace of which it is the means, to be 'a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.' She quotes the third chapter of St. John, in which the necessity of a new birth is asserted, as a chapter implying, on *that account*, 'the great necessity of baptism where it can be had;' in the baptismal offices she expressly connects the regeneration of infants always, and of adults duly qualified, with baptism; in the office for confirmation she does the same; in the Homilies, the font is designated as the 'fountain of our regeneration,' while it insinuates that by baptism we are justified; and she teaches our children in the catechism that they were, at baptism, made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."*

Bishop Latimer says, "In all ages the devil hath stirred up some light heads to esteem the sacraments but lightly, as to be empty and bare *signs*."

Nonconformist's Memorial, Introduction, p. 9:—"So evidently does the Church connect baptism with regeneration, that the Puritans in Queen Elizabeth's time, and the Nonconformists in the reign of Charles II., justified their secession on the ground that '*the Church clearly teaches the doctrine of real baptismal regeneration.*'"

Archbishop Cranmer, Works, vol. ii, p. 302, says,— "Christ hath ordained one spiritual sacrament *of spiritual regeneration in water.*" And in Works, vol. iii, p. 65,— "And when you say that in baptism we receive the spirit of Christ, and in the sacrament of his body and blood we receive his very flesh and blood, this your saying is no small derogation to baptism, wherein we receive not only the spirit of Christ, but also Christ himself, whole body and soul, manhood and Godhead, unto everlasting life, as well as in the holy communion. For St. Paul saith, 'As many as be baptized in Christ put Christ upon them.' Nevertheless, this is done in divers respects; *for in baptism it is done in respect of regeneration, and in the holy communion it is done in respect of augmentation.*"

And in his sermon on Baptism, pp. 1, 7:—"And the second birth is by the water of baptism, which Paul calleth 'the bath of regeneration,' *because our sins be forgiven us in baptism, and the Holy Ghost is poured into us as into*

* A Call to Union, &c., pp. 20, 21.

God's beloved children, so that by the power and working of the Holy Ghost we be born again spiritually, and made new creatures. And so by baptism we enter into the kingdom of God, and are saved for ever, if we continue to our live's end in the faith of Christ. . . . When we are born again by baptism, then our sins are forgiven us, and the Holy Ghost is given us, which doth make us also holy," &c.

Bradford says, "*As, therefore, in baptism is given to us the Holy Ghost, and pardon of our sins, which yet lie not lurking in the water; so in the Lord's supper is given unto us the communion of Christ's body and blood, without transubstantiation, or including the same in the head. By baptism the old man is put off, the new man is put on, yea, Christ is put on without transubstantiating the water. And even so it is in the Lord's supper.*"—Sermon on the Lord's supper, quoted in Wordsworth's *Life of Latimer*, vol. iii, p. 236.

Mr. Simeon, *Works*, vol. ii, p. 259, says,—“In the baptismal service, we thank God for having regenerated the baptized infant by his Holy Spirit. Now, from hence it appears, that, in the opinion of our reformers, *regeneration and remission of sins did accompany baptism.*”*

“By this doctrine,” [of baptismal regeneration,] say the Oxford tractarians, “is meant, first, that the sacrament of baptism is not a mere *sign* or *promise*, but actually a *means of grace—an instrument—by which, when rightly received, the soul is admitted to the benefits of Christ's atonement, such as the forgiveness of sin, original and actual, reconciliation to God, a new creature, adoption, citizenship in Christ's kingdom, and the inheritance of heaven,—in a word, REGENERATION.*”

“But the two sacraments of the gospel, as they may be emphatically styled, *are the instruments of inward life*, according to our Lord's declaration, *that baptism is a new birth*, and that in the eucharist we eat the *living bread.*”†

With respect to the initiation of Christians, says Bishop Pearson, “It is the most general and irrefragable assertion of all, to whom we have reason to give credit, *that all sins*

* See Appendix to “*Call to Union*,” &c., a sermon by Dr. Hook, vicar of Leeds, and chaplain in ordinary to the queen, from which several of the foregoing extracts have been taken.

† *Tracts for the Times*, Nos. 76 and 90.

whatsoever any person is guilty of, are remitted in the baptism of the same person." Again: "It is, therefore, sufficiently certain that baptism, as it was instituted by Christ after the preadministration of John, wheresoever it was received with all qualifications necessary in the person accepting, and conferred with all things necessary to be performed by the person administering, *was most infallibly efficacious, as to this particular, that is, to the remission of all sins committed before the administration of this sacrament.*" Again: "And therefore the church of God, in which remission of sin is preached, doth not only promise it at first *by the laver of regeneration*, but afterward, also, upon the virtue of repentance; and to deny the church this power of absolution, is the heresy of Novatian." Again: "St. Peter made this exhortation of his first sermon, 'Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,' Acts ii, 38. In vain doth doubting and fluctuating Socinus endeavour to evacuate the evidence of this scripture; attributing the remission either to repentance without consideration of baptism, or else to the public profession of faith made in baptism; or, if any thing must be attributed to baptism itself, it must be nothing but a declaration of such remission. For how will these shifts agree with that which Ananias said unto Saul, without any mention either of repentance or confession, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins?' and that which St. Paul hath taught us concerning the church, that Christ doth 'sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water?'"*

The Church of England, in her baptismal service, instructs her ministers to say, concerning an infant after its baptism, "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, *that this child is regenerate*, and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks," &c. And in the collect which is immediately to follow, the minister says, "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee *to regenerate this infant* WITH THY HOLY SPIRIT," &c.

In the catechism to be used before confirmation, the bishop asks the name of the candidate, and then asks, "Who gave you this name?" Ans. "My sponsors in bap-

* Exposition of the Creed, Art. x, pp. 549-551.

tism, WHEREIN *I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.*"

If the reader thinks I have been tedious in these extracts, I must urge the great importance of the subject as my apology. The question of baptismal regeneration is agitating the churches. It is destined to "trouble Israel" in its progress and results, and it is folly for us to be blinded or ignorant respecting its true nature and bearings. Baptist writers have taken great advantage of this point in the controversy on infant baptism, and I am sorry to add, they have not always dealt in fairness.

Respecting the efficacy of the sacraments, the Calvinistic and Arminian schools, with the general family of Non-conformists, do not hold with the Church of England. We, who are styled of the more ultra Protestant school, take entirely a different view. There may be a tendency among us to undervalue external ordinances, and our jealousy for a spiritual religion, and abhorrence of the Romish rituals, may have betrayed us, in some cases, into this ultra tendency. I say, this may be, to some extent, a truth which candour would oblige us to admit. Still we are not sensible of such a tendency. It is true we have among us those who reject water baptism, and discard all outward ordinances. We have Quakers, and mystics of different classes. But the soundness of the general Protestant view, with regard to the efficacy of the sacraments, we do not consider affected by these exceptions.

The tendency of all formalism is, to exalt the virtues of outward rites. But it may still be questioned, that Romanism, in attempting to exalt the character of the sacraments, has not lowered their true dignity. Indeed, the real degradation of the sacraments is traced in nothing more clearly than in an attempt to associate with them, in so high a sense, a saving efficacy. We are hereby led to contemplate them no longer in the simple light of their being beautiful and instructive emblems, but as being possessed of charms, and to be rendered efficacious by a sort of incantation.

That the Church of England has stopped short of the true meaning of the sacraments, in her secession from the Papal thralldom, is the candid belief of a large portion of the Protestant family. I say, a large portion, for not all

Protestants who are not of the Church of England are agreed as to the real nature of the sacraments. Luther and his followers, says Dr. Wall, do indeed speak more doubtfully of this; [that is, whether baptism is strictly necessary to salvation;] and do lay so much stress on actual baptism, as that they allow a layman to do the office in times of necessity, rather than that the infant should die without it.*

“A late Lutheran,” says Dr. Pusey, “admits that ‘as to the sacrament of baptism, there is no controversy of much moment between the two churches,’ Lutheran and Roman.”† This is an astonishing admission, and taken in connection with the doctrine of consubstantiation, places the Lutheran Church, in respect to these two sacraments, in fearful proximity to Rome. It is painful to make these reflections, and happy should we be to believe the English Church pure in this matter. But how far short of Romanism do they fall? How far do they come from the doctrine that sacraments confer grace *ex opere operato*? Not that they hold to this doctrine, but that the doctrine which they do hold is liable to objections scarcely less serious.

The exact doctrine of the Church of England touching the efficacy of baptism, and the certainty of its saving results, is this: that the person is always regenerated at, or in baptism, *unless some obstacle intervene to prevent*. In the case of infants no impediment can be opposed to the grace of baptism; therefore such are always regenerated in that ordinance. Hear them:—

“In the case of infants, their innocence and incapacity are to them instead of repentance, which they do not need, and of actual faith, which they cannot have. They are capable of being savingly born of water and of the Spirit, and of being adopted into sonship with what depends thereupon; because, though they bring no *virtues* with them, no *positive* righteousness, yet they bring NO OBSTACLE, NO IMPEDIMENT.”‡

“The principle of St. Augustine, on the contrary, that children *being able to put no bar of an opposite will, God’s goodness flows unrestrained toward them*, is, in our own

* History of Infant Baptism, part ii, chap. vi, sec. 8.

† Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 73.

‡ Dr. Waterland on Regeneration, p. 19.

Church, thus beautifully expressed by Hooker:—‘He which, with imposition of hands and prayer, did so great works of mercy for restoration of bodily health, was worthily judged as able *to effect the infusion of heavenly grace* into them, whose age was not yet depraved with that malice *which might be supposed a BAR to the goodness of God toward them*. They brought him, therefore, young children, to put his hands on them and pray.’

“In the same way again Archbishop Bramhall: ‘Secondly, we distinguish between the visible sign, and the invisible grace; between the external sacramental ablution, and the grace of the sacrament, that is, interior regeneration. We believe that whosoever hath the former, hath the latter also, *so that he do not put a BAR against the efficacy of the sacrament by his infidelity or hypocrisy, of which a child is not capable.*’* ”

“And, next, baptism is considered to be rightly received, *when there is no positive obstacle, or hinderance to the reception, in the recipient, such as impenitence or unbelief would be in the case of adults; so that infants are necessarily right recipients of it, as not being yet capable of actual sin.*”†

Thousands in the Protestant E. Church, both in England and America, justly complain of this language as too strong. The words of the baptismal service, catechism, and Homilies, are so softened by them as to leave the rite of baptism where our Saviour and his apostles undoubtedly intended to leave it. Yet, that the above is really the doctrine of the Church of England, however some of her more evangelical children may dissent, cannot be denied. Nor is it irrelevant to press this subject upon the American churches. The Episcopal Church of this country is following close in the steps of the Anglican mother.

A treatise on baptism by a late clergyman of that denomination, which bears the warm commendations of Bishop Chase, of Illinois, and others, contains the following:—

“Christ rebuked those who forbade little children to be brought unto him. What shall he say to those fathers or mothers who neglect or refuse to bring unto him their own children? They have need of redemption through

* Vide Dr. Pusey's Letter, &c., pp. 75, 76.

† Tracts for the Times, No. 76.

him as well as yourselves, and will you deny them the privilege of coming unto Christ in the way he hath appointed? I by no means insinuate, that if an infant die without baptism, its future state is thereby rendered worse. It was no fault of its own. But it is neither unreasonable, nor against the Scriptures, *to believe that some distinguishing marks of goodness shall be conferred on those infants in another world who have entered into the door which the Church hath opened.* And to a parent that regards Christianity, *I cannot but think it is a just cause of uneasiness, when his young child dies without baptism, through his neglect.*"*

All this is in itself too strong language—doctrine to which we cannot subscribe:—besides, it seems to intimate a latent suspicion in the author himself, that infant baptism may possibly be necessary to infant salvation after all. Why, else, should the delinquent parent feel "*uneasy?*" Sorrow he may feel for not having dedicated his child to God in baptism, and thereby signified his acquiescence in a divine direction; but *uneasiness* at the thought of this delinquency, *as affecting the future destiny of the child, is extending the efficacy of baptism far beyond what we consider to have been the intention of its Institutor.*

Yet, Archbishop Laud says, "That baptism is necessary to the salvation of infants, (in the ordinary way of the Church, without binding God to the use and means of that sacrament to which he hath bound us,) is express in St. John iii, 5, 'Except a man be born of water,' " &c.

"Concerning the everlasting state of an infant," says Dr. Wall, "that by misfortune dies unbaptized, *the Church of England has determined nothing,* (it were fit that all churches would leave such things to God,) save that they forbid the ordinary office for burial to be used for such a one; for that were to determine the point, and acknowledge him for a Christian brother. And though the most noted men in the said Church from time to time, since the reformation of it to this time, have expressed their hopes that God will accept the *purpose* of it for the *deed*; yet they have done it modestly, and much as Wickliffe did, rather not determining the negative, than absolutely determining

* Rev. Alexander Hay on Baptism, pp. 129, 130.

the positive, that such a child shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Archbishop Laud's words, we see, are, 'We are not to bind God, though he hath bound us.' And Archbishop Whitgift, disputing with Cartwright, says, 'I do mislike, as much as you, the opinion of those that think infants to be condemned which are not baptized.' But there are, indeed, some, who make a pish at any one who is not confident, or does speak with any reserve about that matter."*

Before passing to notice the doctrine of our own (the Methodist Episcopal) Church, we wish to offer a few thoughts on the foregoing views.

1. We have already stated that, in our own opinion, the stress laid upon baptism by the Church of England is too great. Its efficacy is overrated; and the primary cause of this error is, the too literal interpretation of a few passages of Scripture. Language which has been employed evidently in a figurative sense, has been pressed too closely to the *letter*, and the metaphor has been thus made to assume an importance which belonged only to the thing itself, which was represented by it.

These texts are such as John iii, 5; Acts ii, 38, and xxii, 16; Rom. vi, 4; Gal. iii, 26, 27; Eph. v, 25, 26; Titus iii, 5-7; 1 Pet. iii, 21. Admitting that some Protestants may have attached too lax and unworthy views to these strong expressions of Scripture, still it is but figurative language, and baptism is made to be only an outward rite, having no efficacy beyond the force of a *sign* and a *visible pledge*.

2. It is contrary to the analogy of Scripture doctrine, as well as to the nature of the case, that an outward rite, applied to the flesh, should be made an "*instrument*," (in the proximate sense of that term,) or "*means of conveyance*" of spiritual regeneration.

It is contrary to the analogy of Scripture doctrine, because nowhere is an outward ceremony appointed as the proximate instrument of regeneration. Circumcision, to which baptism now answers, was given to Abraham, not as a *means of conveyance* of regeneration, but, as "*a seal of the righteousness which he had yet being uncircumcised*," Rom. iv, 11. Paul, when speaking of the efficacy

* Wall's History, part ii, chap. vi, sec. 8.

of all outward ablutions under the law, admits merely that they "sanctified to the *purifying of the FLESH*," and in direct antithesis to this he asserts that "the blood of Christ" only is the proximate *means* by which God will "purge our consciences from dead works." But the blood of Christ is here spoken of figuratively, as being sprinkled, or used as a material instrument. Analogy, therefore, is against this doctrine.

But reason no less repudiates it. How can a physical rite *convey* grace to the soul? It may represent that grace, but can it *convey* it? Can the chasm between mind and matter be so closed as to bring the two into proximity? Nay, more, can a *moral* change be effected *through* a physical medium? God alone, who is a "spirit," can carry his grace to the heart and conscience of man. Water can go no further than the *flesh*; there it must stop. Beyond that it cannot be used as any "*means of conveyance*," because, beyond that it does not *go*. But beyond this God's Spirit enters, and regenerates the heart. As baptism is not, therefore, the *means*, in propriety of language, of regeneration, so regeneration is not confined to baptism, either from the nature of the case, or the ordinary appointment of God.

I wish the reader to appreciate that it is not a mere phantom, or a mere form of words, that is here opposed. Dr. Waterland says, "From these several passages of the New Testament laid together, it sufficiently appears, not only that baptism is the *ordinary instrument* in God's hands for *conferring* justification; but also, that ordinarily there is no justification conferred either *before* or *without* it. Such grace as *precedes* baptism, amounts not ordinarily to justification, strictly so called: such as *follows* it, owes its force, in a great measure, to the *standing virtue of baptism* once given.*

So then, whether a person have *faith* or not, before baptism, it is all one, "ordinarily," so far as respects complete justification, or "justification *strictly so called*!" This is utterly out of the question. Again: "In baptism is the *first solemn and certain reception of justification*."† Such quotations might be easily multiplied. If nothing more were meant, by all these strong expressions, than

* On Justification, p. 54.

† Ibid., p. 48.

that baptism is *a means* of grace, a peculiar means, if you please, so that the word *means* were used in its ordinary acceptation, as denoting that which helps the soul to embrace Christ, or answers some spiritual end, we would here drop this controversy. And let it be remembered, the question is not whether a person *may be* regenerated at baptism? but whether baptism is the appointed instrument of conveying that blessing? Whether by the special appointment of God, regeneration, or justification, takes place, in all ordinary cases, at that time, and by that means? and, consequently, whether it is reasonable and Scriptural to expect either without baptism, where baptism can be had? Whether the importance of baptism be such as to leave a doubt respecting the future happiness of those infants which die unbaptized? so that it is modest for the Church, in reference to such, to express no opinion as to their future happiness or misery? Whether a child will receive "some distinguishing marks of goodness in another world," for having been baptized in this? And whether a parent has "a just cause of *uneasiness*, when his young child dies without baptism, through his neglect?" These are grave considerations, and they are this day agitating the church of Christ, in many parts, with a deep and terrible convulsion.

I know that it is said the Church of England holds to regeneration by the Holy Spirit *only*, and that baptism is not abstractly *necessary* to salvation, but only necessary in the ordinary appointment of God. All this we understand. But we deny that regeneration by the Holy Spirit takes place *AT* baptism, any more than *BEFORE* that ceremony. We hold to the fitness of baptism, *BECAUSE* the subject is regenerated. And we hold, also, that baptism is no more essential to salvation than any other appointed outward means of grace.

3. It is astonishing to reflect how completely these views, which we oppose, mistake the *genius* of gospel ordinances. It seems to be entirely overlooked that the ordinances have reference strictly to the church *in its militant state*. All their suitableness arises from the circumstances of the church in its *earthly* relations. We need no external ceremonies to fit us for, or induct us into, "the church of the first-born, which are enrolled in heaven."

Baptism has no prospective relation to another life. All its significancy, all its intentions, are fully met and answered in this life. It is designed to give *visibility* to the church, not to confer on it a *spiritual* character. This is conferred only by the Holy Spirit, in his direct communications to the heart. We do not, therefore, conceive any fitness in baptizing a dying person, merely because he is dying. It is proper to bear testimony to the truth, and to show our spirit of obedience, by embracing the sacraments at any suitable time. But the importance of baptism to the individual recipient is not enhanced by the mere circumstance of the near approach of death. The church triumphant recognises no such outward rites, and the terms of membership there relate to the essential purity of the moral man, not to any accidents.

Indeed, this is the very essence of superstition, to place the eternal happiness of the soul upon some outward and accidental circumstance of the person here. God has never placed the spiritual destinies of men upon such precarious footing. It is not in the power of one man thus to withhold salvation from another, or to confer it upon him, in the strong sense which this doctrine of baptismal regeneration supposes. Such a notion is no less revolting to all our natural sense of justice, than it is repugnant to Scripture and right reason. Men have always had a contest with the Almighty as to which should hold the greater sway over their consciences and moral destinies, themselves or their Maker. Man loves to do the work of God better than his own; and if he dare not always assume the prerogative of plenary remission of sin, he will make his consequence to be felt by linking himself somewhere in the train of causes that are to result in such remission. If he dare not assume to regenerate the heart, he will fain think that the Almighty has been pleased to subject himself, as to the *time* of regenerating, and the *means* of justifying, "ordinarily," to the moment of his own convenience, and the ministry of his own hands. These may be deemed uncharitable expressions, but we utter them not in such a spirit. We do not wish to impute any such sentiments as the above to any living men. As a matter of fact, we are aware many, very many, of the Church of England, as well as Episcopalians in this country, repu-

diate all such pretensions. But this, we say, is the tendency of the language of the Liturgy and standard writings of their Church; and if they sincerely regard the general interests of truth, and at the same time revolt at the general construction put upon their statements, why do they not condescend to a more popular, and hence a more comprehensible phraseology? This has long been a subject of just complaint by many of the evangelical sons of their own communion. But have they at all heeded these complaints? A reconciliation with the evangelical party within her pale the Church of England earnestly wishes, but, unhappily, wishes it on the ground stated by Dr. Pusey,* in the following words: "And to this reconciliation it may perhaps the rather tend, if I add, that we do not wish to enforce any technical view of baptismal regeneration: for myself, I should be fully content with any view, which acknowledged in its simple sense the words which our Church teaches every child to say of itself, 'wherein I was made a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;' meaning, of course, really what is here said, *a real child of God, and a real member of Christ, not simply an outward member of an outward body of people called Christians:*"—that is, the Rev. doctor would be satisfied with any view of the words in the baptismal service, catechism, and homilies, peradventure such view accorded with *his own*, and that of the high-Church party! and all this he would do for the sake of reconciliation!

The Methodist connection, it has been covertly insinuated, holds to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Mr. Hinton asks, "Is Methodism clear of baptismal regeneration?" and then says: "It will be perceived that although the prayers in this service [meaning the baptismal service prescribed in the Methodist Discipline] closely resemble those of the Episcopal Church of England, yet, by avoiding the *thanksgiving* at the close, the Methodist is allowed to escape the assertion that the baptized child is 'sanctified with the Holy Ghost,' and 'is received into the ark of Christ's church,' and has received 'the fulness of grace;' though in the prayer, 'ever remain in the number

* Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 81.

of thy faithful and elect children,"* it is clearly intimated that the child was about to become one."†

This, to be sure, is a very curious statement. First, Mr. Hinton gravely tells his readers that the Methodist Church, by avoiding the *thanksgiving* which the Church of England employ after the baptism of an infant, is "allowed to escape the assertion that the baptized child is sanctified," &c.; that is, by omitting to *affirm* the doctrine of the Church of England, the Methodist Church is allowed to *escape* the assertion of that doctrine! This is extraordinary! Secondly. In the prayer, "ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children," &c., it is *not* "intimated that the child is *about to become one*" by baptism, but that it is *already* a subject of grace and an heir of heaven, and *therefore* is entitled to the seal of the covenant.

Mr. Hinton has ventured upon the following statements: "It is not necessary," says he, "to enter more minutely into the investigation of this ordinance as found in the Methodist Church, *since the authorized statements respecting it are exceedingly loose and indefinite,*" &c. And in a footnote remarks, "I am aware, however, that in some instances the authority of great names in the Methodist Church may be found sanctioning some of the wildest fancies of the fathers respecting infant baptism; but wherever fidelity will permit, it is pleasing to exercise *forbearance.*"‡

I think it cannot be denied by the intelligent and candid of the Methodist Church, that some of our standard writers have adopted too far the phraseology of the Church of England. Some of them were educated for the ministry in that Church before they became Methodists, and others were drawn into particular modes of speech from a long intimacy with her justly admired standard writers, as well as from the force of educational connection with her ritual. Mr. Wesley was, in the earlier period of his life, a *high-Churchman*. Afterward his views of doctrine and church government, it is well known, became greatly changed. He always retained, however, those forms of expression concerning baptism which are employed in the Liturgy,

* See collect before baptism.

† History of Baptism, p. 348.

‡ Ibid., p. 349.

attaching to them, invariably, that modified sense of which they are capable, and which, in his guarded method of using them, could not be greatly objectionable even to a Baptist, and certainly could not be misunderstood. Mr. Wesley's real views of the efficacy of baptism were Scriptural, according to the most settled principles of the Protestant school, and his predilection for the forms of speech used in the Liturgy of the Church of England, of which he was a member, is not to be ascribed to any obsequious copying after the Christian fathers. He understood John iii, 5, and Titus iii, 5, to refer to Christian baptism, and considered his language no stronger than that employed in Scripture. But whatever objection may be had to his language, none can be urged against his *meaning*, which is repeatedly and explicitly set forth in his sermons.*

We could have wished, also, that Mr. Watson had, in one or two single expressions, employed words less liable to be misunderstood; as when he says, "Baptism *conveys* also the present blessing of Christ"—"It *secures*, too, the gift of the Holy Spirit, in those secret influences by which the actual regeneration of those children who die in infancy is effected, and which are a *seed of life* in those who are spared." We say, a more guarded phraseology might have been adopted, in strict accordance with Mr. Watson's views, and hence, we could have wished it had been, for the sake of the more fastidious. Mr. Watson's views are fully and most unexceptionably expressed thus: "In a word, it is, both as to infants and to adults, the *sign* and *pledge of that inward grace* which, although modified in its operations by the difference of their circumstances, has respect to, and flows from, a covenant relation to each of the three *persons*, in whose *one name* they are baptized."† Yet it is possible Mr. Hinton imagined he saw in these expressions "some of the wildest fancies of the fathers respecting infant baptism"—expressions "exceedingly loose and indefinite;" although common sense, combined with common honesty, would have taught him to understand their words as they had explained them, in which case no objection, doctrinally, can lie against them.

The doctrine of the Methodist E. Church respecting

* See Note H.

† Institutes, part iv, ch. iii, sec. 2.

the sacraments is expressed in her 16th article of faith: "Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges, or tokens, of Christian men's profession; but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him." Of baptism she says, in her 17th article of faith: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized: but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth." What apology a man can have, after all these statements, (to which we might add others, to an indefinite length,) for representing the Methodist Church as holding loosely and indefinitely to the doctrine of infant baptism, I shall not trouble the reader to divine.

Before dismissing this subject, I beg leave to state that I apprehend some confusion of ideas has resulted from the use of the word *sacrament*. A sacrament is defined to be an outward sign of an inward grace; consisting, consequently, of two parts, the one *visible*, and the other *invisible*; and in baptism one part of the sacrament is *water*, the other *regenerating grace*. It is evident, therefore, that, according to this definition, baptism, or the outward washing, is not of itself a sacrament, but only the *visible*, or *outward part* of a sacrament—the lesser half. How improper, then, to use the words *baptism* and *sacrament* as synonymous! By this means an obscurity has sometimes rested upon language. No one ever believed that baptism, or the outward washing, regenerates; but only that a person is regenerated *at* baptism, and that regeneration is a necessary part of the sacrament, of which baptism is the other part. We could mention many cases where an unguarded use of terms has led to false issues on this point. The question is, Has God appointed that regeneration should ordinarily accompany baptism? We all admit that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit—that baptism adumbrates it; but while the Church of England holds that it ordinarily accompanies baptism, and that baptism is a *means of conveyance*, or *instrument*, of this grace, we hold that regeneration takes place ordinarily *before* baptism, and that baptism is appropriate *because* the person is regenerated, and is, also, a sign and seal of such regeneration.

SECTION II.

1. The relation of baptized infants to the church, it is important to our general subject that we should understand. The following distinctions should be observed:—
 “A person may be a member of the catholic, or universal, church of Christ, while he is not a member of any particular church. Baptism introduces a person into the catholic church of Christ. Baptism alone does not constitute him a member of any particular church. To become a member of a Presbyterian church, or a Methodist church, &c., something more is required besides being baptized. Therefore, when an infant is baptized, though he is introduced by baptism into the church of Christ, he is not thereby constituted a member of any particular branch of Christ’s church; and if the baptism be performed by a Presbyterian or a Methodist minister, he does not baptize him by virtue of his being a Presbyterian or a Methodist, but by virtue of his office as a minister of Christ. He does not, therefore, by virtue of his office, introduce him by baptism immediately into the Presbyterian or Methodist Church. But he does introduce him, by baptism, immediately into the church of Christ.”*

It is a favourite objection with our opponents, and one which they often urge against the baptism of infants, that, in virtue of their baptism, infants have a right to communion at the Lord’s table; but as this is allowed on all hands to be absurd, and as it is alleged that baptism invariably confers upon the recipient this privilege, hence, it is inferred that infant baptism itself is absurd. In reply to this popular objection, and in order to place the true relation of infants to the church in the true light, we observe,—

1.) It is a great mistake to suppose that baptism alone confers upon the patient all the privileges of the visible church. This principle is constantly assumed by our opponents, but it is not admitted by us to be valid. Cases exist where baptized adults are properly excluded from the communion. Something more than mere baptism is requisite. No Christian thinks of claiming a seat at the Lord’s table simply on the ground of his baptism. This fact, which needs no proof, (as none will deny it,) is suffi-

* Rev. P. P. Sandford on Baptism, p. 18.

cient to overthrow the principle upon which the above objection is founded, and hence, to overthrow the objection itself. If mere baptism do not entitle an *adult* to communion, certainly it cannot be supposed to give *infants* such a title, and therefore it is not absurd, *per se*, to baptize infants and then deny them the Lord's table. If something else besides baptism is necessary to this privilege, then manifestly it cannot be predicated of baptism alone. If mere baptism gives permission to sit at the Lord's table, then, why do our Baptist brethren ever suspend from communion some of their own members? but if not, why do they reproach us for not making mere baptism a sufficient qualification for the same privilege? Will they answer?

The truth is, the two ordinances differ in this respect: He that "eateth" at the communion table must "*discern the Lord's body*," in order to partake "worthily." But the design of baptism, as a *sign* and *seal* of covenant grace, does not thus exclude infants from participation, on the score of incapacity; unless it be proved that they are not in a state of grace.

Besides, how do our opponents know that baptism warrants the privilege of communion, any more than it does other church privileges? For this they have no sort of proof; it is mere assumption. Now, it is incontrovertible that baptism does not confer full church privileges in all cases. All females are prohibited for ever all eligibility to ministerial or church offices:—"I suffer not a woman to *teach*, or to usurp *authority*"—"Let them keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak," 1 Cor. xiv, 34, 35; 1 Tim. ii, 11, 12. Here, then, are half the lawful members of Christ's church ecclesiastically disfranchised and laid under perpetual ecclesiastical disabilities;—church members, denied the *rights* of church members! Now, we mention this merely to show that baptism alone does not always introduce to all the rights of church membership, and, so far as the abstract principle is concerned, it is no more paradoxical and absurd to deny the communion to baptized infants, than to deny other church rights to baptized females. I am aware, however, that for an *ad hominem* argument this is an unfortunate one, for our opponents admit females to sit in judgment on the opposite sex in their church assemblies. But whether

in this feature of their congregationalism they claim to follow the letter of Scripture as closely as in baptism, we cannot say.

2.) The principle involved in this question is clearly recognised in the common sense and universal practices of mankind. We know, indeed, that this is not an adequate sanction for any religious practice, *as such*; but it may suffice for illustration, and, withal, it clears us from the charge of acting absurdly. Children are entitled to some of the immunities of law from their earliest infancy. From their birth they are recognised as citizens. Yet are they disabled, during all the period of minority, from holding any share in certain rights which belong to citizens. They belong to the nation—are citizens—are capable of enjoying some of the immunities of law—and yet are physically and legally incapacitated to share in the full privilege of citizenship.

So it is with a child who is heir to an estate. Who will dispute his title on the ground of his age? Yet his title does not give him possession of the inheritance during nonage. So that it may truly be said, "Now an heir differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed." Here is a title without possession. Here is admission to some rights, and exclusion from others, while at the same time the individual holds an equal *title* to ALL. Nonage cannot invalidate the *title*, but it does legally, as it of right should, in the eye of reason, suspend the *possession*, and, consequently, the *plenary enjoyment*. So do we regard the case of infants with respect to communion. They are subjects of grace—they may bear the seal of the covenant—they are entitled to the blessings of the church—"the kingdom of heaven *belongs* to such"—but the period of actual inheritance, when they come into the exercise and enjoyment of all the privileges of their gracious birthright, is postponed to the age of maturer reason. Our opponents, then, will remember, that Scripture, reason, and the common sense of mankind, do sanction the principle involved in the practice of denying the communion to baptized infants. If they wish to ridicule it, therefore, it must be at their own expense. We are vindicated.

3.) But we have higher authority still for this practice.

We are able to settle, not the abstract principle only, but the thing itself, by a case so nearly analogous, as justly to be regarded as a precedent, and as to remove all reasonable ground of doubt respecting its propriety. It is matter of fact that circumcision did initiate into the visible church under the law of Moses. This our opponents will not deny, unless they deny the existence of *any* visible church at that time. It is a fact, also, that male infants, among the Jews, were circumcised, and that ALL infants, of both sexes, were considered as belonging to the church, and as having an equal interest with their parents in the covenant. Yet we know that it was physically impossible for them to partake of the *passover* as early as they were required to be circumcised. We know, also, that they could not have shared in the other feasts, nor in the sacrifices, offerings, and ablutions required by the law. Here age was wanting. Age alone could give capacity.

If we attend to the tenor of the law respecting the observance of the passover, as recorded in Exod. xxiii, 15-17, we shall find that it would have been impracticable for young children to attend that feast. The reader will there find that "three times in a year all the males were to appear before the Lord," in the place which he should choose, and they were not to appear empty. The passover formed one of these occasions. But it does not appear at all probable that their male infants were required to be present at the passover with an offering. Indeed, this would not have been practicable. On the contrary, it is plainly intimated in Exod. xii, 25, and elsewhere, that children were not brought to these annual feasts until they were old enough to inquire of their parents, "What mean you by this service?"

And hence it was that the Jewish "custom," or law, prohibited children from these privileges of the church. We learn from Luke ii, 41, 42, that Jewish children were admitted to the passover at "twelve years old." This was the age at which our Saviour first went up to Jerusalem to this feast. Calvin remarks, that "the passover, which has now been succeeded by the sacred supper, did not admit guests of all descriptions promiscuously; but was rightly eaten by those only who were of sufficient age to be able to inquire into its signification."

The same distinct statement is also made by the Rev. Dr. Gill, an eminent commentator of the Baptist denomination:—"According to the maxims of the Jews," says he, "persons were not obliged to the duties of the law, or subject to the penalties of it in case of non-performance, until they were, a female, at the age of twelve years and one day, and a male, at the age of thirteen years and one day.* But then they were accustomed to train up their children and inure them to religious exercises at an earlier age. They were not properly under the law until they had arrived at the age above mentioned; nor were they reckoned *adult* church members until then; nor then neither, unless worthy persons; for so it is said, 'He that is worthy, at thirteen years of age, is called a son of the congregation of Israel.'"[†]

This, then, is sufficient to settle this point. No objection can lie against the practice of excluding baptized children from the Lord's supper, that does not equally lie against the exclusion of circumcised children from the passover. But the latter is settled by divine authority and

* The German author, Frederick Strauss, represents the custom of the Jews as allowing children to go up to the passover at an earlier age than twelve or thirteen years, if they discovered a capacity for enjoying that sacred feast. In his "Pilgrimage of Helon," which was designed to furnish a "picture of Judaism, in the century which preceded the advent of our Saviour," he describes a procession of Jews going up to Jerusalem to attend the passover. As the vast multitude passed on, with every demonstration of holy joy, "before a house in Bethshur stood a fine boy of *ten years old*. Tears streamed from his large, dark eyes, and the open features of his noble countenance had an expression of profound grief. His mother was endeavouring to comfort him and to lead him back into the court, *assuring him that his father would take him the next time*. But the boy listened neither to her consolations nor her promises, and continued to exclaim, 'O father, father, let me go to the temple! I know all the psalms by heart.' He stretched out his arms to the passers-by in earnest entreaty; and happening to see among them a man of the neighbourhood whom he knew, he flew to him, and clinging to his girdle and his upper garment, besought him with tears to take him with him, till the man, moved with his earnestness, asked his mother to allow him to go, promising to take care of him till he should find out his father.

"'And this,' said Helon, 'is the object of children's longing in Israel; so early does the desire of keeping the festival display itself.' Brought up in Palestine, he felt it would have been with him exactly as with the child."—*Helon's Pilgrimage, &c.*, pp. 96, 97.

[†] Comment on Luke ii, 42. See Miller on Baptism, p. 52.

the nature of the case; the former, therefore, cannot be absurd or irrelevant. The great difficulty lies in assuming the principle that children cannot be members of the church *in any sense*, without being so *in the fullest sense*, and, consequently, if entitled to *any*, entitled to *all*, the privileges of the church. This principle we have seen to be absurd. Our opponents will not abide its consequences when applied to other subjects, or to the case of circumcision, which is perfectly analogous to the one in point. Why, then, will they continue to urge it? Baptized children, therefore, are members of the church just as far as all children are members of the nation, or subjects of the government to which they belong; just as far as all circumcised children were members of the Jewish church; *they are members of the church so far as to entitle them to all the spiritual benefits that belong to their age and capacity.*

2. Infant baptism, as well as that of adults, is an affecting memorial of the sinfulness of our nature, and of our consequent need of inward sanctification by the Holy Spirit.

One primary intention of all outward ceremonial ablutions is, to impress man with the truth of his own pollution by sin. "Behold," says David, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," Psa. li, 5; and Job justly inquires, in reference to the depravity of Adam's descendants, "Who can bring a *clean* thing out of an *unclean*?" Job xiv, 4. "We are *by nature* children of wrath," Eph. ii, 3. No method could have been adopted which could have more fitly aroused the human mind to a just sense of the corruption of our nature, and of our utter need of inward sanctification, in order to the enjoyment of God, than the Jewish ritual respecting outward washings. The same emblematical sense is preserved in the Christian ordinance of baptism, and in this sense is fitly applied to infants.

"Infant baptism," says Dr. Wardlaw, "contains a constant memorial of *original sin*;—of the corruption of our nature being not merely *contracted*, but *inherent*. And this doctrine of original corruption, of which infant baptism is a standing, practical recognition, is one of fundamental importance; one, I am satisfied, to inadequate conceptions and impressions of which may be traced all the principal

perversions of the gospel. In proportion to its relative importance in the system of divine truth is it of consequence that it should not be allowed to slip out of mind; the baptism of every child brings it to view, and impresses it [upon the mind.] If in any case it should be otherwise, the fault is not in the ordinance, but in the power of custom, and in the stupidity and carelessness of spectators, of parents, of ministers. It teaches very simply, but very significantly, that, even from the womb, children are the subjects of pollution; that they stand in need . . . of purification from the inherent depravity of their nature, in order to their entering heaven.”*

3. The moral influence of infant baptism upon parents and children merits attention.

Never was a maxim uttered with more propriety and truth than was that of the apostle: “With the pure, all things are pure; but to them that are defiled is nothing pure.” That principle of human nature developed by this maxim ceases not to affect the opinions and conduct of men in all departments of society, and in every variety of interest. Men will contemplate things through the medium of prejudices and opinions previously formed, and truths, presenting themselves to the mind through these media, will borrow their hues, and appear more or less to blend with their character. As the colour and appearance of external objects are, to our vision, affected by the medium through which we view them, so are doctrines and facts affected by the disposition and prejudices of the mind before which they are presented. Cameleon-like, even truth cannot come before the mind without seeming to take the hues of surrounding notions with which it becomes thus associated.

Such reflections have forced themselves upon our minds, as we have followed the general strain with which Baptist authors have treated this subject. They have represented the moral influence of infant baptism, upon both the subject and the parent, as most hostile to the best interests of Christianity and good morals; and, if the reader can maintain his gravity, and credit our statement, as dangerous to the liberties of these United States!† Religious declen-

* Dissertation on Infant Baptism, p. 179.

† “Now, I ask, what is the moral influence all this infant baptizing

sion in all the Protestant churches is traced back to this practice, as the "spring head" and fountain of all impurity; and indeed, the reader would be likely to infer, from the reading of most Baptist authors on this subject, that but one thing was necessary to remove the great obstacles to the conversion of the world, namely, the abolishment of infant baptism. Dr. Gill called it "a part and pillar of Popery," and he has been echoed and re-echoed by later writers till this day. So the Papist sees nothing but transubstantiation in the words, "this is my body"—the Episcopalian nothing but "the apostolic rite of confirmation" in the words, "the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands"—and the predestinarian his peculiar tenet in Rom. ix, 18. Men will be likely to judge of evidence, and of the moral influence of doctrines, by the force of preconceived opinions in their own minds. These constitute the glass through which they look, but which often, unhappily, discolours all objects before the mind. Let us endeavour to break away from this thralldom of prejudice, and contemplate the moral influence of infant baptism according to the true philosophy of things.

It must always be remembered that the moral influence of all external ceremonies of religion is to be judged of simply by their adaptedness to excite and encourage moral dispositions in the recipient, and in those who may be witnesses of the administration. And this moral influence is not conferred upon the patient by the mere external act of administration. No inherent virtue resides in the ordinances themselves; and none, therefore, can be evoked

is *adapted* to produce in the minds of those involuntary members, either of the Greek, Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Methodist Churches? The grace of God may, in many instances, prevent it,—*but the natural tendency of this system is to produce disgust and alienation, where all would be most desirous to secure respect and kindly feeling.*" . . . "To my own knowledge, spiritual embarrassment and confusion of the most stupifying, or else distressing kind, is the result of this system. . . I do not design to encourage the insinuation that Pedobaptists, either Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Methodist, have any *present design* TO ERECT A NATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT ON THE RUINS OF OUR FREE INSTITUTIONS!! . . . BUT IT MUST BE EVIDENT TO EVERY REFLECTING MIND, THAT IF ANY ONE PEDOBAPTIST DENOMINATION WERE TO ABSORB ALL OTHERS, AND THERE WERE NO 'IGNORANT AND CONTENTIOUS' BAPTISTS REMAINING, THAT A NATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT WOULD THEN BE INEVITABLE!!"—*Hinton's History of Baptism*, pp. 363, 369, &c.

from them by any sort of incantation. Their moral influence depends on the moral dispositions of those concerned in them, and the uses to which they are applied.

Take an example. It will not be doubted that the Jewish ritual was highly adapted to excite and encourage pious and devout feelings among the Jews. Their numerous ablutions were well calculated to impress them with a sense of their own impurities, and of the necessity of holiness; their sacrifices taught them their guilt, and their dependance upon the great Atonement for pardon; their feasts called back to mind those great events of their history, so illustrative of the principles of the moral government—of the character of God—and of their own duty; their offerings were a thankful recognition of an overruling and bounteous Providence; and thus it was that, by external ceremonies, the great principles of the natural and moral governments of God were kept before the mind. This was the natural tendency of these ceremonies, when observed with an enlightened sentiment and a devout heart. Yet, they possessed no conceivable power, in themselves, to change the heart, or to avert the severity of divine justice. At a time when the nation was most exact and most constant in the observance of the law, as to all its outward ceremonies, it was most abhorred in the sight of God. Thus it was in the days of Isaiah, (see chapters i. and lviii,) and in the days of Christ.

But would it become us to cavil, and to ask, "Of what use, then, were all these ordinances?" We know, indeed, that the Christian ordinances are often unproductive of any visible good, even in adults; but does this prove that they are, by any philosophical necessity, unprofitable? We know that they cannot save the soul in any case, and that they never can supersede, in the least degree, the necessity of the atonement, of the divine agency of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, of repentance and faith on the part of the adult, in order to salvation; but shall we, hence, discard them? Shall we say they are but useless forms? Shall we call that common, which God has called clean; or that idle, which he himself has appointed? All objections which are urged against infant baptism, on the score of *inefficacy*, may be urged equally against all outward rites, Jewish or Christian; and especially against the rite of

circumcision, which, in this respect, is a perfectly parallel case.

It must be remembered that the tendency of an ordinance to produce a good moral effect is not to be judged of by the actual effect which it may have produced in any given cases. Infant baptism, we are sorry to say, has often been unproductive of good. The same, also, may be said of adult baptism. But for this failure the ordinance itself cannot be held accountable. Errors have been associated with the rite that have, in some instances, contributed to bring about this result; and in others, a general want of piety, and sense of religious obligation, have neutralized its happier tendencies. Yet, what can be more directly adapted to encourage and stimulate the pious exertions of the parent, in training its little one for God, than the recollection that he has already consecrated that little one to God in baptism? The parent beholds, with humble gratitude and holy joy, that God has been pleased to affix the seal of the covenant to his tender offspring—to enter into covenant “with him and his seed”—to recognise his child as an heir of salvation, and place upon it the visible mark, or pledge, of his protection and grace—all these considerations, presenting themselves to the parent’s mind, could not fail to produce, if rightly improved, a deep and abiding impression. This, I say, would be their tendency.

And the child, when come to years of reason, if properly instructed in the nature and obligations of its baptism, would, if inclined to religion at all, acquiesce in the order of God—recognise the validity and propriety of its early consecration—assume, *in propria persona*, all the obligations consequent upon that act, and feel grateful to his parents for their early and prompt attention to his spiritual welfare, and to God for having blessed him with such parents. This, I say, would be the natural tendency of infant baptism, when rightly used.

But I need not say to the reader, that all these salutary influences depend wholly upon the moral state and education of the parties concerned. The faith of the parent in the divine authority for this practice is an indispensable condition of its salutary effect. If the parent believe that God has directed it, and do it, therefore, from a principle

of obedience to a divine order, attending to all the several duties belonging to the same rite, from the same principle, under such circumstances, the rite itself is highly adapted to the happiest effects upon the parent, securing the happiest results to the child. But if the parent do not believe it to be of divine obligation, or neglect the other duties belonging thereto, we readily conceive how, to him, the practice would be likely to be attended with mischief, rather than good.

So with the child. Should it be permitted to grow up, after baptism, in ignorance of its duty to God, and of the nature and obligations of its baptism; and, withal, should it be taught to believe, either by its parents or others, that infant baptism is a mere human invention, a corruption of the Christian ordinance, "a part and pillar of Popery," and the highest imposition that could be practised upon "helpless infancy;" I say, under these circumstances it is not possible, in the nature of things, that an unhappy and mischievous effect should be prevented. Still, the moral effect would be rather negative than positive—they would only fail to derive any good from the ordinance, without being made positively worse on that account. Infant baptism, as it cannot confer grace *ex opere operato*, so neither can it confer any possible evil, in the same way, by those who afterward treat it unworthily. I mean there is nothing *peculiar* in infant baptism, in this respect. It is always an occasion of evil, in a greater or less degree, to misapprehend and misapply the truth and ordinances of God. But all orthodox Christians hold that outward ceremonies are not to be reckoned among the essentials of religion.

It is easy, then, to perceive how the Baptists have arrived at their notion of the mischievous moral tendencies of infant baptism. They form their estimates wholly on the supposition that neither the parent, at the time he devotes his child to God in baptism, nor the child, in after-days, fully credits the Scriptural obligation of the ordinance. They first introduce skepticism in the minds of all the parties concerned, and then calculate the tendency of infant baptism in the light, and by the operation, of that skepticism. Now, the question is not, "What would be the tendency of infant baptism, if all believed it to be a

mere human invention?" but, "What would be its tendency, if all believed it to be of *divine* origin?" What is its *natural* tendency, when faithfully practised, and carried out in all its parts?

Will any man, in his senses, believe that it is calculated "to produce disgust and alienation" in the mind of the child, to inform it that it has been dedicated from early infancy to God? Disgust it may produce in the mind of a vicious youth, who is now informed for the first time that he was dedicated to God in infancy. Such a mind will turn with equal repugnance from all the institutes and precepts of Christianity. But would this be a proper test of the natural tendency of infant baptism, any more than of Christianity in general? If this same youth had felt predisposed, from the influence of early teaching, and from early divine influence, (which is rendered effectual, ordinarily, by such teaching,) to revere the institutes of religion and submit to its precepts,—if he felt disposed to give his heart to God—would he now feel "disgust" to know that he had been, in early life, dedicated to God by a solemn ordinance of religion? Exactly contrary to this would be the effect. It is perfectly obvious, therefore, that our opponents calculate the moral tendencies of infant baptism in the light of skepticism, and not in the light of faith;—they calculate what its moral effects would be likely to be upon an *impure*, not upon a *pure* mind;—a method of procedure this, as unfair as it is absurd.

But it is worthy of our constant attention that God has settled this question by his word, and by the very constitution of our nature. The question is simply this:—"Is the fact of having dedicated a child to God in baptism calculated to exert a bad moral influence over the mind of that child in after-life?" And on this question there is about as much room for controversy as on this: "Whether it would be calculated to alienate the child from God, in after-life, to bring it up from early childhood in the principles of the Christian religion?" We cannot trifle with the reader's understanding, and, above all, with the word of God, to dwell upon such themes. We wished, however, to say, that the divine obligation of infant circumcision settles for ever the question of the moral tendency of infant baptism, for the two cases are exactly parallel.

As to the question, whether the general practice of infant baptism would lead to national establishments, or the union of church and state, we deem the matter too childish to merit attention. Our opponents can harp upon it, if they can find any one to listen to them. We are not anxious. But the charge of a general tendency to "formalism" and spiritual lethargy is one of very serious consequence, and which, if it fitly apply to infant baptism, must refute all its claims to Scriptural authority.* The philosophy of some men amounts to a literary curiosity. Their method of tracing out cause and effect, and the logical principles by which they deduce and apply evidence in particular cases, ought to be written for the general admonition, or, perhaps, diversion, of mankind. Baptist authors have attributed the formalism and spiritual lethargy of the national establishments of Europe principally to the practice of infant baptism.† They might as well have attributed it to monarchy, or to the wars of Charlemagne.

But to cut this matter short, we must address a sort of *argumentum ad verecundiam* to our opponents, and dismiss the point. It is painful to be obliged to assert one's own good character, or to be under a necessity of comparing and off-setting moral characters with an opponent, in order, by a sort of final appeal to respectability, to terminate a tiresome controversy. This is an issue which, to say the least, is unpleasant. Modesty recoils, while duty and necessity urge forward. We are somewhat comforted, however, when we reflect that Paul, the great apostle, once condescended to the same thing. When driven to this necessity, he did, finally, assert that his character was as good as that of his opposers. He finally consented to take this issue with his adversaries,—“Seeing that many glory . . . I will glory also,” 2 Cor. xi, 18. So say we; and we appeal to the truth-telling page of history in support of the assertion, that Pedobaptist churches (Protestant) do exhibit as truly and as extensively the genuine signs of orthodoxy

* “Here begins to appear the most lamentable moral influence of infant baptism; it has the very contrary effect to that for which baptism was designed by its Founder. Instead of SEPARATING the church and the world, IT ACTUALLY UNITES THEM,” &c. See Hinton's History of Baptism, p. 366, &c.

† Hinton, p. 367.

and vital godliness, as do the Baptist churches in this or any other country. "I am become a fool in glorying; *ye have compelled me.*" We consent, then, that the moral tendencies of the respective doctrines of exclusive *adult* and *infant* baptism should be judged of by the spiritual state of the churches respectively who hold these tenets; though still we say, "It is not expedient for us, doubtless, to glory."

That additional matter which otherwise would fall under this head, the reader will find contained mostly in the third and fifth chapters of this work.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GROUND OF AN INFANT'S ELIGIBILITY TO BAPTISM.

1. ALL infants are, by nature, in the same state, as it respects moral condition; all are under condemnation. "We are, by nature, children of wrath." But at the moment when the period of personal existence commences—at the moment when the identity of the human being is established, so that it is capable of moral happiness or misery—at that moment we consider the soul to come within the gracious provisions of the atonement, which secures unconditional salvation to all such as die in infancy. All children, we consider, are alike in this respect. All are on a perfect parity of standing; and, in so far, all are equally eligible to baptism, the seal of that covenant of grace by which they are saved. And this we regard as the proper, primary ground of eligibility to this ordinance. We know of no principle, either of reason or revelation, which authorizes us to make any distinctions between different children as it respects moral condition.

2. Yet does it not necessarily follow that all children, without distinction, should be brought to baptism. Other circumstances, of a secondary nature, must be taken into account. Infant baptism contemplates, from its very nature, early religious education. Its obligations are prospective. If they are not met and fulfilled, both by the

parent and the child, its grand intention is unanswered, and its efficacy lost. Just so with the adult; if, *after* baptism, he fail to keep the law, his baptism is void. In the language of a Jew in a parallel case, "his circumcision is counted for uncircumcision." If parents do not educate their children for God, it is no better than solemn mockery to offer them up in baptism.

Now, it is reasonable that some *pledge* of the suitable education of the child should be required of the parent before the child is admitted to baptism. Without this, the ordinance would not be sufficiently guarded, and would inevitably fall under public scandal. But ungodly parents cannot give this pledge, from the nature of the case; therefore it is unsuitable to admit the children of ungodly parents to baptism.

3. It will be perceived by this, that we do not hold to the right of children to be baptized, on the ground of natural relation to the parent, (if we understand that phrase.) It is not by virtue of natural descent, as some authors have loosely expressed it, that children derive any claim to the sealing ordinance. The ties of nature, and those of grace, are not to be thus confounded. The one can confer no title to the privileges of the other.

Children of believing parents are not "*born* members of the church," as Dr. Mason has strangely asserted.* This is a doctrine fraught with monstrous consequences. Yet it is probably a mere unguarded phrase, as no individual, or body of Christians, ever believed that a person, adult or infant, could be made a member of the church otherwise than by baptism; that is, if they held to water baptism at all.†

* Christian's Magazine, vol. ii, pp. 49, 50.

† Such a thing as birthright membership in the church of God was never yet known. Among the Jews none were thus reckoned. Circumcision, not natural descent, was the initiating ceremony. Nor were they born ceremonially *clean*. Both the mother and the child were reckoned *unclean*; the child till eight days, and the mother from forty to eighty days, according to circumstances. Lev. xii. The mother and child were restored to a state of purity by the sprinkling of blood, and sacrifice. See Luke ii, 22-24. All this certainly does not look like being born either *clean*, or *members of the church*.

Tertullian thinks the apostle intended to be understood, in 1 Cor. vii, 14, that the children were "holy," only by baptism; they were *designed for holiness*, says he, (*sanctitati designati*.) "Every soul,"

On this point, unhappily, many loose, unguarded expressions have been made. The idea of the "federal holiness" of the children of Christian parents is not well defined, and ought to be omitted. In paraphrasing 1 Cor. vii, 14, Dr. Mason, as above quoted, says, speaking to the "believing" partner concerning his or her children, "They are holy, *because you are so.*" This certainly does not necessarily follow from the words of the apostle, and the doctrine is too liable to objection to be received on such ground. It is carrying Jewish distinctions further than is warranted in the gospel.

4. Nor is it relevant to admit of "sponsors," in lieu of parents, while the latter are yet living. Parents are the natural guardians of children,* and their control over their children precludes that exercise of authority and discipline on the part of sponsors, which are requisite to the fulfil-

continues he, "is reckoned as in Adam, till it be anew enrolled in Christ, and so long unclean, till it be so enrolled."—*De Anima*, c. 39, 40.

Bishop Burnett says, "Their children were not *unclean*—that is, not shut out *from being dedicated to God.*"—*Expos. of the Thirty-nine Articles*.

This is the true idea. All children are born *without* the covenant; that is, they do not come within the covenant by virtue of natural generation, but by grace, and baptism is the *visible token* of that covenant.

As a matter of fact, the children of pious parents in Paul's day were, by their parents, designed for *holiness*—that is, *church relations*; and so were baptized. But their right to baptism was not founded on the piety of their parents, but on the fact that, though by natural birth they were "children of wrath," yet by grace they were included in, and made partakers of, the promise of life; and it became fit and proper to baptize them, because the piety of their parents became a *pledge* and *guarantee* that the ordinance should not be abused, but should be made to answer its appropriate ends. We say again, it would be absurd for ungodly parents to dedicate their children to God. This could not be done in sincerity.

* "The law of nature and of nations puts children in the power of their parents; they are naturally their guardians; and, if they are entitled to any thing, their parents have a right to transact about it, because of the weakness of the child; and what contracts soever they make, by which the child does not lose, but is a gainer, these do certainly bind the child. It is then suitable, both to the constitution of mankind, and to the dispensation of the Mosaical covenant, that parents may dedicate their children to God, and bring them under the obligations of the gospel."—*Bishop Burnett on the Thirty-nine Articles*, Art. xxvii.

ment of their obligations to the baptized child. If the parent, by reason of his impiety, incapacitates himself to become the spiritual sponsor of the child, and thus deprives it of baptism, still the case, we consider, is without remedy. No other person has any right to step in and assume the control of the child, in such a degree as to justify the obligations of a sponsor. In order to this, the child should be formally surrendered to, and adopted by, the sponsor. At least the latter should be invested with an entire discretion, to bring up the child *as if* he were its parent.

This we consider the true philosophy of the case. If a child have Christian parents, or, according to the apostolic rule, (1 Cor. vii, 14,) if it have only one Christian parent, and the parents both concur in this, it is proper to baptize the child. The pledge of the believing parent is sufficient. If it have unbelieving parents, it is irrelevant to baptize the child; not because its moral state is not upon a perfect par with that one which has Christian parents, but because there is no adequate *pledge* that the ends of baptism, so far as relates to early education, will be answered in the child. Yet, if the child were wholly surrendered to, and adopted by, some person, or persons, who would proffer and redeem the requisite pledge, it might with propriety be baptized. And thus, if a child were found, whose parents could not be ascertained, and were adopted by Christian parents, it would be proper to baptize it at their request. But no person can act as a godfather or a godmother (very awkward words, by the by) to the child of another, while at the same time the person thus acting as sponsor has no further control over the child than to see that it is instructed in certain doctrines of religion, and certain catechetical forms. The practice is absurd, and leads to very mischievous consequences. The parent, either by nature or by formal adoption—the person who has the responsible supervision of the entire conduct of the child—can alone become responsible for the religious training of the child; and he alone, therefore, could, with any propriety, present the child in baptism.

This, then, is the true doctrine of sponsors in baptism; not, indeed, as it is held and practised by the Church of

England,* but as it may be justified by the nature of the case, and the principles of religion.

5. However, there is a modified form of this practice which may, under particular circumstances, be harmlessly retained. Parents alone can stand directly pledged for the child; but persons of approved gravity, piety, age, and experience, may pledge themselves to *assist* the pious efforts of parents, taking a sort of collateral responsibility. And this, under certain circumstances, may be not only harmless, but highly expedient.† Especially might this be expedient in case of the death of the parents, and in times of great persecution in the church.

“I have nothing to except,” says Dr. Ridgeley, “against the first rise of this practice, (of having sponsors in baptism,) which was in the second century, when the church was under persecution, and the design thereof was laudable and good, namely, that if the parents should die before the child came of age, whereby it would be in danger of being seized on by the heathen, and trained up in their superstitious and idolatrous mode of worship, the sureties promised that, in this case, they would deal with it as though it were their own child, and bring it up in the Christian religion; which kind and pious concern for its welfare might [however] have been better expressed at some other time than in baptism, lest this should [come at length to] be thought an appendix to the ordinance. However, through the goodness of God, the children of believing parents are not now reduced to those hazardous circumstances; and, therefore, the obligation to do this is the less needful. But to vow, and not perform, is not only useless to the child, but renders that only a matter of form, which they promise to do in this sacred ordinance.”‡

* See the exhortation to godfathers and godmothers after baptism, prescribed by the Church of England.

† Vide Wesley's Works, vol. vi, pp. 235, 236.

‡ Body of Divinity, vol. iv, pp. 228, 229.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—Referred to page 66.

SOME information respecting circumcision cannot fail to be acceptable to the reader, particularly as such information is commonly rare, and the physical nature of the transaction but little understood by people in general.

1. Circumcision was known and practised by other nations besides the Jews; the Egyptians, Samaritans, Arabians, Saracens, Ishmaelites, Colchians, and Ethiopians. The Colchians were originally a colony from Egypt, and probably derived this practice from the parent country. The Egyptians most probably received it from the Arabians, who, together with the Saracens and Ethiopians, derived it from Ishmael. Gen. xvii, 11, 25, 27. The statement of Herodotus, that the Jews derived it from the Egyptians, is not worthy of credit. "Those who assert that the Phœnicians were circumcised, mean, probably, the Samaritans; for we know, from other authority, that the Phœnicians did not observe this ceremony." (See Calmet.) No account is given by these nations as a reason of their practising this rite, and it never was insisted on among the Egyptians as an indispensable condition of their enjoying national privileges, as among the Jews.

2. "Circumcision," says Mr. Stackhouse, "is the cutting off the foreskin of the member which in every male is the instrument of generation; and whoever considers the nature of this operation, painful if not indecent in those of maturity, and to such as live in hot countries highly inconvenient, if not dangerous;—an operation wherein we can perceive no footsteps of human invention, as having no foundation either in reason, or nature, or necessity, or the interest of any particular set of men, we must needs conclude that mankind could never have put such a severity upon themselves, unless they had

been enjoined and directed to it by a divine command. Nay, this single instance of Abraham, who, at the advanced age of ninety-nine, underwent this hazardous operation, and the very indecency of it in a man of his years and dignity; these two considerations are in the place of ten thousand proofs that it was forced upon him; but nothing but the irresistible authority of God could be a force sufficient in those circumstances. So that the strangeness and singularity of this ordinance is so far from being an argument against it, that it is an evident proof of its divine institution; and what was originally instituted by God, cannot, in strictness, be accounted immodest, though we, perhaps, may have some such conception of it; since 'unto the pure all things are pure,' &c.—*Hist. of the Bible*, book iii, sec. 1.

3. "The manner of this ceremony's being performed," says Calmet, "whether in the public synagogues or in private houses, is this:—The person who is appointed to be the godfather sits down upon a seat, with a silk cushion provided for that purpose, and settles the child in a proper posture on his knees, when he who is to circumcise him (which, by the by, is accounted a great honour among the Jews) opens the blankets. Some make use of silver tweezers, to take up so much of the prepuce as they design to cut off; but others take it up with their fingers. Then he who circumcises the child, holding the razor in his hand, says, 'Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast commanded us to be circumcised;' and while he is saying this, cuts off the thick skin of the prepuce, and then, with his thumb nails, tears off a finer skin still remaining. After this he sucks the blood, which flows plentifully on this occasion, and spits it out into a cup full of wine. Then he puts some dragon's blood upon the wound, some coral powder, and other things to stop the bleeding, and so covers up the part affected. When this is done, he takes up the cup wherein he had spit the blood, moistens his lips therewith, and then, blessing both that and the child, gives him the name which his father had appointed, and at the same time pronounces these words of Ezekiel, 'I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live;' (chap. xvi, 6;) after which the whole congregation repeats the one hundred and twenty-eighth Psalm, 'Blessed is

every one that feareth the Lord,' &c.; and so the ceremony concludes. Only we must observe, that, besides the seat appointed for the godfather, there is always one left empty, and is designed, some say, for the prophet Elias, who, as they imagine, is invisibly present at all circumcisions."—*Calmet's Dict.*, Art. *Circumcision*.

NOTE B.—Referred to p. 88.

On the subject of the kind and degree of evidence which any particular subject requires, and which we may reasonably demand as a condition of our assent, much may be said. The subject itself deserves our most mature and candid consideration. Most persons who, in a moment of hasty dispute, and when urged and chafed by the argument of an opponent, put forth a demand for a certain kind or degree of evidence to support the contested doctrine, without duly counting the cost. They are generally apt to be short-sighted, blinded by the precipitancy of their zeal, and deceived as to the relative importance of their mooted doctrine. We wish our opponents and the world to know that we adopt such principles of reasoning and interpretation in the present case, and such *only* as we are prepared to adopt and carry out in all our investigations of the word of God. And we wish them and the world to know, also, that we shall hold them steadily and inflexibly to their own principles. If they have adopted, in the case of infant baptism, a theory of interpretation and evidence by which they consent to abide; and if they hold us to certain conclusions, according to the principles of their own theory; our only resort is to test the soundness of that theory. And we, in our turn, have a right to hold them answerable for the consequences which result from the application of their own principles. It would be an easy thing to adopt a principle, or rule of evidence, in one particular instance, to help us out of a present, galling dilemma, if we had no other concernment or responsibility in the matter than the mere application of such particular rule to the case in hand; but it is quite another thing to conduct an argument skilfully and successfully, according to principles of reason and evidence which are of acknow-

ledged and universal authority. We are athirst, but let us not, therefore, rashly accept the poisoned draught, lest, while we escape from a partial evil, we do thereby plunge ourselves into general destruction.

In addition to the illustrations offered on this point in the body of this work, I beg leave to adduce the following from the pen of the shrewd and eloquent George Stanley Faber, B. D. Although his remarks applied to another subject, they are designed to illustrate the same principle as that under consideration:—

“ If, indeed, we be required to produce, in so many words, a specific declaration that, *at the commencement of patriarchism, God himself instituted the rite of expiatory sacrifice*, a task is certainly imposed upon us, which can never be performed: but a truth, I apprehend, may be clearly and distinctly conveyed in other modes than that of a regular scholastic enunciation.

“ I. A modern Socinian writer has challenged us to bring forward a single text in which *the twofold nature of Christ* is unequivocally asserted: and he boasts that, although such a challenge has often been given, it has never yet been accepted.

“ Doubtless he may make the boast with perfect safety: for, after the most careful examination of the whole Bible, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse, we must fairly confess that the precise words, *Christ has two natures*, nowhere occur. Yet, we do not, on that account, the less hold the doctrine.

“ Why, then, it will be asked, do we deem ourselves fully authorized to maintain it? Simply, because, in some passages, we find Christ expressly declared to be *God*, while, in other passages, we find him no less expressly declared to be *man*. These two declarations, each alike resting upon inspired verity, we combine in a single proposition: and the clear RESULT is *the doctrine of Christ's double nature*.

“ 2. The same remark, and the same mode of reasoning, may be extended to the all-important doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

“ That doctrine forms the very nucleus of sound religion: but still, I fear, we must confess, that nowhere, in the regular scholastic form of an article or a symbol, are

we taught that *God is one essence, and three in personality*. Yet, notwithstanding this omission of a direct enunciation in some one specific text, every sound Catholic holds the doctrine to be of vital necessity: nor will he allow the silence of Scripture to be any proof of its *neutrality*.

“How, then, does he proceed, for the purpose of establishing his position, and of vindicating his belief?”

“With Athanasius of old, he examines the Bible: and, since he there finds the essential unity of the Godhead expressly maintained, while the identical things predicated of the Father are also predicated of the Son and of the Spirit, he perceives that in no way can Scripture be reconciled with Scripture, save by the reception of *the doctrine of a trinity in unity*.

“The demonstration is, I think, clear and invincible: but, after all, we must acknowledge that it rests upon *induction*; after all, we must confess that God has not revealed, in so many precise and formal words, that *the Deity is three in regard to personality, and one in regard to essence*. . . .

“3. I have yet to learn in what part of the Mosaic narrative, or even in what part of the entire volume of Scripture, *the primitive divine institution of a perpetually recurring sabbath, to be observed by man as matter of ordained religious obligation, is PRECISELY AND SCHOLASTICALLY ENUNCIATED*. I vainly look for an absolute COMMAND, that the subjects of the patriarchal dispensation should observe a perpetually recurring sabbath.

“The record is brief, and simply historical:—

“‘On the seventh day, God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.’ Gen. ii, 2, 3.

“The FACT that God, having rested on the seventh day from the work of creation, sanctified the precise seventh day on which he rested from all his work, is indeed distinctly specified: but, in regard to *the positive INSTITUTION of a perpetually recurring sabbath*, we are neither indefinitely told that *EVERY successive seventh day was sanctified*, nor are we definitely taught that *EVERY successive*

seventh day should always be set apart BY MAN for the duties and purposes of religion.

“ 4. By those who advocate the theory of Bishop Warburton and Mr. Davison, we are assured that *the primitive divine institution of expiatory sacrifice is nowhere mentioned in the Mosaic history.*

“ With respect to this allegation, I freely confess that, *IN THE FORM OF A REGULAR PROPOSITION, the primitive divine institution of expiatory sacrifice, immediately after the fall, is nowhere mentioned.*

“ I myself hold the primitive divine institution *both* of the sabbath and of piacular sacrifice : and, in *each* case, I hold it much upon the same principle. Yet were I to set up any difference between the two, I should not hesitate to assert, that the evidence for *the primitive divine institution of piacular sacrifice* is stronger and more direct than the evidence for *the primitive divine institution of the sabbath.* For almost at the very commencement of the patriarchal dispensation, we can produce a specific instance where the devotement of a sin-offering is *COMMANDED* : [which manifestly intimates that such was the *DUTY* of Cain, to whom the command was addressed, in consequence of a well-known, already existing divine institution.] But throughout the whole book of Genesis (which, from the creation, brings us down well nigh to Moses) we are unable to produce a single instance where either the observance of the sabbath is *enjoined*, or where it is mentioned as a *positive institution*, or even where it is barely noticed *as a mere occurrence.*”*

I have ventured upon this extract merely to illustrate further to the reader the method by which we often arrive at truth. I wish him fully to appreciate what would be the condition of theology should the principles of reasoning and evidence adopted by our opponents, in the case of infant baptism, be universally adopted in reference to all other subjects. The great doctrines of Christianity *need* no other evidence than that which they *have* ; but it cannot be denied that many of them utterly fail of that kind of evidence which results purely from clear and express statement. Yet this is the evidence which our opponents demand for infant baptism.

* Faber on Primitive Sacrifice, pp. 188-199.

NOTE C.—Referred to p. 99.

The fact that the Jews baptized their proselytes at the time of Christ, is now generally admitted without controversy among the learned. It is a remarkable fact that the Jews felt no surprise at the fact that John baptized his disciples, which they certainly would have manifested had baptism been a novel thing. Nay, they even go to John and ask, "Who art thou?" He assured them he was not the Christ. They reply, "*Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?*" John i, 25. Here is no surprise manifested at the simple fact of baptism—this they seemed to have expected when Christ should come—but they merely wished to be informed how it came to pass that a person of less authority than Messiah could baptize. This indicates most clearly a familiarity, on their part, with baptism as a religious ceremony, in which light John employed it.

When our Saviour talked with Nicodemus, and announced the startling doctrine that, "except any person (so it reads in the Greek) be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God," the Pharisee was surprised, and his surprise arose from a want of clear comprehension of the nature of the new birth, and also from the fact that our Saviour made no exceptions in favour of the Jews, but affirmed the necessity of the regeneration of them as well as of Gentiles. Our Lord, in turn, expressed his astonishment that he, being a "master in Israel," should not understand this doctrine. As if he had said, "Dost thou, as a spiritual master in Israel, command proselytes to be baptized with water, as an emblem of a *new birth*; and art thou unacquainted with the *cause, necessity, nature, and effects* of that new birth?" (See Dr. A. Clarke on the place.)

Nicodemus did not seem to be surprised at the *phraseology* of Christ, but only at the *sense* he attached to this phraseology, and its application to Jews as well as Gentiles; and Christ expressed his wonder that this language, which was so generally employed by the Jews, as applying to proselyted Gentiles, should not be comprehended in its true import by one whose office it was to be an instructor of the ignorant, and a guide to the blind. He did

not comprehend the meaning of that very language which was familiar to every Jew from the practice of proselytic baptism.

The Jews derived authority for baptizing proselytes from the fact that, before they themselves were entered into covenant with God at Mount Sinai, they were commanded to sanctify themselves, washing their clothes, &c., which was called a baptism. At this time, therefore, they considered that their whole nation was baptized, and thus, in connection with the use of circumcision and sacrifice, they were entered into covenant. Then, it was written in their law, Num. xv, 15, 16, "One ordinance shall be for you, and also for the stranger (that is, proselyte) that sojourneth with you. . . As ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you." As they themselves, therefore, considered that they had acquired, and still retained, their standing as Jews by circumcision, baptism, and oblation; and as one law must serve equally for them, and the stranger, or proselyte, that sojourned with them, it is obvious from whence their authority for baptizing proselytes proceeded. As to themselves, however, they considered that as their nation was once dedicated to God solemnly by baptism, (Exod. xix, 10, &c.) there was no necessity that their children should afterward be baptized, being born of parents already legally clean, or holy.

But these notions, whether well-founded or not, have no weakening force upon our argument. All that we are concerned to prove is, the *fact* that the Jews uniformly baptized proselytes at the time of Christ. Indeed, they knew of no way of making disciples, or proselytes, but by baptism. So Maimonides says,—

"*And so* IN ALL AGES, when a Gentile is willing to enter into covenant, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon him the yoke of the law, *he must be circumcised, and baptized, and bring a sacrifice.* As it is written, 'As you are, so shall the stranger be.' How are you? By circumcision, and baptism, and bringing of a sacrifice. So also the stranger, [or proselyte,] THROUGH ALL GENERATIONS; by circumcision, and baptism, and bringing a sacrifice. . . .

“At this time, when there is no sacrificing, they must be circumcised and baptized. And when the temple shall be built, they are to bring the sacrifice. A stranger that is circumcised, and not baptized; or baptized, and not circumcised; he is not a proselyte till he be both circumcised and baptized.”

The Talmud of Babylon says, “When a proselyte is received, he must be circumcised: and when he is cured [of the wound of circumcision,] they baptize him in the presence of two wise men, saying, ‘Behold, he is an Israelite in all things.’”

The Talmud of Jerusalem testifies to the same point, only specifying “sacrifice” in addition to circumcision and baptism.

The Gemara of Babylon, a Jewish commentary on the Mishna, says, “The proselytes entered not into covenant but by circumcision, baptism, and sprinkling of blood.”

So they believe Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, was proselyted, and all others who came into the Jewish church after his day. Hence, Arrianus, who wrote about A. D. 147, calls the Jewish proselytes, in derision, “*the baptized.*”

As baptism was well understood and practised by the Jews in our Saviour’s time, so also was infant baptism. Maimonides says, “If an Israelite take a Gentile CHILD, or find a Gentile INFANT, and baptize him in the name of a proselyte, behold he is a proselyte.” Rabbi Joseph says, that persons who are made proselytes in *infancy* may retract when they are grown up, &c.

Rabbi Hezekiah has this rule, in regard to proselyting a person in the name of a free man, or a servant: “Behold, one finds an infant cast out, and baptizes him in the name of a servant: do thou also circumcise him in the name of a servant. But if he baptize him in the name of a free man: do thou also circumcise him in the name of a free man.”*

“In regard to this subject,” says Dr. Woods, “let the following things be well considered:—

* See Dr. Lightfoot’s *Horæ Hebraicæ Talmudicæ*; also his *Harmony of the New Testament*. Dr. Hammond’s *Annotations*; also his *Six Queries on Infant Baptism*. Quoted by Wall, *History*, part i, *Introduction*; and Dr. A. Clarke, at the close of his comment on *Mark’s Gospel*.

“ 1. The rabbins unanimously assert that the baptism of proselytes had been practised by the Jews in all ages, from Moses down to the time when they wrote. Now these writers must have been sensible that their contemporaries, both Jews and Christians, knew whether such a practice had been prevalent, or not. And had it been known that no such practice had existed, would not some Jews have been found bold enough to contradict such a groundless assertion of the rabbins? At least, would there not have been some Christians, fired with the love of truth, jealous for the honour of a sacred rite, first instituted by Christ, who would have exposed to shame those who falsely asserted that a similar rite had existed for more than a thousand years? But neither of these things was done.

“ 2. Had not the Jews been accustomed to baptize proselytes previously to the Christian era, it is extremely improbable that they would have adopted the practice afterward. For their contempt and hatred of Christianity exceeded all bounds, and must have kept them at the greatest possible distance from copying a rite peculiar to Christians.

“ 3. It seems to have been perfectly consistent and proper for the Jews to baptize proselytes. For their divine ritual enjoined various purifications by washing, or baptism. And as they considered all Gentiles to be *unclean*, how could they do otherwise than understand the divine law to require, that when any of them were proselyted to the Jewish religion, they should receive the same sign of purification as was, in so many cases, applied to themselves?”*

NOTE D.—Referred to p. 128.

Cruden enumerates four senses in which the word sanctify is employed in Scripture:—

“ 1. It signifies, to confess and celebrate that to be holy which in itself was so before. Matt. vi, 9. And thus it is to be understood, wheresoever God is said to be sanctified.

“ 2. To make persons holy, [in a moral sense,] who

* Lectures on Infant Baptism, pp. 48, 49.

were impure and defiled before. 1 Cor. vi, 11. And this is the sense of the word in those passages of Scripture where the elect are said to be sanctified.

“ 3. To separate and set apart some things, or persons, from a common unto a holy use, as the tabernacle, temple, priests, &c. [This is proper ceremonial sanctification.]

“ 4. To employ a thing in holy and religious exercises, in the worship of God in public and private, and the celebration of his works; in this and the former sense, the seventh day is sanctified. Exod. xx, 8.”

Not to mention that the last two of these significations seem necessarily to involve each other, and hence, to be one and the same thing substantially, the great fault of this enumeration is, that it overlooks the very sense in which *ἁγιαζω* occurs in 1 Cor. vii, 14, and, indeed, in many other places. Things were deemed *sanctified* that were not devoted to any particular *religious* use, but which were merely lawful for a Jew or a Christian to use, as has been noticed in the body of this work.

NOTE E.—Referred to p. 138.

It is proper that the reader should be informed of the various opinions that have been held with regard to this passage, in order that he may the more clearly settle his own opinion respecting the true meaning. I have given, in the body of this work, what I conceive to be the true sense of the terms employed, and the real force of the apostle's argument. I shall here endeavour briefly to notice others that have elicited the most considerable share of attention from writers on both sides of the question.

First. There is an opinion which Pedobaptists have held respecting this passage, which is set forth in the following paraphrase: “ For it has ordinarily come to pass, that an unbelieving husband has been brought to the faith, and so to baptism, by his wife; and likewise an unbelieving wife by her husband. If it were not so, and if the wickedness or infidelity of the unbelieving party did usually prevail, the children of such would be generally kept unbaptized, and so be unclean. But now we see, by the

grace of God, a contrary effect, for they are generally baptized, and so become holy, or sanctified.”*

This view requires us to understand the words *sanctified* and *holy* as applying to moral character, and as implying *baptism*. The reasons urged in favour of this construction are the following:—

1. The grammatical form of the sentence is said to indicate it. It stands thus: *ἡγιασται γαρ ὁ ἀνηρ ὁ ἀπίστος ἐν τῇ γυναικί* for the *unbelieving husband* HATH BEEN SANCTIFIED *by the wife*, &c. The verb *ἡγιασται* *sanctify* is in the *perfect passive*, and not in the *present active* form, as our translators have rendered it.

2. This is the view entertained by many of the fathers of the Christian church.

3. It is supposed to accord better with the scope of Paul's reasoning, for he expressly says in verse 16, “For what knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” &c.; as if the scope of his argument all along is, to show that the salvation (and hence baptism) of the unbelieving partner might be, and often had been, effected through the instrumentality of the believing partner, and this should induce them to live together, as it would sanction their continued union.

Mr. Wesley seems to have been of this opinion. He says, “For the unbelieving husband hath, in many instances, been sanctified by the wife, &c., else would your children have been brought up heathens, whereas now they are Christians.” (See his Notes on the place.)

So also Bishop Burnett: “The apostle does appoint the Christian to live with the infidel, and says that the Christian is so far from being defiled by the infidel, *that there is a communication of a blessing that passes from the Christian to the infidel*, the one being the better for the prayers of the other, and sharing in the blessings bestowed on the other: the better part was accepted of God, in whom mercy rejoices over judgment.”—*Expos. of the Articles*, Art. xxvii.

In reply, it is sufficient to say, 1. As to the grammatical form of the sentence, it equally accords with the version and particular turn of sense we have given to the passage. We might read, “For the unbelieving husband *has been*

* See Wall's History of Infant Baptism, part i, c. xi, sec. 11.

sanctified to the wife," &c., and it would equally make to our purpose. 2. It appears strange that writers should have found so much trouble with the little particle *ev en*. Our English text has it *by*, and this is, I believe, the translation more commonly given. It is this translation of this small word that has occasioned so much misunderstanding of the passage, and which, indeed, is the basis of the above view. If this particle were rendered *to*, instead of *by*, the whole argument of Paul would assume another aspect. Indeed, the opinion above stated does not give a true view of the force and character of the argument. The question in the Corinthian church was this, whether it was ceremonially lawful for a believer to dwell with an unbeliever? But it is no proof that such a union would not render the believing party *now* unclean, to say that *sometimes* the unbeliever has been sanctified by the instrumentality of the believer, and that the latter might, in this case, *hereafter* be the means of accomplishing the same good.

Secondly. It has been maintained by Baptist authors, at whose head, in this respect, stands Dr. Gill, that the word "*unclean*," ver. 14, is to be understood in the sense of *illegitimate*, and the word "*holy*" in the sense of *legitimate*, or *lawfully begotten*.

Dr. Gill has thus expressed this view:—" 'The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by her husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.' The parties spoken of are duly, rightly, and legally espoused to each other;—otherwise, that is, if they were not truly married to each other, the children must be *spurious*, and not *legitimate*. 'Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy;' that is, if the marriage contracted between them was not valid, and if, since the conversion of one of them, it can never be thought to be good; then the children begotten and born, either when both were infidels, or since one of them was converted, must be unlawfully begotten, base-born, and not genuine, legitimate offspring; but as the parents are lawfully married, the children born of them are, in a civil and legal sense, holy, that is, legitimate."

This view of the text is endorsed by the American

Baptist Publication and Tract Society, as it is the view of Mr. Pengilly, whose tract on baptism that society have published: although, to be sure, they have published another view of the text in the same tract, which we shall notice hereafter.

The most plausible argument in favour of this construction is, that it appears to coincide with the scope of Paul's reasoning. He certainly is arguing to the question, whether a man and woman may innocently live together, under given circumstances, in marriage relations; and it appears, at first blush, to be a natural and a satisfactory reply to this inquiry, to show that the parties were lawfully married at first. The great objections lying against this theory, however, are,—

1. If it had been a question of civil law, or relating to the lawfulness of marriage in a civil sense, it is not probable, as we have before observed, that the Corinthian church would have applied to Paul, now residing at Ephesus. Why did they not appeal to civil law at once?

2. To understand *ακαθατος* *akathartos* and *ἅγια* *hagia* in the sense of *illegitimate* and *legitimate*, is contrary to the *usus loquendi*. “It puts a sense upon these words which is widely different from the prevailing sense; yea, different from the sense which they have in any other passage of Scripture. And Dr. Gill himself does not pretend that either of the words is used in the sense he contends for, in any other text. He does, indeed, attempt to support his rendering by referring to the use of the Hebrew *קָדַשׁ* in the Talmudic books, where it has the sense of *espousing* merely. But Schleusner objects to the argument, and says, ‘that the notion of espousing, which certain interpreters have attributed to the word *το ἁγιαζειν*, from the use of the word *קָדַשׁ* in the Talmudic books, is, as any one must see, manifestly foreign to this place. There is not one of the senses of *קָדַשׁ*, given by Gesenius, and not one of the many senses of *ἁγιαζω*, given by Schleusner and Wahl, which favours the rendering of Dr. Gill. The same is true of the adjective *ἅγια*. Schleusner and Wahl give a great variety of senses, but none of them relate to the *legitimacy of children*. Nor is *ακαθατος*, nor the corresponding Hebrew *טָמֵא*, ever used to

designate a *spurious*, or illegitimate offspring. Good use, then, is entirely against the rendering of Dr. Gill.* We have already, in the body of this work, illustrated the Scripture use of these words.

3. Such a meaning as this of Dr. Gill, and his disciples, does not meet the *design* of the apostle. We have before noticed the true occasion and design of Paul's reasoning; and we here refer the reader's attention to those remarks. The question before the apostle arose purely from Jewish *ceremonial* distinctions, and not from any state or condition of the civil law respecting marriage;—it respected, therefore, only their *ceremonial purity*, and not the *legality* of their marriage, or the *legitimacy* of their offspring.

4. It has been urged against this view that it represents the apostle in the puerile effort of trying to prove a thing by itself. It represents him as proving the lawfulness of the marriage of the parties by the legitimacy of their offspring—"You are lawfully married, because your children are not bastards." A shorter method of arguing, on the same principles, would have been to say, "You are lawfully married, *because you are lawfully married.*"

This opinion concerning the sense of 1 Cor. vii, 14, the Baptists have long held, and many of them still hold it. But by many also it is totally discarded, so that it does not seem necessary to extend our notice of it further.

Thirdly. The next opinion which deserves notice in this place is, so far as I am informed, original with the Rev. John L. Dagg, formerly pastor of the Fifth Baptist church, Philadelphia. His views are published by the directors of the Baptist General Tract Society, in an appendix to Mr. Pengilly's Scripture Guide to Baptism. Mr. Dagg takes the words "unclean" and "*holy*" in their usual sense, and brings forth the following paraphrastic exposition of the passage:—

"The apostle," says he, "decides, in verses 12 and 13, that they [the believing and unbelieving partners] may lawfully dwell together; and in ver. 14, for the convincing and silencing of any members of the church who might object to the decision, he in substance says, '*The unbelieving husband is not unclean, so that his wife may not*

* Dr. Woods on Infant Baptism, p. 85.

lawfully dwell with him; the unbelieving wife is not unclean, so that her husband may not lawfully dwell with her. If they are unclean, then are your children unclean, and not one parent in the whole church must dwell with or touch his children, until God shall convert them; and thus Christians will be made to sever the ties that bind parents to their children, and to throw out the offspring of Christian parents into the ungodly world, from their very birth, without any provision for their protection, support, or religious education."

Mr. Hinton, in his History of Baptism, (p. 150,) adopts this view at large, as the most probable one he had met with. Mr. Jewett also (Baptism, p. 79) adopts the same opinion. Mr. Woolsey seems to prefer the opinion advocated by Dr. Gill. Which of the two constructions is nearer the truth, in the estimation of the Baptist General Tract Society, they have not informed us. They have offered both to the public on equal authority, and, with much liberality, have left the matter to our election. We prefer neither. However, they both serve to show how troublesome is this text to their peculiar theory.

The reader will perceive that the pronoun *your*, our author understands to refer, not exclusively to those parents of whom one was a believer, and the other an unbeliever, but to the *whole church*. He thinks that if the apostle had intended to speak of those children only who had one parent a believer, and the other an unbeliever, he would have said, *τεκνα αυτων tekna auton, their children*, instead of *τεκνα υμων tekna humon, your children*; the use of the latter pronoun being more customary in addressing the *whole church*, while the third person is more generally employed to designate *individuals* of the body. He thinks also that the present tense of the verb, "your children *εστι* are unclean," is a mode of speaking more suited to a parallel than a dependant case.

The objections to this view are the following:—1. It is based upon a supposition that is wholly improbable and absurd, and which contradicts all analogy. It supposes that if it be not ceremonially lawful for a believing husband or wife to live in conjugal relation with an unbelieving partner, so neither would it be lawful, on the same principles of reasoning, for Christian parents to live with their chil-

dren. Now, the cases are by no means parallel, and the latter cannot be inferred from the former. It does not follow, by parity of reasoning, if a Christian and a heathen cannot live together as husband and wife without the ceremonial defilement of the Christian, that, therefore, Christian parents cannot live with their children, whether born before or after the conversion of the parents, without contracting ceremonial pollution in an equal degree. Analogy is altogether against such a supposition. The history of ceremonial distinctions clearly informs us that where *both* parents were clean, the *children*, who should be afterward born, would be clean also. And if among Jews or Christians a believer has been reckoned defiled by living with an unbeliever, or children have been reckoned unclean when but one of their parents was converted, (both which held true among the Jews,) certain it is that children have never been reckoned unclean where *both* their parents were converted before their birth, any more than two Jews or two Christians have been reckoned unclean merely by living with each other. We know not, indeed, where our author derived his authority for advancing such a supposition, or by what authority the "directors of the General Tract Society" endorsed it; but this we do know, that it is unauthorized by any precedent or parallel in the entire range of analogy.

"If," says Dr. Woods, "we admit the above-mentioned interpretation, what sense would there be in the apostle's argument? Speaking of a believing wife who is connected with an unbelieving husband, he says, Such a husband is sanctified to his wife, so that she is under no necessity to leave him;—and the same as to a believing husband and an unbelieving wife;—and then he adds, *addressing himself unquestionably to the same persons*, 'otherwise,' that is, were it not for this innocency of relation, which the believing partner has to the unbelieving, 'your children would be unclean;—but now,' in consequence of this favourable relation, 'they are holy;' are to be regarded and treated as a *holy, consecrated seed*. The whole relates to the particular case described. What sense can the passage have if we understand it as addressed to the Christian husbands and wives generally, both parties being believers? 'Else were your children unclean!' How? Why?

The apostle says that it would be so, were it not that the unbelieving partner is sanctified to the believing. But here, according to the supposition, there is no unbelieving partner. And then, what sort of relation has the conclusion to the premises? The reasoning supposed consists of two parts. First. If the unbelieving partner were not sanctified to the believing partner, *the children of all other Christians would be unclean*. Secondly. But now as the unbelieving partner is sanctified to the believing, *the children of all other Christians are holy*. The first could not be true. If the unbelieving partner were not sanctified to the believing, it would indeed follow that *their* children would be unclean, but it would not follow that *other* children would be unclean, where both parents were believers. The conclusion in the second part is true,—but it does not follow at all from the premises. The children of the church generally, where both parents are believers, are indeed *holy*, in the sense of the apostle; but not because an unbelieving partner is sanctified to a believing.”*

2. If the above supposition were true;—if we concede to our opponents all the claims of the above argument, still, we frankly confess, we cannot feel that it possesses force. What is the argument? Why, simply, “that if it be not ceremonially lawful for a believing husband or wife to live with an unbelieving partner, so neither is it lawful, by parity of reasoning, for Christian parents to live with their children.” But wherein lies the force of this argument? Simply in the supposition that it is more unnatural and shocking to humanity for parents to refuse to live with their children, than for husbands to refuse to live with their wives, or wives with their husbands. Destroy this supposition, and the argument has no conceivable force.

Why should the fact, that parents may not refuse to live with their children, be urged as an argument to prove that husbands should not refuse to live with their wives, or wives with their husbands, except on the supposition that the former is self-evidently unnatural and shocking, while the latter is not? If there be any thing

* Infant Baptism, p. 98.—I have slightly altered the phraseology of this extract, merely to suit the turn I have given to the text in the translation I have adopted, but not so as to alter the bearing of the argument as intended by the author.

in the philosophy of Mr. Dagg's argument, this is it. But if we appeal directly to nature, or to the common sense of mankind, we shall find that it is no more repugnant to the social feelings, the good order and happiness of society, nor more appalling to humanity, for parents to refuse to live with their children, than for husbands and wives to refuse to live together. The former is not more strongly prohibited by nature itself, by revelation, or by the disastrous consequences that would ensue, than the latter. It is plain, therefore, that the unnatural wickedness of the one cannot be a forcible argument against the performance of the other, where the wickedness of both would be equal. Our author, then, undertakes to prove a doctrine, first, by stating a parallel, which indeed is found to be no parallel; certainly not such an obvious one as to entitle it to become the basis of a new theory! and, secondly, by deducing from this supposed parallel appalling consequences, which, indeed, are no more appalling or impious than those of the original error which they are intended to refute.

The consequences, moreover, are unfairly drawn. The fertility of the author's genius in deducing corollaries has betrayed him into a most amusing excess. It appears as if he had attempted to storm the imagination, and take the judgment prisoner by a sort of *coup de main*, but it proves a failure. If we should suppose that Christian parents could not live with their children without ceremonial defilement, and to avoid profaneness, were consequently obliged to separate from them until they had grown up and become converted, still it would be far from following, (and that man must be crazy indeed who could suppose that it *must* follow,) as a necessary alternative, that they must "*sever the ties that bind them to their children, and throw out their offspring into the ungodly world from their very birth, WITHOUT ANY PROVISION FOR THEIR PROTECTION, SUPPORT, OR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION!!*" *Facinus horrendum!* On the contrary, even if Christian parents could not be allowed to live with their children, still they could love them, and make any other provision for them in their power, for "their protection, support, and religious education."

3. After all, this mode of reasoning seems nothing bet-

ter than proving a thing by itself; a method of procedure absurd and senseless, and expressly rejected by Mr. Dagg himself. If it be an absurd mode of reasoning to say, "You are lawfully married, because your children are lawfully begotten," (and Mr. D. says it *is* absurd,) then, also, is it equally absurd, and by perfect parity of reasoning, to say, (as Mr. D. *has* said,) "You are clean, because your children, which are born of you, are clean." If the *cleanness* or *holiness* in both cases is the same, answering the same ends, then has Mr. D. adopted a mode of reasoning which he himself had repudiated in Dr. Gill. And this is not merely an *argumentum ad hominem*, for in both cases the reasoning is to be rejected.

NOTE F.—Referred to p. 222.

In connection with the historical argument in support of infant baptism, it becomes necessary to furnish the reader with some account of the Waldenses, Albigenses, &c., and particularly of the sect called Petrobrusians. The reader should be apprized that the Baptists have made great searchings into the ecclesiastical records of Christian antiquity, to find some sect, or broken fragment of the church, or independent society, through which to reckon the descent of anti-Pedobaptism from the apostles. They have found a society, answering their purpose in part, in the character and history of some obscure people, who began to attract attention in the middle ages, but whose antiquity and true history are shrouded, in a great degree, to this day, in impenetrable night. The people to which I allude are now more commonly designated by the general name of Waldenses and Albigenses. Before entering upon the brief account of this people which we intend to give, it is proper to premise, that after the Christian church began largely to corrupt itself by the usurpation of temporal dominion, the use of images in worship, and a hundred other departures from the simplicity of the gospel, which it is not necessary to mention, there arose, from time to time, small parties who opposed these existing abominations. These, always being in the despised

minority, and mostly of obscure birth and fortunes, were overawed in the populous cities, where church power was dominant, and quickly expelled. Hence they confined themselves mostly to the obscurer parts of the kingdoms in which they arose. The Waldenses seem to have arisen up, and more generally to have remained, in the mountainous regions of Italy and France. Here, in the retirement and solitude of a rural life, hedged in with lofty mountains, God gave them, for a long time, that liberty of conscience and freedom to worship him, without Papal interdiction, which their seclusion from the world, their distance from Rome, their paucity of numbers, and their unostentatious pursuits, seemed so naturally to guaranty. In the principality of Piedmont, in Italy, and in the late province of Dauphiny, in France, (now comprising the departments of Drome, Isere, and Upper Alps,) as well as in many parts bordering on the Pyrenees, are beautiful and fertile valleys, where, under a genial sun, are cultivated all the fruits and luxuries which belong to any of the districts of France or Italy.

In these regions, on account of the greater security which the situation offered, arose numerous sects, at different times, widely differing from each other, and all enemies of the Catholic Church. The word Waldenses simply signifies *valleys, inhabitants of valleys, &c.*, and applied to all the sects generally who inhabited these valleys. Of the sects that arose in these regions, some were Manichees,* and, with many impious and absurd tenets, denied all water baptism, retaining only a "baptism by fire," as they called it, which they administered only to adults. Mr. Wall says, "Though the authors do not well distinguish the names, yet, most generally, this sort that denied all baptism, and held the other vile opinions, are denoted by these names, *Cathari, Apostolici, Luciferians, Runcarians, Popelicans, alias Publicans.*"†

After minutely searching out the histories of all the different sects that inhabited these *valleys*, and which are modernly denominated Waldenses, he fixes upon *one sect only* of those who held to water baptism at all, who yet

* For an account of the Manichean heresy, vide Dr. Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, century iii, chapter v.

† History, part ii, chap. vii, sec. 7.

denied infant baptism. This sect was the Petrobrusians. Ecclesiastical historians complain much of the obscurity that rests upon the history of these times. The history of these sects we derive from their enemies and persecutors, the bigoted monks, and others who took part against them. Hence they are sometimes charged with denying particular doctrines, and, among the rest, infant baptism, evidently to slander them. The whole evidence of there being any sect, or society of men, among those generally called Waldenses, that denied infant baptism, who, at the same time, held to any water baptism at all, is but *probable*. So says Mr. Wall, and so many others regard it.

“The modern Waldenses in Piedmont and Provence, who are the descendants of those ancient ones, practise infant baptism. And they were also found in the practice of it when the Protestants of Luther’s Reformation sent to know their state and doctrine, and to confer with them. And they themselves say that their fathers never practised otherwise; and they give proof of it from an old book of theirs, called the Spiritual Almanac, where infant baptism is owned. Perin, their historian, gives the reason of the report that had been to the contrary. He says, ‘Their ancestors being constrained for some hundred years to suffer their children to be baptized by the priests of the Church of Rome, they deferred the doing thereof as long as they could, because they had in detestation those human inventions that were added to the sacrament, which they held to be the pollution thereof. And forasmuch as their own pastors were many times abroad, employed in the service of their churches, they could not have baptism administered to their infants by their own ministers. For this cause they kept them long from baptism; which the priests perceiving, and taking notice of, charged them with this slander.’ There are many other confessions of theirs of like import, produced by Perin, Baxter, Wills, &c. This is the account the Waldenses give of themselves in those confessions, some of which seem to have been published about two hundred years ago, (that is, about 1505.) One, of the Bohemian Waldenses, is dated 1508.”*

* Wall’s History, part ii, chap. vii, sec. 3.

These various sects that arose in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, were known by different names in different places. In France they were mostly known as Albigenses, so called from Albi, a city in Languedoc, where they became very numerous; or, perhaps more accurately, from Albigesium, the general denomination of Narbonnese Gaul in that century. So some of them also were called Lyonists, or the poor men of Lyons.

The antiquity of these various sects cannot well be computed. The exact date of their origin is not a matter of history. Peter Waldus, a native of Lyons, an opulent merchant and a layman, became so affected with the existing corruptions of the church, that he began to inveigh against them. He began his ministry about A. D. 1160. In the course of his exertions he became acquainted with a people in the valleys of Piedmont, of spirits congenial to his own. These were what were afterward called the Waldenses, or "men of the valleys." By the influence and labours of Peter, his disciples from Lyons became intimately associated with those in the valleys of Piedmont. But the latter had long subsisted there previously to this date. Some believe that they had existed from the days of the apostles. Others ascribe to them an indefinite antiquity. St. Bernard says they must have derived their origin from the devil, since there is no other extraction which we can assign to them. Waddington says we must admit that the direct historical evidence is not sufficient to prove their apostolical descent. He supposes the general sect of the Waldenses may have gradually crept into existence, and extended from the eighth to the eleventh century. It still appears, says he, that the name is not mentioned in any writing before the twelfth century; and there is no direct, specific evidence of the previous existence of the sect. Nevertheless, as its origin was confessedly immemorial in the thirteenth century, and as there has not, perhaps, existed, in the history of heresy, any other sect to which some origin has not been expressly ascribed, we have just reason to infer the very high antiquity of the Vaudois, or Waldenses.*

But the antiquity of this sect, or, we should say, perhaps, of these sects, is of very little importance to the

* History of the Church, p. 290.

argument of our opponents, so long as it is by no means clear that they denied infant baptism. Indeed it is clear that they did not deny it, if we except a single party of a later origin. Mr. Gilly, an English clergyman, who made excursions among the modern Waldenses of Piedmont in 1823, has shown that they now practise infant baptism; and Mr. Jones, in his History of the Waldenses, has attempted to evade the force of this by showing that the present inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmont are not the true descendants of the ancient Waldenses, and that they do not hold the same faith of the latter. His proofs, however, do not appear fully satisfactory touching the point of infant baptism, to say no more. For where he quotes the ancient Waldenses as saying that antichrist "teaches to baptize children into the faith, and attributes to this the work of regeneration," &c., it does not necessarily follow that they intended to condemn infant baptism itself, but only the making it to be equal to regeneration, and indeed what immediately follows proves this to have been the point of their meaning. So when they speak of professing faith before baptism, it may only refer to adults, which is a very common mode of speaking.*

But allowing the ancient Waldenses to have denied infant baptism, still this can hold true only of one of the many sects that went under that name, namely, the followers of Peter Bruis, hence called Petrobrusians. Peter began to preach about A. D. 1126, in the province of Dauphiny, in France. His sect spread over much of the southern part of France, both in country and city, particularly in Toulouse. He was arrested and burnt as a heretic in A. D. 1144. He was succeeded by one Henry, who took the lead of the party for some time. Henry was arrested, and it is probable that he was executed, about A. D. 1147 or 1148. St. Bernard had been sent out by Pope Eugenius to suppress this sect, and, after the death of Henry, "it is said that those who had erred were reduced, the wavering were satisfied, and the seducers so confuted that they durst nowhere appear. And a little after this, Bernard sends a letter to the people of Toulouse, congratulating their recovery from the confusions that had

* See Jones's History of the Waldenses, vol. ii, pp. 335-338; and Preface to fifth edition, *Philadelphia*.

been among them on account of those opinions."* Here, then, was the suppression of the only sect, of which we have any authentic and positive knowledge, for the first eleven hundred years after the apostles, who denied infant baptism. Their distinct existence as a sect seems not to have continued more than about thirty years. After this, there is no direct account of any sect who denied infant baptism until the rise of the Anabaptists in Germany early in the sixteenth century, (A. D. 1522.) This sect might have arisen, like the phoenix, from the scattered ashes of the former.

I have now laid before the reader, very briefly, the prominent facts in the case, in relation to the Waldenses, so far as they stand connected with our subject. The question, then, arises, What does all this make for the argument of our opponents? In other words, What is the force of the argument for anti-Pedobaptism, derived from the fact that the Waldenses, or some who passed under that general name, denied infant baptism? Really we cannot see that it has any force whatever. All the force that the argument can possibly have, in the nature of the case, is derived from the supposition that there existed, in the northern part of Italy and in the southern part of France, a sect who, from the days of the apostles, denied infant baptism, and held to believers' baptism only. If anti-Pedobaptism cannot be traced through these men up to the apostles, the argument is good for nothing. The argument from church history is brought in merely to prove the antiquity of the practice; and if it can be traced up to the apostles themselves, as the uniform and uncontested practice of the church, it furnishes a powerful presumption, nay, almost a demonstration, that it was instituted by the apostles. This, in regard to infant baptism, we have shown to have been the fact. But is this the state of the case in reference to anti-Pedobaptism? Far from it. What if all the Waldensian sects denied infant baptism? What if they had united to ascribe their origin to apostolic times, and their practice to apostolic teaching? All this could have proved nothing, any more than the antiquity of the Chinese can be proved from their mere pretensions. In the absence of authentic records, or of powerful circumstantial testimony, we can

* Wall's History, part ii, c. vii, sec. 7.

place no reliance whatever upon mere rumour, or upon mere sectarian pretension. The Waldenses did not come fully into notice till the twelfth century, and the denial of infant baptism dates no further back than the year 1128. Beyond this is, with reference to this subject, the fabulous age—the age of fiction and conjecture. All the Christian world regarded the doctrine as *new* when it then appeared, first in the Alpine regions of Dauphiny.

But it should be remembered (which we have not before stated) that the *principle* on which infant baptism was denied by the Petrobrusians is such as to indicate sufficiently its new and heretical character. “Christ sending his disciples to preach,” say they, “says in the gospel, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.’ From these words of our Saviour it is plain that none can be saved unless he believe and be baptized: that is, have *both* Christian faith and baptism. For not one of these, but both together, doth save. So that infants, though they be by you baptized, yet, since by reason of their age they cannot believe, *are not saved*. It is therefore an idle and vain thing for you to wash persons with water, at such a time when you may indeed cleanse their skin from dirt in a carnal manner, but not purge their souls from sin. But we do stay till the proper time of faith: and when a person is capable to know his God and believe in him, then we do (not, as you charge us, rebaptize him, but) baptize him. For he is to be accounted as not yet baptized who is not washed with that baptism by which sins are done away.”* The principle, then, upon which this sect denied infant baptism was plainly this, that infants, *baptized or not baptized, are lost*, so that it is unfit that they should be subjects of any religious ordinance, not being subjects of grace. A practice founded on a principle so erroneous (not to say shocking) cannot commend itself to us with authority, or yield any important aid to the cause of modern anti-Pedobaptism.

* Vide Wall's History, part ii, c. vii, sec. 5.

NOTE G.—Referred to p. 223.

The Church of Rome hold that the administration of baptism belongs chiefly to bishops, priests, and deacons; but, in case of necessity, men or women, Jews, infidels, or heretics, may do it, *if they intend to do what the Church doeth.*

The ceremonies that are used in baptism are the following:—

1. Chrism, or oil mixed with water. This is a token of salvation.

2. Exorcism, composed of certain words, prayers, and actions, for expelling the devil out of the person, and also out of the salt to be used. The priest is to blow in the face of the child after the form of a cross, saying, “Go out of him, Satan!”

3. The forehead, eyes, breast, &c., are to be crossed, to show that by the mystery of baptism the senses are opened to receive God, and to understand his commands.

4. Then some exorcised salt is to be put into the mouth, to signify a deliverance from the putrefaction of sin, and the savour of good works. And the priest, in putting it into the mouth, saith, “N., take the salt of wisdom, and let it be a propitiation for thee to eternal life. Amen.”

5. Then the nose and ears are to be anointed with spittle, and then the child is to be brought to the water, as the blind man to Siloam, to signify it brings light to the mind.

After baptism, 1. The priest anoints the top of the head with chrism; and adds, “Let him anoint thee with the chrism of salvation.”

2. He puts a white garment on the baptized, saying, “Take this white garment, which thou mayest bring before the judgment-seat of Christ, that thou mayest have life eternal.”

3. A lighted candle is put into the hand, to show a faith inflamed with charity, and nourished with good works. Vide Wesley’s Works, vol. v, pp. 785, 786, from which this is taken.

Now, can all these senseless and ridiculous ceremonies, which are evidently only the inventions of men, prove that

infant baptism itself was also nothing but an invention of man? If such an argument holds good against infant baptism, it certainly holds equally good against all baptism whatsoever, for adult baptism was involved in the same superstitious corruptions. On the same principles of reasoning also the divine institution of the eucharist is invalidated, and proved to be a human invention, because it was corrupted with not only silly superstitions, but monstrous absurdities.

How pitiful, then, is all this attempt to get up an ignorant prejudice against the apostolic institution of infant baptism, merely on the ground of its having been abused by the superadditions of a foolish superstition, to meet the vitiated taste of an apostate church! It is amusing, and at the same time pitiful, to trace the laboured efforts of Mr. Robinson, and of his copyist and admirer, Mr. Benedict, in their Histories of Baptism and the Baptists, through tiresome pages, wrapping themselves in an endless verbosity, and saying many silly things, and all to show that infant baptism had its origin in the middle ages! and arose from the general despotism of the laws, the ignorance of the people, the licentiousness of the clergy, &c., &c.! We say, considered in the light of either sober argument or authentic history, all this is pitiful—is contemptible. It is a mere play upon the presumed ignorance and credulity of their readers. See Robinson's History of Baptism, pp. 269–282; and Benedict's Hist. of the Baptists, vol. i, pp. 60, 61, &c.

NOTE H.—Referred to p. 278.

In his sermon on "Marks of the New Birth," Mr. Wesley says,—

"Say not, then, in your heart, 'I *was once* baptized, therefore I *am now* a child of God.' Alas! that consequence will by no means hold. How many are the baptized gluttons and drunkards, the baptized liars and common swearers, the baptized railers and evil speakers, the baptized whoremongers, thieves, extortioners! What think you? Are these now the children of God? Verily I say unto you, whosoever you are, unto whom any one of the

preceding characters belong, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye do.' Unto you I call, in the name of Him whom you crucify afresh, and in his words to your circumcised predecessors, 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?'

"How indeed, except ye be born again! for ye are now dead in trespasses and in sins. To say, then, that ye cannot be born again, *that there is no new birth but in baptism*, is to seal you all under damnation, to consign you to hell, without help, and without hope....

"'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye,' also, 'must be born again.' 'Except ye' also 'be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God.' Lean no more on that staff of a broken reed, that ye *were* born again in baptism. Who denies that ye were then made children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven? But, notwithstanding this, ye are now children of the devil. And let not Satan put it into your heart to cavil at a word, when the thing is clear. Ye have heard what are the marks of the children of God: all ye who have them not on your souls, baptized or unbaptized, must needs receive them, or, without doubt, ye will perish everlastingly. And if ye have been baptized, your only hope is this, that those who were made the children of God by baptism, but are now the children of the devil, may yet again receive 'power to become the sons of God;' that they may receive again what they have lost, even the 'spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father!'"—*Works*, vol. i, pp. 160, 161.

In his sermon on "the New Birth," he says,—

"I proposed, in the last place, to subjoin a few inferences which naturally follow from the preceding observations.

"1. And first, it follows that baptism is not the new birth: *they are not one and the same thing*. Many, indeed, seem to imagine that they are just the same; at least, they speak as if they thought so; but I do not know that this opinion is avowed by any denomination of Christians whatever. Certainly it is not by any within these kingdoms, whether of the established Church, or dissenting from it. The judgment of the latter is clearly declared in their large catechism: 'Q. What are the parts of a

sacrament? Ans. The parts of a sacrament are two: the one, an outward and sensible sign; the other, an inward and spiritual grace, thereby signified. Q. What is baptism? Ans. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water, to be a sign and seal of regeneration by his Spirit.' Here it is manifest, baptism, the sign, is spoken of as distinct from regeneration, the thing signified.

"In the Church Catechism, likewise, the judgment of our Church is declared with the utmost clearness: 'Q. What meanest thou by this word sacrament? Ans. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Q. What is the outward part or form in baptism? Ans. Water, wherein the person is baptized, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Q. What is the inward part, or thing signified? Ans. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.' Nothing, therefore, is plainer than that, according to the Church of England, baptism is not the new birth.

"But, indeed, the reason of the thing is so clear and evident as not to need any other authority. For what can be more plain than that the one is an external, the other an internal work; that the one is a visible, the other an invisible thing, and therefore wholly different from each other?—the one being an act of man, purifying the body; the other a change wrought by God in the soul: so that the former is just as distinguishable from the latter, as the soul from the body, or water from the Holy Ghost.

"2. From the preceding reflections we may, secondly, observe, that as the new birth is not the same thing with baptism, *so it does not always accompany baptism: they do not constantly go together.* A man may possibly be 'born of water,' and yet not 'born of the Spirit.' There may sometimes be the outward sign, where there is not the inward grace. I do not now speak with regard to infants: it is certain our Church supposes, that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years.

But whatever be the case with infants, it is sure, all of riper years who are baptized are not, at the same time, born again. 'The tree is known by its fruits : ' and hereby it appears too plain to be denied that divers of those, who were children of the devil before they were baptized, continue the same after baptism ; ' for the works of their father they do : ' they continue servants of sin, without any pretence either to inward or outward holiness."—*Ibid.*, pp. 404, 405.

From these extracts it appears most obvious that Mr. Wesley's view of baptismal regeneration is of the most modified form, differing far less with the general class of dissenters than with the high-Church party. His catechetical and liturgical forms of expression differ, sometimes, from those which we prefer to adopt, but his explanations, and practical uses of the doctrines of baptism and regeneration, are evangelical and sound. His Christian character and doctrines were too highly evangelical to admit of an error here. No man, since the days of Paul, ever exhibited the necessity of inward holiness with a greater clearness of expression, or enforced it upon his hearers with a bolder energy of diction. He levelled his fearless rebukes against the formalism of his day—against all that tendency to exalt the outward means to the disparagement of real godliness which was bringing the Church, with a fearful proclivity, in a retrograde movement toward the enormities of the tenth century—against these deteriorating tendencies, I say, Wesley opposed the most pungent rebukes of the oracles of God, and hurled the polished shafts of the quiver of truth. He is the last man upon whom suspicion of formalism can fix her venomous fang.

THE END.

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