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The Library of the  
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Ralph Wardlaw D. D.  
Glasgow, Scotland.

A DISSERTATION  
ON  
INFANT BAPTISM.

GLASGOW:  
PUBLISHED BY JAMES MACLEHOSE.

LONDON: JACKSON AND WALFORD.

“ . HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.

EDINBURGH: A. AND C. BLACK.

“ OLIVER AND BOYD.

A

DISSERTATION

ON THE

SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY, NATURE, AND USES,

OF

INFANT BAPTISM.

By RALPH WARDLAW, D.D.

THIRD EDITION.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

STRICTURES ON THE VIEWS ADVOCATED BY THE  
REV. DR. HALLEY,

IN HIS VOLUME ENTITLED "THE SACRAMENTS," ON JOHN'S BAPTISM, AND ON  
THE SCRIPTURAL REQUISITES TO CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

GLASGOW :

JAMES MACLEHOSE, BUCHANAN STREET.

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MDCCCLVI.

GLASGOW:  
PRINTED BY D. RUSSELL, BUCHANAN COURT,  
75, ARGYLL STREET.



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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So long ago as the year 1807, I published "Three Lectures on Romans iv. 9—25, designed chiefly to illustrate the nature of the Abrahamic Covenant, and its connexion with Infant Baptism; with an Appendix, on the Mode of Baptism."—It was my first publication: and, after the lapse of seventeen years, I have seen very little reason to alter or to modify the general principles of that work.—A Review of it appeared, in the end of the same year, from the pen of the late Mr Archibald Maclean of Edinburgh, a man held in just estimation, not by his own party only, but by all who knew him, for natural acuteness of intellect, close application to the study of the scriptures, and general consistency of character. I was satisfied that my main positions were unshaken by the objections and counter-reasonings of the reviewer; and the chief consideration that prevented me from then replying was, the time it would necessarily occupy, which, I thought, might, on the whole, be more profitably

employed. I am not now sure, whether this was a correct judgment.

A desire has repeatedly been expressed to me for the re-publication of these lectures. I could not, however, think of publishing them again in the same form. The great business of an expositor, I am fully aware, ought to be, to give a clear view of the scope, or main design, of the writer whom he expounds, and to show how his reasonings establish, and his illustrations elucidate, the point of which he treats. All matter that is not immediately relevant for this end, ought to be either omitted entirely, or very sparingly introduced;—if touched, not dwelt upon. The reason why this principle was departed from in the lectures, was one which I then thought, and still think, sufficient to justify the deviation. It is obvious, that the same *principles*, which a writer lays down as the foundation of the conclusions which it is his object to establish, may often, with equal fairness, be made the basis of other conclusions, besides those which are at the time in his view; and principles settled by Divine authority it is, on this account, as well as for the sake of the inferences actually deduced from them, of the highest consequence to ascertain. We then have at least determinate premises; and have only to show how they bear us out in our deductions. Now, it may happen, that at the very time when a minister, in the regular course of exposition, arrives at a particular passage, the minds of fellow-christians, in his own religious connexions, or more extensively, may be occupied and agitated by

subjects which, though not immediately connected with the doctrine which it is the writer's direct object to establish, may yet have a very intimate connexion with the facts and principles brought forward by him for its confirmation. In such circumstances, it is surely warrantable for that minister, whilst he shows how these principles bear upon the writer's immediate object, to lay hold of them for a separate purpose, and, even at some length, to dwell on the particular subject respecting which he feels it to be of consequence to settle the minds of his hearers. The only proper question, in such a case, would be, whether the principles were fairly stated, and whether the conclusions from them were legitimately deduced.—Such was precisely the state of things, when the lectures in question were delivered. But I am sensible, that the same reason which justified at the time, the introduction of discussions on the Abrahamic covenant and infant baptism, to a length so disproportionate in illustrating the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, would hardly justify the re-publication of the lectures at a distant period, when the principles can be taken by themselves, and the argument separated entirely from that of the Epistle.—I have been led to make these remarks by an observation of Mr Maclean, in the introduction to his review, very much fitted to prejudice the mind of his reader,—namely, that “he finds my main design to be, to support infant baptism, and that from two chapters, (Rom. iv. and Gal. iii.) where it is never once mentioned, nor does it appear in

“the least degree to have entered into the mind or “view of the sacred writer.”—But Mr Maclean does not accuse me of overlooking the object of the apostle, or of failing to show how that object is made out from his premises:—and the sole question with him ought to have been, whether the same premises which authorised the one conclusion, were or were not legitimately applied to the establishment of the other.

The work which is now presented to the public may be considered as a substitute for that part of the former which immediately regarded the subject of the Abrahamic covenant and baptism. It is, however, in almost all respects, a new work. The discussions are cleared from all the foreign matter, with which they were unavoidably associated by the passages on which the lectures were founded. The reasonings are, by this means, rendered more distinct and consecutive. The subject is treated more at large, in all its parts, and especially in some which before were hardly, if at all, touched upon. To the whole train of argument an arrangement has been given, such as, it is hoped, may render it plain and easily followed, and may serve to free the subject of it from some portion at least of the confusion and difficulty, in which, to not a few minds, it has always appeared to be involved. Some of the leading objections, moreover, have been met, and, to my own satisfaction at least, exposed;—and what is said, in the third section, of the *USES* of infant baptism, is wholly new.

It may be thought, that the necessity of publish-



ing at all was superseded by the late able work of my esteemed friend and colleague, Mr Ewing.\* The larger proportion of his ESSAY, however, as the circumstances which gave rise to it might have led us to anticipate, relates to the MODE of baptism; and, although this is treated with a measure of originality, and of classical and biblical learning, highly creditable to its author,—there still seemed to be room left for a fuller and more systematic discussion of the other great branch of the controversy,—the SUBJECTS of the ordinance,—which is touched in the Essay indeed, and touched with the same ability, but which it is not the professed object of the writer to treat extensively. This part of the field the circumstances I have before stated had long determined me to occupy anew, previously to the publication of Mr Ewing's work; and my determination was quickened to action by the appearance of an antagonist to him, and to the late Dr. Dwight, and to myself. I refer to the work of the Rev. F. A. Cox, of Hackney, put forth with the ponderous and appalling title—“On Baptism: chiefly in Reply to the Etymological Positions of the Rev. Greville Ewing, in his ‘Essay on Baptism:’ the Polemic Discussions of the Rev. Timothy Dwight, S. T. D., LL. D., in his Work,

\* “An Essay on baptism: being an inquiry into the meaning, form, and extent, of the administration of that ordinance.—With an Appendix; containing a vindication of the explanations in the Author's Greek Grammar and Greek and English Scripture Lexicon on the same subject,—in a letter to the Author from a literary christian Friend.” 1824.

entitled, 'Theology;' and the Inferential Reasonings of the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, D.D. in his Lectures on the Abrahamic Covenant."—In some of the advertisements of this work, the first part of the title, I observe, has undergone an alteration; and, instead of the "etymological *positions*," we have the "etymological *novelties*," of Mr Ewing: and it is surely, in the annals of controversy, a somewhat curious circumstance, that an opponent should formally announce, in his title-page, a reply to precisely that part of the work he sets himself to oppose, which its author had himself declared to be unconnected with the course and conclusiveness of his argument:—for thus Mr Ewing had expressed himself:—"Such is my attempt "to analyze βαπτω and its related words. If any "shall reject it (I dare say many will); in that case, "they will of course disallow my theory for illustrating the origin, and the connexion of the various "meanings of those words. But they will not be "able, thereby, to set aside the meanings themselves. "These must still be tried by the force of the examples which may be produced in support of each by "itself. Although I shall, in what follows, refer to "my theory of the derivation of the terms, for the "sake of showing how well it tallies with the application of them in the examples in which they occur; "I shall, in no case, use an argument, in support of "their meaning, which shall rest on that theory."—To announce a formal reply to what an author has thus previously intimated to be unessential to his argument, a speculation of which the entire omission

leaves its force untouched;—to produce upon the reader's mind, by the very phraseology of a title-page, the impression, that that is the pith and substance of a work, and what chiefly calls for notice and exposure, which the writer himself announces he will not make the basis of a single proof;—and then, to confirm this false impression and prejudice, by applying ridicule, as the test of truth, to what, even were it overturned, would not, by its removal, affect, in the slightest degree, a single conclusion;—may be a convenient *ruse de guerre*,—but it is neither ingenuous nor manly. It is very easy, however, and that adds to the convenience.—Whatever diversity of opinion may subsist on some unessential points, Mr Cox's assault has, in my judgment, left the main positions, on which Mr Ewing's argument rests, in their full strength.

Although the appearance of Mr Cox's strictures hastened the fulfilment of a previous intention, the following pages are not to be considered as a reply to his work. They are not a formal reply to any one. I follow the train of my own argument, and take notice of the objections of others, as they come in my way. And I trust it will be found, I have not shrunk from meeting my opponents (or rather, let me say, the opponents, the conscientious opponents, of the views I advocate)—fully and fairly, in the main points of their strength.—I have had occasion, once or twice, to allude to the strictures of the Rev. Mr Birt, of Birmingham, on a sermon by my excellent friend, the Rev. H. F. Burder, of Hackney, a neigh-

bour and fellow-labourer of Mr Cox;—and I gladly embrace the opportunity of saying, that although there may be one or two minor statements in that sermon in which I may not thoroughly acquiesce, it appears to me distinguished by the clearness and cogency and comprehensive brevity of its reasonings, as well as by the piety and the christian meekness of its spirit; and to remain little, if at all affected, in its great general principles, by the animadversions of his opponent.—I have now and then referred to, and quoted, other publications. But indeed these are now, on both sides, so numerous, that I have found it better not to cumber myself by looking into many, and so exposing myself to the temptation of introducing matter, either quite extraneous, or but remotely connected with my argument.

It has been my endeavour to adhere to the Latin maxim, “*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,*” familiarly rendered in English “Soft words and hard arguments.” Whether I have succeeded or failed, the reader must judge. If occasionally I may have expressed myself (of which, however, I am not conscious) with unbecoming asperity, may I find forgiveness of Him, who has said, “The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men!”—To his blessing I humbly commend this part of my labours, in the conviction,—a conviction that has gained strength by every new examination of the subject,—that the cause is his, and that its opponents, however plausible their scheme may be rendered, (and it is admitted, in some of its points,

to be susceptible of *great* plausibility,) have not a foot-breadth of solid scriptural ground to stand upon.

R. W.

GLASGOW,  
13th January, 1825.

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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN this SECOND EDITION, there have been introduced a number of slight alterations, and occasionally some little enlargements, which I have not judged it necessary to distinguish by any mark, but which, it is hoped, will be found improvements.

R. W.

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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THIS Dissertation has now, for a good many years, been out of print. I have had repeated inquiries after it, and urgent requests, from different quarters, for its re-publication. To these requests various other engagements have hitherto prevented me from paying the only satisfactory attention,—not the intimation of a purpose merely, but its execution. To this the appearance of my friend Dr. Halley's volume\* presented, I confess, a new and strong incitement; the impression on my mind having long been deep and sorrowful of the unscriptural laxity of the sentiments and practice of my Southern Congregational brethren, in regard to the administration of baptism,—and that volume containing a broader and more unqualified

\* "The Sacraments. An inquiry into the nature of the symbolic Institutions of the christian religion, usually called the Sacraments. By Robert Halley, D.D. Part I. Baptism." The volume is the tenth series of the Congregational Lecture.

assertion of the rectitude of those sentiments and of that practice, as well as a more formal and extended vindication of them, than I had ever met with. The efficiency even of that stimulus, however, has still been counteracted and retarded by other influences, such as it is needless to detail. I now, at length, lay my strictures before both my English and Scottish brethren; requesting for them no more than a candid examination, and desiring for myself openness to conviction, if they can be proved erroneous. They have been written—portions of them especially—amidst many interruptions, and, towards the close, even in the snatches of time redeemable from travelling, and official occupations at a distance from home. But while this may plead in extenuation of any defects that may appear in the mere execution, it is not meant as a plea for any haste in the formation of the sentiments. These, right or wrong, have not been rashly adopted. They are old and long matured.

It may seem strange that I should have made no reference, in the Appendix, to any other works than Dr. Halley's. In explanation of this, I have simply to state, that I have purposely avoided even reading the volumes of Dr. Godwin and Mr Stovel, being desirous to avoid the confusion apt to arise from replying to two or more at once, and, at the same time, to shun the appearance of plagiarism, and pursue my own course in my own way. For the same reason, although my revered and able friend Dr. Urwick (a friend from whom, as from Dr. Halley,

I am timid as well as sorry to differ) has recently re-published a tract on the subject which I many years ago perused, I have denied myself also the re-perusal of it.

The Dissertation has been very carefully revised; and such improvements have been introduced, and such occasional additions made, as the style, or the argument, appeared to require.

Both it and the Appendix I commend to the candid judgment of my brethren, and, as far as they contain his own truth, to the blessing of my divine Master.

R. W.

MOUNT HARRIET,  
*July 1st, 1846.*





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## INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

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SOME persons are disposed to deprecate all such discussions as the one on which I am now entering, under the common designation of *unprofitable controversy*. That it is *controversy*, I admit ;—that it is *unprofitable controversy*, I deny. If I thought it so, I trust I should have grace to abstain from it. But I think otherwise, for the following reasons :—

*In the first place* : As a pædobaptist, I am accustomed, along with my brethren of the same persuasion, to administer the ordinance of baptism, as occasions present themselves, both privately and publicly, to the infant children of believers ; and we are countenanced in so doing by our churches and congregations. Now every thing that we do, as professed subjects of the Lord Jesus, ought to be done, not blindly, or in mere conformity to custom, but from a scriptural and enlightened conviction of duty. To call any institution an ordinance of God, and persist in adherence to it, without knowing either its import or the reason of observing it, is unworthy

a professor of that religion, which enjoins nothing but what is "reasonable service."

*Secondly* : In consequence of the universality of the practice of infant baptism, and the consequent frequency of the abuse and prostitution of the ordinance, believers themselves are in no small danger of attending to it as a mere matter of course, without due consideration, either of the nature of the rite, the grounds on which the administration of it to their children rests, or the parental obligations, so deep and so solemn, that are inseparably connected with it.

*Thirdly* : I see no reason whatever, why pædobaptists should feel the slightest disposition to evade the question, or the most distant fear,—although on both sides there may be minute points of difficulty,—to meet it fully, fairly, and openly, in all its great general bearings.—There has sometimes appeared to me, on the part of pædobaptists, too much of a disposition to stand upon the *defensive* merely ;—too much of the mere negation of the conclusiveness of arguments used on the side of their opponents, and too little of the direct enforcement of positive evidence on their own ;—too much of the *shield*, and too little of the *sword* :—I mean, of course, "the sword of the Spirit."

*Fourthly* : There are too many, especially of the young, who, in the outset of their christian profession, have not their minds directed at all to the subject. It is an unexamined point. And these persons, when, in this state of destitution or deficiency

of knowledge and information, they happen to fall in with a baptist friend, a baptist book, or a baptist argument, feel themselves unprepared to meet what is new and startling; their minds are in danger of being immediately unsettled, and of hastily adopting what is presented to them with no little plausibility, and possibly too with much imposing confidence.—I invite the attention of my young christian readers,—not fearing, that if we are only enabled to come to the subject without the heat of party opinionativeness, in a cool, composed, and reasonable frame of spirit, and especially in humble dependence on Divine teaching, we shall be led into all truth, and established in the due observance of every scriptural institution.

*Fifthly* : The discussion does not exclusively regard a particular instituted observance; it involves principles and topics, such as are very closely connected with the right understanding of a large proportion of the Old Testament scriptures, and of those parts of the New of which the reasonings and illustrations are founded upon the Old; and also with just views of the Divine procedure towards the church, from the beginning to the end of its history.—This must have been apparent to every person of the slightest discernment, that has bestowed any attention upon the controversy. There is a certain style of speaking and writing regarding the Old and New Dispensations, and the two revelations respectively connected with them, by which, in general, the supporters of the opposite sides of it may be

readily distinguished. And this gives an importance to the argument, beyond its direct conclusions respecting the single ordinance which forms its more immediate subject.

*Lastly* : I am satisfied, that the argument respecting the validity of infant baptism is, far from being so difficult and formidable, as, from the numberless pamphlets and volumes that have been written upon either side of the question, many are ready, without further inquiry, to suppose. They shrink from approaching the subject, under the apprehension (not altogether unnatural) that if such a mass of controversy must be gone through in order to bring their minds to a settlement, it is a hopeless case. They will not venture into the flood ;—it is frothy and turbulent, and troublesome to pass, and they have little certainty of finding solid footing beyond it. They heave a desponding sigh ; and, as the easiest at least, if not the best and safest way to dispose of the subject, they dismiss it with the trite and indolent remark, that “much, it seems, may be said on both sides.”—And it is true, that a vast deal *has been* said on both sides ; much more, in my apprehension, than enough ; much that is needlessly abstruse,—much that is very irrelevant,—much that has only involved the combatants in clouds of “learned dust,” which has served to blind the eyes of common and unlettered men, and almost at times, I fear, to blind their own.

Nothing can be easier, on such a subject, especially now, when we have so much criticism about it made

up by others and ready to our hand, than even for the veriest sciolist to make a mighty parade of learning:—nothing, I say, can be easier,—unless indeed it be, speaking with great positiveness and dogmatism—a figure of speech, which, on all subjects, has been too much resorted to, as a substitute for the lack of argument.—On no subject, it is granted,—and especially, on no subject that involves the obligations of conscience towards God, are we to allow ourselves to be determined by the weight of names and of human authority. “He that judgeth us is the Lord;” and “What saith the Lord?” ought to be our sole inquiry.—But although our opinions and practice are not to be decided by names; yet the *manner of our treating* any subject not only may be, but ought to be, not a little affected by them. And when I think of the names of high eminence, both for intellect and for piety, both for scholarship and for integrity, that are ranged on both sides of the present controversy, I cannot but consider pertness and dogmatism as indications, not of vigour of judgment, but of the imbecility of self-conceit.—If, through infirmity and corruption, I should, in any part of my argument, be found guilty of these evils, or of the appearance of them, I have thus pronounced a previous verdict against myself.—My aim, however, shall be to avoid them, and to state my views and reasonings, although with decision and firmness, (because to this I do believe them, *bona fide*, to be entitled,) yet with becoming simplicity, self-diffidence, and charity.

I am not about to bewilder the reader's mind by multifarious and protracted discussions,—by entering at large into all the topics that have been forced into connexion with this subject. It has long been my conviction, from observation of the writings of others, and from any little experience I have myself had in controversy, that in conducting an argument, the principal difficulty consists, not in finding *what to say*, but in knowing *what not to say*. The resolution to say all that *can* be said, has often led to the introduction of a great deal of matter, that, if not altogether irrelevant, is yet but remotely and by slight association connected with the point in debate, and, being redundant, is enfeebling to the conclusion aimed at. There may be self-denial at times in using the pruning-knife; but it is necessary to a vigorous fructification. A skilful gardener, who wishes his tree to bear well, will lop off freely its green wood, and never think of encumbering the wall by training in every shoot that sprouts in the luxuriance of vegetation. He may sometimes be at a loss, which to cut, and which to spare: he must exercise his discretion: but he will never hesitate to cut, when to spare promises no produce. Branches that yield no fruit themselves will mar the productiveness of others.—The present argument has assumed much of the appearance of intricate complexity and difficulty; for which both sides of it are in some degree answerable. My present object is to *simplify*,—to divest the subject, as much as possible, of its multiplied encumbrances, and to present it in an easy intelligible form, and with as



much brevity as its own nature, and the previous state of the controversy, will admit.

One ground of objection I must anticipate, and endeavour to remove, because it is frequently and confidently urged against all inferential conclusions, and all reasonings indeed together, on such a subject.—It is alleged, that the case is one which does not admit of a process of reasoning ;—one with which argument and inference have nothing to do. The ordinance of baptism, both in itself and in regard to the subjects of it, is a *positive institute* ; and a positive institute cannot be established by reasoning, but requires, to warrant its observance, *explicit terms of institution*.

In reply to this view of the matter, let it be considered, *in the first place* ;—If any thing can be made out from the word of God, as having Divine authority to support it, it is surely our duty to obey, *whatever may have been the mode of arriving at the conclusion*. Only make the *supposition* that we can show such authority for any practice ;—we certainly can never consider ourselves as at liberty to decline compliance, because the point has not been made out exactly in the way which we had previously determined to be the only legitimate and right way. This ought to be self-evident. The man who questions it (with whatever assurance he may express himself) betrays a secret want of confidence in his own views. He hypothetically admits that the practice has the support of Divine authority ; and yet declines compliance, because the intimation of God's will has not been conveyed in a manner according with his taste,

and his preconceptions of propriety. He prefers his own judgment to that of God, and presumptuously refuses the *substance* of authority on account of the *mode* in which its requirement has been expressed! The simple and only question is, What saith the scripture? not, In what way does the scripture say it? It is not ours, in this or in any thing else, to prescribe to God.

*Secondly* : Those who make the objection may be fairly called to consider, how far the principle of it, if consistently applied and followed out, will necessarily carry them.—I am not going to take up the ground which by some pædobaptists has been assumed, that, on the principle of the objection, we have no direct and explicit authority for the admission of *women* to the Lord's table;—because this has always appeared to me ground hardly consistent with manly fairness and candour, and calculated to enfeeble rather than to strengthen, to expose to a sneer rather than recommend to acceptance, the cause it is meant to support. I have in my view a case of much higher order, not inferior in importance to the question of infant-baptism itself;—I mean *the sanctification of the first day of the week as the christian sabbath*.—The observance of a sabbath,—the consecration of a part of our time to the worship of God and to spiritual purposes, is not a merely positive, but a moral duty. But the *proportion of time*, and the *particular day*, are positive. It seems, however, impossible to ascertain the *change of the day* from the seventh to the first, and the *consecration of the whole day* to the

Lord, without a process of induction, in many respects resembling that which is employed to vindicate the authority of pædobaptism. I am myself, it is true, of opinion, with some eminent critics and expositors, that in the ninth and tenth verses of the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have direct intimation and express authority for the change:—“There remaineth therefore a sabbatism\* (or the keeping of a sabbath) to the people of God: for he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his.” But the establishment of this depends upon a process of reasoning; of reasoning too, which has never yet occurred to the minds, or settled the convictions, of the great majority of Christians: and I am free to say, that although I am perfectly satisfied as to the meaning of the passage, as an intended and explicit declaration of the change of the sabbath, yet, had it not been accompanied with the commentary of *facts* in the recorded practice of apostolic times, we could not with confidence have founded our observance of the first day of the week on its exclusive authority. Even from the facts alluded to, we can only ascertain that on that day the disciples were accustomed to meet together for the worship of God, and the other sacred exercises

\* The word in the original in this verse, rendered by our translators *rest*, is σαββατισμος, being different from the word so translated throughout the whole of the preceding and subsequent context,—which is ἀναπαυσις. The reader may see the question as to the true import of the passage fully discussed in the Author’s “Discourses on the Sabbath”—Discourse IV.

of christian fellowship. But the *sanctification of the entire day*, as a day of "holy resting" from secular engagements, and of spiritual occupation and preparation for eternity, must be made out on other grounds. That it *can* be made out, and that most satisfactorily, I am thoroughly convinced; and especially by a combination of the facts with the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews just referred to, and other collateral expressions:—and I tremble for the interests of personal and social religion, in the individual mind, and in the christian society, where this conviction has begun to give way. Yet I am persuaded that no antipædobaptist can set about proving the obligation of the sabbath, without adopting principles of reasoning, if not identically the same, certainly very closely analogous to those which he is accustomed to controvert, as inadmissible, when applied in support of infant baptism.

*Thirdly*: I hope to be able immediately to show, that the requisition, on the part of our baptist brethren, of a positive precept for our practice, is unfair; and that we are rather entitled to require such explicit authority from them. If we can succeed in establishing the previous existence of the connexion of children with their parents, under the same "covenant of promise" with that which constitutes the ground of fellowship in the christian church;—then we have a title to demand *an explicit statute of repeal*. Explicit authority for *relinquishing* a practice, is quite as indispensable as explicit authority for *commencing* one. But more of this by and by.

I must still further premise, because on all controverted topics I feel the essential benefit of clearing my ground as to the principles of reasoning;—that the question *is not at all about adult baptism*, or about the necessity, to the baptism of adults, of a profession of the faith. On this, baptists and pædobaptists are of one mind.\* When, therefore, the former adduce, in opposition to infant baptism, those passages of the New Testament in which the subject is the baptism of adults, and from them insist on the universal necessity of understanding and faith, on the part of the recipients of the ordinance, to its legitimate administration, they do nothing at all to the purpose. They are guilty of a sophism. They bring infants into their conclusion, whilst they are not in the premises. The illusion is very much of the same kind with one which abounds in the writings of Unitarians, who have an inveterate habit of adducing passages to prove that Christ is *not God*, which only prove that he *is man*;—as if to prove his *humanity*,—the point in which we agree with them, and which we are quite as desirous to establish as themselves,—were to disprove his *divinity*,—the point in which we differ from them, and which is not in the least degree affected by the evidence of his real humanity. Anti-pædobaptists seem to be chargeable with the same description of fallacy, when they think to disprove infant baptism by proving adult baptism. Instead of establishing their own view of the subject on which

\* See beginning of Appendix.

we differ from them, they only establish (a thing quite unnecessary) a point in which we are perfectly agreed.—This observation narrows the limits of the field of argument; bringing the subject of dispute (which is always very desirable) into smaller compass.—No one, I trust, will take groundless offence at my having named a class of theologians whom I consider as subverters of the gospel of Christ, in connexion with those whom, notwithstanding our differences in sentiment and practice, I esteem, and love, and honour, as brethren in the faith. I have not compared the men—God forbid! I have not compared their views of divine truth. All that I have done has been, to point out the nature of one fallacy in argument, by comparing it with another of a similar description.

I have only further to observe, that, if the general views which I am about to present on this subject shall be fairly established from scripture, it is foolish to allow our minds to be easily startled and shaken by particular difficulties which may be suggested and urged, as to what would be right practice in certain supposed cases. Nothing can be easier than thus to perplex and puzzle the mind; and the mournfully prevalent abuse of the practice of infant baptism has given rise to cases of apparent difficulty, respecting which there may be hesitation and diversity of opinion, even amongst those who are of one mind as to leading principles. Were it a becoming mode of arguing, there are puzzles to be found for baptists, as well as for pædobaptists; although it may readily be admitted, without the smallest disparagement to

the cause of the latter, that the abuse just referred to has given their brethren who are opposed to them no inconsiderable advantage for the invention of casuistical questions.

That indiscriminate admission to the ordinances of Christ which is involved in the very idea of a national religion, has produced, or at least maintained, a very general ignorance, or gross misunderstanding, of their true nature:—and I would entreat any whose minds may have been startled on the subject of infant baptism by the grievous prostitution and abuse of it, and the various absurd notions entertained respecting it, to consider, that the other ordinance has been equally abused and prostituted; and that to suffer this, in either case, to shake their convictions and unsettle their practice, is the indication of a weak mind, in which feeling has the ascendancy over judgment, and which is incapable of discriminating between the precepts of God and the corruptions of them by men. The possibility, or even the existence, of particular cases of difficulty should never be allowed to take our minds off from the great general principles, when these have been satisfactorily established from the word of God. There are few of the doctrines of that word, how clearly soever revealed, to which objections have not occasionally been offered that may perplex our minds and “give us pause:”—but are we at once to renounce the faith, because, on some of its articles, a puzzling question may be put to us by a subtle adversary?

Our baptist brethren are abundantly ready to im-

pute our views and practice to the power of educational prejudice, and of prevailing custom, which, when once introduced, goes on without consideration or inquiry,—and to assume, with rather more than enough at times of a happy self-complacency, the certain rectitude of their own principles,—laying them down as settled points, and, in conversation, when speaking of the inveteracy of early prepossessions and habitual associations of ideas, familiarly adducing the sentiments of those who differ from them, amongst their common-places of illustration, and “astonished with a great astonishment” at the dimness which on this subject rests upon the vision of minds that are otherwise clear-sighted and intelligent. “My persuasion is,” says Mr (now Dr.) Cox, “that the “*popular feeling* is theirs, the *argument* ours. If an “evidence of the latter were requisite, it might in “part be deduced from the striking facts, that not “only have the best pædobaptist writers made us re- “peated and most important concessions, while many, “if not a majority, of their living teachers, constantly “admit one half at least of our arguments for the “*mode* of baptism: but their churches contain vast “numbers of theoretic baptists, who have discern- “ment enough to appreciate the force of evidence, “but not piety enough to pursue the path of duty.”\* Now this, it will not be questioned, is somewhat provoking. That the “popular feeling” is ours, we do not deny; that in a vast number of instances it is

\* Preface to his Reply to Ewing, Dwight, and Wardlaw.



*ignorantly* ours, we believe and regret; while the circumstances in which pædobaptism has been placed leave us at no loss to account for the fact. But that we have none of the argument, we cannot quite so readily concede; and we feel ourselves warranted to say, that the reasoning of Dr. Cox, in the work the preface to which contains the preceding extract, ought to have been of a much firmer, more coherent, and more conclusive texture, to have warranted this lofty style. As to the christian charity of the allegation in the close of the extract, I leave the reader to judge of it; simply reminding the respected writer, that the charity which Paul so beautifully eulogises has for one of its features, that it “thinketh no evil.”—That there may in our churches be *some* such hypocrites as he describes, is very possible;—and let them take the merited reproof, and act accordingly: but his “*vast numbers*” only show us, that there are other *figures* besides arithmetical ones, by which the process of multiplication can be effected.—We certainly are not quite ready to submit to the alternative which is here imposed upon us, by which the whole multitude of pædobaptist professors is divided into two classes, —those who have “discernment enough to appreciate the force of evidence, but not piety enough to pursue the path of duty,”—and those who have “piety enough to pursue the path of duty, but not discernment enough to appreciate the force of evidence.” We have the presumption to fancy, that a person may have both discernment and piety, and yet be a pædobaptist.—We desire, however, to be sensible of our

danger. It is perfectly right that we should be reminded of it. We *are* in danger of doing, without thought, what our forefathers have done before us. Dissenters from established articles of faith, and non-conformists to established usages, are generally better acquainted with their principles than those from whom they differ. They are bound to assign a reason for leaving the beaten track; whilst those who follow it are apt to think it enough that it *is* beaten, and to move indolently forward. But the danger is not confined to one side. In proportion to the respective numbers of baptist and pædobaptist *families*, perhaps there may be found as many who hold their views from education, in the one communion, as in the other. And moreover, while the deceitfulness of our hearts should put us on our guard, on the one hand, against adhering to any practice from the mere force of custom; it ought, on the other, to make us jealous of the charms of novelty, lest we should too readily renounce a principle or an observance, from fondness of change, or from the secret, though unavowed wish, to obtain a reputation for unusual candour.

Baptists and pædobaptists ought surely to yield to each other the claim of mutual sincerity. The refusal of this, while it springs from that self-sufficient confidence in our own judgment, which questions the possibility of others not seeing as we see, is, at the same time, highly inconsistent with the charity before referred to, which "thinketh no evil." And whilst the suspicion itself, harboured in the mind, is a violation of the Saviour's law of love; the expression of

such suspicion, in words or in conduct, tends to provoke a temper not less opposed to the spirit of that law, the passion of proud resentment and indignant disdain.—Surely fellow-christians know, how little need there is to stir one another's corruption. They sin deeply against Christ when they do so. And all expressions of contempt and bitterness have this effect, as well as the insinuated suspicion of insincerity. The whole of such treatment, besides, has the tendency to frustrate the very end which, in all our discussions, ought to be kept in view: for its effect is, to shut the eyes against the light of truth, and to summon up into action every principle that can resist conviction. “No doubt ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you; but I have understanding as well as you, I am not inferior to you,”\*—is the language which all such treatment, and especially the display of self-sufficiency and scorn, naturally prompts us, with a return of similar feelings, to employ. And there can be no state of mind more unfavourable than this to the discovery and reception of truth.

Thinking ourselves right, and thinking those who differ from us wrong, are expressions of equivalent import: and if we feel the spirit of genuine brotherly love, we cannot but be desirous that our fellow-christians should discern and relinquish what are, in our apprehension, their errors. But let us beware of putting any thing in the room of CHRIST. Let us beware of refusing to acknowledge, in the character of

\* Job xii. 2, 3.

“brethren beloved,” any who give evidence that “Christ has received them.” To a believer’s mind, there is something inexpressibly awful in the idea of his affections being confined within narrower limits than the love of Jesus ;—of any consideration being a bar against admission into *his* heart, that does not exclude from the heart of his Divine Master ;—of any being refused a part in his prayer for the household of faith, who are subjects of the Saviour’s intercession within the veil !

Pitiably dreary must be the mind of that man, who can look round on the wide world, and count his dozen or his score, whom alone he can salute as brethren, or expect to accompany to heaven !—Far from me and from my christian friends be that self-sufficient bigotry, which freezes the fountain of love, and keeps the heart cold under the melting beams of the sun of righteousness !—While we seek the Spirit of Christ for the discernment of truth and duty, and for enabling us, meekly but firmly, to adhere to what we deem his revealed will ; let us, on the point before us, and on other similar particulars, bear with diversity of judgment in those who “hold the Head,” and who give evidence, in their general character, that they do not resist or trifle with the authority of the same Lord—“both theirs and ours.”

“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ IN SINCERITY !”—whose love to him is not the faithless profession of lying lips, nor the lukewarm fickleness of a heart divided between him and the world,—but unfeigned, supreme, and constant ;—re-

garding its object in his true character, as the Divine and only Saviour;—and evincing its reality by a life of holy obedience and unreserved submission to his will,—by a desire to know and to follow, in every thing, the light of his word!

Under the influence of such feelings as these, I desire to pursue the present discussion. I shall divide my argument into three general heads, and shall allot to each a distinct section:—

I. The divinely instituted practice, previously to the New Testament dispensation, and the absence of all evidence authorising a departure from that practice under it:—

II. Evidence of the fact, that, instead of such departure being authorised, the children of converts to the faith of the gospel were actually baptized along with their parents, in the time of the apostles:—

III. The important truths and duties which the baptism of infants exhibits, and impresses upon our minds; and the perfect consistency of the administration of this ordinance to them with all that the Bible teaches us respecting them, as subjects of salvation, and of the kingdom of heaven.

SECTION I.

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THE DIVINELY INSTITUTED PRACTICE PREVIOUSLY TO THE NEW TESTAMENT DISPENSATION, AND THE ABSENCE OF ALL EVIDENCE AUTHORISING A DEPARTURE FROM THAT PRACTICE UNDER IT.

WE state our argument thus:—*Before the coming of Christ, the covenant of grace had been revealed; and under that covenant there existed a divinely instituted connexion between children and their parents; the sign and seal of the blessings of the covenant was, by divine appointment, administered to children; and there can be produced no satisfactory evidence of this connexion having been done away.*

It is not my purpose to enter very largely into the wide field which these propositions, directly and indirectly, embrace. I shall endeavour, as briefly as I can, to establish the two following points:—1. That the covenant of promise made by God with Abraham was, in substance, the new covenant,—the covenant of grace,—the same covenant which, under a fuller, and clearer, and simpler discovery of it, forms

now the basis of the christian church :—and, 2. That the ordinance of circumcision was connected with the Abrahamic covenant, in this view of it.

1. Of the first of these two propositions, that the covenant made with Abraham was the gospel covenant, the proof is, or ought to be, very short. It is the plain and positive declaration of an inspired apostle. The reader will find it in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, the 17th and 18th verses :—“And this I say, that the covenant which  
 “was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law,  
 “which was four hundred and thirty years after,  
 “cannot disannul, that it should make the promise  
 “of God of no effect. For if the inheritance be of  
 “the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave  
 “it to Abraham by promise.”—I have never, I confess, been able to fancy to myself any thing plainer than this; and although much has been said and written calculated to mystify the subject, and involve it in perplexity, here it stands as plain as ever. The covenant spoken of in these words *was not the law, or Sinaitic covenant*; for it existed four hundred and thirty years before it, and was not at all disannulled or set aside by it :—it was a covenant of *promise*, as opposed, in the apostle’s reasoning, to any thing resting on the conditions of *law* :—it was “confirmed before of God *in Christ*,”—an expression which, translate it as you will, can be naturally applied to no other covenant but one :—and believers in Christ, under the New Testament dispensation, are declared, in the concluding verse of the same chapter, to be

“heirs according to the promise” of that covenant. Take the three expressions, in the 16th, the 18th, and the 29th verses in connexion, (for there is nothing in the intermediate statement and reasoning to disjoin them, but only links that bring them together), and this will be strikingly apparent:—“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made:” —“If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise:” —“and if ye be Christ’s, then are ye *Abraham’s seed*, and *heirs according to the promise.*”—Heirs of what? Of the inheritance promised, in the covenant, to Abraham and his seed. The covenant, therefore, contained the promise of the heavenly or eternal inheritance. But, except as couched under the promise of the earthly, the temporal, the typical inheritance, it contained no such thing. Both the earthly and the heavenly, then, were the subjects of *promise*; and of both alike it is affirmed, that they were obtained and held, *not by law*, but *by faith in the promise*. Had it been otherwise, the type would have failed in one of the most important and interesting points of resemblance.—The same lesson is taught with no less plainness and decisiveness, in Rom. iv. 13, 14. “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. For if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.”—It is needless to enlarge on the particular phrase here used, “the promise that he should be *the heir of the world.*”



It holds the same place in the reasoning in this passage, that the simpler designation "*the inheritance*" does, in the epistle to the Galatians. It will be admitted to include the promise of the *earthly* Canaan;—for the literal terms of the covenant specified it, and it alone; and it were strange if the inheritance specifically mentioned in the terms of the covenant, should not be meant at all when the promise of the covenant is spoken of: and there can be as little doubt that in the apostle's reasoning the *heavenly* inheritance is assumed to be also included, since it is respecting it that his inferences and conclusions are drawn.—The covenant, then, which was "confirmed of God in Christ,"—which preceded the law by four hundred and thirty years, and was entirely independent of it,—which was founded in free promise, in opposition to legal conditions,—and which contained amongst its promises that of the heavenly inheritance, of which New Testament believers are heirs;—this covenant must be in substance the same with the gospel, or the covenant of grace.

2. Our second proposition, and one of primary importance in the present discussion, is, that the rite of circumcision was connected with this covenant, as a covenant of spiritual blessings. I have dwelt the more briefly on the first, because the discussion of the second will serve further to illustrate and confirm it.

This second proposition appears to me as evident, as the terms of a plain historical narrative can make it. The following is the account of the matter in

the book of Genesis :—“And when Abram was  
“ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to  
“Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty  
“God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And  
“I will make my covenant between me and thee,  
“and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram  
“fell on his face : and God talked with him, saying,  
“As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and  
“thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither  
“shall thy name any more be called Abram ; but  
“thy name shall be 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 to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou  
“art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an ever-  
“lasting possession ; and I will be their God. And  
“God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my  
“covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee,  
“in their generations. This is my covenant, 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 cove-  
“nant betwixt me and you.” Gen. xvii. 1—11.

Such are the terms of the covenant to which the ordinance of circumcision was annexed, and which

we affirm to be in substance the covenant of grace.— There are two theories of explanation, by which our baptist brethren have attempted to evade the conclusion to which this would lead. To each of these I must beg the reader's attention.

1. The first of the two, and the more ordinary one, is that which alleges, that the covenant made with Abraham consisted properly of *two distinct covenants*, the one a covenant of temporal promises, the other of spiritual; the former having reference to the natural, and the latter to the spiritual seed of Abraham; and that it was with the former, and not with the latter, that circumcision was connected.

On this representation of the case let it be observed,

In the *first* place, that *no such distinction appears on the face of the narrative*. Circumcision is enjoined, as the token of "*the covenant*," considered as comprehending *all the blessings* enumerated as pertaining to it. It is not said, that circumcision was to be the token of *that part of the covenant* that engaged for temporal blessings to Abraham's fleshly seed; but of *the covenant throughout*, as exhibited in the above passage. There is nothing whatever in the simple statement of the history, not even the most remote insinuation, that warrants the introduction of the distinction in question.

*Secondly* : No such distinction is any where discernible *in the apostle's reasoning*. It is neither directly made, nor even incidentally alluded to. The blessings of the covenant in general, all its blessings,

temporal and spiritual, and especially the two inheritances, the earthly and the heavenly, the typical and the typified, are there represented as alike given *by promise*, as obtained and held by *the same seed*, on *the same ground*:—Gal. iii. 15, 16—“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: though it be but a man’s covenant, yet, if it be confirmed, no man annulleth, or addeth thereto. 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.”—What we have at present to notice is, not the promises themselves, or the seed to whom they were made, but the simple fact, stated in terms the most plain and unequivocal, that “*the promises*” of the covenant, without any hinted discrimination, were made to the *same seed* on the *same ground*.

*Thirdly*: The rite of circumcision itself is admitted by our baptist brethren in general, to be *significant of spiritual blessings*:—who, indeed, that attentively reads either Old or New Testament, can question it? It is significant, according to a writer on that side of the controversy, of “cleansing from sin”—and “not only of the purity of moral holiness, but also of the cleansing from the guilt of sin in justification.” And, agreeably to this spiritual import of the rite, we so frequently read of the “circumcision of the heart,” with other equivalent phrases; which the apostle finely explains, when he says, “He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who 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. Now it is not easy to perceive, with what propriety, or consistency, a sign, admitted to be significant of the highest spiritual blessings, should be made the seal, or the token, of a covenant of temporal promises and temporal blessings alone.—Consistency seems to require, either that the spiritual signification of circumcision should be given up, or that the covenant, of which it was the appointed token, should be allowed to have contained spiritual as well as temporal promises.

*Fourthly* : Circumcision is most *expressly pronounced by the apostle*, to have been a sign and a seal of *spiritual blessings*, and especially of that first blessing of the gospel covenant, *justification by faith* :—“Abraham,” says he, “received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which “he had being yet uncircumcised; that he might be “the father of all them that believe, though they be “not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also,” Rom. iv. 11 :—the meaning of which words evidently is, not that the sign of circumcision was to Abraham the seal of his own personal justification,—for this would have been incompatible with subsequent trial, and with his “giving diligence,” like other believers, “to make his calling and election sure,”—inasmuch as it is impossible to arrive at a greater degree of certainty, than that which is given by the sealed testimony of God ;—but rather, that

it was the seal of that covenant, according to whose provisions, all sinners, believing as he believed, were, like him, to be justified by faith.—To *this* covenant, according to the apostle, circumcision was annexed.

*Fifthly* : By those who hold this distinction, the *temporal half* of the covenant is supposed to have been *the same with the law or Sinai covenant*, which was entered into four hundred and thirty years after with the people of Israel, the natural descendants of Abraham.—Now I must beg the reader to observe, how greatly this view mars the force, and invalidates the conclusiveness, of the apostle's argument, with regard to the ground of Abraham's justification.—In those parts of his Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians where this subject is treated of, his leading design is to prove, for the establishment of Jewish and Gentile believers, for the conviction of his unbelieving countrymen, and for the refutation of false teachers, the doctrine of justification by grace, as having been, from the beginning, the doctrine of the word of God. He selects, as an instance to his purpose, the case of Abraham. He shows that this patriarch, in whom the Jews were wont to glory, was himself justified, not by the law, but on the footing of a covenant which was made four hundred and thirty years before it. Now, if this covenant be considered as entirely distinct from the law, the argument is perspicuous and conclusive. But it requires no great measure of penetration to perceive, how much its force and decisiveness are impaired by the view which I am opposing; according to which, the law, instead

of being four hundred and thirty years after this covenant, and altogether distinct from it, was in fact coeval with it, and formed one of its branches. I appeal to every candid and discerning mind, if this does not introduce confusion and feebleness into the apostle's reasoning. Surely, without some further explanations and distinctions, which he has not thought it necessary to introduce, it cannot be deemed a very appropriate or satisfactory inference,—that Abraham could not be justified *by the law*, because he was justified on the footing of a covenant *of which the law was a part!*

II. The second of the two theories of explanation, by which our baptist brethren parry the conclusion, deducible from the annexation of the rite of circumcision to a covenant of spiritual promises and blessings, is this:—they distinguish between the different appearances of God to Abraham, recorded, respectively, in the twelfth, the fifteenth, and the seventeenth chapters of the book of Genesis, and represent them as having been, not repetitions of the same covenant, in different forms, under different circumstances, and with different degrees of enlargement and particularity of detail, but so many *distinct covenants*.—That which was made first, and which is contained in the twelfth chapter, is conceived by them to be the one referred to in the apostle's reasoning, as having been four hundred and thirty years before the law, because, upon calculation, this time corresponds with the date of it, and, consequently, of it only. This they admit to be the gospel covenant, containing the

specific promise, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." That, on the contrary, of which we have so particular an account in the seventeenth chapter, they conceive to be a covenant of temporal blessings only, and to bear relation solely to the fleshly seed or natural offspring of Abraham. To *this* covenant, it is alleged, circumcision was annexed, and not to the former; and it is it that is denominated "the covenant of circumcision."

This is the view adopted by the late Mr Archibald Maclean, in his Review of my Lectures on the Abrahamic Covenant. In his previous publications, he had avowed and argued upon the other. Whether, when he adopted this new theory, he had at all felt his former ground insecure, I will not presume to say. But although Dr. Cox, in his Treatise before referred to, pronounces the Review a "masterly performance," and, on the subject now before us, adopts the ground on which it proceeds, it does, I confess, appear to me to be ground far less tenable than even the former. If the former was sand, this is quicksand.

The following is the brief record of the transaction in the *twelfth* chapter: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and 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 him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the



“earth be blessed.” Gen. xii. 1—3. I have formerly quoted the terms of the covenant of circumcision in the *seventeenth* chapter. See page 24. It ought to require no more than the simple reading of the two passages together, to satisfy any unprejudiced mind, that the latter, though not containing the precise words which are alleged to be the gospel promise, is yet but an amplification of the former:—especially when it is considered, that the covenant recorded in the *fifteenth* chapter, on the statement of which the apostle founds his principal argument for the justification of Abraham *by faith* without the deeds of the law, *does not contain the promise, on which so much stress is laid*, that “in him and in his seed should all the families “of the earth be blessed.” It contains no more than the assurance of *the increase of his seed*:—“He “brought him forth abroad, and said, 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.” Gen. xv. 5, 6. The gospel, then, must have been involved in the promise thus given and believed:—for it will not surely be disputed, that it was by the faith of *the gospel* that Abraham was justified.

But what most of all surprises me, in regard to this hypothesis, is, that that particular covenant which is supposed to be a covenant of temporal blessings only, to the natural offspring of Abraham, should be the very covenant of which the terms are most distinctly and most frequently quoted, in the New Testament,

with a spiritual interpretation. That Mr Maclean should have been guilty of such an oversight, affords, I fear, only one exemplification amongst many, of a defect to which even the acutest and most vigorous minds are liable, the unconsciously blinding influence of attachment to system.—But let me bring a proof or two of my position :—

1. Gen. xvii. 4, 5. “As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and *thou shalt be a father of many nations*. Neither shall thy name be called any more Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for “*a father of many nations have I made thee.*”—It was not, a priori, probable, that the memorable circumstance, of the divinely intimated change of the patriarch’s name, should have been associated with any covenant inferior to that which contained the best and highest blessings; which God here, as in many other places, appropriately designates “my covenant.”\*—

\* The change of *Sarah’s* name on the same occasion, is far from affording any valid objection to this remark. It is true that the seal of the covenant was exclusively appropriate to one sex. But to talk of this is mere trifling; as if any one ever alleged that Abraham’s change of name had been introduced *on account of his circumcision!* No: it was on account of *the Covenant* of which circumcision was the seal: and of that covenant Sarah was, by faith, a subject, as well as he, and equally interested in its provisions, both as they regarded herself and her promised offspring. That the promise of her being “*a mother of nations*” was “of purely temporal reference,” is by no means so manifest as has been hastily and confidently assumed. Connected as it is, on the same occasion, with Abraham’s being a “*father of many nations,*” there is

Accordingly, the very promise in the above verses is most expressly applied, by the apostle, to the spiritual seed of Abraham as the father of the faithful,—the spiritual father of believers in all nations:—Rom. iv. 16, 17. “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be “by grace; to the end the promise might be sure “to all the seed, not to that only which is of the “law, but to that also 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,)*” &c. —Nothing can be more explicit than this.

I might ask, indeed,—if this covenant of circumcision was a covenant of temporal promises merely, to whom were these promises made? It will at once

nothing to forbid our understanding it in a similar spiritual sense. The faith of Sarah, in “judging him faithful who had promised,” is spoken of with approbation by the apostle Paul, as well as that of Abraham. It is at the time of the birth of Isaac that the names of both are changed; and we know, from apostolic explanation, that the promise “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” had a spiritual significance: for thus it is interpreted—“They are not all Israel who are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but ‘In Isaac shall thy seed be called:’ that is, they who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, ‘At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.’”—It seems to me, that the apostle Peter intimates, not merely a resemblance in character, but a *spiritual relation*, to Sarah, as well as to Abraham, when he says—“Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: *whose daughters ye are*, so long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.” 1 Pet. iii. 6.

be answered, To the natural offspring of Abraham *in the line of Isaac*.—I ask, then, again, What connexion has the promise “I will make thee a father of many nations” with this part of Abraham’s posterity?—We can readily perceive its relation to the new or Gospel covenant. It is a declaration regarding the extent of the seed to whom its promises were to be fulfilled. But what connexion has it with the descendents of Abraham by Isaac? It is not a *statement* of the Seed to whom the subsequent promises were to be verified;—for with the promises of such a temporal covenant the “many nations” naturally descended from Abraham had nothing to do—they were expressly excluded from any share in them:—neither is it itself a *promise* to the seed really intended;—for that Abraham was to be the father of various peoples and tribes, by Hagar and by Keturah, was surely no peculiar privilege or promised blessing to his seed by Isaac.—Let it not be said, the declaration has both a literal, and a typical or spiritual signification:—for this would be to admit the covenant to be *inclusive* of a spiritual seed and spiritual promises, contrary to the principle of the hypothesis at present under consideration;—according to which, the covenant of circumcision is regarded as distinct from the spiritual covenants admitted to have been previously made.

2. “And I will establish my covenant between me  
“and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their genera-  
“tions, *to be a God to thee and to thy seed after  
thee.*” Chap. xvii. 7.

As to *this* promise, which certainly sounds very like one of the “exceeding great and precious promises” of the new covenant, it is of essential consequence first of all to notice, that in whatever sense God promises here to be a God to Abraham himself, he promises, in the same sense, to be a God to his seed. The promise is one. No hint is ever given of his being the God of Abraham in one sense, and the God of his seed in another.—Now who are the seed to whom Jehovah thus engages to be a God? Surely the seed specified in the preceding terms of the covenant. And who are they? Have we not the answer given us by inspired authority, in the apostle’s interpretation of the words—“Thou shalt be *a father of many nations?*” If this means, as Paul teaches us it does, his being the spiritual father of believers in all nations, then must not *these* be the seed of Abraham to whom he promises to be a God?—If objections are offered to this, they ought, I think, to be directed against the apostle.

The New Testament interpretation of the promise itself “I will be a God to thee”—“I will be thy God”—is in perfect accordance with this view of the seed to whom the promise is made.—Jehovah has been the God of his people, in every age, upon the same ground; and that ground is intimated by our Lord Jesus Christ to be their connexion with him, when he says to Mary Magdalene, after his resurrection, “Go, tell my disciples, I ascend to *my* Father “and *your* Father, to *my* God and *your* God.” John xx. 17.—The full import of the interesting designa-

tion may appear from the following passages of scripture :—

In Matt. xxii. 31, 32. Jesus concludes his reply to the Sadducees, respecting the resurrection and a future state, with these words, in evidence of his doctrine :—“ But as touching the resurrection of the “ dead, have ye not read that which was spoken to “ you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, “ and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God “ is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”— From this passage it is evident, without entering into any discussion of the nature and extent of the entire argument, that as “ *their God*,” declaring himself to sustain the relation so long after their decease, he had received their spirits to blessedness with himself, and also—the resurrection of the dead being the subject in question—that he was to raise their bodies from the grave,—to “ show them the path of life,”—to put them in possession, in body and soul together, of those “ pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore ;” and so to fulfil to them the promise of “ everlasting inheritance.”

Compare with this passage, Heb. xi. 13—16. “ These all died in faith, not having received the “ promises, but having seen them afar off, and were “ persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on “ the earth. For they that say such things declare “ plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if “ they had been mindful of that country from whence “ they came out, they might have had opportunity

“to have returned: but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.” The faith, and hope, and desire of the patriarchs, are here represented as having for their object the heavenly country. This they expected to receive from God as *their God*, according to the promise of his covenant; and we are assured, that *as their God* he would not disappoint their most enlarged and elevated hopes, founded as they were on his own word. “God is not ashamed to be called *their God*, for he hath prepared for them a city.” Can any inference be more simple or direct from such a passage, than that God *would have been* ashamed to be called their God, had he not provided for them *such a city* as is here referred to, the “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker he himself is,” ver. 10.—that he would have been ashamed to represent himself in so high, so close, so endearing a relation to them, had the title been accompanied with the bestowment of a mere earthly inheritance—a temporal blessing only; had he prepared for them any thing that would have fallen short of their hopes, and failed to satisfy the utmost extent of their desires? The title and the gift would have been incongruous; as when a man raises our expectations by high professions of friendship, and then puts us off with a comparative trifle. God’s gifts are more worthy of himself, and of the relations which he has graciously assumed, and revealed himself as sustaining, towards his people.

This promise, indeed, "I will be thy God," is often expressed as a principal one amongst the engagements of the new covenant, and has ever been acknowledged and felt by his people, as "the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." In evidence of this, the reader may consult the following passages of the Old and New Testament scriptures; and if he is well acquainted with his Bible, he will be able to add to them many more. Jer. xxxi. 33. xxxii. 38—40. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24; 30, 31. xxxvi. 25—28. xxxvii. 27. Heb. viii. 10. 2 Cor. vi. 16—18.

It is no valid objection to this, that God is so frequently spoken of as the *God of the nation of Israel*; and that, in assuming this relation to them, as a nation, he represents himself as "*remembering his covenant*" with their fathers. Exod. vi. 4—8. Lev. xxvi. 12, &c.—It should be recollected, that the nation of Israel, springing from Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob, was the *Church of God*. Now God has been the God of his church, collectively considered, and regarded as containing the true Israel, in the same sense, in all ages. I will not multiply passages in proof of this. Let the following, from the prophecies of Isaiah, serve as a specimen. Any reader, who is familiar with his Bible, will be able to add parallels to an almost indefinite extent. Isa. xliii. 1—7. "But now, saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, "and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not: for I "have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy "name; thou art mine. When thou passest through "the waters, I will be with thee; and through the



“rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord **THY GOD**, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not; for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth: even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” In these verses is a reference to what God had done, in manifestation of his love to his people, and of the value he set upon them; and there are, at the same time, promises of what he was to do for them in future times:—yet he speaks of himself as bearing the same relation to them all along—from the beginning to the end—when he “gave Egypt for their ransom,” and when, in the latter days, he “brings his sons from far, and his daughters from the ends of the earth:”—“I am Jehovah **THY GOD**, the Holy One of Israel, **THY SAVIOUR**.”

It is worthy of particular notice, that the appearance of Jehovah to Abraham recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, is *the only occasion on which this promise is made to the patriarch*. It is not to be found, either in the *twelfth*, or in the *fifteenth*,

or subsequently in the *twenty-second*. If, therefore, the covenant in the seventeenth chapter was a covenant of temporal promises only, then this promise was never made to Abraham at all in its spiritual meaning; in that meaning which alone gave it real worth, in which alone it is applicable to the followers of Abraham's faith, and in which the New Testament scriptures explain and make so much of it! Is this credible,—is this possible?

3. "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed "after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all "the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." —The question is not, whether this is a promise of the earthly Canaan. No one, I presume, ever questioned that. But is it a promise of the earthly Canaan *only*? That the promise of the temporal inheritance does, in one or other or all of its occurrences, include under it the promise of the eternal, must be very evident from this one consideration, that if it be not so, the eternal inheritance was never, so far as appears, promised *at all*. Yet surely it was upon the ground of promises actually recorded, that Abraham and the other believing patriarchs looked for the heavenly country. That they *did* look for it, we know; and it is equally sure, from the apostle's language in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, formerly quoted—that they founded their expectations on Divine promise:—"By faith Abraham sojourned "in *the land of promise*, as in a strange country, "dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the "heirs with him of the *same promise*: for,"—on the

ground of that promise surely—"he looked for a city " *which hath foundations*, whose builder and maker is " God." Heb. xi. 9, 10. The hope of the heavenly Canaan, then, was founded on the promise of the earthly, understood as typical, and comprehensive of higher blessings than the literal terms imported ; and, at the same time, on the promise, " I will be thy God," which also, as we have seen, included spiritual and eternal blessings.—Indeed the whole of the gospel revelation then was, and for ages afterwards continued, under the veil of figurative language, and of typical rites, objects, and events. To have given, in clear and explicit terms, the full promise of the eternal inheritance, would not have been consistent with the divine scheme of gradual development, nor with the fact of " life and immortality being brought to light " by Jesus Christ." But that the promise *was given*, is manifest from the apostolic representation, and from his saying elsewhere, respecting those patriarchs who, though they "*sojourned*" in the land of Canaan, received "*no inheritance in it*, no not so much as to " set their foot on," that on their following each other, by death, to heaven, " through faith and patience they *inherited the promises.*"—I might show the spiritual meaning of the phraseology in Gen. xvii. in some other particulars ; but I am desirous to confine myself to such as are expressly interpreted in the New Testament scriptures.

From these considerations, it appears to me " passing strange," that *this* should be the covenant (supposing it a distinct one from the rest) selected for

degradation to a mere covenant of temporal promises to the natural offspring! The promises which it contains are evidently the same in substance with those given at previous appearances, only more amply unfolded:—and that there is not the least necessity for considering every successive appearance as a distinct covenant, Mr Maclean himself may be cited as authority: for, after intimating the propriety of following what he alleges to be the scriptural representation of the case, and taking up the communications recorded in the 12th, 15th, and 17th chapters of Genesis, as so many distinct covenants, he yet admits that the covenant confirmed by oath in the *twenty-second* chapter, at a period still later, was in substance the same as that in the *twelfth*, the earliest of all. But if we are warranted in considering the earliest and the latest as the same, we cannot surely be very far wrong in so considering the others that were intermediate.

It was with this covenant, then, which the apostle so explicitly declares to have been the covenant of grace, “confirmed before of God in Christ,”—that the rite of circumcision was connected.—There are some, however, of our baptist brethren, who readily admit the spiritual nature of the Abrahamic covenant, but declare themselves incapable of perceiving the legitimacy and conclusiveness of the inference we deduce from it, and who therefore regard all our reasonings in support of it, so far as the subject of baptism is concerned, as thrown away.—This has always appeared to me very surprising. If the connexion between parents and children, recognised in that ordi-

nance, had belonged only to the *old* or *Sinai covenant*, and if the ordinance of circumcision, instead of being “*of the fathers*,” had been exclusively “*of Moses*,” pertaining solely to that temporary dispensation of which he was the mediator,—we should then have seen a good reason why both the connexion itself and the ordinance that marked it should have ceased together, when the dispensation came to a close with which they were associated.—But if (as our Lord himself declares, John vii. 22,) circumcision was “not of Moses, but of the fathers;”—if it originally pertained to a covenant that never “decayeth or waxeth old;” and if, under that covenant, children were connected with their parents in the application of the sign and seal:—then we must insist upon it, that the burden of proof rests upon our opponents. They demand of us express precept for our practice. We are better entitled to demand of them express precept for *theirs*. If the covenant made with Abraham be indeed God’s everlasting covenant of grace,—and if the sign and seal of this covenant was administered by God’s command to the children of those who professed the faith of Abraham, and to them in their turn became, as it had been to him, a “seal of the righteousness of faith”—(and who can deny that it was such to Isaac and Jacob, the “heirs with him of the same promise?” and if to them, why not to other believers?)—if these things, I say, be so,—then where, we ask, is any change in the constitution of the covenant in this respect pointed out? *When* were children excluded, and *by what law*? Let an express repealing

statute be shown us, and we will immediately relinquish our practice. The alteration of an old constitution, or the setting aside of an old law, as was formerly hinted, requires an express precept, as much as the appointment of a constitution or law entirely new. To speak of the abolition, tacit or express, of the old economy, the Mosaic dispensation, is nothing to the purpose: because the apostle assures us, that the covenant of circumcision, so far from being a part of the law, and partaking of its temporary and evanescent nature, was a covenant which existed long before it, which could not be disannulled either by its introduction or its cessation, but which continues to this day.—By confounding this covenant with the law, and including any part of its gracious provisions in “that which decayed, and waxed old, and vanished away,” you set the law “against the promises of God,” and throw into confusion and inconclusiveness the simple and beautiful reasoning of the apostle, in both his epistles, to the Romans and to the Galatians.—That the particular *rite* is changed we have abundant evidence; and satisfactory reasons for the change might be assigned, although it does not come within our province with certainty to assign them, nor can they reasonably be demanded of us.\* But of any altera-

\* Besides its import as denoting the “putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,” circumcision was, in all probability, intended as a sign that the seed, in whom all nations were to be blessed, *should come from the loins of Abraham*. Of this it was a significant emblem and remembrancer. The promise of the Messiah was restricted to the line of descent by Isaac. In

tion as to the admission of children with their parents to the sign and seal and blessing of the covenant, we are destitute of evidence entirely. Nothing whatever can be produced in the form of a direct repeal; and as to the inferential reasoning which has been employed to set aside the previously existing connexion, we shall have occasion to examine it in next section of this treatise.

I am aware, indeed, how frequently and how confidently it has been alleged, that the words of institution, as they have been improperly called—improperly as to the rite itself at least, which was *not* at that time first instituted, but had been practised before—involved a repeal, by declaring that none are to be *baptized* but such as are capable of being *taught*. The well-known words are: “Go ye, therefore, and “teach (or disciple μαθητευσατε) all nations, baptizing “them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, “and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe

this line, therefore, the rite became a memorial of the promise that Messiah should be “made flesh” amongst them. And I doubt not that, in other lines also of descent from Abraham, the same rite, originally administered by the command of God, to all his family, had its influence, in a general way, in preserving the idea and expectation of the promised seed. If this be well founded, we at once perceive a good reason why circumcision should be abolished *when this seed came*; and why another rite should be substituted in its place, which as expressly, or more so, continued to signify the “putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,” while it ceased to be significant *of that part of the meaning of the former symbol, which had now received its fulfilment*.

“all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”  
Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

The reply to this is simple and satisfactory; although I am sufficiently aware, how strongly a certain habit of mind, in viewing a particular passage, tends to prevent the clear perception of the validity of any reasoning, directed against the sense thus habitually and systematically affixed to it.—Suppose the ordinance of *circumcision* had been to continue, and the command had run in these terms:—“Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, *circumcising* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things,” &c. Had such language been used, we should have known that children were to be the subjects of the prescribed rite, as well as their parents: the previously existing practice would have ascertained this. Now, should we, even with this knowledge, have been sensible of the smallest impropriety or inconsistency in the use of such language? Would it have appeared to us, in even the slightest degree, contradictory or incongruous? Would it have been understood by the apostles, as necessarily excluding children? Would they certainly have inferred from it, that although the *same rite* was to continue, there was to be a change in the *subjects* of it?—that none now were to be circumcised but those who were capable of immediate instruction in the will of Christ, and practical compliance with it? No: there is nothing in the terms of the commission that could at all have led them to such a conclusion. They would, without hesitation, have gone on to cir-



cumcise children with their parents as formerly, teaching the parents the mind and will of Christ, and charging them to instruct their rising offspring. And if a commission to *circumcise*, given in these terms, would not have been understood as necessarily excluding children, it can never be shown that a commission in the same terms to *baptize* must have been so understood. The practical evidence that the apostles actually *did not* so understand it, will be afterwards considered.—In the mean time, permit me to observe, we have, in a parallel passage of scripture, most satisfactory evidence of the justness of these remarks. I refer to Gal. v. 2—5. “Behold, I Paul say unto you, “that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you “nothing. For I testify again to every man that is “circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of “you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from “grace.”—In the 27th verse of the third chapter of the same Epistle, the apostle says:—“For as many “of you as have been baptized into Christ (or, ye, “whosoever have been baptized into Christ) have “put on Christ.” From this expression it has been very confidently argued, that *adults only were baptized*, because of “putting on Christ” *adults only were capable*.—Now, let this principle of interpretation, or of inference, be applied to the passage quoted from the fifth chapter. It is an address to *adults*:—it expresses things of which *adults only were capable*. Are we, then, to infer from this, that *adults only were circumcised*? Such, certainly, ought

to be our inference, on the same principle on which we infer, from the other, that adults alone were *baptized*. There is precisely the same ground in the former case, as there is in the latter. Yet we know, that in the latter the inference would be contrary to fact; for nothing can be more certain than that, when Gentile converts were circumcised, it was, in conformity with Jewish practice, *along with their children*. A principle of criticism, therefore, which, applied in one case, leads to a conclusion at variance with known facts, cannot with any fairness, nay, cannot, without the risk, and more than the risk, of mistake and error, be applied in another.—The truth is, that the strict application of such a principle to language of this general kind, would lead us into innumerable absurdities.

I may here, by the way, take notice of a difficulty which has been suggested, from the passage which I have just quoted, in regard to the import of circumcision, and its identity under the one dispensation with baptism under the other. How, it has been asked, should circumcision exclude from the grace and blessings of the gospel covenant, if it was connected with that covenant, and signified the same thing with baptism?\*

But the moment we recollect to what description of doctrine the apostle is here opposing himself, the solution of the difficulty is at once apparent. It is the doctrine of those who taught the Gentile brethren, that, "*except they were*

\* See Maclean, Rev. p. 21.

*circumcised after the manner of Moses they could not be saved;*”—that “it was necessary,” namely, *to their salvation*, “to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” Acts xv. 1, 5, 24.—Now when, in such a connexion, the apostle says, “*If ye be circumcised*, Christ shall profit you nothing,” it is equivalent to his saying, “*if ye embrace this doctrine*, Christ shall profit you nothing.” This is clear from the circumstance, that “*being circumcised*” in the one verse corresponds to “*being justified by the law*” in the other: in the one he says, “*If ye be circumcised*, Christ shall profit you nothing;”—in the other, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you *are justified by the law*.”—He reminds them, therefore, that if they embraced this doctrine, they renounced the grace of the gospel; and that if they persisted in seeking justification by circumcision and the law, they should bear in mind what the law required of them in order to their attaining their end;—that nothing would suffice short of their “doing the *whole law*,” yielding to it a sinless obedience.—That such is the import of the phrase “*if ye be circumcised*,” is further evident from the case of Abraham and the original circumcision. Abraham was circumcised: but surely “Christ” did not therefore “profit him nothing;”—he did not “fall from grace.” So far from it, that his circumcision was the seal to him of the righteousness, not of works, but of faith—not of law, but of grace.—The Gentile Christians “being circumcised,” therefore, was not their mere submis-

sion to the rite, but their dependence upon it, in connexion with the law of Moses, for justification: and no person, acquainted with the spirit of the apostle's writings on this subject, will question the position, that in similar circumstances, he would have said the very same thing of *baptism*, that he says of circumcision. He who now trusts for acceptance to his baptism, as effectually falls from Christ and from grace, as he who trusted of old to his circumcision.

Before closing this section, I may offer a few further strictures, on the reasonings of some of the opponents of pædobaptism, on one of the leading topics discussed in it,—namely, the true nature of the covenant of circumcision, and the import of the rite as connected with it; strictures, which I have reserved for this place, in order to avoid giving a disproportionate extension to one of the links in the chain of my own argument, by which the reader might have been in danger of losing sight of the connexion. They will, however, serve to give further confirmation to the general principles which it has been my endeavour to establish.

Of the covenant in Gen. xvii. Mr Maclean thus writes, contrasting it with the promise in the 12th Chapter: "The first promise made to Abraham, Gen. "xii. 3, is termed 'THE COVENANT which was confirmed before of God in Christ,' Gal. iii. 17, and "contained a promise of blessing *all nations*, i.e. all "Abraham's spiritual or believing seed of Jews and "Gentiles. But the covenant of circumcision did not

“include the Gentiles, but was a peculiar covenant  
 “with the natural posterity of Abraham, who were  
 “to receive the token of it in their flesh in infancy,  
 “as a people separated unto God from all others, and  
 “of whom Messiah was to spring. Christian bap-  
 “tism, therefore, is not founded on the covenant of  
 “circumcision, which was peculiar to the natural  
 “seed of Abraham ; but on that covenant which ex-  
 “tends the blessing of Abraham to his spiritual seed  
 “of all nations. Accordingly, when the ancient cove-  
 “nant of promise came to be actually ratified in the  
 “blood of Christ, the peculiar covenant of circum-  
 “cision with the fleshly seed of Abraham was set  
 “aside, and baptism was appointed to be adminis-  
 “tered to all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who appear-  
 “ed to be his spiritual seed by faith in Christ, but  
 “to none else.” *Review*, p. 104.—I must here be  
 permitted again to marvel, at the dimness of vision,  
 and the confusion of ideas, which the admission of  
 a false principle, and attachment to an erroneous sys-  
 tem, can produce in even the acutest and most dis-  
 cerning minds. The promise of blessing to “*all*  
*nations*” is, in the above extract, admitted to mean  
 —of blessing to “*all Abraham’s spiritual or believ-  
 ing seed of Jews and Gentiles ;*” and yet that cove-  
 nant is affirmed “*not to have included the Gentiles,*”  
 but to have been “*a peculiar covenant with the*  
*natural posterity of Abraham,*” the very terms of  
 which are expressly applied by the apostle himself  
 to the “*spiritual seed of all nations ;*” for thus, as  
 we have seen, he explains the promise “*a father of*

many nations have I made thee.”—How Mr Maclean, with the apostolic interpretation of these words before him, could have hazarded the assertion, that the covenant which contains them “did not include the Gentiles,” is to me, I repeat, altogether unaccountable.—“Christian baptism,” says Mr M'L., “is not founded in the covenant of circumcision.” True; if the covenant of circumcision was indeed only a covenant of temporal blessings, peculiar to the natural offspring of Abraham. In that case, it *was* “set aside;” and Christian baptism *does* belong to a different covenant from that to which circumcision was annexed. But if, on the contrary, we have succeeded in showing, that the “covenant of circumcision” was indeed a covenant of spiritual as well as temporal blessings to the spiritual seed of Abraham, then have we not here Mr Maclean’s distinct concession, that, instead of “being set aside,” it still continues, and that Christian baptism *is* founded in it, and holds a similar place now, in connexion with the same covenant, to that held of old by circumcision? This shows how much depends on a right view of the covenant in Gen. xvii. with which circumcision was connected.

But the amiable and excellent author of “EUGENIO AND EPENETUS,” takes quite a different view of this covenant of circumcision from Mr Maclean. He admits its spirituality: and when circumcision is denominated “*the token of the covenant,*” he considers the phrase as of equivalent import with that other phrase used by the apostle, “*a seal of the righteous-*

“*ness of faith.*”—“It was,” says he, “the token of  
“a covenant made with Abraham *as a believer*, and  
“essentially connected with that righteousness which  
“was imputed to him by faith. Hence the recollec-  
“tion of this covenant brought along with it the re-  
“collection of that faith in connexion with which it  
“was formed. And whatever could be properly de-  
“nominated a *token of a covenant founded on a*  
“*righteousness imputed by faith*, might, with equal  
“propriety, be termed a seal, or standing memorial  
“of that righteousness of faith with which this cove-  
“nant was connected.” Page 55.—I perfectly con-  
cur with Mr Innes in the view which he gives, and  
in support of which he, in my opinion, successfully  
argues, of the meaning of the phrase, “a seal of  
the righteousness of faith,” as signifying, not a seal  
to the individual of personal justification, but a seal  
or symbolical certification, and standing memorial,  
of the grand doctrine of justification by faith,—of  
which the justification of Abraham was, both to Jew  
and Gentile, the pattern or exemplar. But this doc-  
trine belongs to the new and everlasting covenant,  
and constitutes its fundamental article. Mr Maclean,  
in the passage above cited, by affirming the connexion  
of circumcision with the temporal covenant only, in-  
directly admits that, if it had been connected with the  
other, there would have been some ground for the in-  
ferences drawn by us as to Christian baptism ;—for  
he makes the difference between circumcision and  
baptism to consist in the former being connected  
with the *old* and *temporary* covenant, and the latter

with the *new, spiritual, and everlasting* one.—Mr Innes, on the contrary, connects circumcision with the spiritual covenant, that covenant according to which Abraham and all believers since have been justified by faith. But he is one of those referred to above, who, granting the premises, do not perceive the legitimacy of the conclusion.—Baptists have sometimes said to pædobaptists, “You cannot be right; you differ so much amongst yourselves in your views of the subject.” They had as well be quiet on that score. It is but “foolish talking,” on both sides. Our sole inquiry should be after truth and duty. If one view of a subject be true, it is not the less true that another has been held.

Dr. Cox embraces Mr Maclean’s *second* view of the covenant of circumcision. Whether he ever held his first, I cannot say. But surely, never was there published to the world a statement more thoroughly at issue in every point, with that of the apostle, than the following. After quoting the terms of the covenant, in Gen. xvii. 2—14,—for which see the preceding pages,—he thus comments:—“Let a person “unbiassed by any previous system, put into ordinary language the blessings covenanted in the above “recited paragraph; let him impartially state its entire import. Would he not inevitably give the “following interpretation? Circumcision was the “sign of a covenant with Abraham and his posterity, “denoting that it was the divine purpose to increase “his family to a remarkable degree, that they should “become a great nation, and even be diffused far



“over the surface of the earth ; to manifest a peculiar  
 “and unalterable regard to his family as their God,  
 “by the ample fulfilment of the agreement which he  
 “now condescended to form with their illustrious an-  
 “cestor, and which stipulated their extraordinary  
 “multiplication ;—and to give them Canaan for an  
 “inheritance. All persons, however attached to the  
 “family, whether as children or servants, were to  
 “undergo the prescribed rite, in order to distinguish  
 “them from the surrounding nations, and to evince  
 “that they belonged to the people whom God had  
 “especially chosen. This token of association with  
 “Abraham, and participation of his privileges, was, it  
 “appears, bestowed irrespectively of personal charac-  
 “ter, conduct, or faith ; for the purchased slave  
 “received it as well as the home-born child, whether  
 “a believer in the God of Abraham or not, and sim-  
 “ply as a part of his domestic establishment. But  
 “though they were to undergo the painful rite, the  
 “promise of inheritance was restricted to the pos-  
 “terity of the individual who stood as their federal  
 “representative, and who, by this ordinance, were  
 “separated and distinguished from all the Gentile  
 “nations.”\*

Now, with regard to the nature and amount of  
 the blessings covenanted in the passage in question, I  
 must be allowed to prefer, as my interpreters, our  
 Lord and his apostles, to Dr. Cox. *They* were surely  
 “unbiassed by any previous system ;” and we have

\* Essay, 131, 132.

seen how very different from his are the views which they hold forth. Dr. Cox appears to adopt as his principle of interpretation, the sense which any reader, taking up the passage, without any previous knowledge at all, would naturally attach to its phraseology. But the slightest reflection must satisfy him, that this is far from being a legitimate principle. In interpreting the Old Testament, the New, wherever it gives us direction, is our surest guide. Dr. Cox's ignorant reader might no doubt understand Abraham's being "a father of many nations" literally;—but if the apostle Paul interprets it spiritually, which are we to follow? He would consider the "land of Canaan" as signifying the country on earth so denominated, and no more; but if Paul explains the promise of Canaan as inclusive of "the better country, even the heavenly," the promise of which is not to be found at all, unless under this form,—and if, as he tells us, the patriarchs themselves so understood it, and founded their hopes upon it accordingly, which authority is to decide?—What idea might be affixed by such a supposed reader, to the other promise, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee," is not perhaps so easily determined. But, whatever it might be, the same question would still present itself; a question, the reply to which admits of no hesitation.

It will not surely be denied, that circumcision *could not be intended for a purpose which it never answered*. "The promise of the inheritance," says Dr. C. "was restricted to the posterity of the indivi-

“dual who stood as their federal representative, who, “by this ordinance, were separated and distinguished “from all the Gentile nations.” He should have added that it was restricted to this posterity, *in a particular line of descent*, namely *by Isaac*. Now by the very circumstance of circumcision having been administered to so many others besides Isaac, it failed to serve the purpose thus assigned to it; it was no distinction of Abraham’s posterity by Isaac; but was common to them with other tribes and nations sprung from the same stock, and yet having no part in the promise of the earthly inheritance. Might not this circumstance have suggested to Dr. Cox’s mind, that, connecting circumcision with the covenant of redemption, there was, in its administration to others besides Isaac, an intimation intended, that although, to serve particular purposes in the divine economy, the “covenant was established with *him*,” yet its best blessings, were not to be confined to one portion of Abraham’s family, or even to his posterity at large, but were to extend to others also;—an intimation which continued to be given in the admission, by circumcision, to the church of God, of all Gentile proselytes professing the faith of Abraham.

That circumcision was administered to all the adult domestics of Abraham, without regard to any profession of the faith of their master, but “simply as a part of his domestic establishment,” is a gratuitous assumption, needful, it may be, to the support of the baptist system, but of which there is no proof beyond the brevity of the history. Nay, there is not

even this. All the proof that really exists is proof of the contrary. When Jehovah himself gives the character of Abraham, as one whom he “knew to command his children and household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment,” we must be permitted to consider it as a slander upon the father of the faithful, to suppose that there were any in his household uninstructed in the knowledge and fear of God; and if we are to judge of the rest by the specimen we have in the history,—Eliezer of Damascus, and Hagar the Egyptian, it will be no unfavourable estimate we shall form of the character of the inmates of his family. Let us not judge of the “friend of God” by the example of an American or Brazilian slaveholder.\*

Dr. Cox conceives, and very confidently says, that it is my “first and great mistake respecting the covenant itself, that perplexes the whole subject, pollutes all the subsequent reasonings, and confounds together things which essentially differ.”—I agree with him, that if my view of the covenant of circumcision be a mistaken one, it must necessarily invalidate and overthrow the reasonings founded upon it. But it unfortunately happens, that the reasonings both of Dr. Cox and Mr Maclean have

\* In former editions—“a *West India* Slaveholder.” I give thanks to God, on behalf of my country, that I can now blot that out. Would to God that I could not have found,—and would to God that soon I may be unable to find—a substitute!

settled me more firmly in the conviction, that the mistake and confusion are on *their* side, not on mine.—Dr. Cox denies the truth of my position, that circumcision “was a *sign* of the blessings bestowed in justification; representing the taking away of sin, both in its guilt and its pollution; that is, representing the two great blessings of justification and sanctification.” “Will Dr. W.,” says he, “or any of his brethren, have the goodness to point out the phrases, which represent the *two great blessings of justification and sanctification*? Here is not only a general statement of the existence of a covenant between God and Abraham, but a specification of the design of that covenant, and the blessings of which it gave assurance to that eminent servant of God. Is *justification* mentioned? Is *sanctification* mentioned?” The reader, who has attended to the view before given, from the new Testament, of the promises of the covenant referred to,—the covenant of circumcision in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis,—will be at no loss for an answer to these questions. I know of no writer, indeed, unless it be Dr. Cox himself, who hesitates to admit the *spiritual signification* of the rite of circumcision; and that *he* really denies it, I have found it difficult to persuade myself, in the face of those expressions of scripture, which occur so frequently, and with which his mind is familiar:—such as, “Circumcise the foreskin of your heart;”—“All the seed of Israel are uncircumcised in heart;”—“Circumcision is that of the

“heart, in the spirit and not in the letter;”—“We are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit;”—“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,”—&c. &c.—Strange as would have been the denial, in opposition to such phraseology, of the spiritual import of circumcision, yet, had Dr. Cox been able to maintain it, it would have been consistent with his view of the covenant with which the rite was connected, as a covenant “solely of temporal blessings:” and, startled as I was, on finding him questioning whether circumcision at all *represented* spiritual blessings, I really thought I had found in him the first baptist whom I had ever known consistent with himself upon this point. But “nil fuit unquam tam impar sibi.”—He says, “I have already shown that the covenant of circumcision included solely temporal blessings, and that the rite was instituted to distinguish the Jews from the other nations, and to show their title to the land of Canaan.”\* Had Dr. Cox, I repeat, been able, in the face of his Bible, to adhere to this simple view of the rite, his system, respecting the covenant to which it was annexed, might at least have been consistent with itself. But it will not do. After quoting the Apostle’s expression, respecting Abraham,—“he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had

\* Page 137.

“being yet uncircumcised,”—he says: “This language surely represents it as a token of his acceptance as a believer;—a seal of *his* justification, *before* he was circumcised;—a public pledge that his faith was imputed to him for righteousness, or that God accepted his faith; and *an exhibition of the doctrine that their faith should be imputed in a similar manner to all subsequent believers.* Thus it involved essentially a personal reference, *while it represented a general truth!*” And again, in remarking on my sentiment, that, whatever circumcision signified and sealed to Abraham, it must have signified and sealed also to Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:—“Undoubtedly Isaac and Jacob were co-heirs with Abraham, and circumcision indicated to them what it did to *all* his posterity; for indeed there is no reason for this discrimination in favour of these eminent patriarchs; that is, it indicated to them their heirship by birth of the temporal promises, *and their equal participation by faith of the spiritual blessings!*”

From these premises, the following strange anomalies may be directly deduced:—

1. The covenant to which circumcision was annexed, as its token, contained promises exclusively of *temporal* blessings; and yet circumcision was to Abraham, personally, the seal or pledge of his possessing the first of *spiritual* blessings, including in it the assurance of all the rest,—justification by faith:—

2. The covenant of circumcision contained nothing

in it of the “two great blessings of justification and sanctification,”—and the rite was instituted simply “to distinguish the Jews from other nations, and to “show their title to the land of Canaan:” yet circumcision, connected as it was with this temporal covenant only, “represented the general truth” of justification by faith; being “an exhibition of the “doctrine that their faith should be imputed in a “similar manner to all subsequent believers,”—and “indicating to Isaac and Jacob, and to all the posterity of Abraham, their equal participation by faith of “the spiritual blessings:”—

3. Abraham obtained his justification, and all the blessings of salvation connected with it, on the ground of the Gospel covenant, or covenant of grace; yet the sign which he received, and by which these precious blessings were pledged to him, had no connexion at all with that covenant, on the ground of which he obtained them:—and believers in all ages are designated “*the circumcision,*” although the rite, from which they obtain the designation, not only was not spiritual in itself (which no rite can be), but did not even signify any of those peculiar blessings by which they are distinguished, nor bear any relation to the covenant whose promises are fulfilled in the bestowment of them!

Nor are the sentiments of Mr Maclean on this subject more self-consistent than those of Dr. Cox.—He considers (as we have before seen) the covenant, of which we have the record in Gen. xii. as essentially distinct from that in Gen. xvii. The former alone he regards as the gospel covenant, the latter as con-



taining exclusively promises of temporal blessings to Abraham and his natural offspring. But he has not only the difficulty to contend with, how it should come to pass that the token annexed to a covenant of temporal promises, should be, to Abraham himself, the seal of the blessings of the higher and better covenant;—his system is embarrassed with another difficulty. He admits that “both circumcision, and the temporal promises to which it was annexed, had also a mystical or typical sense:” that “circumcision and what pertained to it had both a *letter* and a *spirit*, or a *literal sense* in relation to the fleshly seed of Abraham, and a *mystical* or *typical* sense in reference to his spiritual seed.”\*—Now, without pressing on this acute writer, the inconsistency of reasoning in support of the *second* of his two successive theories in terms that are applicable only to the *first*,—I would merely observe: It is here admitted that the covenant in Gen. xvii. contains promises;—that these promises have a mystical or spiritual sense, as well as a literal and temporal;—and that circumcision, the token of this covenant, has a similar spiritual as well as literal meaning:—I have then to ask—Are the blessings contained in this covenant to be considered as *promised in the mystical or spiritual sense*, as well as in the literal and temporal? If they be; then does it not become, bona fide, a covenant of spiritual as well as of temporal promises; only that, in the former sense, the promises are made in refer-

\* Review, pages 22, 23, *et passim*.

ence to the spiritual seed, and in the latter to the natural?—and does not circumcision, as annexed to such a covenant, and itself possessing a mystical as well as a literal meaning, become the token of the covenant in its spiritual as well as its temporal import? And does not this effectually subvert the distinction contended for between the *different covenants* (as they are alleged to have been) with Abraham?—and the more especially, when three things formerly adverted to are recollected;—*first*, that the faith by which Abraham is declared to have been justified is the faith of *one* of the promises in the covenant of circumcision, namely, that of the multiplication of his seed—See Gen. xv. 5, 6: *secondly*, that believers in all ages are represented as being heirs according to *another* of its promises, namely, that of the inheritance of Canaan; for under no other form is the promise of the “better country” ever given in the divine communications with Abraham; see as before, Gal. iii. 18—29:—and *thirdly*, that *another* still, a *third* of its promises, and one of which so much is made in the New Testament,—that of Jehovah being “his God and the God of his seed,” is nowhere to be found at all, in any covenant with Abraham, except here.

I have before referred to various modes of expression in scripture which clearly show the *spiritual import* of the right of circumcision. I might have noticed more particularly, as not only a proof of this, but also of baptism and circumcision being substantially significant of the same things—(with the ex-

ception of the latter having contained a pledge of the coming of Messiah out of the loins of Abraham, which pledge of course ceased to be necessary when the event had taken place,)—the language of the Apostle Paul, in Col. ii. 11, 12, “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: having been  
 “buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are  
 “risen with him, through the faith of the operation  
 “of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”—  
 The more I consider this passage, I am the more convinced, that it warrants our regarding baptism as the *Christian circumcision*. The inquiry ought not to be, Is it *possible* to interpret the language otherwise?—but, Is this its most *natural* meaning? I think it is, first, because otherwise there is a feeble tautology; the “circumcision made without hands,” and the “circumcision of Christ,” being rendered of the very same import;—as if the apostle had said—  
 “Ye are circumcised with the circumcision of the  
 “heart, in putting off the body of the sins of the  
 “flesh, by the circumcision of the heart,” &c.:—and further, because the connexion between the two verses leads to this interpretation;—“having been *buried with him in baptism*,” being added *in explanation* of the preceding phrase, “putting off the body of the sins of the flesh *by the circumcision of Christ*.” And the fact that baptism corresponds to circumcision, in *denoting* the “putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,” goes to confirm this interpretation. “His

“meaning is,” says Mr Ewing, “that, as they were  
“blessed with regeneration, which was the blessing  
“signified by their baptism, they stood in no need of  
“circumcision, since regeneration is the circumcision  
“made without hands, that is, the circumcision of  
“the heart, so often spoken of both in the Old and  
“New Testament. Now, this reasoning is inconclu-  
“sive, and the very language in which it is express-  
“ed is unintelligible, not only unless the ordinance  
“of baptism under the reign of Christ, and the ordi-  
“nance of circumcision which was observed before  
“his coming, (both equally done with hands) signify  
“the same thing, but unless the one has come in the  
“room of the other.”

I have formerly (page 25,) stated my conviction that the promises of the “covenant of circumcision,” considered as including both temporal and spiritual blessings, were made, the one and the other alike, to the same seed, on the same ground;—and that, in this respect, there is no distinction recognized, either in the narrative or in the reasonings of the Apostle, between the two kinds of promises, as if the one had been made to the natural seed, and the other to the spiritual.—I believe both to have been made, (because, by speaking of the promises of the covenant indiscriminately, the Apostle in effect says so,) to the *spiritual seed*; whilst there was, at the same time, a *primary respect to the natural offspring*, amongst whose successive generations that seed was, by divinely appointed means, and especially parental instruction, to be raised up.

Had my friend Dr. Cox understood my positions, or duly attended to them, he could never have written as follows:—"The statement, that both promises are bestowed on the same seed and on the same footing, is equally erroneous. Dr. Wardlaw will never, surely, attempt to prove that all the seed of Abraham according to the flesh were partakers of salvation—that they were all justified and sanctified! If the promises of the covenant of circumcision were temporal, they were fulfilled; if they are supposed to have been spiritual, they were not accomplished."\*—To the same purpose he elsewhere quotes Mr Kinghorn as saying—"Surely none will maintain that God engaged to bestow special spiritual blessings on all the natural seed of Abraham; for this was not the fact in any age; and we cannot imagine the covenant intended to point out what was not fulfilled."†—This way of representing the case is very common with Baptists: but they are chargeable in it with a glaring oversight. They forget, that to "*all* the natural seed of Abraham," even in the line of Isaac, the *temporal* promises were not fulfilled, any more than the *spiritual*. They forget, that for nearly five hundred years from the time of the promise, not a soul of Abraham's posterity inherited a foot-breadth of Canaan; and that now, for more than seventeen centuries, it has been given to the Gentiles, the seed of the father of the faithful being utterly dispossessed of it.—So far am I from fancying

\* Pages 143, 144.

† Page 133.

the covenant "intended to point out what was not "fulfilled," that I do not see any satisfactory ground on which the faithfulness of God to the promises of the covenant, *whether temporal or spiritual*, can be fully and clearly vindicated, but that which the Apostle himself takes up, that "*they are not all Israel who are of Israel.*"—Let us recollect the occasion on which he introduces this distinction. He supposes the objection might be made to his statements, respecting the casting off of the Jewish people for their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah, that it would be a violation of the divine promises, which were made to Abraham and his posterity. When he first mentions this difficulty, he does not give the solution of it, but only rejects, with indignation, every possibility of God's failing in his word:—"For what if "some did not believe? shall their unbelief make "the faithfulness of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, though every man "should be a liar," Rom. iii. 3, 4.—But he afterwards resumes the subject, and states explicitly the *principle* on which the divine veracity is cleared of impeachment. Having expressed, in the beginning of the ninth chapter of the same epistle, his "great "heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for his "brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh," anticipating no doubt the impending judgments of God, and their ejection from his church, he adds, verses 6—8, "Not as though the word of God hath taken "none effect; for they are not all Israel, who are of "Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abra-

“ham are they all children ; but in Isaac shall thy  
“seed be called : that is, they who are the children  
“of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but  
“the children of the promise are counted for the  
“seed.”—It is evident, that in this ground of vindication, the principle is assumed, that the promises of a faithful God must be fulfilled, in the sense, and to the extent, in which they were made. Had the promises been made to all the natural posterity of Abraham as such,—then to all of them, as such, they must have been verified ; and the “casting off” of the unbelieving Jews from the privileges of the church, and from the possession of the earthly inheritance, would, the Apostle tacitly admits, have been at variance with the truth of God. But the distinction which he introduces reconciles the facts with the promises, showing that their accomplishment extends to all to whom they were originally made.

If it should be objected to this, that the *spiritual seed* have been deprived of the earthly Canaan as well as the *natural offspring*, and that therefore, the promises, in their temporal sense, have not been fulfilled universally to the former any more than to the latter ;—I answer, *first*, that the difficulty attaches to both sides of the present question, and therefore ought not to be vehemently urged by the one or the other against its opposite ;—and *secondly*, that the simplest principle of solution seems to be, that believers, since the coming of Christ, are “inheritors of the promises,” in the same sense in which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob themselves were, in which Moses and Aaron were, in

which all the saints were, previously to the actual possession of Canaan. If the instances that *preceded* its occupation be not valid exceptions, neither are those which have *followed* it,—or rather, perhaps, I should say, which intervene between its forfeiture and its re-occupation. Individual Jews, who are brought to the knowledge of Christ, come to be heirs of the promises in their higher sense, the less blessing being absorbed, as it were, in the greater, till “the De-  
“liverer shall come to Zion, and turn away ungod-  
“liness from Jacob.” Not, however, that the temporal promise is, to the people of God, done away. Godliness has “the promise of the life that now is,” as well as of “that which is to come;” and those who “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteous-  
“ness,” have the assurance that “all these things”—namely, the needful blessings of this life,—“shall be added unto them.”

These observations, respecting the seed to whom the *temporal* inheritance was promised as well as the *eternal*, are in full harmony with the ground on which, according to the statements of scripture, the earthly Canaan was *obtained*, and *held*, and *lost*. It was obtained by faith; held by faith; and lost by unbelief.

1. What was the reason why the race that came out of Egypt by Moses did not enter Canaan?—what was the cause of their exclusion?—It was *unbelief*;—unbelief of the promises of God to their fathers; which promises, as we have already seen, contained the gospel, in the state of its revelation at the time. This



is plainly declared, Heb. iii. 18, 19, "To whom  
"sware he that they should not enter into his rest,  
"but to them who believed not? So we see, that  
"they could not enter in because of unbelief:" and  
chap. iv. 2, "For unto us was the gospel preached as  
"well as unto them: but the word preached did not  
"profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that  
"heard it."—The unbelief, thus imputed to this pro-  
scribed generation, was not unbelief of the statements  
of those who had been sent to search the land. For  
if, in the representation given by these, there was any  
material difference between Caleb and Joshua on the  
one hand, and the remaining ten on the other, cer-  
tainly, as far as respected human testimony, the  
Israelites could not have been greatly to blame, for  
receiving the declaration of ten in preference to that  
of two. But it was unbelief of the declarations and  
promises of *God*, made by Him to their fathers, re-  
specting that land; and, consequently, distrust of his  
veracity, and his power, springing from "the fear of  
man," and accompanied with rebellious complaints  
and murmurings. It amounted to a rejection of  
the word of God and the promises of his covenant,  
—a rejection of God himself as the God of their  
fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was a denial  
of his faithfulness, not in the promise of Canaan  
only, but in all the promises respecting the seed of  
Abraham, connected with it, and dependent upon  
its fulfilment. These "sinners against their own  
souls" were, doubtless, unbelieving and proud despis-  
ers of all that the God of their fathers had engaged

by covenant to do,—of the accomplishment of which their own deliverance, by signs and wonders, from Egyptian bondage, was a prelude and a pledge. They were unbelievers of the Gospel, as then revealed in the promises of the covenant made with Abraham.

2. It is true, that the Israelites are spoken of as continuing to hold the land of Canaan in possession *through obedience*. But by this obedience we must understand the *obedience of faith*. I say, we *must* so understand it, not because it is necessary to the making out of our present argument, but because the principles laid down by the Apostle, respecting the possession of the inheritance, indispensably require it. “If the inheritance be of the law,” he says, “it is no more of promise:”—“if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of no effect.”—These expressions stand in perfect opposition to the idea of the land of Canaan ever being held on the ground of law, or as the merited reward of legal obedience. And there are, accordingly, many passages, in which the obedience required of Israel is described as being much more than mere outward subjection; as being nothing less than inward spiritual principle, manifested in external conduct; that is, in other words, the obedience of faith. Let the reader, who is desirous to ascertain the truth of this or the contrary, consult Deut. x. 12—22, and vi. 1—19; and, as illustrative of the reasons of Divine judgments and of restoration from them, the whole of the thirtieth chapter of the same book.

—If any choose to say, that their obedience was the *condition* of their continuing to enjoy the promised blessings, my approving or disapproving of the expression, (which is ambiguous, and therefore improper) depends on the meaning which it is intended to bear. If by *condition* be meant *meritorious ground* or *procuring cause*, I decidedly object to the statement, as contradictory of the Apostle's. But if by obedience being the *condition* of enjoying the blessing, nothing more is intended, than its being *essentially requisite*, a *sine qua non*; then the expression conveys an important truth,—a truth as applicable to us as to them;—for there is no enjoying the blessings, of any kind, which God has promised, but in the way of obedience to his commandments, under the influence of “faith working by love.” It is equally a truth that “by grace we are saved,” and that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord;”—that “eternal life is the gift of God,” and yet that we must “seek for glory, honour, and immortality, by “a patient continuance in well doing.”

3. The reason why the Jews were at length, with such awful judgments, cast out from the land of promise, corresponds with these views. It was *unbelief*—rejection of the person and Gospel of the Son of God.—“Because of unbelief they were broken off,” says Paul, “and thou standest by faith”—Rom. xi. 20. Moses, many hundred years before, had denounced curses upon them if they should be *disobedient*. These curses were fulfilled, on account of their *unbelief*. And this shows us what kind of disobedi-

ence was the ground of his denunciations, delivered in the name of the God of truth.—See the following passages: Luke xix. 41—44. Matt. xxiii. 34—39. 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. Acts iii. 23, &c.

Thus it appears, that the promise of the inheritance was originally through faith; that it was as professors of Abraham's faith that the Israelites entered on the possession of Canaan; that the possession was continued through the obedience of faith; and that on account of their disobedience—disobedience springing from unbelief and including it—judgments were threatened and inflicted:—in a word, that by faith the inheritance was obtained; that by faith it was held; and that by unbelief it was lost.

I have said, that, whilst the promises of the covenant with Abraham were made to the patriarch and his spiritual seed, there was in them at the same time a *primary respect to his natural offspring*, among whose successive generations that seed was to be raised up. This observation is of essential consequence to our present subject; and I have yet seen no reason to shrink from the position. The following is the argument of my former publication, referred to in the preface, in support of it.

“It has been said, that ‘if spiritual blessings were  
“promised, in that covenant, to the fleshly seed as  
“such, then it behoved all the fleshly seed to possess  
“them, and to be saved; which is contrary to fact,  
“and therefore inconsistent with the faithfulness of  
“God.’ Those who make this objection conceive  
“the temporal promise to have been made to the

“fleshly seed, and the spiritual promise to the spi-  
 “ritual seed. It ought to be remembered, however,  
 “that the reasoning which holds good as to the spi-  
 “ritual promise is, in point of fact, equally conclu-  
 “sive as to the temporal. ‘If the land of Canaan  
 “and its temporal blessings were promised by God  
 “to the fleshly seed of Abraham *as such*, then it be-  
 “hoved all the fleshly seed to inherit and enjoy them,  
 “which is contrary to fact, and therefore inconsistent  
 “with the faithfulness of God.’ The truth is, as I  
 “have attempted to show, that neither the one pro-  
 “mise nor the other was made to the fleshly seed,  
 “*merely as such*; and that the principle ‘they are  
 “not all Israel who are of Israel’ is the only prin-  
 “ciple on which, in either case, the Divine faithful-  
 “ness can be vindicated and maintained. ‘What if  
 “some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the  
 “faithfulness of God of no effect? God forbid.’

“This view is by no means at variance with the  
 “idea of that *primary respect*, of which I now speak,  
 “as being had, in the promise, to the natural off-  
 “spring; a respect, not merely primary according  
 “to the order of *time*, but according to a *peculiarity*  
 “*of regard*, and according to what may be termed  
 “the *natural course of things*.—That any peculiar  
 “regard or favour is shown to children on account  
 “of their parents, is by many strongly denied; as  
 “being inconsistent with the freedom of Divine grace.  
 “But that God does show such regard to children, for  
 “the sake of their parents, we find both intimated  
 “and exemplified, in many parts of the scripture

“history. God represents himself\* as ‘visiting the  
 “iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the  
 “third and fourth generation of them that hate him,  
 “and showing mercy unto thousands (of generations)  
 “of them that love him and keep his command-  
 “ments.’ Now, without entering into any discus-  
 “sion of the precise or full meaning of these ex-  
 “pressions, I would merely remark, that the latter  
 “surely cannot be considered as less consistent with  
 “the freedom of mercy, than the former with the  
 “strictness of justice.—There is an expression also  
 “used by Paul, respecting the Jews in their present  
 “state of unbelief, which appears to me inexplicable,  
 “except on some such principle:—‘As touching the  
 “election,’ says he, ‘they are *beloved for the fa-  
 “thers’ sakes.*’ † If in these words a peculiarity of  
 “regard is not expressed towards the natural ‘seed  
 “of Abraham, God’s friend,’ for the sake of him and  
 “of their other godly fathers, with whom Jehovah  
 “established his covenant, I am at a loss to imagine  
 “what meaning the expression can have.

“Besides: in the idea suggested there is nothing  
 “inconsistent with the free operation of Divine grace;  
 “because, this grace, in its various blessings, being  
 “conveyed to sinners *by means*, it is quite according  
 “to the natural order of things, that it should accom-  
 “pany those means, and as it were, flow with them,  
 “in the same channel. If, therefore, the knowledge  
 “of God—(the means by which the blessings of

\* Exod. xx. 5, 6.

† Rom. xi. 28.

“salvation come to be enjoyed)—was appointed to  
“be conveyed from generation to generation, we must  
“suppose the blessings to be conveyed along with it,  
“and the conveyance of the blessings to be the grand  
“design of the conveyance of the knowledge. There  
“is no other design which we can imagine God to  
“have had. And therefore, although the grace of  
“God is not imparted by fleshly birth, all being  
“‘conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity;’  
“yet, that when God’s people are attentive to the  
“means appointed, this grace should appear descend-  
“ing through their successive generations, cannot at  
“all be matter of wonder. If God has been pleased  
“to make the promises of his covenant, with a *pri-*  
“*mary reference* to the generations of his people, as  
“the line in which, by the communication of the  
“knowledge of his name, the blessings of his grace  
“should flow, (though not to the exclusion of others  
“from being, in his sovereign pleasure, brought with-  
“in the bond of his covenant;) and if, in the token  
“of his covenant, he has given his people encourage-  
“ment to indulge the believing expectation of his  
“mercy being imparted, through the use of appointed  
“means, to their offspring, as well as to themselves;  
“it becomes a very serious matter, to treat this en-  
“couragement, which regards the dearest and most  
“interesting of all concerns to a believing parent’s  
“heart, with indifference or neglect.

“That the promise, then, really had a *primary*  
“respect to the fleshly seed of believing Abraham,  
“implying as its *first* import, not indeed that *all* his

“fleshly seed should be saved, but that amongst them there should be a seed to serve the Lord, may, I think, be established from the following passages of the word of God.

“1. Gen. xviii. 17—19. ‘And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.’

“The most inattentive reader will perceive, that, in this passage, the character given of Abraham is connected with the fulfilment of God’s promise to him. It is equally obvious, that the faithful and authoritative instruction of his family could have no influence whatever in accomplishing the promise of a *carnal* or *natural* seed; that its only imaginable connexion is with his having a *spiritual* offspring—‘a seed to serve the Lord.’ His acting in the manner described was the means, by which God verified his word; giving him such a seed, from among his natural offspring, by the communication of the knowledge of God to his family, and from them downwards, through successive generations. By this means, God ‘brought upon Abraham that which he had spoken of him;’ proving ‘a God to him, and to his seed after him *in their generations.*’



“And in the same manner, ‘the generation of the upright’ continued to be ‘blessed’—‘God’s righteousness being to children’s children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.’ Psa. ciii. 17, 18.

“2. Rom. xi. 1. ‘I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.’—The Apostle here begins to prove, that God had not cast off his people. And what is the first consideration which he suggests? That he himself, whom God had blessed with salvation, was a descendant of Abraham *after the flesh*. For, that he speaks of fleshly descent, is plain, from his mentioning ‘the tribe of Benjamin’ along with the ‘seed of Abraham.’

“Two things may be observed from this passage. 1st. If there had not been such a primary respect to the fleshly seed as I am endeavouring to establish; the salvation of one belonging to the fleshly seed could never, with propriety, have been adduced as any peculiar or appropriate evidence that ‘God had not cast away his people.’ The salvation of a Gentile would have been quite as much to the purpose; the ‘election’ among the Gentiles being *the people of God*, as well as among the Jews:—and the Apostle might have quoted the case of Cornelius, or of the Philippian jailor, with as much conclusive effect, as his own. 2dly. It seems equally evident, that, while there was a primary respect to the natural seed of those to whom the promises

“were made, these promises never implied, that *all*  
 “who should descend from them, by fleshly birth,  
 “should partake of the blessings. For of this, the  
 “salvation of an individual, or of ‘a remnant accord-  
 “ing to the election of grace,’ however numerous,  
 “would have been a proof totally inconclusive.

“3. Jer. xxxi. 31—33. Heb. viii. 8—10. ‘Behold  
 “the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a  
 “new covenant *with the house of Israel and with*  
 “*the house of Judah*; not according to the covenant  
 “that I made with *their fathers*, &c. For this is  
 “the covenant which I will make *with the house of*  
 “*Israel*,’ &c.—When we consider what is so often  
 “repeated in the New Testament, respecting the  
 “gospel, or new covenant, as being ‘*to the Jew first*,’  
 “the meaning of these passages appears sufficiently  
 “obvious. They represent the new covenant as made  
 “with *the same people* with whom the old was made,  
 “—‘the house of Israel,’—the natural seed of Abra-  
 “ham, Isaac, and Jacob. And this was fulfilled,  
 “when *to them first*, God, ‘having raised up his Son  
 “Jesus, sent him to bless them, in turning away  
 “every one of them from their iniquities,’ Acts iii. 26.  
 “These words immediately follow an address of the  
 “Apostle Peter, to the unbelieving Jews, which ap-  
 “pears to put this matter beyond a doubt: ‘*Ye are*  
 “the children of the prophets, says he, and of the  
 “covenant which God made with our fathers, saying  
 “unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the families  
 “of the earth be blessed.’ From this arises the  
 “encouraging declaration immediately added, ‘Unto

“*you first,*’ &c. If in the promises there had been  
 “no such primary reference of peculiar regard to  
 “the fleshly seed, I am at a loss to conceive, in what  
 “sense the Jews here addressed, who had no relation  
 “to Abraham but that of carnal descent, could be  
 “denominated the children of the covenant made  
 “with the fathers, not as containing the promise of  
 “temporal blessings only, but the promise of the  
 “glorious gospel of the blessed God.—‘To them’  
 “(says the apostle, in the ninth chapter of the  
 “epistle to the Romans, speaking of his ‘kinsmen  
 “according to the flesh,’) ‘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.*’ Verse 4.

“If this *primary respect* to the fleshly seed be  
 “admitted, it is all that I am desirous to establish  
 “in behalf of the carnal or natural relation.”

Mr Maclean’s strictures on this reasoning have only served to establish me in the conviction of its truth. He first “freely admits, that the promises made to Abraham had a *primary* respect to his natural offspring.” “But,” he adds, “on this subject we must distinguish Abraham’s natural offspring into the *children of the flesh* and the *children of the promise*, and also the promises themselves into *temporal* and *spiritual* :”—and from the laying down of this usual distinction, any reader that has the slightest portion of sagacity, and of acquaintance with this controversy, might anticipate the manner in which it is applied.—The sagacity of

the same reader, however, may enable him to perceive, that the whole of my argument and illustration regarded the *primary respect* of the *spiritual promises* to the *fleshly seed*. I should have been doing a very useless thing indeed, had I set myself to prove the primary reference to this seed of the *temporal* promises; for I should have been proving what no one questioned. Now, what I *have* contended for, Mr Maclean in substance admits: "As  
 " to the *spiritual* promises which are included in the  
 " blessing of Abraham, such as justification, the pro-  
 " mise of the Spirit, the true adoption of sons, &c.  
 " these had also a *primary*, though not a *peculiar* or  
 " *exclusive* respect to Abraham's natural offspring.  
 " That they had not an *exclusive* respect to them, is  
 " clear from the very words of the covenant with  
 " Abraham on which the Apostle's argument is found-  
 " ed, viz. 'In thee,' or 'in thy seed, shall all the  
 " nations of the earth be blessed,' which includes  
 " Gentiles as well as Jews, Gal. iii. 8, 14, 16, 17, 28;  
 " and with this the facts recorded in the accomplish-  
 " ment of that promise fully agree."\*

These positions he proceeds to establish, much in the same way as I have myself done above. And when he subjoins, "Thus the spiritual promises had  
 " a *primary* respect to the natural offspring of Abra-  
 " ham: but as the bulk of that nation rejected Christ  
 " when he came, and persecuted his followers, nei-  
 " ther their being the circumcised seed of Abraham,

\* Review, p. 88, 89.

“nor their national relation to God by the Sinai covenant, could entitle them to the privileges of the free sons and heirs; and so they were, like the bond-woman and her son, cast out of God’s house:”—he says what I heartily subscribe to. The distinctions made are essential to my own argument.

Mr Maclean labours hard with the passage Rom. xi. 28. “As touching the election, they are *beloved for the fathers’ sakes.*”—After stating his objection to its being understood as implying any regard, in the bestowment of spiritual blessings, to the character of their godly progenitors,—namely, the apparent inconsistency of such a sentiment with the freedom of grace,—he proceeds to say—“I apprehend, therefore, that when the Apostle says, ‘As concerning the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes,’ he means, for the sake of that which God promised to their fathers. The promise to Abraham was, ‘In thee,’ or ‘in thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.’ Gen. xii. 3, xxii. 18. This, the Apostle informs us, was the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, and in which the gospel was before preached to Abraham; and he explains this seed in whom the nations were to be blessed, and to whom the promises were made, to be Christ.” Gal. iii. 8, 16, 17.\*

This view of the passage is liable to the following objections:—

1. Mr Maclean understands ‘the election’ as mean

\* Review, p. 92, 93.

ing the *persons elected*,—and the pronoun *they* as having these persons for its antecedent,—“they (i. e. “the election) are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” But the structure of the entire verse will hardly admit of this:—“As concerning the gospel, they are “enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.”—It seems evident, that the pronoun “THEY,” in the two clauses of the verse, has the same antecedent. It relates to *the race of the Jews*,—not the then existing generation, but *the race generally*, considered as the offspring of the ancient fathers. The same mode of expression occurs in all the preceding context—where the Apostle, speaking of the *future restoration* of Israel, says—“And THEY also, if they abide not still “in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able “to graft THEM in again,” &c. verses 23—27. Although the pronoun *them* appears to refer to the branches which were then broken off, yet the real reference is, not to the generation at the time in being, but only to *the same people or race*, at a distant period, considered as retaining its identity in its continued connexion with the same original root or stock.

It appears to me evident, that, in the verse under consideration, *things* and *persons* are respectively set in contrast:—“as concerning THE GOSPEL”—“as touching THE ELECTION:”—“enemies for YOUR sakes”—“beloved for THE FATHERS’ sakes.”—“The election,” therefore, means, I think, not the *persons chosen*, but the *divine choice*. The word is used in

both senses in the preceding part of the same chapter; and this acceptation of it here accords with the verse which follows;—“for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance:” which in effect is the same as saying, the *divine choice* is without repentance.

2. That the sense affixed by Mr Maclean to the phrase “*for the fathers’ sakes*” is not the natural one, is evident from his own admission in the following words, which conclude the paragraph of which I have cited the beginning:—“So that whatever temporal blessings and outward privileges were promised to, or conferred on, the nation of Israel, FOR THE FATHERS’ SAKES, yet the spiritual blessings of redemption, which were peculiar to the elect among them, are promised and bestowed only FOR CHRIST’S SAKE.”—This is as much as to say, that if the phrase “for the fathers’ sakes” had been used in regard to *temporal* blessings, it might have been allowed to mean what it plainly and simply expresses;—but that as the Apostle is here speaking of the restoration of Israel to the church of God, and of their spiritual salvation, it must signify, not what it plainly expresses, but “for Christ’s sake.” This is arbitrary. Is there any inconsistency in holding, that, whilst all the blessings of salvation are bestowed in free mercy for Christ’s sake, yet, in conferring them on any of the posterity of his servants, the God of grace may have a regard to the previous objects of his love, and, in blessing the offspring, gratify, as it were, an ancient affection to the fathers? And is not this in perfect harmony with the language, so frequent in

scripture, which represents the love of God to the fathers as terminating upon the children:—“The Lord had a delight in thy fathers, to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day—circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.”\*

3. The promise quoted by Mr Maclean, namely, “In thee,” or “in thy seed, shall all nations of the earth be blessed”—affords no ground whatever for the inference of a special or primary regard to the election *among the Jews*. That promise relates alike to the Gentiles and to the natural offspring of Abraham: and any obligation on the part of God to fulfil a promise relative to *all nations*, was not at all to the purpose of the Apostle’s argument. The election among the Gentiles were as much beloved for the sake of this promise, as the election among the Jews. It left no room for a “*how much more*” on behalf of the latter. If there was any *primary respect* in it at all, it was rather to the world at large than to the offspring of Abraham: and so the Apostle interprets it when he says—“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Gal. iii. 8. But that a peculiarity of regard to the “seed of Abraham God’s friend” is intended to be expressed, is as clear as words can make it; and an explanation

\* Deut. x. 15, 16.



that takes away the ground of this peculiarity, cannot be the true one.

4. It ought to be observed, that the promise "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed" is, according to the Apostle, "*the gospel*" as "preached to Abraham." If, therefore, "for the fathers' sakes" means for the sake of that promise, it means for the sake of *the gospel*. What, then, are we to make of the text? "as concerning *the gospel*, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for *the gospel's* sake!" How entirely does this destroy the antithesis, and subvert the argument of the passage!

5. It is very unfair in Mr Maclean, to introduce the word MERELY into the argument, a word which is neither the Apostle's nor mine:—"If they were thus beloved *merely* for the sake of the godliness of their fathers; Ishmael and Esau with their posterities, and, at any rate, the whole nation of Israel, must have had an equal claim to this peculiarity of divine regard; for they all sprung from the same godly fathers." Who has ever said they were beloved *merely* for the sake of their fathers? who ever thought so?—As to what is said of "Ishmael and Esau, with their posterities," I have only to say, let the reader look at the text cited a little ago, where Moses says to the Jewish people, "God had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people." Is there, or is there not, any connexion intimated here, between the choice of the seed, and the delight in the

fathers? If there be, (and who can question it?) the answer to the objection lies not with me—namely, why God did not choose Ishmael and Esau with their posterities, on account of the same delight. The fact that it was otherwise is all in our favour: for, seeing the connexion between the delight and the choice, as between a cause and its effect, is so unequivocally intimated, it follows, that there is no inconsistency between *gracious sovereignty* in the choice of the seed, and a *regard of love in it*, at the same time, *to the fathers*.

Mr Maclean further objects, that, “as the promises made to Abraham had a primary respect to his natural offspring, it follows from this, that they can have no such respect to the natural offspring of Gentile believers, for this plain reason, that they cannot have *two* primary respects.”\*—But the objection is more specious than solid. The spiritual seed amongst the posterity of Abraham, and the spiritual seed amongst the Gentiles, are not *two spiritual seeds*. They are one seed, of which Abraham is the spiritual father. The *primary respect* for which I contend, was not, if I may so speak, concentrated in Abraham personally. It descended with the possession of his faith; every follower of that faith sharing in it, and deriving from it his encouragement in making known God’s “testimony and law” to his children, that they too might “set their hope in God.” When a Gentile received the faith of Abraham, and

\* Review, p. 93, 94.

united himself to the Israelitish Church, the circumcision of his children along with him showed, that, amongst other privileges, he became a partaker in this primary respect of the promises to the natural offspring. At the fulness of time, the Gentiles, believing the gospel, and received into the church, became the people of God. The blessing of Abraham came upon them. They became partakers and heirs of the promises:—and the continuance among them of the primary respect to the natural offspring no more constitutes two primary respects, than their reception into the church produced two peoples of God, or two spiritual seeds of Abraham.

SECTION II.

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EVIDENCE OF THE FACT THAT, SO FAR FROM THE ANCIENT CONNEXION BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN HAVING BEEN ABROGATED, THE CHILDREN OF CONVERTS TO THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL WERE ACTUALLY BAPTIZED ALONG WITH THEIR PARENTS, IN THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES.

IN the preceding section, I have endeavoured to show, that the covenant made with Abraham was the gospel covenant, the covenant of grace, under which we live, and which is the basis of the New Testament church:—that the ordinance of circumcision was attached to that covenant, and, as the sign of its blessings and the seal of its promises, was, by divine command, administered to children:—that, although there is abundant evidence of a change in the rite or ordinance, there is none whatever of any such change in its administration, as excludes children from being any longer the legitimate subjects of its observance:—and that, therefore, whilst our baptist friends call upon us for the production of express precept, authorizing the baptism of children, we are better entitled

to require the production of such precept from them, repealing and setting aside the ancient injunction and practice, which existed under the same covenant, and, not belonging to the old economy, the dispensation of Moses, did not necessarily cease when that economy “waxed old, and vanished away.”

The excellence of any process of reasoning consists in its successfully eliciting and establishing truth. The philosopher who contrives an experiment, or a course of experiments, by which a controverted point in science may be satisfactorily settled, should certainly be regarded with gratitude. Should any brother philosopher have previously laid down to himself certain principles and rules, according to which all scientific inquiries and experiments ought to be conducted,—and, because the process has not been in perfect agreement with his pre-ordained regulations, should he not only refuse to be satisfied by the experiments, but even so much as to examine them;—he would justly be reprimanded as unreasonable, as a bigot to modes and forms, and an enemy to knowledge unless it has been attained by a particular route. No man has any title to complain of any mode of discussion, or of the sources from which arguments are drawn, if he is conducted by them to true conclusions and right principles.—I refer, in these remarks, to the exception, so generally and so strongly taken by our baptist brethren, against all reasonings in support of a New Testament practice, drawn from the Old Testament scriptures. It has even been said, that “those “who attempt to prove infant baptism from the Abra-

“hamic covenant, follow the same course as those who try to prove the propriety of the alliance between the church and the world. Many subtle arguments, which may perplex, are also brought forward on this subject from the Old Testament ; but if any one attends to the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and to the apostolic instructions and examples, the truth appears clear and manifest.” \*— It does so : but why ?—because the arguments drawn from the Old Testament, in support of the alliance between church and state, have been deduced from a perverse misapplication to the conduct of other nations, of the peculiarities of the Jewish people ; peculiarities, which were such as no other people can be authorized to apply to themselves, unless they can show, that, like Israel of old, they have been singled out by Jehovah for special purposes, that they have been taken into the same peculiar relation to himself, and have been endowed with the same peculiar privileges. There never has been a divinely authorized national church but one. If it could be shown, that we found our argument for infant baptism on any of the peculiarities of that constitution ; that we build our reasonings upon the specialties of the old and temporary covenant ; that we would bind the consciences of Christians by what was purely and exclusively Mosaic ;—there might be some justice in the above comparison. But it is not so. The argu-

\* Mr Haldane’s Reasons of a Change in Sentiment and Practice on the Subject of Baptism, p. 93.

ment drawn from the Abrahamic covenant, is founded on the very consideration, that it is *not* exclusively Mosaic; that, on the contrary, it existed centuries before the Sinaitic constitution, and was entirely independent of it; that it is the covenant of grace; and that, in arguing from it, we do not argue from one covenant to another, but from the same covenant in different states of its progressive revelation.—The only question with regard to any argument ought to be, Is it *scriptural*?—not, From which of the two Testaments has it been drawn? If both be scripture, it may be as scriptural when drawn from the one as from the other: and if it be scriptural, it is valid; for “all scripture is given by inspiration of God.” There is a glorious and beautiful harmony in divine revelation. If my argument from Moses makes him inconsistent with Paul, I must be in the wrong; but if another’s argument from Paul makes him inconsistent with Moses, he must be equally in the wrong. That system is the right one, which harmonizes the different discoveries of the Divine mind, and shows the consistency of scripture with itself.

It has been alleged, moreover, as a general reply to the strain of reasoning in the preceding section, that, in regard to infant baptism, *the New Testament is silent*;—and that *this silence alone is sufficient to set it aside*. The passage usually quoted in support of this sentiment,—quoted by men of sense and discrimination, and reiterated by men of neither,—is Heb. vii. 14. “For it is evident, that our Lord “sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake

“*nothing concerning priesthood.*”—I have been surprised, I confess, at the citation of this text for such a purpose. The two cases are essentially different. In the first place, the express command of God confined the priesthood in Israel to a particular tribe,—the tribe of Levi. The intrusion of others was unhallowed presumption, and punished with death. The phrase, therefore, “Moses *spake nothing,*” evidently means more, in this connexion, than *mere silence* ;—namely, that the law which restricted the priesthood to the tribe of Levi, was a law *exclusive of all others*,—so that, by this limiting and excluding statute, *Judah* had nothing to do with the priesthood. When our brethren shall have made out, from scripture, as exclusive a law for believer baptism, as the law which confined the priesthood to the tribe of Levi, they will have done something to the purpose. Their argument will then bear some resemblance in validity to that of the apostle. But until they shall have done this, their reference to such a passage will continue a mere begging of the question.—Secondly, We deny the truth of the affirmation, that the New Testament is silent on the subject. We think it contains intimations of the connexion of children with their parents, in the promises of the covenant, and the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, and also of the apostolic practice in regard to their baptism, exactly such as the circumstances of the case might have led us to expect.

I must repeat, that proofs of the fact of adult or believer baptism, are nothing to the purpose ; because



they are proofs of what nobody disputes. The question stands thus:—Our baptist brethren adduce passages on their side of the controversy, in which persons are said to have “*believed and been baptized*” —to have been “*baptized both men and women*”—to have “*gladly received the word and been baptized,*” &c. But we, on our part, say, these passages prove what to us requires no proof. They prove *adults* to have been baptized on a profession of the faith—but they do not *disprove* the baptism of the *children* of proselytes. Yes, say the baptists, they *do* disprove it; for, as to the baptism of any besides the believing adults themselves, the scriptures are silent. They “speak nothing” concerning the baptism of infants: therefore infants ought not to be baptized. Now, this is what we deny. It is precisely here that we are at issue. We say, they are *not* silent. We affirm, in the terms of the second of our three propositions, that **THERE IS SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE OF THE FACT, THAT, INSTEAD OF ANY CHANGE, EXCLUSIVE OF CHILDREN, HAVING TAKEN PLACE UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT DISPENSATION, THE CHILDREN OF CONVERTS TO THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL WERE ACTUALLY BAPTIZED ALONG WITH THEIR PARENTS, IN THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES AND THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES.** To the establishment of this proposition I now proceed. I shall state and illustrate a series of observations, all bearing us forward towards our conclusion, and some of them, in my apprehension, sufficient of themselves to settle it.

1. It is very common, to speak of the Old and New Testament churches, as if they were *quite distinct* from each other; as if, when the latter was introduced, the former had been entirely removed, and succeeded by something totally new. But this is far from being the style in which the matter is represented, either in the Old Testament scriptures, or in the New. In both, the ancient church is spoken of, not as annihilated, and followed by another, but as visited, comforted, purified, raised up, and gloriously restored from decline and corruption. If in some passages the idea of complete *renovation* appears to be suggested, we need not be surprised that such language should be applied to a change in the state of the church so remarkable,—to a revival so eminently glorious. The prosperity of the church in the latter days is represented by the “creation of new heavens and a new earth, so that the former should not be remembered, nor come into mind.”—If such language is employed to elevate our conceptions and anticipations of that blessed era, we might surely expect terms somewhat similar to be used, in reference to the time when “God was to be manifested in the flesh,” “a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.”

The fact is, that when the prophets of the Old Testament predict the calling of the Gentiles at the fulness of time, they represent them as brought in to the previously existing church, although in its renovated and remodelled state:—and when the prophets of the New Testament foretell the restoration of the

Jews, it is under the idea of being brought in again to the same church from which, on account of their unbelief, they had been ejected. I might multiply passages in proof of these positions. I shall content myself with two as a specimen,—one from the Old Testament, and one from the New.\*

The first of the two is Amos. ix. 11, 12; of which we have an inspired interpretation, in perfect harmony with the principle we are endeavouring to establish:—  
 “In that day will I *raise up* the tabernacle of David  
 “that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof;  
 “and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as  
 “in the days of old: that they may possess the  
 “remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which  
 “are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth  
 “this.” How is this prediction explained in the New Testament? How was the tabernacle of David to be raised up? How was the remnant of Edom and of all the heathen to be possessed by the ancient church? The answer is, by the bringing in of the Gentiles into the church of Christ:—Acts xv. 14—17.  
 “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit  
 “the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his  
 “name. And to this agree the words of the pro-

\* In the former editions, I quoted also Isaiah xlix. 20—22. I now omit it, because I feel uncertain whether it relates to the gathering of the Gentiles into the church, or to the employment of the Gentiles as agents in effecting the future restoration of the Jews. The passage which I retain has the advantage of being expressly cited, in proof of my position, by inspired authority, in the New Testament Scriptures.

“phets; as it is written, After this I will return, “and will build again the tabernacle of David, which “is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins “thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of “men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gen- “tiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the “Lord, who doeth all these things.” The attentive reader of the Old Testament prophecies will be at no loss to add to these quotations not a few more.

The other passage is a very decisive one, from the New Testament, Rom. xi. 23, 24. “And they also, “if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted “in: for God is able to graft them in again. For “if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild “by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a “good olive-tree; how much more shall these, which “be the natural branches, be grafted into their own “olive-tree?” Were the Old and New Testament churches entirely different, having no substantial points in common, it is not easy to see with what propriety the Jews, in being brought into the latter, could be said to be grafted into *their own* olive-tree—grafted in again, that is into the same olive-tree from which they had been cut off.—Mr Maclean indeed argues, that by this tree cannot be meant the *national church of Israel*, because *into* that church the believing Gentiles *were not grafted*. But does not the reader at once perceive, that, upon the same principle, it might be said, it cannot mean the *New Testament church*, because *from* that church the unbelieving Jews *were not cut off*? And if it was

neither the Old Testament church, nor the New Testament church, what church was it? Is it not very clear, that the believing Gentiles were grafted into the same stock from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off? and if they were grafted into the same stock, they certainly became branches of the same tree—branches, occupying the place of those that had been cut away. The tree is not represented as *cut down*, or *rooted up*; but as having “*some of the branches broken off*,” verse 17. If *some* were *broken off*, the *rest* surely *remained*; and when the branches from the wild-olive were engrafted, the tree continued. It is not a new tree planted, but an old tree, mutilated by the cutting off of a number of its branches, and filled up with grafts upon the lopped boughs: “Thou wilt say then, the branches “were broken off that I might be grafted in: well; “because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou “standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.” The branches that were *broken off* were the unbelieving Jews;—those that *remained* were the spiritual members of the ancient church, and such as received the testimony of Jesus previously to the time of judicial excision;—and those that were *added*, in the room of the cast-away, were the converted Gentiles. It is true, there was an overturning of the national form of the church. Its constitution was remodelled. And the Gentiles were introduced, though not into the *national church of Israel*, yet into the *church of the living God* in its remodelled state: and I can imagine nothing clearer, than that when the unbe-

lieving Jews are represented as, at a period yet future, to be "grafted in again to their own olive-tree," the figure means their being *reintroduced* to the same church, though under a new form, from which their ancestors were ejected. I have nowhere represented their being "grafted in *again*" as signifying their being "*put into their former Jewish church state;*" but only their being restored to the church of God, in its New Testament form.—It should be recollected, that the church which had Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob for its original stock—(we might go even farther back, but this is the point of time to which the Apostle's reasonings usually refer)—that this church existed for more than four centuries before its national constitution was formally organized at Sinai. The natural offspring of these patriarchs, along with proselytes from among the Gentiles, formed all along the visible church of God; at times indeed in a state of fearful corruption, but still containing in it his true spiritual people, until "the time of restoration." Then "the wicked were to be shaken out of it." Those "children of the stock of Abraham" who were not his children by faith, though, on account of their fleshly connexion with him, denominated "the natural branches," were to be cut off; and Gentiles, becoming by faith children of Abraham, were to be grafted in, in their room, and to "partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree;"—that is, to share in the special and enlarged privileges of the church, of which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were the original stock; which was rooted in the covenant

made with these patriarchs ; and which, though varying its form and external constitution and aspect, has been substantially the same from the beginning. I might venture to say, that the whole style of prophetic representation of that which was to come, proceeds upon the principle of the substantial identity of the church ;—and with this the language of the New Testament writers agrees.—I have before referred to the terms in which the prophets describe the church as, at the fulness of time, to be visited, restored, and purified. It is ridiculous to speak of this as if it meant its entire annihilation, and the substitution of another in its room. Some of the passages are very remarkable. Let one suffice. Speaking of the coming of the Messiah, the “Messenger of the covenant,” the prophet Malachi says, chap. iii. 2, 3.—“But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap : and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver ; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” This purification of his church was effected, by casting out the wicked in wrath, and by bringing the remnant through the fire in mercy : See the subsequent verses, and Zech. xiii. 8, 9.—When the prophet Malachi adds, “Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years,”—there can be no doubt that he refers to the spiritual worship of the New Testament

church:—which, however, is not the worship of a church entirely new, but of the old church renovated and purified;—and is accordingly compared, in its acceptableness, to that of the church in former times, in the purest and best periods of her ancient history. When the Gentiles are brought in to the church of Christ, they are described as having been previously “*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,*” but as now “*no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*” Eph. ii. 12, 19.

But it would be endless to dilate. Enough has been said in support of my first position.

2. My second is, that we ought to bear in mind, what was the previous state of things in regard to children, and their connexion with their parents in the application of the sign and seal of the covenant.—What this was, I need not repeat. I merely remind the reader of it. The connexion, and the symbolical recognition of it, existed not only amongst Jewish families themselves, but extended to the case of Gentiles professing the faith of Abraham,—proselytes to Judaism. A head of a family was received into the community of Israel, *with his household*. When I say, with his household, I mean his infant children, and *such of the adults as professed the same faith with himself*. I make this restriction, because the notion which some have entertained, that adults in a family were, upon the conversion of the head of it, *compelled, upon pain of death, to go over with him to the new religion, is so revolting to every principle of*



justice and reason, involving the establishment, by divine authority, of a system of persecution unto death for conscience sake,—that I cannot assent to it; nor do I conceive that there is any thing in the record, that may not be fairly explained, without the admission of a supposition so monstrous. But on this I must not here insist.\* What I wish the

\* When any interpretation of a divine law proceeds on a supposition, that is diametrically at variance with the grand moral principles of the Bible, and the divinely sanctioned rights of conscience, I feel myself warranted, in not merely suspecting, but concluding, that it involves some mistake. The excellent author of “Eugenio and Epenetus,” previously to the publication of that work, submitted to me, as a friend, some parts of the manuscript, requesting my remarks. I offered a few strictures in reply. These are repeatedly referred to in the work, though, in conformity with my desire, without the mention of my name, which, as the remarks were but brief and hasty, I did not wish at the time to be introduced. I have now no objections to avow myself the writer of the following paragraph, at p. 85 of those “Conversations,” designed to illustrate, by a parallel case, what I conceive to be the true spirit of the injunction that “all the males” of Gentile proselytes should be circumcised, before these proselytes themselves could be admitted to eat the passover.—“Suppose the government of any country to enact a law, that all foreigners desirous of settling in the country as subjects, should, in order to their enjoying the privileges of subjects, have a particular mark affixed in their forehead or right hand. Apply this enactment to the case of the head of a family having, let us say, *twenty* adults. Suppose four of these are unwilling to receive the necessary mark: would it be at all a rational interpretation of the law, that therefore he could not leave these four, and settle in the

reader now to bear in mind, is simply this—that the connexion of children with their parents, of which I have been speaking, existed of old, and was interwoven with all the thoughts, and feelings, and prac-

“ country with the remaining sixteen, who were willing to  
 “ accompany him on the prescribed condition? The obligation  
 “ arising from such a law would never be interpreted as amount-  
 “ ing to—‘ You must have a mark affixed to the body of every  
 “ adult, as well as every infant, now in your family. You can-  
 “ not settle in the country, if but one of these refuses to submit  
 “ to this mark, not even on the ground of that one being ex-  
 “ cluded and left behind.’ It would be understood as amount-  
 “ ing only to this—‘ No one who does not receive this mark  
 “ must come with you; for none such can be admitted to the  
 “ privileges of subjects.’—The application of this to circumcision  
 “ is obvious. When all the members of a man’s family are  
 “ required to be circumcised, on the head of the family’s passing  
 “ into the communion of Israel, all that is implied appears to be,  
 “ that, as many as passed with him into this communion, and  
 “ became partakers with him of its privileges, must have this  
 “ mark put upon them.”

The parallelism of this illustrative case appears from the very reason assigned for the injunction—“ *For no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*” If the declared *object* of the law is *perfectly attained*, without the monstrous supposition adverted to in the text, of every adult member of a household being compelled, upon pain of death, to follow the faith of its head, are we not fairly warranted to conceive the supposition erroneous? —“ In the supposed parallel case,” says Mr Innes, in reply, “ of a person enjoying, on certain conditions, the privileges of a particular community, there is one very important point omitted, viz., that it was an essential part of the law, that if any one of a man’s family did not receive the mark he was to be *cut off*, i. e. to be put to death. The case alleged sup-

tices of the ancient church. It had place in the reception of proselytes. It pervaded and characterized the entire style and language of their sacred books. The connexion of this observation with our argument will appear immediately when we have remarked,

3. In the third place,—The language of the prophets, in looking forward to New Testament times, ap-

“ poses, that it was an optional thing in the members of the  
 “ family to submit to the prescribed mark or not ; and that if  
 “ any of them did not, they might leave the family, while the  
 “ head of it was not to blame. Now this is a case totally differ-  
 “ ent from the institution of circumcision. According to it, a  
 “ man was deeply criminal, if he had not all his males circum-  
 “ cised. Such as were not so, were not authorized to separate  
 “ from him, but were commanded to be put to death.”—I need  
 not say much in answer to this, because it is only a re-affirma-  
 tion of his interpretation of the law. Granting that being “ cut  
 off from his people” means being put to death ; as the design of  
 the law was to prevent any uncircumcised person from partaking  
 of the passover or being a member of the Israelitish community,  
 which was the church of God, the punishment I understand to  
 apply to such as should presume, without circumcision, to in-  
 trude themselves into the congregation of the Lord. This is  
 evident, from the nature of the case ; from the original law,  
 that “ every uncircumcised manchild should be cut off from his  
 people,”—which manifestly signifies every manchild *found in*  
*connexion with the congregation of Israel*,—the very phrase  
 “ from his people” implying this ; and from the fact of the  
 judgments of God being denounced against Israel by the pro-  
 phets, for having, amongst other evils, “ brought strangers,  
 “ uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in  
 “ his sanctuary, to pollute it.”

pears to assume, or even to affirm, the continuance in those times of the same connexion that existed of old.

Jeremiah, speaking of the blessedness of the house of Israel, when they shall turn to the Lord in the latter days, says, in the name of Jehovah:—"I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."\*—I cannot readily imagine any consistent interpretation of this passage, if it does not contain a promise of spiritual blessing to the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now in a state of dispersion, and likewise to *their* children after them, in their generations; or, as the prophet Ezekiel expresses it (chap. xxxvii. 25,) "to their children, and to their children's children, for ever." I have tried to apply the passage to the restoration of the Jews of the captivity from Babylon:—but the terms are too strong to be understood as having had their meaning exhausted then; when, in so comparatively short a period, a "turning away from them" so much more

\* Jer. xxxii. 37—40.

fearful and lasting actually awaited them, as the result of a "departure" so much more fearful, on their part, "from Him." And, as this language respecting the Jews seems therefore to be used in prospect of their union with the Gentiles in the New Testament church, when they shall acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ; it follows, that the terms employed concerning them are descriptive of the state and privileges of *all* the subjects of the new covenant, Gentiles as well as Jews. The passage, then, as referring to gospel times, appears to contain an intimation, that the same connexion should then continue between the people of God and their offspring, which had existed from the days of Abraham.

The prophet Isaiah, predicting the glory of the church in the latter days, gives the following, among other declarations, of the blessedness of God's people:—"They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they are *the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.*" Isa. lxxv. 23. They are "the seed of the blessed of the Lord," that is, as I apprehend, the spiritual seed of the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were peculiarly the blessed of the Lord;—"and their offspring with them;" that is, connected with them in the promise of the covenant, as in the days when it was made with these blessed of the Lord, and partaking with them of his blessing. This appears to be assigned as the reason of their "not bringing forth for trouble,"—the blessing of the Lord resting on the offspring in connexion with their parents.

In replying to any argument, candour always requires, that we bear in remembrance the precise point which it is intended to establish. The above passages are adduced, simply to show, that the prophets, in anticipating the spiritual times of the New Testament church, employ language such as indicates the future continuance of the connexion between parents and children which formerly subsisted. The proper way of answering them, therefore, is, to show that they do not, in any degree, warrant or countenance such an inference. I say, *in any degree*. It is not enough to show that they are not, in themselves, and apart from all other proof, conclusive. Each link of a chain, however remote, has a connexion with the final point of fixture, as real and as necessary, though not so immediate, as the last. Each in its own proper place, by its junction with that which precedes and that which follows it, contributes to the continuity and strength of the chain. And so does each argument, in a series of proofs, conduct to a conclusion. If each bears legitimately its own proportion of inference, this is all that should be expected from it. To reply to it, by showing that it does not bear *more*, that it is not in itself conclusive as to the ultimate point, is not candid. Thus, in answer to the above passages, it has been said, "We want *direct proof*, that the '*good*' promised in them to the people of God and '*their children after them,*' includes *their baptism while infants.*" This is banter, not argument. The sole question should be, Do the passages give any countenance to the inference, that the connexion between

parents and children, which subsisted from the institution of the covenant with Abraham, and characterized the ancient dispensations, was to continue under the new? If the negative of this precise point is not made out, the passages are not fairly met, but evaded.—It has been further said, “We want positive proof that *their children* mean *their infant children*.” But this too is little better than evasion. There can be no question, that in the promise of the original covenant, “I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee in their generations,” *infant children* were included; for the token of the covenant was applied to them at eight days old:—this was the connexion between parents and children which existed anciently, and which was familiar to the Israelites; and the question is, as before, whether the above, and other similar passages, do or do not contain any intimation that, in the predicted New Testament period of the church, the same thing was to continue.—I am satisfied they do,—the attempt to explain them away having confirmed the conviction.

4. I go on now to remark, in the fourth place, that the language of the New Testament intimates the continuance of the same connexion; and intimates it exactly in such a way as, from the previous state of things, might naturally have been expected.

It is of essential importance, in interpreting the New Testament, that we should keep in mind the state of things preceding it. The reason is obvious. It is surely natural to expect, that its language should be affected by these existing circumstances; and the

import of the expressions used we shall, in many instances, be unable correctly to appreciate, unless we take into account, as a principle of interpretation, a reference, in the mind of the writers, to what already existed and was familiarly known, and the existence and familiar knowledge of which rendered greater enlargement, and minuteness, and precision, unnecessary. This is a principle so obvious, and its influence so natural and unavoidable, that, with the man who should question the admission of it as a legitimate canon of interpretation, I should consider reasoning as thrown away. The strongest consideration alleged against it, we shall have occasion to notice by and by.

I have before observed, how the burden of proof lies on the side of the opponents of infant baptism. They seek a precept in positive terms, such as—Let the infant children of proselytes to the faith of the gospel be baptized with their parents. But we demand a precept in similar positive terms—Let the children of proselytes be no longer admitted, as formerly, to the sign and seal of the blessings of the covenant of God.—We call for the production of an express declaration, that such admission is inconsistent with the spirituality of the new dispensation. But no such thing is ever said: no hint of such a thing is ever given. So far from it, that let us mark in general terms, how the case stands.—After finding the connexion in question pervading the Old Testament, in the manner we have stated;—the children of the professed people of God circumcised with their



parents ; and the children of Gentile proselytes to the faith of Abraham introduced with their children, by the same rite, to the privileges of the ancient church ; —we then come forward to the history of the new dispensation. If this previous state of things were really inconsistent with its spiritual nature, it seems not unreasonable to expect that the language on this point should be plain and decisive. But what is the fact ? Instead of plain and decisive intimations of this inconsistency, and of the necessary discontinuance of the practice, we meet with language in perfect accordance with the previous state of things : precisely such as writers whose minds were habituated to it would naturally use, and such as readers in similar circumstances could not understand in any other way than one.—“ They brought young children to him, “ that he should touch them ; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus “ saw it he was much displeased, and said unto “ them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, “ and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of “ God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not “ receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he “ shall not enter therein. And he took them up “ in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed “ them :” —“ Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house : forasmuch as he also “ is a son of Abraham :” —“ Then Peter said unto “ them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, “ for the remission of sins ; and ye shall receive “ the gift of the Holy Ghost :—for the promise is to

“you, and to your children, and to all that are afar  
 “off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call :”  
 —“A certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of pur-  
 “ple, of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God,  
 “heard us :—whose heart the Lord opened, that she  
 “attended to those things which were spoken of Paul.  
 “And when she was baptized, and her household, she  
 “besought us,” &c.—“They said unto him, Believe  
 “in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,  
 “and thy house : and they spake unto him the word  
 “of the Lord, and to all that were in his house :—  
 “and he was baptized, he and all his, straightway :”  
 —“I baptized also the household of Stephanas :”—  
 “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the be-  
 “lieving wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified  
 “by the believing husband ;—else were your children  
 “unclean ; but now are they holy.”\*—It is not on  
 one or another of these texts, taken separately, that I  
 am resting my argument under the present particular.  
 It is on the intimation which, when taken together,  
 they so clearly afford, of the continuance of the same  
 state of things, in regard to families, as had formerly  
 subsisted. I profess myself unable to account for the  
 language, on any thing like easy and natural princi-  
 ples of interpretation, unless upon this hypothesis.  
 The unnatural straining which is employed, to get rid  
 of some of the passages, we shall see immediately.—  
 But, before leaving this particular, I must take notice

\* Mark x. 13—16. Luke xix. 9. Acts ii. 39 ; xvi. 14, 15,  
 and 31, 33. 1 Cor. i. 16. 1 Cor. vii. 14.

of a highly ingenious, and, at first view, very plausible and imposing light, in which the objection has been placed to the mode of reasoning in general from the previous state of things, and of the minds of the Jews in reference to it. "By the same kind of reasoning," it is alleged, "it might, with equal plausibility, be proved, that the kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of this world. It might be argued, That though the kingdom of ancient Israel was a worldly kingdom, including their carnal seed, it was the kingdom of God: that the prophecies relating to the kingdom of Messiah frequently represent it as a worldly monarchy, like the kingdom of Israel under the reigns of David and Solomon:—that the Jews in general interpreted these prophecies of a worldly kingdom; their minds were habituated to this idea, and it was an idea deeply rooted in their hearts: they must therefore have understood John the baptist, or Christ and his apostles, when preaching that kingdom, in a sense consistent with their previous views, as intimating a *continuance* of the same worldly kingdom as formerly, but now to be restored to Israel, and raised to a higher pitch of worldly power and prosperity than ever."\*

Now, ingenious and plausible as this mode of putting the question may seem, it is more than fallacious. I am sincerely obliged to the reviewer for it, because it serves to set my argument in a still clearer light, and to give it additional force and conclusiveness. It

\* Maclean's Rev., pp. 119, 120.

is admitted, that the minds of the Jews were habituated to the expectation of a worldly kingdom, and that the idea was deeply rooted in their hearts. Let the passages, then, be pointed out, in which John the baptist, or Christ and his apostles, acted or spoke in a manner that harmonized with this expectation, and was calculated to countenance and to cherish, instead of unsettling and doing it away. The cases will then be parallel; and the reasoning from the parallelism such as could not easily be rebutted. But it is very far otherwise. Instead of parallelism, there is contrast. The whole conduct and discourse of our Lord are framed, as if for the very purpose of opposing their worldly and unscriptural conceptions. Every thing about him was fitted to put such conceptions down, and to thwart, and mortify, and wither the hopes arising out of them. His whole preaching, when he proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, was pointedly directed against the prevailing ideas of its nature. The very first sentence of his sermon on the mount was enough to dissipate them for ever—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"—Matt. v. 3: and the whole description of character which follows has the same tendency. It is all spiritual, opposed to every worldly principle, to every carnal and earthly expectation.—Of the same description is his first address to Nicodemus, intimating the necessity of a spiritual birth, in all the subjects of his kingdom—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii. 3.—

And how flatly and explicitly does he contradict what he knew to be the views and hopes of the Pharisees, when they asked him “when the kingdom of God should come”—“The kingdom of God,” said he, “cometh not with outward show: neither shall they say, Lo here, or Lo there; for behold the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke xvii. 20, 21.\*—All this is in harmony too with the “good confession” which he subsequently “witnessed before Pontius Pilate,” “My kingdom is not of this world.”—In fact, the very existence of these false preconceptions makes him evidently studious to avoid whatever might encourage them, and to embrace every opportunity of exposing and warning against them.—This is what might have been expected. And I have only to request the candid reader, to consider the marked difference between the two cases; and to put the question to his own mind, whether, if the continuance of the pre-existing connexion between children and parents had been inconsistent with the spirituality of his kingdom, he who showed himself so jealous of that spirituality, and set himself so decidedly against the worldly views and expectations of his deluded countrymen, would not have acted, in regard to it, upon the same principle, and have avoided whatever was fitted to countenance and confirm such erroneous preconceptions?

\* I am aware that some translators render the words—“the kingdom of God is *among* you.” I am satisfied that our own translation is decidedly preferable; but, as the difference is not material to my present argument, I may spare criticism.

5. Having taken this general view of the passages, and shown their bearing, let me now, in the fifth place, request the reader's attention to two or three of them separately.

Acts ii. 38, 39. "Then Peter said, 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 to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

These words were addressed by a Jew to fellow Jews. How would such an audience understand them? When they heard of a promise *to them and to their children*, could their minds fail, on such an occasion, to go back to the promise of the covenant made with their fathers, and declared to be to them and to their seed after them? And in that case, there was but one sense in which the hearers of Peter could understand the designation "your children." Yet it is on the ground of the promise made to them and to their children, that the apostle founds his assurance of "the gift of the Holy Ghost:" and this gift another apostle (Paul) denominates "the blessing of Abraham,"—or declares it at least to be included in that blessing, Gal. iii. 14.—Recollect, then, that the minds of Peter's auditors were habituated to the idea of the connexion of their children with themselves in the promise of the covenant. The idea was deeply and familiarly settled in their minds and hearts. Is it unreasonable, then, to say, that they must have un-

derstood Peter's words,—the words of Divine promise to themselves and to their children—addressed to them by an inspired prophet,—in a sense consistent with that which they were accustomed to affix to similar modes of expression, when used of old to their fathers,—and consistent with all their previous habits of thought? And if they did so understand them, they must have conceived of them as assuming, and intimating, the continuance of the same connexion.—Are we then to suppose, that this “holy man of God, speaking as he was moved by the Holy Ghost,” would, without explanation or restriction, at the very “beginning of the gospel,” in his first address to his countrymen, when a right impression was of so much consequence—employ expressions, that were fitted to convey to their minds a false and worldly view of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom?

Mark x. 13—16. “And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

“The kingdom of God” is the New Testament church,—the spiritual kingdom of Christ, begun on earth, and perfected in heaven,—the gospel dispen-

sation, including both its state in this world, and its state in the world to come. This comprehensive view of the designation readily accounts for its being sometimes applied to the church below, and at other times to heaven itself. It is the same kingdom, in the two great stages of its progress.—Of this kingdom, young children (*βρεφους*, infants) are here most explicitly declared to be subjects,—partakers of its privileges and blessings.—If (as some allege) the phrase “*of such*” means of *persons possessing the dispositions of children*, still, beyond all question, it means this, *inclusively of the children themselves*. If not, the reason for receiving them would have been as applicable to *lambs*, or *doves*, as to children, both of these creatures being used as examples and emblems of the dispositions in question. And besides, the words which follow ascertain their being included,—“Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God *as a little child*, (i. e. surely as a little child *receives it*,) he shall in no case enter therein.”—The Sovereign of this kingdom, then, distinctly recognises little children amongst his subjects; and he is “much displeased” with those who would prevent their being brought to him for his blessing. Recollect, then, reader, the previous state of things; and let me ask you, is this at all like the language of *exclusion*? Is it not, on the contrary, language which delightfully teaches us, that such little children are capable of possessing the blessings of his kingdom, and that a large proportion of those who shall glorify and enjoy him in heaven consists of such?—Am I then to be-



lieve, that whilst Jesus makes this interesting declaration, pronouncing them objects of his tender love, subjects of his spiritual kingdom, and partakers of its blessings, he, at the same time, cuts off all such from any external sign of connexion with the kingdom he was establishing?—that he declares them partakers of the blessings of the promise, and yet forbids the outward token of such participation to be any longer administered to them?—that he receives them, with the melting eye of benignity and kindness, and acknowledges their intimate connexion with him, and yet excludes them from every external indication of such connexion, leaving them no mark or token of the love he so emphatically expresses for them?—I must have proof of this, more explicit and satisfactory than any I have yet seen, before I can believe it. The words of Christ appear to me very plainly to warrant the inference, or even to involve a declaration, that, as the great promise of the covenant made with the fathers was now receiving its accomplishment, it was still to include, according to its original constitution, the people of God and their seed. The persons by whom these children were brought to Jesus, professed, in the very act of bringing them, their faith in him, and the value they set on his blessing.

If it shall be objected, that salvation is not confined to the seed of believers,—I gladly admit the fact. I delight in the conviction of the salvation of all that die in infancy, though it would be foreign to my purpose to enlarge here on the grounds of this conviction. Let one observation suffice. I see God actually

taking of the offspring of ungodly men, and calling them by his grace, *in their adult years*; and, resting on this matter of fact, I can see nothing to hinder his taking also, as the objects of his sovereign mercy, such of their offspring as *die in infancy*. I am not, however, to forget, that God's sovereign dealing in the case of others, is not to be considered as interfering with his special promises to his people; and that the administration of ordinances must run in the line of the Divine promise and prescription. *We* have no title, whatever God's sovereignty may do, to go beyond or out of the course of these. The appropriation of the promise and seal of the covenant to the line of descent from Abraham by Isaac, was not such as to preclude the gracious admission of proselytes from among the Gentiles.

Luke xix. 9. "Jesus said unto him, This day is "salvation come *to this house*, for-so-much as he also "is a son of Abraham:"—Acts xvi. 15. "When she "was baptized, *and her household*:"—Acts xvi. 31, 33. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou "shalt be saved, *and thy house*:"—"He was baptized, *he and all his*, straightway:"—1 Cor. i. 16. "I baptized also *the household of Stephanas*."

These passages relating to *families*, I take of course together. The general argument from them, arising from the continuance of a phraseology corresponding to the previous state of things, I have considered under the preceding particular. As to *that* view of the argument, I feel no anxiety about the question, whether there were infant children in those families or

not. As the passages, however, have been the occasion of no small controversy, a few additional observations are indispensable.

*In the first place*, then, there is one point of fact undeniably clear, namely, that the apostles baptized *households*, or *families*. As to this there can be no question.—It should be noticed, too, that a man's *house* (*οικος*) most properly means his children, his offspring, his descendants,—and is generally used to denote these even exclusively. I refer the reader to the following instances, which he may consult. Ruth iv. 12. 1 Kings xiv. 10—14; xvi. 3; xxi. 22. 1 Tim. iii. 4, &c.

*Secondly* : To an unprejudiced reader of the New Testament, it must, I think, be equally clear, that the baptism of families is mentioned in a way that indicates its being no *extraordinary* occurrence,—but a *thing of course*. This is remarkably the case as to Lydia. “The Lord opened her heart, that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul. “And *when she was baptized and her family*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there.” I cannot but consider any person unreasonable, who will not admit, that the mode of expression here is one which would naturally be used respecting a thing that was customary. And it is worthy of notice, moreover, that the baptism of her family is immediately connected in the record with *her own* reception of the truth; and that upon *her own* faithfulness to the Lord she founds her plea for

their coming under her roof.—Similar remarks might be made as to the case of the Philippian jailor, who “was baptized, *he and all his* straightway.”

*Thirdly* :—Having thus the unquestionable fact of the *baptism of families*,—a fact according with the ancient practice of the circumcision of families—and supported by the use of a word that properly denotes a man’s children or offspring,—we are warranted to assume, that such was the usual practice, unless our baptist brethren can show, that the cases of Lydia, the jailor, and Stephanas, were in the circumstances of them *extraordinary*, and therefore not fair specimens of what was customary. Here is the turning point on this part of the argument. If they cannot make out this,—or if they cannot make it out without unnatural straining and inadmissible suppositions, our ground is firm.

Let us then, *in the fourth place*, examine a little the principles on which they endeavour to set aside the inference from the examples in question.—“We really,” they allege, “cannot help its appearing unnatural to suppose that there were no little children in those families; we have to do only with the *fact*; and in each of the cases, we have clear evidence that there were none.” What then is this evidence?

First, it has been said, there were no children in the family of Lydia; for when Paul and Silas were released from their imprisonment, “they entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.”

We are here informed, it is alleged, that the family of Lydia were "brethren," who were capable of being "comforted" by Paul and Silas at their departure.—Now, let the reader observe the wonderfully slender ground on which this argument rests. It is simply this, "They saw these brethren in the house of Lydia,—therefore they were Lydia's family—and "Lydia's family only!" Surely, compared with this,

"The spider's most attenuated thread  
Is rope, is cable."—

How preposterously absurd, to be sure, to suppose that any persons should ever come into a man's house, except the members of his own family! and especially when a common friend is there, the object of deep interest and warm attachment, about to take a last farewell, whom none of course, in such circumstances, could have any wish to see! Seriously, is it inconceivable that the converts at Philippi should have met in the house of Lydia? Is it very improbable, that they should have been there at a season so intensely interesting,—waiting the result, and engaged in prayer for the suffering preachers of the word, like those who met for this exercise, in the house of John Mark, on behalf of Peter?—or that they should have convened there for the purpose of taking farewell of Paul and Silas?—Let the reader further observe, what an improbable and heartless supposition is involved in this argument;—a supposition which no one surely would willingly admit,

unless necessitated by an express declaration :—namely, that Lydia and her family were the only converts, except the jailor and his, made during Paul's stay at Philippi. But this is not only contrary to all probability; it is opposed to obvious fact. The history is very brief; and the particular incidents selected for detail are only a few out of many, distinguished by the peculiarity of their circumstances or consequences. Sometimes nothing is recorded at all, but the fact of the preachers having visited the countries, although we afterwards learn, incidentally, that they had met with much success. Thus in Acts xviii. 23, we are informed, that Paul “went over the “countries of Galatia and Phrygia in order, *strengthening all the disciples:*” yet all that is said of these countries before, is, “When they had gone through—out Phrygia and the region of Galatia”—Acts xvi. 6. Are we then to suppose, that Paul and his associates remained at Philippi “*many days,*” (verses 12, 18,) at a time, too, when God was so remarkably blessing the labours of his servants,—“always,” as the apostle himself expresses it, “causing them to “triumph in Christ, and making manifest the savour “of his knowledge by them in every place,”—and that the entire product of their preaching for that time in the chief city of Macedonia, was *one family?*—for the jailor's was at the very close of their stay, and arose from very peculiar circumstances. I refrain from saying what I think, of the argument that requires such a supposition to support it.—But still further. From the manner in which the apostle

writes to the church at Philippi, it appears evidently to have been, from the first, a numerous and flourishing one. Let the reader consult the following passages of that epistle—chap. i. 4—7; i. 30; ii. 12; iv. 3; iv. 15, 16,—or, if he please, peruse the whole; and draw the inference for himself, whether the apostle had seen no more fruit of his labours, when there, than the members of two families!

Equally futile are the proofs adduced, that there were no infant children in the households of the jailor, and of Stephanas:—namely, that respecting the former it is said, Paul “spoke the word of the Lord to “all that were in his house,” Acts xvi. 32,—which supposes them all capable of understanding and receiving what he spoke: and respecting the latter, that they “addicted themselves to the ministry of the “saints,” 1 Cor. xvi. 15, which shows them to have been all capable of feeling and practising Christian benevolence. The simple answer to this is, that such *general expressions* are perfectly common, both in conversation and in writing. When we ascribe to a *family* anything of which infants are universally understood to be incapable, we never think of making a formal exception of them. The man who from my saying “I spoke to the whole family—to all in the house,”—or “They are a very benevolent family—they lay themselves out for doing good,”—should conclude that I was certainly speaking of a family in which there were no *infant children*,—I should be apt to regard either as in jest, or as a hypercritical fool. When Joshua says, “As for me *and my house*, we

will *serve the Lord*," does any one ever think of inferring, that his family could not contain any infants, because infants were incapable of serving the Lord? Yet the inference would be as legitimate in this case, as in either of the others: and it may not be amiss for our baptist brethren, to make it the subject of a little self-examination, by what principle it is that they are led to such a conclusion in the one case, when they never think of it in the other:—what is the precise difference in the state of their minds, when they read the 15th verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua, and when they read the 34th verse of the sixteenth chapter of the Acts, or the 16th verse of the sixteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians.

Let us only consider for a moment, into what ridiculous absurdities we should be led by the general adoption of such a principle of criticism.—The children of Israel were commanded, in preparing the passover, "to take a lamb for *a house*, according to the "*number of souls*." Are we to infer from this, that they numbered the mouths of sucking infants?—or that there were no such infants at that time in the families of Israel?—They were enjoined to eat it "with their loins girt, and their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand:"—children could not do this; therefore we conclude again that there must have been none:—and the conclusion is irresistibly confirmed, by the testimony of the Psalmist respecting the passage through the Red Sea,—for "they went through the flood," he says, "*on foot*;" which



infants, none will dispute, were incapable of doing.—When the paralytic Eneas was cured by Peter, it is said, “all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord;”—from which, amongst other inferences, it will follow, that these places presented the singular anomaly, of a population without infants!—Paul writes to the Thessalonians, that “if any would not work, neither should he eat:”—were the babes of Thessalonica, then, to be left to starve, because they were incapable of earning, or of being willing to earn, their daily bread?—Let no baptist say indignantly, “This is ridiculous,—it is making a joke of the matter.” I grant it is. It is fit for nothing else. But let him recollect, that the materials of the joke are furnished by his own friends. Let the *argument* (if it must have a name to which it has no title) be withdrawn, and there will be no room left for the *joke*. I am only ashamed indeed of being obliged to argue it at all. It is not worth the ammunition.

6. I add, as a *sixth* general observation, the extreme improbability, that a change, which must have been felt so important by those whose minds had been all along habituated to the connexion of their children with themselves in the covenant of promise, should have taken place, without the slightest recorded symptom of opposition or demurring.

We know the strength of attachment to ancient institutions, felt and manifested by the Jewish converts to the faith of the gospel,—their extreme reluctance to part even with those observances which belonged exclusively to that system of shadows, of which the

body was Christ. They were still "zealous for the law;" and they showed their zeal by their indignation at Paul, for having, as they had been informed, taught their countrymen that they should not "*circumcise their children*, neither walk after the customs." Is it likely, then, nay is it at all conceivable, on the supposition of the new system entirely excluding children from its appropriate rites, that not a hint should appear of any one having been startled by the change,—that not a symptom should have discovered itself of any disposition to object or complain?—nay more—that none of the bitter adversaries of the Christian scheme should ever have cavilled at this, or founded upon it any part of their disputatious opposition!—That to Jewish eyes it must have appeared an innovation of no trifling magnitude, will not be questioned by any one, who duly considers how strongly the connexion, supposed to be disannulled, was sanctioned in their minds, by the sacred provisions of God's covenant with their venerated fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;—how firmly it was settled in their practice, not only by the regular circumcision of their own offspring, but also by the admission of Gentiles *by families* into the communion of Israel; and how intimately it was incorporated with all their most favourite and cherished conceptions.—Considering, therefore, the attachment of the believing Jews to ancient practices on the one hand, and the eagerness of their unbelieving countrymen, on the other, to avail themselves of every possible ground of objection,—the circumstance of no opposition having

been made to such a change, and no appeal rested upon it against the Christian doctrine, and the claims of Jesus of Nazareth, when it might have been done with so much plausibility and effect,—is in my mind a proof, of no inconsiderable weight, that no such change had actually been introduced.

7. Another remarkable circumstance, akin to the preceding, is,—that when the judaizing teachers insisted on the Gentile converts submitting to circumcision,—although there can be no doubt that this was done, in every case, *in connexion with their children*;—yet, when the doctrine and practice of these perverters of the gospel came to be discussed in the assembly of the apostles and elders and brethren at Jerusalem, no notice whatsoever is taken of the inconsistency with the spirituality of the new dispensation of administering *any* sign to *children*, on the admission of their parents into the Christian commonwealth,—or of treating them as if they continued to have any connexion at all with their parents, in reference to the blessings of the covenant, or of the church of God.—Now, surely, if such connexion really *was* inconsistent with the spirituality of the Gospel and the New Testament church, it must have been an error of no trifling moment; and it is reasonable to conclude, that, upon an occasion which brought the subject so immediately and formally under notice, some disapproval should have been intimated and recorded, of the error itself, and the practice founded upon it: and the absence of all such intimation is a collateral evidence, that there was no such inconsist-

ency, and that children were to be held, and treated, as sustaining the same covenant relation to their parents as formerly.—I hope I am clearly understood. When these judaizing teachers insisted on the circumcision of Gentile proselytes to the faith and profession of the gospel, they doubtless administered the rite according to the instituted and universal practice,—the children being circumcised with the parent. But if this covenant relation of parent and child had, under the gospel, been abolished, as being inconsistent with its spiritual nature, it is hardly conceivable, that, on such an occasion, on so natural and fair an opportunity, no notice whatever should be taken of such abolition, and of such inconsistency. This, I say, forms an additional corroborative indication of the continuance, in this respect, of the former state of things.

8. Let it be further considered, that we have no recorded instance of the baptism of any person, grown to manhood, that had been born of Jewish converts, or of Gentile proselytes to the faith of Christ ;—nor have we, in any of the apostolic epistles to the churches, the remotest allusion, in the form of direction or of warning, to the reception of such children by baptism into the Christian church, upon their professing the faith in which they had been brought up.

To every mind that duly considers the case, this must appear a very remarkable circumstance. The class of individuals alluded to must have been a very numerous one indeed, and one too exceedingly im-

portant and interesting. But although, in the epistles to the churches, instructions, various and minute, are given, on points connected with their order, and purity, and increase, respecting some of which inquiries had been made by them at the apostles, we have nothing, in any shape whatever, on this subject.

“ I have heard it alleged,” says Mr Walker,\* “ that this is drawing an inference from the *silence* of “ scripture, which that silence does not warrant. But “ the objection is made by those who do not, or will “ not, understand the argument. I do not argue “ from the *mere* silence of the scriptures, that the “ thing about which they are silent was, or was not. “ But this I say, that so far as it is probable, from “ the nature of any thing, that if it were so or so, the “ scriptures would not be silent about it, so far is “ their silence about it a probable argument that it “ was not so. Now, it appears to me, that baptism, “ upon the baptist principles, is such a thing; and “ from the silence of scripture on the subject, I cannot “ but see a confirmed probability that these principles “ are false.—And it is vain to say, that what the “ scriptures relate of the baptism of *adult* believers is “ sufficient, and shows that there is not that silence “ of which I speak. For every instance of adult bap- “ tism recorded in the Bible is an instance—not of “ the baptism of one brought up from childhood in “ the profession of Christianity—but of one who had “ never before professed Christianity. So that there

\* Thoughts on Baptism, &c.

“is that absolute silence on the subject which I have asserted—so far as the baptist principles are concerned in it.”

Our baptist brethren present us, in support of their system, with instances of the baptism of *adults*. They would do something more to their purpose, if they could produce one or two examples of the baptism of *such adults* as those mentioned. These would be in point. But nothing of the kind is to be found;—nothing in the form either of fact, or allusion, or advice, or precept. And the simplest explanation, and one in every respect sufficient and satisfactory, of the total absence of everything of the sort, is the supposition of what so many other proofs concur to establish,—that the children of the converts who composed the churches had been baptized with their parents, on these parents entering as disciples into the fellowship of the New Testament church.

9. This supposition, let it be further noticed, is in coincidence with the fact, of children being addressed in the apostolic epistles to the churches of Christ. Thus in Ephes. vi. 1, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Col. iii. 20, “Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.”

That such preceptive intimations of the Lord’s will are not to be understood as addressed merely to those adult members of families, who were at the same time members of churches, but as including children from their earliest capability of instruction and admonition, will be admitted by every candid mind that considers

their connexion with the injunctions to parents which immediately follow:—"And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." The duties of parents, in the bringing up of their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, commence with the first dawn of reason, and must keep pace with the gradual opening of the mind:—and it is a part of this duty, to point out to their children, as early as they are capable of understanding, the above commands of the Lord *as addressed to them*; to show them how the Lord, the Head of the Church, the good Shepherd, who gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom,—the kind and condescending Saviour, who said "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,"—how HE in these words tells them their duty, and shows them the motives,—motives of grateful love to himself,—by which they should be influenced in the fulfilling of it. Do our baptist brethren wait till their children are members of churches, before they venture to put their finger on the passages we have quoted, and say, "This is addressed to you?" If they do not, they act inconsistently with their principles; for if the words were not originally addressed to the young children of the parents in the churches, neither are they now:—and yet if they do, they discharge their parental trust, as it appears to me, in a very defective and unscriptural manner. Of

many of them whom I know, and esteem, and love, I am persuaded better things. Yet every baptist, who, in the christian tuition of his family, opens his Bible, and points out to his little interesting charge the words "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,"—and tenderly inculcates the duty by the motives that are involved in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord,"—tacitly admits by his practice that young children were addressed by the apostles,—and that, not merely as members of families, but, since the epistles were directed to churches, as in some way connected, by virtue of their relation to their parents, with the christian communities to which the apostles wrote. And this is in perfect harmony with the baptism of families, and with all the preceding particulars;—and in harmony too with all the directions given as to the treatment of children in the Old Testament Scriptures, when their covenant relation to their parents, and their connexion with the community of the people of God, are not questioned.

10. The circumstances of the early history of the church, after the apostolic age, are unaccountable on antipædobaptist principles.

I am not about to refer to, or argue from, the authority of the Fathers,—or to found any conclusions on the practice of the post-apostolic age. If I did not think my principles, on this or any other subject, borne out by the scriptures alone, I should relinquish them. But a question of *fact* may derive corroboration from the records of antiquity; and I am the



more induced to refer to those records, because my baptist brethren hold them to be so decisive in their favour. They are accustomed to allege, that the first writer by whom infant baptism is expressly mentioned, is Tertullian, who lived in the beginning of the third century, a hundred years and more after the apostolic age:—and he, says Dr Cox, “in fact CONDEMNS it!” Emphasis is thus laid on the peculiar *opinion* of this father. But the question before us is not one of *opinion*, but of *fact*. Tertullian was remarkable for singular and extravagant opinions. “He was endowed,” says Mosheim, “with a great genius, but seemed deficient in point of judgment. His piety was warm and vigorous, but, at the same time, melancholy and austere. His learning was extensive and profound; and yet his credulity and superstition were such as might have been expected from the darkest ignorance. And with respect to his reasonings, they had more of that subtlety that dazzles the imagination, than of that solidity that brings light and conviction to the mind.”—On the particular subject before us, he not only advised the delay of baptism in the case of *infants*, but also of *unmarried* persons. Will our baptist brethren admit the inference as to the latter, which they draw so complacently as to the former? The truth is, that, as to *both* the *legitimate* inference is the very contrary. The very *advice to delay*, or, if you will, the *condemnation* of baptism in infancy (though these two are far from being the same, and the former alone properly belongs to Tertullian) is a conclusive evidence of the *previous*

*existence of the practice.* This is the point. The *opinion* is nothing to the purpose. It has no authority. If our baptist friends think it has, let them do the good old father justice, and follow it fully.—His *condemning* the practice of baptizing infants, so far from being in their favour, militates against them. It not only proves its previous existence; it proves more. It proves that it was no innovation. When a man condemns a practice, he is naturally desirous to support his peculiar views by the strongest arguments. Could Tertullian, therefore, have shown, that the practice was of recent origin; that it had been introduced in his own day, or even at any time subsequent to the lives of the apostles; we may be very sure he would have availed himself of a ground so obvious, and so conclusive. It proves still further, that the baptism of infants was the *general practice of the church* in Tertullian's time. His opinion is his own. It is that of a dissident from the universal body of professing christians. He never pretends to say, that any part of the church had held or acted upon it. Of his *opinion* and *advice*, then, we may say, *Valeant quantum valere possunt.* But the total absence of any attempt to support and recommend them by appeal to the practice of the church in apostolic times, or of any part of the church at any intervening period between those times and his own, certainly goes far to prove the *matter of fact*, with which alone we have to do,—that infant baptism was the original and universal practice.

“Origen, who was contemporary with Tertullian,

“ expressly declares infant-baptism to have been the  
 “ constant usage of the church from the apostles.  
 “ He says, ‘ The baptism of the church is given for  
 “ the forgiveness of sins : but why are infants, *by the*  
 “ *usage of the church*, baptized, if there is nothing in  
 “ them that needs forgiveness ?’

“ Further, he says, ‘ *Infants are baptized* for the  
 “ remission of sins ; for none is free from pollution,  
 “ though his life be but the length of one day upon  
 “ the earth. And it is for that reason, because by  
 “ baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away,  
 “ that *infants are baptized.*’

“ Again, he observes, ‘ *The church had from the*  
 “ *apostles an order to give baptism to infants ;* for  
 “ they, to whom the Divine mysteries were com-  
 “ mitted, knew that there was in all persons the  
 “ natural pollution of sin, which must be done away  
 “ by water and the Spirit.’

“ Now, as Origen, in these passages, argues from  
 “ infant-baptism to prove original sin, we may con-  
 “ clude it was an uncontroverted usage of the church :  
 “ for otherwise, he could not with propriety have used  
 “ it as an argument to establish another point.”\*

This remark is judicious and strong. The reader will also bear in mind, that it is solely with *matter of fact* that we are at present concerned, and not with the particular opinions of fathers, whether right or wrong.

\* Sermons on the Mode and Subjects of Baptism, &c. By Joseph Lathrop, D.D., New England.

“Cyprian, who wrote about a hundred and fifty years after the apostles, gives a fuller testimony to “this fact” (of the baptism of infants being the uncontroverted usage of the church). “In his time, a “question was started by one Fidus, not whether “infants might be baptized, but whether baptism “ought not to be given them on the eighth day, according to the law of circumcision? This question “was proposed to a council of sixty-six bishops, convened at Carthage, who unanimously resolved, that “the baptism of infants ought not to be deferred to “the eighth day, but might be given them at any time “before. And a large letter to this purpose, containing the reasons of the resolve, was written and “signed by Cyprian, in the name of the council. “Now — if infant-baptism had been a usage lately “introduced, some or all of these ministers must have “known its recent origin. And if so, it was very “strange that not one of them intimated any scruple “about it. Whether infants should be baptized, “seems not to have been at all a question; but only “whether their baptism needed to be deferred till the “eighth day, which, without hesitancy, was determined in the negative.\*

“Austin, about three hundred years after the apostles, had a controversy with Pelagius about original “sin; and to prove it, he frequently urges infant “baptism, demanding why infants are baptized for “the remission of sins, if they have none? Pelagius,

\* Ibid.

“ though greatly puzzled with the argument, yet never  
 “ pretends that infant baptism was an unscriptural in-  
 “ novation, or a partial usage in the church ; which,  
 “ had it been true, a man of his very extensive  
 “ acquaintance with the world must have known :  
 “ and had he known it, he doubtless would have  
 “ said it, when he found himself embarrassed with  
 “ the argument.\* But, far from intimating any such  
 “ thing, when some charged upon him the denial of  
 “ infant baptism, as a consequence of his opinion, he  
 “ disavows the consequence, and complains that he  
 “ had been *slanderosly represented as denying bap-*  
 “ *tism to infants.* He asks, ‘ Who can be so im-  
 “ pious, as to hinder infants from being baptized,

\* Mr Milner justly deduces the same inference from the in-  
 stance of Cœlestius, the supporter of the Pelagian heresy in  
 Africa, in the beginning of the fifth century.—“ He was accused  
 “ of denying original sin ; and when he was pressed with the  
 “ custom of the church in baptizing infants, as a proof of her  
 “ belief in all ages that infants needed redemption, he declared  
 “ that they had no need of remission, and yet ought to be  
 “ baptized, that they might be sanctified in Christ.”—“ On being  
 “ asked, whether he had not asserted, that infants are born in  
 “ the state in which Adam was before transgression, all that  
 “ could be obtained from him was, that infants needed baptism,  
 “ and ought to be baptized.”—The first of two inferences drawn,  
 in a note, from this case, is : “ That the right of baptizing infants  
 “ was allowed on all sides to have been of apostolical and primi-  
 “ tive authority. It is impossible that men so shrewd and  
 “ learned as Cœlestius and his master would not have objected  
 “ to the novelty of infant baptism, had it been a novelty.”—  
 Chap. III. Cent. V.

“and born again in Christ.’ And, citing those “words, ‘Except one be born of water and of the “Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,’ “he says, who can be so impious as to refuse to an “infant, of whatever age, the common redemption “of mankind? And many other expressions he “uses, which plainly suppose, that infant baptism “had been practised universally, and time out of “mind.”\*

This last citation shows, whence the application originated of the term *regeneration* to baptism; namely, from our Lord’s language, “Except a man be *born of “water, and of the Spirit.”* The phrase, “born of water,” very naturally accounts for the early application of the terms significant of the spiritual change, to the external symbol. The phraseology indeed gives no countenance to the unscriptural and irrational figment of *baptismal regeneration*, any more than the declaration, “This is my body,” gives to transubstantiation, or the real presence. It may show us, however, whence the foolish and pernicious fancy arose; and at all events, it explains the early use of similar phraseology, by the christian writers, in regard to baptism.—The phraseology of Pelagius, in the preceding quotation, appears to have come down current from an earlier age.—“Irenæus, who wrote “about sixty-seven years after the apostles, and was “born, it is said, before the death of St. John, and “was acquainted with Polycarp, who was John’s dis-

\* Ibid.

“ciple, says concerning Christ, He came to save all  
 “persons by himself, who by him are *regenerated*  
 “unto God, infants, little ones, youths, and elderly  
 “persons.”—That by being “regenerated unto God”  
 he means being baptized, candour, I think, ought to  
 admit, when the expression is compared with that  
 of Pelagius, and when the explanation of Irenæus  
 himself is considered—“When Christ gave his dis-  
 “ciples the command of *regenerating unto God*, he  
 “said, Go, teach all nations, *baptizing them*,” &c.  
 Now, our baptist brethren themselves being judges,  
*infants* are incapable of being “regenerated unto  
 God” by means of human instruction. So far as the  
 agency of man is concerned, they could only be par-  
 takers of the external sign.

“Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after  
 “the apostolic age, says, ‘We have not received the  
 “carnal but the spiritual circumcision by baptism—  
 “and it is enjoined to all persons to receive it in  
 “the same way.’ Here he plainly considers bap-  
 “tism as succeeding in the place of circumcision,  
 “and consequently as being designed for infants, as  
 “*that* was: which opinion he could not easily have  
 “fallen into, if the apostles had universally, both in  
 “doctrine and practice, rejected infants. In one of  
 “his apologies for the Christians, he says, ‘Several  
 “persons among us, of sixty and seventy years old,  
 “who were *made disciples to Christ from their child-*  
 “*hood*, do continue uncorrupt.’ *Made disciples.*  
 “He uses the same word which is used in the  
 “commission, *Disciple all nations, baptizing them.*

“ If they were *made disciples*, they were doubtless “baptized.”\* ”

Does the reader marvel that infant baptism should not be spoken of more frequently, and in more direct and explicit terms, during the first century after the apostles? Let him only suppose the uncontroverted universality of the practice from the beginning, and his wonder will cease. That which goes on as the understood and established usage, it is quite natural to expect should be but seldom spoken of, and, when it is, only in the way of indirect and incidental allusion. *Circumcision* is never alluded to for more than a century and a half after its institution, when an occurrence in the history (the violation of Jacob's daughter, the proposal of marriage with her by the prince of Shechem, and the artful revenge of the patriarch's sons) leads to the incidental mention of it;— and from that time, it is never noticed again for nearly two centuries and a half, till the circumcision of the younger son of Moses by his mother Zipporah.— The case is similar, during the first century after the apostles, with regard to infant baptism. It is occasionally alluded to, in terms, on which, we are not disposed to deny, an adversary, now that it has come to be controverted, may plausibly put another construction; and the first that speaks of it in plain language, and by its proper name, is the first that questions and objects to it. And on what grounds does he object? Not that the practice was without

\* Ibid.



apostolic authority;—not that it was a recent and unscriptural innovation;—not even that it was only partially observed in the church:—no; he never hints any such things as these. His objections proceed, chiefly, on a superstitious notion he had come to attach to the rite, on which he founds a proposal for the delay of its administration;—a proposal, including not merely infants, but unmarried persons, and having precisely the same authority as to both,—the authority, that is, of Tertullian's fanciful singularity.

“Curcellæus remarks,” says Dr. Cox, “The baptism of infants in the first two centuries after Christ, was altogether unknown.” But of what amount is the *gratis-dictum* of Curcellæus, or of any man? With regard to the *first* of these two centuries, which we may denominate the apostolic century, we claim the privilege, whatever Curcellæus may remark, of forming our own judgment from the apostolic records themselves, till other and higher authority be produced. And as to the *second*; even supposing we were wrong in our interpretation of Justin Martyr and Irenæus,—what are we to make of Tertullian and Origen in the beginning of the third? According to the remark of Curcellæus, the practice of infant baptism was “*altogether unknown*” till after the beginning of this century; which amounts to the same thing as saying, that these fathers witnessed its introduction, and were aware of its being a practice totally new and unheard of before! How then comes Tertullian to assume its previous existence, without the remotest hint of its novelty or its partial extent?

And how comes Origen to speak of it as the "usage of the church," and received as "an order from the apostles?"—And how comes it, I ask further, and I ask it emphatically,—that no baptist has ever been able to discover, and to point out, the time when infant baptism was introduced—to trace the practice to any origin on this side of the apostolic age? Had nothing of the kind existed originally, then there was, from the first, throughout all the churches, a standing practical testimony against it. Yet not the slightest vestige is to be found, by which its introduction into the christian church, and its early and universal reception, can be traced. The time of Tertullian was the time, not when it began to be *practised*, but only to be *questioned*; and questioned, not as *unauthorised* and *unlawful*, but, on certain grounds of the author's own, as *generally* (for he admits of exceptions) *inexpedient*.—It has been said, indeed, that about the end of the second century, an opinion began to prevail, of the necessity of baptism to salvation; that parents naturally took the alarm for the salvation of their children; and that hence arose infant baptism. Now, it is very convenient to find a fact in history, on which we can found a plausible hypothesis. But we must still distinguish between the hypothesis and the fact. The latter is history, the former is fancy only, and conjecture. And, if we are to deal in theory and hypothesis at all, to me it appears, in the present case, an incomparably more natural and reasonable conjecture, that the *opinion arose from the practice*, than that the *practice arose from the opinion*. If about

the end of the second century, "parents took the "alarm for the salvation of their children," and had them, on this account, baptized, then the whole Christian church must have previously, for nearly two hundred years, believed in the salvation of their children *without* baptism. Now, when we have *hypothesis* on both sides, that is most entitled to credit which is simplest and most natural. The question therefore is, (since no historian has recorded this alarm of parents, *as the origin of infant baptism,*) whether is it most likely, that the universal practice of the baptism of infants should have led the minds of men to connect their baptism with their salvation, and thus to fall into the opinion of its necessity, and the danger of omitting it; or whether, in opposition to the previous conviction of two centuries, the opinion came first to be entertained, and the baptism of infants to be founded upon it, and to have become almost instantaneously universal?—I must honestly say, that I can entertain but a low estimate of that man's perspicacity, or candour, that can hesitate between these two suppositions.

A similar remark may be made, respecting certain other practices, which were early introduced into the church, and which our antipædobaptist brethren are very fond of quoting, as on the same footing with infant baptism:—the early practice, for example, of *administering the Lord's Supper to infants*. The previous existence of the admission of infants to *one* Christian ordinance, affords a very natural origin for the practice of introducing them to another. The

one might very readily be grafted upon the other ; whereas it is very far from being so easily accounted for, that both should have taken place so early, and the former so universally, without the least opposition or noise.

11. I have only one other particular to add to this series. It is the remarkable fact, of the entire absence, so far as my recollection serves me, of any thing resembling the baptism of *households or families*, in the accounts of the propagation of the gospel by our baptist brethren. That the apostles baptized families, no believer of the scripture history can doubt; and we have seen, that the manner in which such baptisms are recorded, or referred to, indicates that it was no extraordinary thing. Now it surely *is* an extraordinary thing, that in the journals and periodical accounts of baptist missions in heathen countries, we should never meet with anything of the kind. I question, whether, in the half century of the history of the baptist mission in India, there is to be found a single instance of the baptism of a household. When do we find a baptist missionary saying, “When she “was baptized and her family”—or, “I baptized the “family of Krishnoo,” or any other convert? We have the baptism of individuals; but nothing corresponding to the apostolic baptism of families. This fact is a strong corroborative proof, that there is some difference between their practice and that of the apostles. If the practice of both were the same, there might surely be expected *some little* correspondence in the facts connected with it.

In reply to this matter-of-fact observation, I have been told of baptist ministers by whom whole households *have* been baptized. I have asked in return, whether these have been families to which the gospel has for the first time been preached, and by whose members it has been simultaneously embraced,—families, that is, of *converts*; or whether they have not rather been families already christian, not converts to the faith of the gospel, but converts to the principles of antipædobaptism. To this question I have not, as yet, received any satisfactory answer. My readers must be sensible, that it is only cases of the former description that are at all in point:—and if in the reports of baptist missions such cases are to be found, sure I am that they are marvellously rare; and moreover, that the *manner* in which they are related is widely different from the *matter-of-course* manner in which they are mentioned in the narrative of the New Testament, or alluded to in the epistles.—I am not at all anxious, however, about establishing the fact in question. I have referred to it only as corroborative of an argument that is sufficiently complete without it.

Let me, in concluding this section, entreat the reader to *take all these things together*, calmly, dispassionately, candidly.—I have endeavoured to show, that the Old and New Testament churches, though different in their constitutional forms, and in the degree of their spirituality, are most clearly and distinctly represented, both by prophets under the former, and apostles under the latter dispensation, as

*substantially the same*:—that the connexion of children with their parents, in the promises of the covenant, and in the application of its sign and seal, existed under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, was interwoven with all the thoughts and feelings and practices of the Old Testament church, and pervaded and characterized the entire style and language of their sacred books:—that the prophets, in their inspired predictions relative to New Testament times, employ language, such as directly affirms, or evidently implies and assumes, the continuance of the same connexion under the approaching reign of the Messiah:—that, on coming forward to the New Testament records themselves, so far from finding any direct repeal, or even any indirect intimation of change in the previous state of things, we find language in perfect accordance with it, exactly such as, on the supposition of its continuance, we might, *a priori*, have expected the writers to use;—instead of an express declaration that children were no longer to be admitted to the seal of the covenant, and acknowledged as visible subjects of the reign of Christ, we have Christ himself saying, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God;” we have the apostles, in the very outset and establishment of that kingdom, declaring to Jews, without explanation or comment, “The promise is unto you and unto your children;” and we have the unquestioned fact of the baptism of *families*, recorded in terms such as indicate its having been, not an extraordinary, but a customary

thing, on the professed faith of their respective heads :—that it is exceedingly improbable, that a change of such magnitude and importance as the entire exclusion of children from the place they were accustomed to hold, should have been introduced without the slightest recorded symptom of opposition or demurring amongst the Jewish converts, tenacious as they showed themselves of the established usages,—or of objection and cavil on the part of those who lay at the catch for whatever they could get hold of against the new system :—that, so far from this, when the Judaizing teachers insisted on the necessity of the Gentile converts submitting to circumcision, which must of course have been administered to their children as well as to themselves, no notice whatever is taken by the apostles and elders assembled at Jerusalem, of the inconsistency with the spiritual nature of the new dispensation of administering to children, on the admission of their parents to the christian church, any sign of covenant connexion with them,—although an inconsistency so great as, in the opinion of our baptist brethren, to amount to a subversion of the spirituality of Messiah's kingdom :—that we have no recorded instance of the baptism of any adult that had been born of baptized proselytes, Jewish or Gentile, into the faith of Christ—although this class of persons must, on the antipædobaptist hypothesis, have been very numerous indeed :—that in the apostolic epistles to the churches, children are expressly addressed, not merely adults, but such as were yet to be “brought up in the nurture and admonition of

the Lord ;” and, although the spiritual training of them is especially devolved upon their parents, yet their being so addressed shows that they were considered by the writers as having connexion with the christian community :—that the circumstances of the early history of the church, after the time of the apostles, were such as do not admit of a satisfactory explanation on baptist principles,—whilst they are in perfect harmony with the supposition of pædobaptism having been the original practice,—this most simply and naturally accounting for other facts, rather than requiring to be accounted for by them :—and that the entire absence, in the history of the propagation of the gospel by antipædobaptists, of any thing resembling the baptism of *families* which we find in apostolic times, should lead our brethren more than to suspect a difference between their views and practice, and those of the first preachers of the kingdom of Christ.—I say, let the reader *take all these things together* ; let him connect them with the argument of the preceding section ; and let him form his own conclusion. Nothing could be easier, than to blow trumpets, and to make a flourish, and to shout and vaunt with the triumphant confidence of victory. But it is not victory that should be our object :—it is solely the discovery of truth and duty.—I prefer no claims to originality, in almost a single statement or argument I have advanced. If I have succeeded in bringing old arguments into a well connected and luminous form, it is all that I have aimed at. Truth does not suffer by time ; nor is a good old argument



at all the worse for its age. I can only say for myself, coolly and deliberately, and with perfect sincerity, that the more I have considered this case, I have ever felt my ground the firmer. Whether I may have conveyed the same impression to the minds of my readers, I cannot tell. It is certainly my prayer to God that I may, because I believe the conclusion, which I have been endeavouring to establish, has the sanction and authority of his word.

## SECTION III.

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THE IMPORTANT TRUTHS AND DUTIES WHICH THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS EXHIBITS, AND IMPRESSES ON OUR MINDS : —AND THE PERFECT CONSISTENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THIS ORDINANCE TO THEM WITH ALL THAT THE BIBLE TEACHES US RESPECTING THEM, AS SUBJECTS OF SALVATION, AND OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

It has often been asked by antipædobaptists, What are the *uses* of infant-baptism? What *good ends* are answered by it? And their own reply to the question may be given in the words of Mr Birt;\* “It is, on “every ground hitherto taken for its support, a *cause* “that in this world produces no *effect*—a *means* con- “nected with no *end*—a *cloud* that affords no *rain*— “a *tree* that yields no *fruit*.”—This representation, I hope to show, has a great deal more in it of boldness, than of truth.

It ought first to be observed, however, that, with regard to all such questions as the one so often put and so confidently answered, there is obviously a *pre-*

\* *Strictures*, p. 10.

*vious* question, namely, that which we have been considering in the preceding sections, *Is it, or is it not, a divine institution?* If it be once shown to possess the authority of the supreme Lawgiver, it will not be disputed, that our first and immediate duty is compliance. What he appoints, it is ours to observe. Questions of a similar kind might have been asked respecting *circumcision*. Multitudes of those to whom that rite was administered died in infancy: of what use was it to them? Multitudes who lived till manhood, never obtained the blessings of the temporal inheritance; what was the benefit of it to them?—But it is not with questions of this nature that we have, in the first instance, to do. Our *first* inquiry should be, *What is God's will?* not *Why is it his will?*

Still, however, we freely admit, it is reasonable to expect that there should be some uses apparent of whatever the God of infinite wisdom enjoins:—and on the present occasion, we feel no difficulty in meeting the inquiry. Of baptism as administered to infants we are at no loss to point out uses, which we conceive to be of no trivial magnitude. We shall endeavour to show these by considering it in the two following lights:—1. AS A MEMORIAL OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS:—2. AS A REMEMBRANCER OF IMPORTANT DUTIES, AND AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO THEIR PERFORMANCE.

1. In considering infant-baptism in the former of these views, as a *memorial of fundamental truths*, it becomes necessary to take some notice, in the first

place, of the general signification of the rite itself. It appears, then, to me very evident, that the emblematic significance of baptism is to be found in the *purifying nature of the element employed in it*,—in the *cleansing virtue of water*. Almost every instance in which the ordinance is spoken of, or alluded to, with any intimation of its meaning, might be adduced in proof of this. The following passages are but a specimen of many: Acts xxii. 16, “And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Eph. v. 25, 26, “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water, through the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” In this latter passage, spiritual purification is no doubt intended; but it contains such an allusion to the ordinance of baptism with water, as leads us to conclude, that this spiritual purification is what it is designed principally to represent.—A similar allusion there seems to be in Tit. iii. 5, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

From these and other passages it appears, that baptism, by the emblem of the cleansing virtue of water, denotes the removal of sin, in its guilt, and in its pollution. Of such allusions, indeed, the scriptures are full. And surely, that view which is most frequently

exhibited to our attention, and which both on the subject of justification and of sanctification, imparts, if I may so speak, a peculiar figurative complexion to the current language of scripture, I am warranted to consider as at least the principal, if not even the exclusive import of the institution.

But according to the views of our baptist brethren, *washing*, or *cleansing*, so far from being the exclusive, is not even the principal, but only a secondary meaning of the rite.—Whilst the general tenor of the language of scripture, as well as a number of particular passages, seems to place its symbolical meaning in the *nature of the element employed*, it is by them placed principally, and by some of them indeed, as would appear from their manner of expressing themselves, almost solely, in *the mode in which that element is used*.

The passages referred to by them, in support of this notion, are the two following: Rom. vi. 3, 4, “ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized “ into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? “ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into “ death; that like as Christ was raised up from the “ dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also “ should walk in newness of life.” Col. ii. 12, “ Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are “ risen with him, through the faith of the operation “ of God who hath raised him from the dead.”—In these passages, our brethren conceive, there is an obvious reference to the mode of baptism by immersion. The apostle represents this ordinance, to use

the language of Mr Maclean, in his Commission, p. 137, as “exhibiting the *death, burial, and resurrection* of Christ, together with the christian’s *communion* with, and *conformity* to him therein.” The baptized person’s communion with Christ in his death and burial, is represented by his being *laid under the water*; and his communion with him in his resurrection, by his being *raised out of it*.

Two things may just be noticed here, before proceeding to the explanation of the passages. The first is, that it is obviously incorrect, to speak of the ordinance as “exhibiting the *death* of Christ,” as well as his burial and resurrection; for whatever resemblance fancy may imagine to the two latter, there is surely no representation of the former. The *death* can only be considered as *implied* in the *burial*.—The second is, (what has been largely shown by others,\*) that even to the burial and resurrection of Christ, the immersion of a body under water, and its emersion from it, bear but a very indistinct and remote resemblance. The mind may easily indeed habituate itself to the idea of likeness, between being let down under *earth* and raised out of it, and being let down under *water* and raised out of it. But where is the likeness, between the latter of these and the carrying of a body, by a lateral door into a cavern hewn out of a rock, and that body reviving, and coming forth by the same door?—which were the real circumstances of the burial and resurrection of the Saviour. I confess this

\* See particularly Mr Ewing’s essay.

resemblance, on which so much stress is laid by our baptist brethren, has always appeared to me but a far-fetched fancy. I shall say nothing stronger, lest I should possibly be in the wrong in so considering it. Of one thing, however, I must express my firm conviction, namely, that any allusion at all to the mode of baptism, is in no respect necessary to the right and easy understanding of the passages in question. And if this can be shown, it will follow of course that they form but a flimsy foundation for the superstructure, of sentiment and practice, that has been reared upon them. Let it not be said, that other pædobaptists have thought differently, have admitted an allusion, and endeavoured to explain it in other ways. I cannot help that. I state my own views, and wish them to be tried, not by comparison with those of others, but by the test of the Bible. It is a puny and pitiful way of carrying on a controversy, to prowl about amongst different writers on the same side of a question, for the purpose of detecting, and setting forth in contrasted columns, every little discrepancy between them; with the view, covert or avowed, of drawing the reader to the conclusion, that they cannot be right who so differ from one another. Our baptist friends are rather too fond of this attempt to divide us against ourselves. Yet were it altogether an honourable description of warfare, it is one in which we might venture on competition, without despairing of success.

With regard to the passages in question, Mr Maclean, the eminent baptist writer referred to a

little ago, well explains their spiritual meaning to be—that, Christ having “died substitutionally” for our sins, and “risen again for our justification,” believing sinners are regarded as having been, “by a “gracious constitution,” “so comprehended in, and “accounted one with him, as to have died in his “death, been buried in his burial, and raised again “in his resurrection.”\* This I take to be the true principle of interpretation for the whole context of the passage in Rom. vi. But that this blessed truth, (with which, as the same writer justly observes, the scriptures abound,) is “signified to believers in their “baptism, *wherein the death, burial, and resurrection “of Christ are re-acted, in a figure, upon their own “persons,*”—the language employed does not seem, either necessarily or naturally, to imply.

To be “*baptized into Christ*” is to be baptized into the faith of him as the Messiah;—into the faith of his divine mission, character, and work. To be “*baptized into his death*” is to be baptized into the faith of his death, in the view which the gospel gives of it, as the death of a surety or substitute, making atonement for the sins of those for whom he died.—Now, by being thus “baptized into his death,” says the apostle, we are “*buried with him.*” The simple meaning of this expression evidently is, that by being baptized into the faith of his death, as the death of our surety and substitute, we become *partakers with him in it.* When the apostle, pursuing

\* Commission, page 140.



his beautiful illustration of the spiritual connexion of believers with Christ, and the practical obligations thence arising, says in the eighth verse, "Now if "we be *dead with Christ*, we believe that we shall "also live with him," he uses a phrase of equivalent import with the one before us. To be *dead with Christ*, and to be *buried with Christ*, are the same thing. The latter of the two phrases appears to be used in the fourth verse, chiefly for the sake of *completing the apostle's figure*. As it was necessary, in order to Christ's *rising*, that he should be *laid in the grave*; so, *in the figure*, it is necessary that we should be viewed as *buried with him*, in order to our *rising with him* to newness of life:—

"Ours the cross, the grave, the skies."

The simple meaning is this:—Since, in our being baptized into Jesus Christ, we were baptized *into his death*,—into the faith of his death as the death of a surety; we may be considered as, by faith, partaking with him in his death,—as *buried with him*; and that, with the special end of our rising with him, in a spiritual resemblance to his resurrection, and "walking in newness of life." Now it is quite obvious, that the *argument* of the apostle has not the remotest connexion with the *mode of baptism*. There is not the most distant occasion for the supposition of any such allusion, in order to render the passage intelligible; nor does the allusion, when supposed, impart to it any addition of force or propriety. The

meaning does not, in the least degree, depend on the manner of performing the ceremony: it turns entirely on its being baptism *into Christ's death*. Provided it was this, it makes not the smallest difference to the apostle's statement, or argument, or conclusion, whether we suppose it to have been by immersion, by pouring, or by sprinkling.

The same observations apply, with at least equal, if not greater force, to the parallel passage—Col. ii. 12. Believers are there said to be “*risen* as well as “*buried* with Christ in baptism.”—They were not baptized into the faith of Christ's *death* alone, as the death of their surety; they were baptized also into the faith of his *resurrection*, as the resurrection of their surety. And as, by the former, they became, in virtue of their connexion with him as a surety, partakers with him in his death; so, by the latter, they became, in the same way, partakers with him also in his resurrection. Being baptized into the faith of both, they had, by faith, fellowship or union with him in both. *How* is it, accordingly, that they are said to be “risen with him?” It is “*through the faith of the operation of God who raised him from the dead;*” that is, through the faith of his resurrection, as effected by the operation, or mighty power, of God.—Their being “*risen with him in baptism*” does not, therefore, refer to any emblematic representation of a resurrection in the mode of the ordinance; but to their being one with him in his resurrection, through faith in him as the surety of sinners. And in this view they might, with per-

fect propriety, be said to be risen with him in baptism, whatever was the mode of its administration, provided only it was baptism *into the faith of his resurrection*.

It has, indeed, been alleged, that, in whatever sense believers are said to be buried and risen with Christ, they could not be represented as so buried and risen *in baptism*, unless there were, in that ordinance, some *representation* of that burial and resurrection.—I observe in reply: 1st. Although the expression in Col. ii. 12, is “buried with him *in baptism*” (Εν τῷ βαπτισματι;) yet in Rom. vi. 4, it is different—“buried with him *by baptism* into his death,” (Δια τοῦ βαπτισματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτου;) which does not at all imply any such similitude in the ordinance, but directs the attention to *that into which they were baptized*; which, indeed, as I have noticed, is the point on which the whole reasoning turns.—2dly. Although it was, strictly speaking, *in believing*, that these converts became partakers with Christ in his death and resurrection; yet it is not unusual to speak of things as taking place *in baptism* which properly took place *by faith*, because baptism was the first public declaration of the faith of the converts, and of their belonging to the body of Christ. It is on the same principle, that they are spoken of as *in baptism* “washing away their sins,” and “putting on Christ.”—3dly. In Rom. vi., the language of the whole passage is figurative. The same principle of interpretation, according to which the expression “*buried with Christ*” is explained as refer-

ing to the representation of interment by the immersion of the body under water, should lead us also to understand the phrase which immediately follows, "*planted together in the likeness of his death*" as referring to an emblematic representation of *planting*—which accordingly some have stretched and strained their fancy to make out; or the phrase "*crucified with him,*" to some similar exhibition of crucifixion.

There is still another view of this subject, which I have never seen adduced, but which has struck my own mind as having in it no little weight.—The salvation revealed in the gospel consists essentially of two ingredients,—deliverance from guilt and condemnation, and deliverance from the moral pollution of sin,—justification and sanctification. The former is effected by the work of Christ, the latter by the work of the Spirit. Between these two essential parts of salvation and the two principal classes of divine ordinances, there has all along from the beginning subsisted a remarkable divinely instituted correspondence. The two descriptions of ordinances under the law, and before it, were the rites of sacrifice and the rites of purification. The one bore a typical reference to the work of Christ and justification; the other to the work of the Spirit and sanctification. And the same correspondence continues in the two simple rites of New Testament celebration. This gives a beautiful consistency and completeness to the system of ritual observance, whether typical or commemorative.—Now, in order to this consistency and completeness, it is necessary that the true significance of baptism be considered

as lying in *the purifying virtue of the element employed*. If our baptist friends be right in regarding the proper import of baptism as lying in the *form* of it,—that is, in the representation, by immersion and emersion, of the death and burial and resurrection of Christ, and the believer's participation in them,—it will follow, that *both* ordinances relate to the work of Christ, and neither of them to the work of the Spirit; and so the *completeness* of the ritual representation is destroyed;—the Holy Spirit's work being deprived of its appropriately significant rite.—But why should this be? Why should both the Lord's supper and baptism hold forth emphatically, and as their primary import, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and neither of them the purifying power of the divine Spirit? Is not the work of the latter as essential to salvation as that of the former? And is not the fulness and harmony of divine ordinances marred by what I may call the monopolizing of both for Christ, and depriving the Spirit of his due honour?—Consider the Lord's supper as the emblematic commemoration of the death or finished work of Christ, and baptism as the representation by symbol of the regenerating and sanctifying power and work of the Holy Spirit,—and all is complete; and the harmony of the New Testament rites with those of the patriarchal and Mosaic periods, is effectually and satisfactorily maintained. But appropriate both to Christ, and leave the Spirit out, or give him a place only indirectly and by implication; and the perfection is marred.

Being myself thoroughly convinced, that the significance and appropriateness of the rite arise from the cleansing nature of the element employed, and not from the mode of its application, I am disposed to consider the mode as of comparatively inferior importance. It is in the application of water, as the emblem of the purifying influence of the Spirit of truth, that the ordinance properly consists. A baptist brother may smile at me when I say, that on this ground I have no hesitation in admitting immersion to be valid baptism: and if it be a brotherly smile, I have no objection to return it. But if it be the smile of implied derision, which, if turned into words, would say—"A great concession truly! *admit* immersion to be valid baptism! why, immersion alone *is* baptism:—it is the only scriptural mode;—it is the only meaning of the original word;—it is the only representation of the death, and burial, and resurrection of Christ:"—I *could* return it on quite sufficient grounds, if derision were a brotherly feeling; but I would not *wish* to do it, because christian charity forbids me.

Although it is somewhat foreign to my main object, to pursue the discussion of the *mode* to any great length, yet I cannot pass it over without a few remarks. Others have successfully shown, by a detail of learned criticism, the consistency of the practice of pædobaptists, with the usages of classical Greek writers. My present remarks shall be for the unlearned; being designed to show, that there is no occasion to go beyond the plain intimations of the

Bible itself, for a satisfactory settlement of the point in dispute.

Even were it to be admitted, that *immersion* is the original or primary import of the word *baptism*—(which is only the Greek word Anglicised)—yet every one at all versant in languages is aware, that it is not by tracing back a word to its earliest etymology, that its actual meaning is to be ascertained, in particular applications of it, at subsequent periods in the history of the tongue to which it belongs. Even in our own language, we should run ourselves into innumerable mistakes and absurdities, by the adoption of such a test of the import of terms. The sole inquiry ought to be,—not, what is the strict, original, etymological sense of the word; but, *what is the sense in which it is used by the scripture writers?* And it has long appeared to me, that the reading, and comparing with each other, of such texts as the following, should be enough to satisfy any candid man, that *sprinkling* and *pouring*, so far from being without the countenance of these writers in their use of the term, are uniformly recognized by them, in their incidental explanations of it, as its true and proper counterparts; and should therefore lead the deriders of *infant-sprinkling*, (as even the most diminutive of our opponents have learned from their superiors sneeringly to designate our practice) to consider, on what and on whom their contempt must ultimately fall.

Mark vii. 3, 4. “For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they

“come from the market, except they wash they eat  
 “not. And many other things there be, which they  
 “have received to hold, as the washing (*βαπτισμους*,  
 “*baptisms*,) of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of  
 “tables.”—Do our brethren *really believe*, that the  
*couches* on which the Jews reclined at their meals,—  
 (which are meant by the word rendered improperly  
 in the latter of these verses *tables*) were *immersed*, or  
 plunged entirely under water? Is this likely in itself;  
 especially where water was seldom so abundant as to  
 be lavishly expended? And is it not much more  
 reasonable to suppose, that in adding to the *extent* of  
 the law of purification, the legal *mode* of purification  
 should still be retained; and that the cleansing was  
 similar to that prescribed, Num. xix. 18. “A clean  
 “person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water,  
 “and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the ves-  
 “sels?”—At any rate, whatever be supposed as to  
 the “pots, and cups, and brazen vessels,” it surely  
 requires the prejudice of system, to fancy the immer-  
 sion of the beds or couches.

In Heb. ix. 10, the apostle says of the ancient dis-  
 pensation, that it “stood only in meats and drinks  
 and *diverse washings*, and carnal ordinances.”—The  
 word rendered *washings* is *βαπτισματα* (*baptisms*;) un-  
 der which are certainly to be included all the various  
 modes of ceremonial purification, or cleansing, that  
 were enjoined under the law. The principal and most  
 frequent of these was *sprinkling*. The cases in which  
 the bathing of the body was prescribed are no doubt  
 also intended; but it is enough for my purpose, if the



expression is admitted to comprehend *other* modes of purifying.

1 Cor. x. 2, "They were all *baptized* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea."—Are our brethren not sensible of the straining that is necessary to make out immersion baptism here?—of the absolute ridiculousness of the conceit (I *cannot* view it in any other light) that the Israelites were baptized, by having the cloud over them, and the waters of the sea on either side of them? I cannot help the mind that has brought itself to fancy this quite simple and natural. A dry baptism! without the contact at all of the baptismal element, in any way! Would our brethren consider a man duly baptized, by his being placed between two cisterns of water, with a third over his head?

When the baptism of the Holy Spirit, signified by baptism with water, is spoken of, it is almost invariably associated with the idea of *pouring out*, or *effusion*;—and it is surely not unreasonable to conclude, that there should be a correspondence between the emblematic rite and that which it represents; nor is the charge of inconsiderate presumption destitute of ground, against those who indulge themselves in ridicule and mockery of this correspondence.—As a specimen of the language of the scriptures, let the following passages suffice. Isa. xlv. 3, "I will *pour water* on "him that is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground: "I will *pour my Spirit* upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:"—Joel. ii. 28, 29, quoted as fulfilled, Acts ii. 17, 18, "It shall come to pass "afterward, that I will *pour out my Spirit* upon all

“flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the hand-maidens in those days will I *pour out my Spirit*:” Acts ii. 34, “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath *shed forth* (*ἐξέχευε, poured out*) this, which ye now see and hear:”—Tit. iii. 5, 6, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he *shed* (*ἐξέχευεν, poured out*) on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

That this *pouring out of the Spirit* was the same as the *baptism of the Spirit*, we have an authority which my reader, I hope, will deem satisfactory—the express and pointed testimony of an inspired apostle. In giving his account of the effect of his mission to the household of Cornelius, Peter says, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell on them*, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost*.” Acts xi. 15, 16. That the Spirit *falling upon* these converts, is equivalent to his being *poured out* upon them, appears, from comparing this account of Peter with the narrative itself of the event: “As Peter began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell on* all them who heard the word. And they of the circumcision were astonished, as many as came with

“ Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost.”—Look, then, reader, at Peter’s words. The Holy Spirit was *poured out*; and Peter called to mind the promise, which of course he considered as being then fulfilled—“ Ye shall be *baptized with* the Holy Spirit.” According to Peter, then, *baptism* was effected by *pouring out*. Till better authority be produced, I desire to bow to this. The argument, I am aware, is very simple, and may be contemned as being an unlearned one;—but my very object is to show, that learning is not necessary to determine the question, in what sense a writer uses a particular word, when that writer himself favours us with his own explanation. This is done here, in terms as explicit as it is possible to devise. And when Peter himself tells me that he *did* consider *effusion* as *baptism*, the learning of all the etymologists in Europe will not persuade me, against his own word, that it was impossible he should.

I have said, it is surely not unreasonable to suppose, that baptism with water, which represents baptism with the Spirit, should bear an analogy to it in this particular. The language, accordingly, of the subsequent part of the same narrative, most naturally leads to the conclusion, (so naturally, indeed, that I might almost say it directly expresses it,) that such was the fact,—that the converts, on whom the Spirit had fallen, were not conducted to a river, or elsewhere, where they might be conveniently immersed, but that water was brought, and that they were baptized immediately, upon the spot. Peter said, “ *Who*

*can forbid water*, that these should not be baptized?" an expression which the ear itself of every candid reader at once interprets to his mind, as intimating the apostle's desire that *water should be brought*. All assenting, he commanded them to be "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." It was immediately done; and they "prayed him to tarry with them certain days."

I only further remark, that the same authority, namely, that of scripture itself, warrants me so explicitly, to consider *sprinkling*, or *pouring*, as sufficiently expressive of *washing* or *cleansing* from pollution, that I have no deference to pay to any affirmations of the contrary. Let the following examples be attended to:—Ezek. xxxvi. 25, "Then will I *sprinkle* "clean water upon you, and *ye shall be clean*; from "all your filthiness and from all your idols will I "cleanse you." *Sprinkling* is here represented as having the effect of *cleansing*.—Psal. li. 7, "Purge "me *with hyssop*, and *I shall be clean*; wash me, "and I shall be whiter than snow." The hyssop was used for *sprinkling* either water or blood, or both, upon the person to be ceremonially purified; so that here too sprinkling is held sufficient for cleansing.—So it is also in Heb. ix. 13, 14, "For if the blood of "bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, "*sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the *purifying* "*(καθαροτητα)* of the flesh; how much more shall the "blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, "offered himself without spot unto God, *purge*" (*καθαρισει*, *purify* or *cleanse*) "your conscience from

“dead works, to serve the living God?” The blood of Christ is, with the same allusion to its cleansing virtue, called the *blood of sprinkling*.—Isa. lii. 15, “So shall he *sprinkle* many nations:” that is, “with “his atoning blood, and by the pouring out of his “Spirit as purifying water; of which,” (adds Mr Scott, and it belongs to our baptist brethren to show how unreasonably) “baptism should be the outward “and visible sign.”—Surely such passages of scripture as these ought at least to rescue sprinkling and pouring from the misplaced and pitiful ridicule, which has so often been directed against them by the abettors of immersion. It is, I repeat, in the *application of water as a cleansing element*, that the appropriateness of the rite consists. Were *this* admitted, I should not be disposed, as I have before hinted, to consider the *mode of its application* as essential to the validity of the ordinance. I must, however, declare my conviction, that, whilst I have produced decisive instances of baptism, in the phraseology of the New Testament, being equivalent to *effusion*, I have never yet seen an instance established, of its necessarily or certainly signifying *immersion*.\* I have already said, that it is not by *etymology*, but by *usage*, that this point can be fairly determined; and the attempts

\* The reader will therefore perceive, that when I say I can admit immersion to be valid baptism, I do not mean that it has been administered according to the mode practised by the apostles. All that I mean is, that if baptism has already been administered by immersion, I should not reckon it necessary to administer it again by effusion or sprinkling.

made to determine it by usage, from the New Testament, in favour of immersion, have ever appeared to me entire failures. Two or three brief remarks shall suffice on some of the modes of reasoning.

The argument from etymology has been supported by the observation, that, in most of its occurrences, the verb is connected with the preposition EN—*εν* ἰδατι, — *εν* πνευματι ἁγια, — &c. — *in water*, — *in the Holy Spirit*, &c. — It is truly surprising, that so much stress should be laid on the frequently vague import of a Greek preposition. This preposition (*εν*) in many of its occurrences is necessarily rendered *with*. Of this not a few instances might be quoted. I shall content myself with one, because it bears an immediate relation to the present subject. In Heb. ix. 22, it is said, “almost all things are by the law purged (or purified *καθαριζονται*) *with blood* (EN αιματι) and without “shedding of blood is no remission.” — Now these purifications with blood were effected by *sprinkling*; and to render the phrase here “IN blood,” would be absurd. Our baptist friends are sufficiently aware of this frequent signification of the preposition. And yet, this being the case, the use of it in the present instance *determines nothing*; because, before it can be made out that the preposition should be rendered *in*, it must be previously proved that the verb signifies exclusively *to immerse* — the propriety of the one translation obviously depending upon the establishment of the other. — Nor is this all. We have, in the very case before us, the clearest evidence of the fallacy of the criticism: for, as we have seen a little ago, the

promise “Ye shall be baptized EN πνευματι ἁγίῳ,” was verified by the *pouring out* of this Spirit upon the disciples.—To be immersed, or plunged, *in the Holy Ghost* and *in fire*, are expressions not merely harsh and grating to the ear,—I should not rest much upon that, because there are few or no modes of speech, to which both the ear and the mind may not, by custom, become habituated and reconciled;—but they are expressions in direct opposition to the invariable representations of scripture respecting the gift of the Spirit.—Dr. Cox asks, “What reason can be assigned, if pouring be the proper method of administering baptism, for the constant use of a term in the New Testament, which, every critic admits, signifies immersion, and which even Mr Ewing allows to mean immersion *as much* as pouring; and the entire omission of all those Greek words which contain, in their primary, or general application, the sense of *effusion* or *pouring*? Either of the following verbs,” says he, “might have answered the purpose; βαλλω, jacio, εκχεω effundo, επιχεω infundo, εκχυνω effundo, καταχεω effundo, προσχεω adfundo: they are moreover all made use of in the writings of the apostles, and yet they are never applied to the ordinance of baptism. The same may be affirmed of ῥαντισω I sprinkle.”\*—But this is either inconsiderate, or uncandid. It is true, that such terms do not happen to be used with immediate application to the *ordinance* of baptism,

\* Cox on Baptism, p. 47.

because βαπτίζω is the appropriate term, the *vox signata*, for that ordinance. But to insinuate that they are never used as *equivalent to baptism*, is to insinuate what is most untrue. Either ἐχέω or ἐχύνω (to *pour out*) is uniformly employed, as has been already noticed, to express the baptism of the Spirit. They on whom the *Spirit was poured out* are most explicitly affirmed to have been *baptized with the Spirit*. There is no getting over this. The βαπτισμα is effected by the ἐχυσις. It will never be alleged that ἐχύνω signifies to *immerse*; yet the apostle Peter declares the ἐχυσις to have been the accomplishment of the promise, βαπτισθησεθε.—As to the verb ῥαντίζω, I shall only observe, that amongst the “divers washings” (βαπτισματα, baptisms) of the old dispensation, referred to Heb. ix. 10, must surely be included all the modes of Jewish purification, and consequently the ῥαντισματα, or *sprinklings*, which were the most numerous. The passages, moreover, formerly cited, show, that, in scripture phraseology, sprinkling is equivalent to washing or cleansing.

Equally uncertain, as to the conclusion deducible from them, are the expressions, that John baptized “*in Jordan*,” “*in the river of Jordan*”—ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ—ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ:—Matt. iii. 6. Mark i. 5. Such expressions are inconclusive, for this obvious reason, that they are equally suitable, on the supposition of *pouring* having been the mode of baptism, as on that of *immersion*. Had John stood in the water, however shallow, or had he stood in the bed of the river at the water’s edge, and poured the water



on those who came to him for baptism,—the historian not only might have used the same expression with propriety, but could hardly have used another.—An argument, then, is brought from the use of a particular preposition, to fix the verb to one of two alleged meanings:—but if the preposition may be used with equal propriety, whichever of the meanings be affixed to the verb, it is superfluous to say that the use of it *determines neither*.—The truth is, that our baptist friends have their own sense of the verb previously fixed in their minds; and, instead of ascertaining the sense of the verb by the use of the preposition, they determine the sense of the preposition from its connexion with the verb.

This will be further evident, from the sense affixed by some of them to another preposition, on one occasion at least used in connexion with βαπτίζω,—the preposition ΕΙΣ. It is said, Mark i. 9, “Jesus came “from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John “ΕΙΣ τον Ἰορδάνην.”—By some antipædobaptists, this is translated *into Jordan*; and is considered as settling the point, because being “baptized *to or towards* Jordan” is nonsense. And nonsense no doubt it is. But the remark settles no point whatever, unless it be the inconsideration or prejudice of such critics. They surely know, that, in such connexions εἰς not unusually has the signification of *at*. So it is correctly rendered in Acts viii. 40, “Philip was found *at* Azotus.” Acts xxv. 15, “About whom, when I was *at* Jerusalem,” &c.; and in other places. The phrase does not signify that the persons baptized

were plunged *εις τον Ιορδανην* into the Jordan; but simply that the baptized and the baptizer were *at*, or, if you will, *in* Jordan, when the rite was administered. Nothing is determinately affirmed by it of the mode of its administration.—If it be alleged, that in the instances quoted as examples of *εις* signifying *at*, the persons were *at* the places mentioned certainly so as to be *in* them;—granting the truth of the criticism, the *utmost* that can be deduced from it is what I have just mentioned, that the parties were *in* Jordan when the ceremony was performed. But the phrase might be used with perfect propriety upon the supposition of their having been only on the margin or bank of the river.

“In remarking upon Matt. iii. 16,” says Dr. Cox, “Mr Ewing expresses himself thus:—‘I suppose *no man upon earth* who can read *ανεβη ευθως απο του ιδατος*, imagines it to be any thing else than ‘he went up straightway *from* the water.’” It is presumable, notwithstanding the hostility against Dr. Campbell, that he was at least *able to read* the words recited; and yet he *imagined* them to mean ‘he no sooner *arose out of* the water.’ *Vossius, Venema, Doddridge*, and a thousand others, were certainly *able to read* these words, and yet they imagined them to have a meaning different from the interpretation of our Glasgow friend, and conformable to that of the Principal of Marischall College, and of almost all the critics, both baptist and pædobaptist.”\*

\* Page 87.

Now the man who names *three* critics, and refers to the rest by *thousands*, should be sure of his correctness at least in his small sample. I happen not to have Vossius and Venema by me; but I have just looked into Doddridge, and find his translation in harmony, not with Dr. Campbell's, but with Mr Ewing's! It is—"And after Jesus was baptized, as soon as he ascended out of the water to the bank of Jordan." This needs no comment. It is true that Dr. Doddridge renders the preposition *out of*, while Mr Ewing renders it *from*.—But the mere verbal rendering of the preposition itself is nothing. Dr. Campbell's translation is a baptist one, evidently representing the phrase as signifying *emerging from under the water*,—and it is astonishing that he or any critic should ever have so understood it.—Dr. Doddridge's translation is as far as Mr Ewing's from being in harmony with this. The only difference is, that Mr Ewing's does not directly convey the idea—(though neither does it exclude it) of the person baptized having been standing *in the water* when the rite was administered, which Dr. Doddridge's does. Nothing, indeed, can be more unnecessary than to go through a thousand critics, to ascertain the meaning of the phrases *καταβαίνειν εις το ὕδωρ*, and *αναβαίνειν απο (or εκ) του ὕδατος*. We need not go beyond the New Testament; for in it we have the clearest and most explicit proof that they are phrases totally unconnected with the *act of baptizing*. In Acts viii. 38, 39, it is said, "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he

“baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more.”—Nothing can be clearer than this. The *act of baptizing* is something quite distinct from either the *going down into the water*, or the *coming up out of it*. If these two phrases had any reference at all to the mode of baptism, it would follow, that Philip was immersed under the water, and emerged out of it, as well as the Eunuch; which no one supposes. The plain meaning is, that Philip and the Eunuch descended together from the chariot *to*, or if you will *into* the water; that, when they had so descended, Philip baptized the Eunuch, but *in what way*, not a hint is given; and that, this being done, they ascended together again *out of*, or *from*, the water. *Both* went down, and *both* came up, but *one only* was *baptized*. I cannot imagine that our baptist friends should not perceive, how entirely the plain statement of the historian, in this passage, sets aside the whole of their argument derived from the modes of expression employed—*going down into* and *coming up out of*, the water; the one being so clearly previous, and the other subsequent, to the act of baptizing.—I partake with Mr Ewing in his astonishment that any man should ever have thought otherwise:—and I think I may add, that a *baptist* should ever have thought otherwise is “passing strange.” I have been accustomed to understand, that our friends consider the *subject* or *recipient* of the ordinance as *passive*,—not himself going down under the water,

and coming up out of it, but being laid under it, and raised out of it, by another. But the *κατεβη* and the *ανεβη* express actions of the baptized person himself, and are quite distinct from his *being baptized*.

I have dwelt a great deal longer on the subject of the *mode* of baptism than was my original intention. The remarks made are intended to show, from the plain statements of the New Testament itself, that baptism was performed by sprinkling or pouring, and that there is no necessity for any learned appeal to other authorities. This appeal has been made by pædobaptists, and made, in my judgment, with success. They do not deny that the verbs *βαπτω* and *βαπτίζω* signify to *dip* or *immerse*; but they do deny that this is their only signification, and that it is their signification when they are used by the sacred writers. In insisting that immersion is the sole signification of the verbs, our baptist brethren appear to me to discover a deficiency of critical candour; to be much more *ingenious* than *ingenuous*; and sometimes, without perceiving it, to employ a sophistry, of which the conclusions, even if they were sound, are nothing to their purpose.—For example: Dr. Cox is somewhat testy with Mr Ewing for referring to the use of *βαπτω* in application to Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 33. “His body was wet (or wetted) with the dew of heaven.” This is at least the twentieth time, he alleges, that this instance has been produced in the controversy. But the question is, not how often it has been *produced*, but how often it has been *refuted*. If it has not been fairly met and set aside,

it is not frequency of repetition that will deprive it of its force. There is no term of prescription that transmutes truth into falsehood; or in the course of which an argument becomes weak, that once had strength. It is not repetition for twenty times, nor for twenty times twenty, that can ever impair it. On the contrary, the longer it stands unrepelled, it gets stronger and stronger.—Let us see, then, what Dr. Cox makes of this case. He thinks the ordinary reply satisfactory, “That a body exposed to eastern dews would be as wet as if plunged in water:” but considering the passage as “meriting a little more detailed explanation,” he goes on to observe:—“The verb here used is in the passive voice, in the second aorist, and the indicative mood, implying consequently that the action was past and indefinite as to time. It does not imply the *manner* in which the effect was produced, but the *effect itself*; not the *mode* by which the body of the king was wetted, but its *condition*, as resulting from exposure to the dews of heaven. Suppose, by way of illustration, we select another word, and put it into the same voice and tense; as, *εβλάβη ἵπο σου*; ‘he was hurt by you.’ It is obvious, that this representation might refer to an injury done long ago, and would predicate nothing of the *manner* in which it was inflicted: it simply expresses the *fact* and the *condition* of injury which resulted.”\*—Now what is the amount of all this? Twenty times twenty have

\* Pages 40, 41.

we poor pædobaptists been told, that there is no room for reasoning; that the idea of immersion is in the very words βαπτω and βαπτίζω; that *immersion baptism* is consequently a tautology, and *baptism by pouring* a contradiction. And yet here, on Dr. Cox's own showing, is an instance, in which βαπτω "*predicates nothing of the manner.*" It does not denote *immersion*; it does not denote being wet *as the effect of immersion!*—Suppose we admit that it signifies the *state of being wet*: still it cannot be denied, that it signifies this state, as the result, not of plunging, but of the very gentlest of possible affusions. Βαπτω is used, and expresses nothing of immersion—"not the mode"—to use Dr. Cox's own words—"by which the body of the king was wetted!" I have only to ask my esteemed friend, whether he would consider a person *duly baptized*, if water were *poured upon him till he were thoroughly wetted*. If he would, then what would become of the favourite idea of the emblematic representation, in baptism, of a burial and resurrection?—The truth is, that Dr. Cox's illustrative parallel is not a parallel. Why is it that the aorist passive εβλαβη "*predicates nothing of the manner*" in which the hurt had been inflicted? Simply because the verb βλαπτω does not signify to hurt *in a particular way*, but to hurt *in any way*. Did βλαπτω, for instance, exclusively signify to hurt *by beating*, then the phrase εβλαβη ἵπο σου must have meant "*he was hurt by having been beaten by you.*" The aorist expresses indefiniteness as to *time*, but does not surely deprive the verb of any definiteness that belongs to it in

*sense*. If Dr. Cox admits βαπτω to be on a footing with βλαπτω in the indefiniteness of its *sense*, so that, as the latter verb means to *hurt in any way*, the former means to *wet in any way*; then will it be true, that, as the aorist of the one “predicates nothing of the *manner*” of *hurting*, so does the aorist of the other predicate nothing of the *manner of wetting*. But such an admission would be fatal to the entire argument of the baptists derived from what they affirm to be the proper and the only meaning of the verb. If βαπτω does exclusively denote to *dip*, to *immerse*, then εβαφη must mean that Nebuchadnezzar had been *dipped*, had been *immersed*, had been *wetted by dipping or immersion*, at some *indefinite past time*,—this being the only indefiniteness that belongs to the aorist. If the definite sense of dipping pertains essentially to the verb, it pertains to it in the aorist as much as in any other tense. But with this essential sense of the verb “being *wetted with the dews of heaven*” can never be reconciled; for this, I repeat, is being wetted by an effusion the softest and gentlest in nature.

Considering, then, as I have repeatedly mentioned, the emblematic import of baptism, to be derived from the cleansing or purifying nature of the element employed, not from the mode of its application, although *affusion* appears to have the decided countenance of the New Testament scriptures; I proceed to illustrate my first position,—that baptism, and that baptism administered to infants, is a **STANDING VISI-**



## BLE MEMORIAL, IN THE CHURCH, OF IMPORTANT TRUTHS.

Baptism itself, whether administered to infants or to adults, is a permanent remembrancer of guilt and pollution,—of the consequent necessity of cleansing from both,—and of the means provided for such cleansing, the blood and Spirit of Christ. But, on these general views of the import of the ordinance, it is not needful for me to dwell. There are additional truths brought to mind, by the *administration of the ordinance to children*, which it is more to my present purpose to notice.

1. Infant baptism contains a constant memorial of *original sin*—that is, of the *corruption of our nature* being not merely contracted, by the moral contagion of education and example,—but *inherent*. Every time it is administered to an infant, it emblematically reminds all who witness it of the truth expressed by the Psalmist, “Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” 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. 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 a participation in the pardon of the original apostacy, and of purification from the inherent depravity of their nature, in order to their entering heaven, and seeing God.—The impression of such truths is of the very highest importance, especially to parents, in fixing the principles on which their children are to be trained and instructed, and in directing their practical application. Let not an institution, then, which serves to sustain the remembrance and impression of such truths, be represented as destitute of use.

That infant baptism contains a practical testimony, from the Divine author of the institution, to the necessity of regeneration, is a very different thing from its being regeneration itself, or invariably accompanied by it in its infant subject. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is, in many respects, as pernicious in its tendencies, as it is absurd on principles of reason, and destitute of foundation in scripture. It is an abuse, for which, as for many others, the ordinance itself is not responsible. The only wonder is, that any man of common sense should ever have maintained it.

It is a doctrine of the church of Rome, and it harmonizes well with the innumerable absurdities of that antichristian communion. It is contained also in the catechism and baptismal service of the church of England, constituting one of the remnants of popery, of

which there are too many in the constitution and ceremonies of our Episcopalian Establishment:—and it is hardly necessary to add, that, as a part of the more general doctrine of the saving virtue of the sacraments, when administered by duly consecrated hands, it forms an essential element in modern Anglo-catholicism. I am aware, indeed, that, on the present subject, the sense in which the terms employed are to be understood has been the ground of very vehement controversy; but their simple and *prima facie* meaning is, without question, favourable to this foolish and mischievous tenet.—But when Mr Birt represents “the majority of pædobaptists in general as believing in baptismal regeneration,” he writes, to say the least of it, unguardedly. He ought to have explained, that, in making this statement, he included *papists*; of whom, in a discussion of the pædobaptist controversy, not one in a hundred of his readers, I am well persuaded, would ever think.\*

2. Whilst infant baptism reminds us of the humbling doctrine of original depravity, it brings before our minds a truth of a different kind,—eminently cheering and encouraging,—namely, that *little children are not incapable of being subjects of the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, and participating in its blessings*.—I need not set about proving this; because their capability is granted by baptists themselves:—they are admitted to have even been pro-

\* On this point, the reader is again referred to my Reply to the Letter of Mr Birt of Manchester—pages 14—17.

nounced by Christ visible subjects of his kingdom. On that beautiful passage, Mark x. 13—16, Mr Maclean says, “Here are children brought to Christ, “*declared of his kingdom*, and blessed, and thus becoming *visible subjects*; yet we read nothing of “their baptism.” With the latter clause we have at present no concern. Far be it from us to deny, that “infants may be acknowledged to be of the kingdom “of God, without baptizing them.” Far be it from us to pass any such sentence of exclusion against the children of our baptist brethren, however much we may think their parents mistaken. We do not consider the outward rite as thus essential to salvation. But this we say, that if infants are capable subjects of the kingdom, and are pronounced such by the Lord himself, there is surely no contradiction or incongruity in infant baptism; that is, in the application of the *sign* to those who are admitted to be capable of the *thing signified*. There is certainly nothing in this that can warrant the scorn and ridicule with which it has been assailed. To admit an infant to be a “visible subject” of the spiritual kingdom, and to laugh at the application to such an infant of the rite which signifies the peculiar blessings of that kingdom, and talk of it as a “solemn farce,” does not seem to indicate great consistency of thought or feeling.

Let it not be said, the ground of ridicule is, that infants are incapable of that faith, which the New Testament affirms to be necessary to baptism, and of which baptism is the profession. It has often been remarked, and it has never been satisfactorily an-

swered, that this mode of reasoning, if valid for the exclusion of infants from baptism, must be equally valid for their exclusion from salvation. If it be a correct syllogism—Believing is necessary to baptism; infants are incapable of believing: therefore, no infants ought to be baptized;—then the following must be correct too—Believing is necessary to salvation: infants are incapable of believing: therefore infants cannot be saved.—Dr. Cox and our baptist friends may be angry at the twentieth repetition of this too. But it is simply impossible to get rid of the second conclusion, if the first be sound. When it is said, “He that *believeth* and *is baptized* shall be saved: he that *believeth not* shall be condemned;” it is very manifest, from the nature of the thing, and from the charge in the preceding verse, “Go, preach the gospel to every creature,”—that the language refers to all mankind in general to whom the gospel *could* be preached; that is, to adults, who were capable of hearing and understanding what was said.—It is one of those cases, in which baptists themselves are constrained to have recourse to the ground of *general language*. They apply this principle to that part of the verse that connects *salvation* with faith, because, if they took this strictly and universally, it would inevitably exclude infants from being saved. Have we not reason, then, to complain of want of candour, when they will not allow the application of the same principle of interpretation to that clause which connects *baptism* with faith? The connexion of both with faith is stated in the same sentence, in

the same unqualified terms ; and the same principle of explanation which warrants or condemns the one inference, must equally warrant or condemn the other.

I am strongly inclined to agree with those, who regard the children of believers in the light of *disciples*. If their parents do their duty, they surely are such. It is quite impossible for us to say, how soon the Holy Spirit may begin his secret operations in the soul of a child, under spiritual training, and the subject of believing prayer. And until the principles which are instilled into the child's mind by early tuition, recommended by a godly example, and impressed by affectionate and faithful admonition, are either avowedly rejected, or are shown to be professed without influence on the heart and life,—how can we be entitled to say, that they are *not* disciples? They are *learners* ; they assent to what is taught them ; and, as far as we can judge, are lambs of the flock of the “ good shepherd.” Indications of the contrary may present themselves, sometimes earlier, and sometimes later : and in forming our estimate, we should never lose sight of the necessity of making all allowance for the childishnesses of childhood ; not foolishly looking for the same manifestation of the power of the truth, in a babe, which we expect in a full-grown man.

On the question, Are the baptized children of believers *church members*?—various opinions have been entertained. I shall state, with diffidence, my own.

In the first place :—Baptism, it seems evident from

the New Testament, is not to be regarded as a *social* or *church ordinance*. It did not, when administered to adults, introduce the persons baptized to connexion with any particular church, or society of christians. They were simply baptized into the faith of Christ, and the general fellowship of the gospel. We have one clear and decisive exemplification of this, in the case of the eunuch of Ethiopia. He was baptized by Philip in the desert, when on a journey, where there was, of course, no church; nor was there any, where the eunuch was going. His baptism, therefore, merely recognized him as a professed disciple of Jesus, without constituting him a member of any particular christian church. And so it was with others. The converts, when baptized, "joined themselves," wherever they had opportunity, "to the disciples;" but their baptism was administered to them, simply on a profession of their faith; it was previous to such union, and formed no part of the services of the church, with which they might subsequently unite.

Secondly: This being the case, I am disposed to regard the children of believers as disciples, in a situation somewhat analogous to the one described. They have been baptized; they have become the subjects of spiritual instruction,—of "the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and they are in training for the full fellowship of the people of God, in all the ordinances of his house.—If, on growing up, they do not hold the truth, in the knowledge of which they have been instructed, and on the principles of which they have been "nurtured and admonished;"—they

must be treated accordingly ;—they cannot be admitted to the communion of the church. If, on the contrary, they “abide in the truth,” “holding fast the faithful word as they have been taught,” then they are at liberty to unite in fellowship wherever their judgment and conscience, on examination of the word of God, may direct them.—I do not go so far as to speak of their being *separated from the church* at any particular age, by a formal *sentence of exclusion*, when they do not give evidence of the reception and influence of the gospel ; for the reason just assigned, that their baptism has not constituted them properly members of a particular society, but only disciples of Christ, under training for the duties and enjoyments of his kingdom.—I feel confirmed in this view of the case, by the consideration, that, when the apostle Paul, in any of his epistles, addresses himself to the *children* of the believers,—whilst by so doing he recognizes them as sustaining a relation to the christian community, he yet does not commit the instruction and training of them to the church, or to the pastors of the church, but enjoins it upon *the parents*, as a matter as yet of private and domestic concern.\* Eph. vi. 1—4.

\* I was not aware, when I was led, by my own reflection, to adopt the view which I have given in the text of the church-membership of the children of believers, that it was in perfect coincidence with that given by the late Dr. Dwight, in the 157th Sermon of his THEOLOGY. I leave the reader to consult it for himself. I had not looked into the work, on this subject, till after my own manuscript was ready for the press.



3. Before proceeding to the *duties* which this ordinance brings to mind, and enforces, I must notice one other highly important doctrine,—which it is beautifully calculated to impress.—When our blessed Redeemer took the little children in his arms and said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven,”—he added solemnly to his disciples, “Verily I say unto you, “whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God *as a little child*, he shall not enter therein.”—When an infant receives the blessings of the kingdom, it is *gratuitously*; not as the reward of works of righteousness; not in the exercise of high-minded self-confidence. So must it be with *you*, says the Saviour, the Lord of the kingdom. You must be “justified freely by the grace of God;” you must own yourselves undeserving, and receive all as a gift; whatever you have done, you must come for the blessings of my kingdom, as if you had done nothing, and receive them as little children. This was levelled at the spiritual pride and self-righteousness of the Pharisees, against which, on other occasions also, he warns his disciples.—The *man* who receives the kingdom, must receive it on the same terms as the *child*;—not for a life of virtue,—not for his faith, his repentance, his obedience, as if these could merit any thing from God. He must, as to his *title* to its blessings, be divested of every thing.—Now this is one of the essential articles of gospel truth; one of the immutable laws of the kingdom; one of the indispensable characters of its genuine subjects. And this truth is constantly exhibited, and affectingly impressed, in infant bap-

tism. Every time the ordinance is administered to a child, all who witness it may be considered as having the words of Christ symbolically repeated in their hearing—"Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven AS A LITTLE CHILD, he shall not enter therein." It is not the fault of the ordinance, but of its administrator and witnesses, if such impressions are not made.

These are lessons for all,—lessons of essential consequence; and the wisdom of God has not only revealed and oft repeated them in his word, but has also embodied them in emblematic institutions, which serve as visible memorials of them in his church, to all generations. Such are both baptism and the Lord's supper. And the former, when, according to God's appointment, administered to infants, contains a constantly renewed intimation of the delightful truth, that whilst they are the subjects of guilt, and pollution, and curse, in consequence of the original apostasy, they are, at the same time, through Jesus Christ, partakers of the blessings of the kingdom of mercy.

II. Having considered infant baptism as a memorial of fundamental truths, let me now proceed to view it as *a remembrancer of important duties, and an encouragement to their performance.*

I shall, on this part of my subject, offer a few brief remarks on the duties of *parents, of children, and of churches.*

1. The ordinance is inseparably connected, and all christian parents ought so to regard it, with the in-

cumbent duty of "bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." If this connexion is lost sight of,—if it is not contemplated at the time, and is practically disregarded afterwards, the ordinance becomes nothing better than a useless ceremony, and an idle and profane mockery of its Divine author.—Much has been said, and said sometimes very loosely, by pædobaptists, of the rights and privileges of infants, and of the impropriety of abridging their privileges, and abstracting their rights, in refusing them baptism. But I would have it seriously considered, that the right and the privilege are not worth the contending for, unless the ordinance be connected with parental instruction, discipline, and prayer. It is evident, that the pouring of a little water on an infant's face, can, in itself, do it no good; and as little would the immersion of its whole body. The mere external recognition of its connexion with the christian community, can be of no benefit, except as associated with subsequent training, for the performance of the duties, and the enjoyment of the blessings, of that community. The profit to the child must be through the medium of the parent: and it has long appeared to me, that in the first instance, it is to the parent, rather than to the child, that infant baptism is to be reckoned a privilege. It is an ordinance, in which there is brought before the minds of pious parents, a pleasing and animating recognition of the covenant promises of God to them and to their offspring, which form so great an encouragement to them in the discharge of duty, and

in looking, by prayer, for the divine blessing upon the objects of their tender love. That multitudes who have their children baptized never think of the ordinance in any such light, and are quite regardless of the obligations which, I will not say it imposes, but which it implies, and brings to mind,—is a melancholy truth. And I would earnestly admonish those parents, of the guilt they are contracting, by their solemn mockery of heaven, in the careless profanation of a Divine institution. The abuse is awfully extensive; and it is one of the evils which we owe, not entirely indeed, but in a very great degree, to the nationalizing of christianity by its incorporation with our civil polity, and the consequent universality of its profession. This abuse has afforded a great advantage to the adversaries of infant baptism; but there is both weakness and unfairness in having recourse to it. It shows a mind incapable of distinguishing between the precepts of God and the perversions of them by men. The Lord's supper, from the same cause, has been as extensively perverted and abused as infant baptism. But, while we regret and mourn the prostitution of any ordinance of God, this can never be a valid reason for our neglecting its legitimate and scriptural use. I am fully persuaded of the truth of the remark, that if infant baptism had not been so much abused, it would not have been so much opposed.

Let it not be said, that parents may have a sufficiently strong feeling of their duty to their children, and may fulfil that duty equally well with others,

although they do not see the scripture authority for their baptism. I do not deny, that a baptist may be exemplary in the christian tuition of his family, and that many a pædobaptist may be very much the contrary. But this is not the question. I can conceive of a christian, from certain conscientious but unscriptural and groundless scruples, living for successive years in the neglect of the ordinance of the Lord's supper, and yet, to all appearance, influenced as much as others, in his general character, by the habitual remembrance of his Redeemer. We should never infer from such a case, that the ordinance was useless. Neither ought we in the other. If God has given promises to his people and their seed, promises fitted to stimulate believing parents to the fulfilment of their sacred trust, and has instituted an ordinance in which these promises are recognized and pledged to them, it does not become us to neglect the gracious and pleasing rite, on the ground that we can keep the promises sufficiently well in mind without it. It is kind in that God who "knoweth our frame," not only to give us his word, but to embody, as it were, that word to our senses, to confirm it to our faith, and to impress it upon our memories and hearts, by significant outward institutions. "*Quam enim suave piis animis,*" says Calvin very beautifully, "*non verbo tantum, sed oculari etiam spectaculo, certiores fieri, tantum se gratiæ apud patrem cœlestem obtinere, ut posteritas sua illi curæ sit.*" "How pleasing to the minds of the godly, not merely to have a verbal assurance,

“but to have it certified to them by visible signs, “that the grace of their heavenly Father is so great, “as to extend, not to themselves only, but to their “offspring!”—If christian parents do not feel, as they ought, the practical encouragement to duty which the ordinance, as a recognition of Divine promise, presents, and do not act accordingly, (and all of us must be sensible of criminal deficiency)—the fault lies, not with the institution, or with its author, but with their own want of faith, and of right disposition.

We consider baptism, as an ordinance for *believers and their children*. I am aware, indeed, that I do not express the sentiment of *all* pædobaptists, when I say, that the administration of it to children ought to be confined to those of *believers only*; meaning of course, by the designation, such as we have reason, at the time, to acknowledge as believers. In regard to adults, there is an obvious difference between the *ground of title* to the *reception* of baptism, and the *ground of warrant* for its *administration*. The former is *sincere and genuine faith*: the latter is the *profession of faith*, uncontradicted by any circumstance which deprives it of credibility. That “the belief of the truth” was the true ground of title to the reception of the ordinance, the entire tenor of New Testament phraseology on the subject might be adduced to prove. Being baptized is ever associated with previous believing.—But it was not according to any secret “discernment of spirits,” that baptism was administered; and mistakes might be made respecting the genuineness of profession. When the same

Philip, in the city of Samaria, "preached the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of "Jesus Christ," Simon Magus was amongst those who professed to receive his testimony: and on this profession he was baptized.—Here, then, appears the distinction, between the right to baptism, and the warrant for its administration. Simon Magus had not the same right to baptism as the Ethiopian eunuch; for, instead of "believing with all his heart," it appeared afterwards that he was still "in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity:" but, in both cases, Philip was equally warranted in administering the ordinance; at least, we have no ground to presume, that there were any circumstances in Simon's profession, which ought to have destroyed its credit, and which would have justified Philip in refusing to baptize him.

I am not aware, from any facts or principles in the New Testament, of any profession of faith being sufficient for admission to baptism, that is not sufficient for admission to the Lord's supper, and the full fellowship of the church of Christ. Baptism was not administered to adults on a mere declaration of willingness to be instructed, but on a profession of faith in the testimony delivered. Although the statements of the history are very brief,—so brief, as occasionally to produce oversights and hasty conclusions,—I do not recollect any exception to this representation. When the profession of faith was made, upon hearing the gospel, and witnessing its accompanying evidence, it was, in the judgment of charity, supposed to be

sincere,—to be “with all the heart:” nor am I aware of the existence, in apostolic times, of any such anomalous description of persons, as those who were baptized, but were not admitted to church-fellowship. The three thousand who, on the day of Pentecost, “gladly received Peter’s word, were baptized; and “the same day” they were “added to the church.” —“John’s baptism” may be considered as debatable ground, and, therefore, I shall not enter upon it; but I ask for an instance, subsequently to the commencement of apostolic preaching, and the first formation of a church, of a person making a profession of faith which was sufficient for his admission to baptism, and yet not sufficient for his reception to other christian ordinances. I know of none. The genuineness of the profession, made at baptism, was tried *in the church*, not in an intervening period between baptism and admission to the church.—Now the same principles which the New Testament teaches me to apply to the baptism of adults, it of course prescribes for the baptism of their children. As I should not conceive myself warranted to baptize an adult, on any profession of faith which would not warrant my receiving him to the table of the Lord;—neither do I consider it right and scriptural, to baptize the child of any man, on a profession that would not justify his admission into the church. I can think of no principle, which, as a rule of practice, is definite and intelligible, but this. I am well aware of the different sentiments entertained, and the different course pursued, by many (I might, I fear, say, by *most*) of my



pædobaptist brethren in the south. I cannot but think them very far in the wrong :—and I have never been able to find any thing like fixed and precise ground amongst them, on this subject. Some place the warrant for baptizing, in a willingness to be instructed ; some, in a general profession of christianity, and of faith in the Bible ; others, in the attendance of the party applying for it at church, and bringing his family with him, so as to put them in the way of good ; while others still, I believe, go so far as to concur with the established church of England, and administer it to all who apply, considering it as the privilege of the child, without regard to the profession and character of the parent at all. Now, in all this, there is an undefined and unsettled laxity, which appears to me highly pernicious in its practical consequences ; and which, moreover, tends to weaken, and even, if followed fairly out, to overthrow, the whole of the argument for infant baptism that is founded on the covenant relation, so distinctly recognized in scripture, between parent and child.—Let me not be misunderstood. I do not say that I would not baptize the child of any man, who *is not a member of a church*, or who *does not immediately join one*. What I say is, that I would not baptize, where I could not conscientiously receive to communion on the same profession of faith.—I have before noticed the extent to which the lax administration and abuse of the ordinance prevails :—and I should rejoice to see my dissenting brethren setting their countenance and their practice decidedly against it.

The chief ground on which a looser principle than the one I have assumed, has been usually vindicated by our southern brethren, has been derived from the practice of the Jewish Church in regard to circumcision. All children that were Jews by birth, it is alleged, were indiscriminately admitted to the prescribed ordinance, their parents professing faith in the God of Abraham, and no evidence being required at the time of the genuineness of that profession : and we should proceed on a similar principle in regard to baptism.—The legitimacy of this conclusion, however, appears to me to be much more than questionable. Those who act upon it would do well to consider, how far, if fairly carried out, it will lead them. All the parents, who had their children circumcised, were themselves admitted to the passover, and other institutions of the Jewish church. If, therefore, the alleged parallelism in the one case justifies the admission of children to baptism to the same extent to which they were admitted to circumcision, it must equally justify the admission of their parents to the Lord's supper, and all the institutions of christian fellowship. I do not see how this inference can be evaded. It will not do to say, that there is not the same established parallelism between the passover and the Lord's supper, as there is between circumcision and baptism. For supposing this to be true, my argument does not rest on any such parallelism. It would be the same, though there were *no resemblance at all* between the two former institutions. It rests simply on the fact of the admission

to the ordinances, whatever they might be, which formed the outward distinction of the Jews, as the professors of faith in the God of Abraham, and of such Gentile proselytes as adopted that faith—the admission to these ordinances of all parents whose children were admitted to the initiatory rite of circumcision. Let an instance be pointed out of a parent, whose child was admitted to circumcision, while he himself was *not* admitted to all the ordinances of the Jewish church. If no such instance can be produced, let the parallelism be fairly followed on both sides. Admit to the ordinances for adults all the parents whose infant offspring you admit to the ordinance for children.—This is precisely what I contend for. It was what was actually done *then* : it is what, in my judgment, ought to be done *now*.—The great and essential difference lies in this,—that the New Testament state of the church is uniformly represented, both by prophetic intimations, and by apostolic instructions, as intended of God to be a state of greater purity and spirituality of communion than had previously existed. The Jewish church was *national*. When the new dispensation was introduced, it was no longer to be so. Its constitution was to be remodelled. The wicked were to be shaken out of it. It was to be revived and purified. It was not to consist of nations, but of individuals of all nations, separated from the world by the grace of God. It is evident from the addresses of the different inspired Epistles, “what manner of persons” they were who ought to have been received and retained

as members of churches, associates in the worship, and sharers of the privileges, of the new state of things. They are "beloved of God, called, saints," Rom. i. 7, "sanctified in Christ Jesus," 1 Cor. i. 2, "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus," Eph. i. 1, such as had "obtained like precious faith with the apostles," 2 Pet. i. 1, &c. That persons of a different description did find their way into the communion of the saints, on a false profession of the faith, is too true. But then the churches are blamed, and severely reprimanded, for retaining such persons in their fellowship, after they had, by their conduct, discovered their true character. See particularly the Epistles to the Corinthians, and those in the Book of Revelation to the seven churches of the lesser Asia.—My argument, therefore, which is a very simple, and, as it appears to me, a very conclusive one, stands thus. In the national church of Israel, all parents whose children were circumcised, were themselves admitted to the passover and the other ordinances of that communion. This was accordant with the constitution of the church at that time. The same principle applies in the Church of Christ. All parents, whose children are admitted to baptism, should themselves be admissible to the Lord's supper, and the other social ordinances of *its* communion. But, while the principle in both cases is the same, there is, in the latter of the two cases, a restriction in the application of it, corresponding to the superior purity of New Testament fellowship. We are not authorized to receive into communion any individuals, respecting

whom we have not reason to believe that "Christ has received them;" and if, after their reception, we discover that we have been mistaken in our judgment of their profession, we are bound to separate them from the church. And of those, whom we are not warranted, by the laws of Christ, to receive, and to retain in communion, we are not, in my opinion, warranted to baptize the children. The procedure of those who act otherwise appears to me to be consistent neither with *Jewish* nor with *Christian* principles. If we are to proceed at all according to the former, let us give them their full extent of application, and have national churches at once. But if we cannot admit of these, in a "kingdom which is not of this world," let us not apply the old principles of communion, in a partial and inconsistent way, to the New Testament church.—All national establishments, under the Christian dispensation, instead of deriving any scriptural authority from the constitution of the Jewish church, are utterly subversive of the declared will of God, in regard to the purer and more select and spiritual communion of New Testament times. And I cannot but regret, when any of my dissenting brethren adopt and act upon principles that have the same unhappy tendency.\*

One evil resulting from that prevailing abuse in the administration of infant baptism, to which I have repeatedly alluded, is, its promoting the thoughtlessness

\* On the principal subject of this and the three preceding paragraphs,—pages 196—203,—see Appendix II.

of parents, as to the connexion between the ordinance and their duty.—“I know him,” said the God of Abraham, “that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment: that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”—Gen. xviii. 19.—I do not enter here into the illustration of parental duties, and of the manner in which they ought to be fulfilled. But I press upon christian parents the example of the father of the faithful, as an instance in which the discharge of duty is connected with the fulfilment of promise. All the promises of God, indeed, are intended to operate, not as inducements to indolence, but as stimulants to activity. The assurance, that “it is God who worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure,” is not to encourage us to expect spiritual progress without the use of means: but to excite us to “work out our own salvation,” in the diligent employment of these means, “with fear and trembling.”—Abraham’s bringing up his family in the fear of the Lord is connected, in the above-quoted passage, with the Lord’s “bringing upon him that which he had spoken of him.” But how could it contribute to this? On the promise of a fleshly seed, I have before said, it could have no conceivable influence. But on that of a spiritual seed, “a seed to serve the Lord,” its influence is immediate and apparent. The means are suited to the end,—the cause to the effect. Jehovah begins the fulfilment of his promise, to make him the spiritual “father of many

nations," and "to be a God to him and his seed after him," by Abraham's own instrumentality, in the religious training of his family; and in this way "race unto race" was made to "praise him," and "one generation to tell of his wonderful works to another:"—for "he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known unto their children, that the generation to come might know them, and the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them unto their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of the Lord, but keep his commandments."—It is still by the agency of parents, that God fulfils his word. It is while they "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," that he "pours out his Spirit upon their seed and his blessing upon their offspring," so that they "grow up as among the grass, and as willows by the water-courses:" and if we are looking for the blessing apart from the discharge of the duty, we are not exercising commanded confidence, but guilty of unwarranted and irrational presumption.

Christian parents,—the charge intrusted to you is one, the most momentous and interesting that can be imagined by the human mind. It is the charge of immortal souls. Every child, when born into the world, enters upon an existence that is never to terminate, upon a short and precarious life on earth, which must be succeeded by eternal blessedness, or eternal woe. How solemn the consideration!—And

with regard to your own children, to you is committed the sacred trust, of imparting to them that knowledge, which, through the blessing of God, shall make them "wise unto salvation." These lights, lighted for eternity, it is yours to feed with holy oil from the sanctuary of God, that they may burn, with pure and lovely radiance, before the throne above.—These never-dying plants, it is yours to rear and to cherish, bringing down upon them, by your prayers, the dews and rains of heaven, that so they may flourish and bear fruit for ever, in the paradise of God.—The language of the "Heavenly Father" to every christian parent, is that of Pharaoh's daughter to the mother of Moses, "Take this child, and nurse it for me." O forget not the sacred obligation. Let it be engraven on your hearts, "as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond." You love your children. They are dear to you as the apple of your eye,—precious as your own souls. What is there that you would not part with, to secure their well-being? And are not their eternal interests first in your thoughts, and first in your desires for them? If you feel as christians, they are,—they must be. Let them, then, be first in your prayers, and first in your exertions. Seek to impress early on their hearts a sense of the unspeakable importance of eternal things. Teach them the knowledge and fear of the Lord, when you sit in the house, and when you walk by the way; never with the repulsive austerity of a master, but with all the engaging tenderness of parental love. Let no prospect of temporal advantage induce you to expose their souls to



unnecessary hazards, from the snares and temptations of a deceitful world. Let no corporeal attractions, and no mental accomplishments, however gratifying they may lawfully be, appropriate that peculiar joy, which, in the hearts of godly parents, must ever be reserved for "seeing their children walking in truth."—Set your hearts, with intense and unquenchable desire, on the salvation of your offspring. Ask it of God with the fervour and importunity of faith. Show the sincerity of your prayers, by unwearied attention to the use of necessary means:—and I doubt not, you will have the blessedness of seeing, amongst your offspring, a seed arise to serve the Lord.

If in any case there should be an apparent failure of the blessing, there is a call to much searching of heart, and close investigation of the whole process of training. It is surely safer, to question our own fidelity to duty, than God's fidelity to promise.—Are you sure, that the salvation of your children has engaged your desires, with a fervour and a constancy proportioned to its infinite importance?—Have you pursued this object with sufficient seriousness, as "the one thing needful" to your parental happiness?—While you have been teaching the truths of God, have you been careful to "walk before your house in a perfect way," exemplifying, in your whole deportment, their holy, heavenly influence?—Have you, in no measure, been guilty of sacrificing the souls of your children to their temporal interests?—Have your efforts, and your prayers been engaged about this object, with any thing like a proportion to its

unutterable magnitude?—Have your exertions been believing exertions,—your prayers, the prayers of faith?—or has there not been, in both, a lamentable deficiency of firm, and simple-hearted, and practical confidence in God?

May the “God of the families of Israel” impress, more deeply than ever, upon your minds, the duty enjoined upon you! Let the baptism of your own children, and every baptism you are called to witness, remind you of your obligations, and bring you to your knees, with tears of conscious short-coming, and of earnest entreaty for grace to fulfil them!

2. To the children of godly parents, I would briefly but affectionately say:—In your connexion with such parents, and in their instructions and example, you enjoy, or you have enjoyed, a most precious privilege,—a blessing for which you cannot be sufficiently thankful. But the privilege may, like every other, be abused or neglected, and the blessing, by this means, be converted to a curse. Every favour of heaven heightens the responsibility of those on whom it is conferred, and, through the perversity of the human heart, exposes to the danger of augmented guilt; responsibility being according to privilege. If your parents considered aright what they were doing, when they presented you to the Lord in the ordinance of baptism, it was not, with them, a season of thoughtless merriment, on the giving of a name to their child; but a time of tender feeling, of serious reflection, of solicitous anticipation, of solemn prayer. They brought you in faith to Jesus. They implored

his blessing upon you. They felt the weight of the sacred trust. They placed believing reliance on the divine promises. They resolved that you should be trained in the fear of the Lord,—in his “nurture and admonition;” and they looked, with earnest desire, for the grace of God, to enable them to fulfil their resolution. I speak not of vows made by them in your name; and far less, of god-fathers and god-mothers, stepping in between you and your parents, and taking upon themselves a gratuitous responsibility in your behalf; because I find none of these things in my Bible, and regard them, along with some other practices, as inventions of men,—human appendages to a simple divine institution. But at your baptism, your parents had before them an impressive remembrancer of the obligations, on their part, arising from the promises of God’s covenant; they avowed their sense of these obligations, and their determination, in the strength of grace, to fulfil them; and, if they have acted in consistency with the professions then made, and with the design of the ordinance, they have brought you up as young disciples of the Saviour, instructing you in his truth, and affectionately admonishing you in his name. They have sought, on your behalf, the guidance of the “good Shepherd,” who “gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom,” that under his gracious eye you might be induced to “follow the footsteps of the flock.”

Have you, then, my young friends, improved and profited by your connexion with your parents, and the privileges thence arising? Have you entered into

their desires?—have you valued the promises and blessings of God's covenant?—have you sought, that the emblematical import of your baptism may be realized in your experience?—and that your names may be found, with those of your parents, in the Lamb's book of life? O beware of “forsaking the guide of your youth, and forgetting the covenant of your God;” else, to use his own expression, “you shall know his breach of promise,” and “bring upon yourselves a curse, and not a blessing.” Remember the warnings, “To whom much is given, of them will much be required:”—“The servant that knew his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many stripes:”—“Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have continued unto this day. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee!”

If you have received, in the love of it, the “instruction of wisdom,” the duty of walking in fellowship with the church of Christ, in all his ordinances, ought to be seriously pondered by you. It is true, that “except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:” he cannot be received into it above, and is not a fit member of it below. But, in the case of children, brought up in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” the change which is thus expressed may often be, nay often is, so imperceptible

in its first commencements, and gradual in its subsequent progress,—that time and circumstances cannot be specified. This is what, from the nature of the case, we might reasonably anticipate. I do not say, there is such a thing as hereditary grace: but, since the grace of God, in its various blessings, is conveyed to sinners *by means*, it quite accords with the natural order of things, that it should accompany those means, and flow, as it were, in the same channel with them. So that, if the knowledge of God, the great means by which the blessings of salvation come to be enjoyed, was appointed to be conveyed from generation to generation, we must suppose the blessings to be conveyed along with it, and the conveyance of the blessings to be the grand design of the conveyance of the knowledge. There is no other design, which we can imagine God to have had, in such appointment. And, therefore, although his grace is not imparted by fleshly birth; yet that, when his people are attentive to the means appointed, this grace should appear descending through their generations, cannot at all be matter of wonder.—Not that, in religious education, there is freedom from danger. Beware, my young friends, of thinking so. The natural depravity of our hearts has infused danger into every thing. The danger here is imminent. It is that of growing up in the form of godliness, without its power; in profession, without real principle; in outward virtue, without inward piety. Beware of this danger. But let not the jealous dread of it carry you to the extreme, of keeping back from those ordinances,

which you know it to be the duty of all to observe, who believe in Christ, and fear God. If you are conscious of this faith and fear, and of your need of all the instituted means of stability and growth, neglect not those institutions, which are designed for the spiritual improvement of the disciples. Nothing ought to be more delightful to the churches of Christ and their pastors, than the admission amongst them of the children of the members,—the fruits of the Divine blessing on parental duty.

Some may belong to parents, who had them baptized in their infancy, as a mere matter of form, in compliance with national custom, making them like others, giving them their name, and fancying that their being *christened* made them *christians* of course. But, if the profession of christianity made by your parents has been careless and worldly, destitute of spirituality and of scriptural evidence,—I have only to say beware of following it.—Some have perplexed themselves with the question, whether, in such circumstances, they ought not to be re-baptized; and anti-pædobaptists are apt to feel a kind of triumphant self-complacency in such difficulties, and to urge them on weak consciences in their most puzzling forms. But nothing can be more unfair. Even if the difficulty were ever so perplexing, it could not, in the least degree, affect the conclusiveness of our general argument. A difficulty, which has resulted from the abuse of an ordinance, can never be fairly urged against the proper and legitimate use of it.—Our baptist friends suppose, that adult baptism only was the original

practice of the New Testament churches, and, consequently, that it early gave place to the practice of infant baptism in ninety-nine hundredths of the christian community. It is allowable for the sake of argument to suppose the case reversed. Suppose, then, infant baptism to have been the original practice, and to have been early renounced by ninety-nine hundredths of professing christians, the remaining hundredth alone retaining the custom:—suppose, that, when christianity came to be incorporated with the kingdoms of this world, adult instead of infant baptism had been the prevailing usage; and that as free an admission of adults to baptism had taken place, as there is now of parents to the baptism of their children, whilst the small minority (the pædobaptists) were conscientiously scrupulous as to the profession and character of those whose children they baptized:—it is not difficult to conceive how many perplexing cases, and puzzling questions must have arisen from this state of things, to those antipædobaptist dissenters from the established church, who did not approve of its nationality, and separated from its unavoidable corruption. And these cases and questions the pædobaptist minority would have had the same ground for pressing upon *them*, as *they* now have for pressing upon pædobaptists those which have resulted from the actually existing circumstances. But it would have been as unfair in the one case as it is in the other. The great matter is, to ascertain scriptural principles; and then, when any case of difficulty is suggested, to make it our simple inquiry, What line

of practice will be most consistent with those principles? Even if, in some little points, we should continue at a loss, we are not to renounce a practice which we are satisfied rests on the broad basis of scriptural authority, merely because, in consequence of abuses, questions can be framed by a subtle adversary, which may carry in them a practical difficulty.

Simon Magus was baptized on his professing the faith, although it afterward appeared he was still "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity." Suppose that the rebuke of Peter had taken hold of his conscience, that he had been brought to true repentance, that the "thought of his heart had been forgiven him," and that he had renewed his profession, in sincerity and right understanding; would it have been necessary to baptize him again? or would not a believing recognition of his former baptism have been enough?—When our baptist brethren themselves are disappointed in the profession of any one whom they have admitted to the ordinance, and are constrained to disown him, and to separate him from their fellowship;—if their dealings with him, and the discipline of the house of God, should subsequently bring him to a right mind, and he should acknowledge his former profession to have been without a proper spiritual understanding and feeling of the truth;—would they reckon it their duty to baptize him anew?—Even if the fault had in part lain with the elder by whom the person had been baptized,—if he had been chargeable with lightness and haste,—would they reckon re-baptism necessary?—It is possible, that different



individuals amongst them may be disposed to answer this question differently;—and, in like manner, it is possible, that some pædobaptists may hold one opinion, and some another, as to the propriety of re-baptizing those children, when they come to maturity and profess the faith, whose parents, at the time of their baptism, were living without God;—(a point of fact, however, it may be observed, in all cases of delicate, in many of difficult, and in some of impossible determination:)—but no ground of objection to the views either of baptists or of pædobaptists could be more futile.—For my own part, my young friends, I see little cause for your distressing yourselves upon the subject. When your parents had the ordinance administered to *you*, it ought to have been understood by *them*. If they understood it not, or did not properly consider its import, and its connexion with their duty, and did not act according to the obligations and the encouragements recognized in it; *they* were to be blamed, and *you* were to be pitied. But the meaning of the ordinance was not thereby altered; and, *if you are now satisfied of the scriptural ground for infant baptism*, any suspicion or conviction of the want of faith in your parents can no more be a valid reason for *your* being re-baptized, than the suspicion, or conviction, of the inadequacy of a previous profession would be a valid reason *to the believer in adult baptism only*, for re-baptizing *an adult*, who should come to make that profession in earnest, which he had before made with carelessness or insincerity. In either case, the recognition of the ordinance, with a right understanding

and an honest heart, should be considered as sufficient. The baptism of children, on the professed faith of *their parents*, stands, in this respect, on precisely the same footing, as the baptism of an adult upon *his own* profession. An adult may himself be baptized on a profession that is hollow-hearted and thoughtless; and a parent may have his children baptized on such a profession:—both the baptized adult and the parent may afterwards be brought under the saving power of the truth:—and, in these circumstances, whatever it would be right to do in the one case, it would be right to do in the other. If it would be right to re-baptize the adult, it would be right to re-baptize the children of the parent; if no necessity would be felt for this in the case of the adult, neither is there such necessity in the case of the children. The adult and the parent would both recognize what before they had overlooked or disregarded—the spiritual import of the rite,—and show the sincerity of their new profession, by acting according to it in their respective circumstances. And the very same principle extends to the child of a careless parent, when that child is brought to know the Lord, and to possess the blessings which the ordinance represents.

3. With regard to the duty of *churches* in reference to the children of the members, there is little said in the scriptures, and I shall not therefore enlarge. That they ought to feel an interest in the rising generation, cannot be questioned. The interest ought to be lively and tender. But the different ways in which this interest should practically express itself, are not authori-

tatively prescribed, being, like some other matters, left to discretion.

When the apostle, in his epistles, addressing himself to the churches, introduces the subject of the instruction and spiritual care of children, it is evident, that he devolves the important charge, not upon the associated body of believers, but on the parents amongst them to whom the children belonged. The very address, it is true, *to children*, as connected with the community of God's people, testifies the interest felt in them by the apostle himself, and contains a virtual admonition to the churches, to take care that they were not neglected. By connecting this with the immediately subjoined charge to parents, we are naturally led to the conclusion, that the principal way in which the care of the churches for the spiritual interests of the children connected with them ought to show itself, is their seeing to it that the parents discharge their duty faithfully. The parents have, by apostolic authority, as well as by the dictate of nature, the immediate charge of the children; and the church, by the same Divine authority, has the immediate oversight of the parents. The discipline of the churches ought certainly to be considered as extending to every description of sin. The violation, or neglect, of the parental trust, is a sin, of which cognizance ought to be taken, as well as of others. If parents, who are members of a church, are allowed to go on in such violation and neglect, the church is chargeable with an omission of duty. "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," is as plain and

explicit a command, as "Thou shalt not steal," or "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." The violation of the one may not be of so easy detection, as that of the others. There may even, in certain cases, be circumstances of delicacy and difficulty, that require any cognizance of parental conduct to be gone about with great prudence, and cautious discrimination. But the *principle* of discipline is, in both cases, the same. We must not allow sin to be committed, and persisted in, without endeavouring, by scriptural means, to bring the offender to repentance. And, surely, there is no sin which it is of more consequence to have corrected by repentance, than one which affects the best interests of the rising generation, and thus tends deeply to injure the prosperity of the church, and the cause and glory of Christ. If undutifulness to parents, on the part of children, would be a proper subject of ecclesiastical reprehension, so surely should the neglect of children, on the part of parents. If the man who, in temporal things, "provides not for his own, and especially for those of his own house," is to be treated as one who "has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;" can we hesitate, in so regarding the man, who, as far as his influence is concerned, leaves his children destitute of "the meat which endureth unto life eternal?" No parent can do this, that deserves the name of christian; and no such parent, therefore, should be a member of any christian church. There may be various degrees of the sin; and each case must be dealt with according to its own peculiar circumstances.

But I am verily persuaded, “there is utterly a fault amongst us,” upon this subject. The pastors of the churches ought to feel it their duty, in public and in private, to press upon parents the fulfilment of their trust, and upon children the improvement of their privileges;—to ascertain, by domiciliary visits, the state of domestic instruction, and, with affectionate fidelity, to commend or admonish accordingly;—and, by occasional or stated meetings, of a more public kind,—of the children, for example, in different districts of local residence,—to stimulate both children and parents, and provoke the one and the other, respectively, to a holy emulation. And, in the use of all such means, the deacons and members of churches should show all possible countenance to the pastors, aid them to the full extent of their power, and “by love serve one another.”

I conclude with one general caution.—Let all beware of trusting, in any measure, for their salvation to any outward observance. The Jews, who trusted and gloried in their circumcision, mistook and perverted its design, to the dishonour of Abraham, and of the God of Abraham, and to their own everlasting perdition. You have been baptized. As to the present view of the matter, it is of no consequence whether by sprinkling or immersion, whether in infancy or in adult years: if you fancy yourselves christians because you have been baptized, you are in the same fatal error in which the Jews were, who imagined themselves the children of Abraham and of God, because they were circumcised. Be not deceived. Those

Jews perished without remedy, notwithstanding their circumcision, who refused to “submit themselves unto the righteousness of God,” of which, when properly understood, it was the sign and the seal. So must all, without remedy, perish, notwithstanding their baptism and their other outward privileges, who are not “*born again*,” by being made partakers of like precious faith with Abraham. Circumcision could not save the one; neither can baptism save the other. Mere natural descent from Abraham could not save the one; neither can mere natural relation to godly parents save the other. All the variety of external privilege and observance could not save the one;—outward connexion with the purest church on earth, and the most punctilious attendance upon all its institutions, cannot save the other. “He was not a Jew “who was one outwardly, neither was that circumcision which was outward in the flesh; but he was a “Jew who was one inwardly, and circumcision was “that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, “whose praise is not of men, but of God.” He is not a *christian*, who is one outwardly; neither is that *baptism* which is outward on the flesh; but he is a *christian*, who is one inwardly, and baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. “In Christ Jesus neither “circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, “but a new creation.” \*

\* Rom. ii. 28, 29. Gal. vi. 15.

## APPENDIX.

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ON THE QUESTION OF THE IDENTITY OR NON-IDENTITY OF JOHN'S BAPTISM AND CHRISTIAN BAPTISM :—AND ON THE WARRANTED EXTENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,—OR THE QUESTION, WHETHER, AND HOW FAR, THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL, OR THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE PROFESSED FAITH OF IT, BE REQUISITE IN THE SUBJECTS OF THE ORDINANCE.

IN the “introductory observations” to the preceding dissertation, I have said—“that the question is not at all about adult baptism, or about *the necessity, to the baptism of adults, of a profession of the faith.* On this, baptists and pædobaptists are of one mind.” p. 22.—Such was my full conviction when that sentence was written. Towards the close of the second section of the dissertation, I have adverted to a certain amount of indefiniteness and prevailing laxity on the subject among my pædobaptist brethren in the south. But, until of late, I had no idea of the degree, or of the extent, of this laxity,—both as to the requisites in adults to their own baptism, and in parents to the baptism of their children. It has been

a cause of equal surprise and concern to me to find, from the publications of more than one of those brethren which have recently appeared, that in my first statement I have been so very wide of the truth. The lax views to which I now refer, have been propounded and argued at length in the "Congregational Lecture" for 1844, by my esteemed friend Dr. Halley, of Manchester. To the sentiments and reasonings of that work, in as far as they bear upon the announced subjects of this Appendix, I shall, in endeavouring to vindicate and establish my own views, (which I have seen no sufficient reason to alter, or even to modify) exclusively confine myself; leaving to the reader the application of such general principles as I may succeed in proving scriptural, to the reasonings of others. The work I have mentioned has many excellencies. Its historical and critical learning, its clearness and force, its manly independence, its ingenuous candour, its general acuteness and cogency of argumentation, and its thoroughly evangelical tone, rendered the perusal of it to myself a source of no ordinary gratification. To a very large proportion of the sentiments maintained and vindicated in the volume I append with pleasure my *ex animo* subscription; and from a man who writes as he does,—so faithfully, and so powerfully, on the great essential articles of saving truth, I am loath, even on any point, to differ. But on the topics to which this Appendix is devoted I think him wrong. The views which he broaches and defends are characterized by a latitudinarian laxity, which, in my eyes,



is as mischievous as it is unscriptural,—the former, because the latter. I may be mistaken; and should I ever come to a conviction of mistake, I trust I shall have grace to own it, and to thank the friend by whom it has been rectified. And, on the other hand, should I succeed in carrying conviction to the mind of my friend, I am persuaded that the christian candour and love of truth which he has evinced will induce a similar grateful avowal of it. I thank him for the terms of friendly and christian courtesy in which he expresses himself, even while fixing his lance in the rest to have a tilt at me; and at once infer from them, that the tilt is not at me, but at what he conscientiously believes to be my misapprehensions of truth. Let him regard in the same light any little encounter I may now have with him in return.

#### I. ON JOHN'S BAPTISM.

While the subject of "*John's baptism*" is far from being without an interest of its own, it derives an interest still greater from its bearings upon other points; and especially on those views, to which I have just adverted as peculiarly objectionable, respecting the lax administration of Christian baptism. On the ground of its identity with that of the Apostles after our Lord's ascension, his practice has been appealed to as an exemplification of the "indiscriminate administration" of the Christian ordinance "to all applicants;" to all who profess, not the belief of what

is taught, but a mere willingness to learn it; and also to children indiscriminately, without any respect whatever to the faith or character of their parents.—The question of the identity or distinctness of the two was discussed by the late Mr Hall in connexion with another subject. The opponents of his free communion principles had alleged the priority of the institution of baptism to that of the Lord's supper as “a presumptive evidence that it has, and ever will have, a prior claim to obedience,” and as a proof of the consequent unwarrantableness of admitting to Christian communion those who, according to anti-pædobaptist views, remained unbaptized. Into the relevancy of the argument on the subject of “Terms of Communion,” it belongs not to me at present to enter. The reader who is desirous to see it discussed with the power of a master, may have recourse to Mr Hall.—I have only to do with the assumption on which the priority, in point of time, of the one ordinance to the other rests,—namely, “the identity of John's baptism with that of our Lord.” If this identity has been, or can be, fairly established, then must we submissively acquiesce in all the consequences which can be shown legitimately to follow from it:—and it would be very inconsistent with that candour and openness of mind to the admission of truth which every subject of Christ ought conscientiously to cherish, to set about any attempt to disprove it, in order to evade those consequences. The question is one of fact:—is it so, or is it not so? If the answer to the question were otherwise doubtful,

the scriptural or unscriptural character of obviously legitimate consequences, on either side, might fairly be allowed their weight in bringing it to a settlement. But to endeavour to set aside a point of fact, because of our aversion to any of its implications and results, would be a disingenuousness unworthy of the sincere and fearless inquirer after truth. Of every such biasing prepossession such an inquirer will, with vigilant self-jealousy, beware. Apart altogether from the bearing of the question of identity either upon Mr Hall's subject or my own, I have from the first entertained the same opinion respecting it which he has so ably, and, in my apprehension, so conclusively advocated. Not that I would commit myself to every sentiment which he may have incidentally blended with the discussion, or even concur with him in either the legitimacy or the force of every argument he employs. But the main pillars of his conclusion, notwithstanding all that Dr. Halley and others have done to undermine or to shake them, do still appear to me to stand in all their strength.

It is chiefly on the ground that "by carefully attending to it (John's baptism) we may obtain some assistance in the more important inquiry respecting the nature of christian baptism,"\* that Dr. Halley introduces the discussion. It is, of course, on the same ground that I now set myself to examine the views he takes of it.—I have no objection to the statement of the question as given by him—page 182.

\* Sect. iv. p. 162.

“John baptized; the disciples of Jesus baptized during his ministry; the apostles baptized after his resurrection. Were these baptisms essentially different; or, if different in form, were they identical in their design and import? The several persons are said to have done the same thing. It therefore devolves upon those who maintain that their baptisms were different, to show the difference, and upon us to examine the particulars which they adduce.”—I might contrive, indeed, to place the question in such a position as to throw the *onus probandi* on the other side of it. I might invert the order of the process. I might affirm and demonstrate the essential difference between the state of things before, and the state of things after, the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus, and then challenge to the proof that, in circumstances thus essentially different, the same symbolical and initiatory act could mean the same thing. I admit at once, however, the superior naturalness and fairness of Dr. Halley’s position, and cheerfully accept the challenge.

I have hesitated about the order in which it might be best to take up the different branches of the discussion. On the whole it seems the preferable course to begin with *points of fact*. Fact, and then theory, is the order which all sound philosophy dictates.—There is, on the present subject, one question of fact, the satisfactory settlement of which, Dr. H. himself candidly admits, would render further investigation unnecessary with regard to the difference of the baptisms. It is the question, whether we have any exam-

ples of those who had been the subjects of John's baptism being rebaptized under the ministry of the apostles after the day of Pentecost. Dr. H.'s language here is explicit and decided:—"Was the difference," says he, "between the baptism of John and that of our Lord so important, that those who had been baptized by John were, or ought to have been, rebaptized on their becoming the disciples of Christ? That there was some variation in the form, or at least in the words employed, there can be no doubt whatever; *but we should say the difference was or was not essential, according as it appears that the parties were or were not rebaptized, or that the objects of Christian baptism were not sufficiently accomplished by the baptism of John.*"\* Again:—"Here we must acknowledge, if it can be clearly demonstrated that St. Paul, or any other inspired teacher, knowingly rebaptized any who had duly and properly received the baptism of John, *the essential difference is incontrovertibly proved.*"†

This explicit admission of the conclusiveness of the fact, if the fact can be established, makes our way plain, and our case comfortable. We feel that we are not "beating the air,"—contending for a point which, even should we succeed in establishing it, involves no sure results; but that what we aim at is worth our pains. Of the fact of re-baptism I have myself no doubt. My conviction of it rests upon *two cases*,—one more particular, the other more general,

\* Sect. iv. page 180.

† Ibid. page 194.

—one of a more positive, the other of a more negative, yet not less conclusive character.

I. The first of the two is that recorded in the beginning of the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; which I shall give in the words of the inspired historian:—"And it came to pass, that, "while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed "through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and, "finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have "ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And "they said unto him, We have not so much as heard "whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said "unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And "they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repent- "ance, saying unto the people, that they should "believe on him which should come after him, that "is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And "when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the "Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with "tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were "about twelve."

It will not be necessary to enlarge in proof of the fact of re-baptism in this remarkable case; since by Dr. Halley, with commendable candour, it is frankly admitted:—"That these twelve men were rebaptized must, I think, be candidly acknowledged." And, having mentioned various "ingenious suggestions," which "have been offered by the old reformers to escape the conclusion,"—he adds—"We must confess

“these disciples of the eloquent Apollos constitute the most formidable phalanx in this engagement, without whose aid neither Tractarians nor open communionists could do much to damage the credit of John's baptism.”\*

As to “damaging the credit of John's baptism,” I would have it understood, that of nothing divine do we “damage the credit,” but rather do the only legitimate credit both to it and to its Author, when we assign to it its true place and its real intention;—that we “damage its credit,” when we either raise it higher or sink it lower, when we either make more or make less of it, than was in the divine purpose in its appointment.—And as to those “twelve men” being either the only or the “most formidable phalanx” on our side of the present “engagement,” that remains to be seen. If I mistake not, we shall find another, still more numerous, and not less stalwart and indomitable.

The matter of fact, that these twelve disciples of John were rebaptized, has ever appeared to me to be as clear from the narrative as words could render it. Even with the aid of the  $\mu\epsilon\nu$  and the  $\delta\epsilon$ ,—were the genuineness of the former less questionable than it is—the attempt to make out the contrary would be a straining and a failure:—for what could well be more drivelling than to suppose the Apostle formally employing the contrariety implied in the use of these two particles to express what, instead of a contrariety,

\* Ibid. pages 195, 196.

is only, in Dr. Halley's appropriate language, the "unmeaning repetition, that John baptized in the name of Him that was to come, and his hearers were baptized in that name?" To introduce the phrases "on the one hand" and "on the other" in such a case, is to impose upon ourselves or others by a form of speech which means nothing. It would be at variance with the candour for which I have been commending my friend, were I to say that there is in the case no difficulty. These twelve men are called "*disciples*;" which, in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, never has another meaning than "*disciples of Jesus.*"—They are addressed by Paul as having "*believed*;" which, in that book, can signify nothing else than their having believed *in Jesus*. And their being disciples of Jesus, and believing in Jesus, must mean, if it mean any thing at all, their having the knowledge that *Jesus was the Christ*.—I was wont to consider the words—"that is, on Christ Jesus" as implying the contrary of this; their having, as partakers of John's baptism, believed in "him who should come after him,"—that is, on the Messiah as about to appear,—without their having yet been aware that Jesus was that Messiah; and that into the faith of this primary truth of the Gospel Dispensation they were now baptized anew. But the fact of their being called "*disciples*," and being said to have "*believed*," I am unable to reconcile with this hypothesis. The difficulty, however, when rightly viewed, may be found rather to strengthen my argument than invalidate it.—Paul asked them—"Have



ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They answered,—“We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” The answer is surely not to be understood as meaning that they were ignorant of the *existence* of the third person in the Godhead. The mode of expression, in the original, is the same as in John vii. 30. The words in that passage—*ὄπω γαρ ἦν πνευμα ἅγιον*—are translated, with a supplement,—“for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*.” On the same principle the words before us—*ἀλλ' οὐδε ἐν πνευμα ἅγιον ἐστὶ ἠκουσαμεν*—ought surely to be interpreted. They had not heard of the Holy Ghost's having been *given*; not that they had not heard of his personal existence, but they had not heard of his existence in his miraculous gifts in the church. The case is, even thus understood, an extraordinary one. But it is not incumbent on us to explain the circumstances in which these disciples had been placed, and by which this their singular ignorance is to be accounted for. It is the fact alone that is stated; and it is with the fact alone that we have to do.—Now, when Paul follows up their declaration of ignorance with the further question—“Into what, then, were ye *baptized*?”—and this question is connected with his former one—“Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye *believed*?”—one thing seems clear,—namely, the assumption, on the part of the Apostle, that when they *believed* they had been *baptized*. There would seem, indeed, a further assumption, that on their being baptized, they should either have received in themselves, or witnessed in others baptized along with

them, the final certification of the great truth that Jesus was the Christ, in the supernatural pentecostal gifts of the Spirit. I am of Dr. Halley's opinion, that the impartation of these spiritual gifts was far from having been individually universal. Yet their ignorance of such gifts was manifestly matter of surprise to the Apostle.—It appears, then, that these men had received "John's baptism,"—that is, baptism into the faith of "him who should come after him,"—into the faith that the expected *coming one* was at hand. At what time, subsequently, they came to the knowledge and belief of the farther truth that *Jesus* was this *coming one*, the Messiah—the Christ,—does not appear. But whensoever it was, *they had not been baptized when they received and avowed it.* Were they of Dr. Halley's mind, that their being baptized again was unnecessary? It really would appear so. But the fact of their re-baptism, admitted by Dr. Halley, is sufficient proof that, if they thought so, they were wrong. The ground of this may appear by and by.

Meantime, let us attend to the position which Dr. Halley takes up, to account for this admitted instance of re-baptism in consistency with his principle of the identity of the two baptisms.—"But if we believe, as we do," says he, "that these twelve men were rebaptized by St. Paul, it may be asked, how do we escape the conclusion that the disciples of John were baptized a second time by the Apostles? I acknowledge the difficulty." And to do the Dr. justice, I must give his solution of it at

length and in his own terms:—"Let us observe the connexion of the passage; and if we cannot escape the conclusion that these men were baptized by John, and rebaptized by Paul, we must resign this fact, as one argument against us which is not damaged on examination. The question is suggested, Were they baptized by John or his disciples previously to the death of Christ, or were they subsequently baptized by Apollos, in his ignorance of the death of Christ, after the manner of John's baptism?

" 'It came to pass, when Apollos was in Corinth.' These words suggest the inquiry, why the absence of Apollos should be mentioned, and what connexion he had with the narrative? Had he no connexion with it, the mention of his name would be superfluous and trifling. This clause connects the chapter with the preceding, and by its aid we correct the unfortunate interruption of the narrative by an inappropriate division. Of Apollos it is said a few verses before, 'Being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing' and therefore administering, 'only the baptism of John.' To know only the baptism of John, seems to intimate that he was acquainted with Jesus as the Messiah whom John taught, but not with his death and resurrection. This man, having been a disciple of John, and believing his testimony, that Jesus was the one mightier than he, preached with great power and success the religion of John, before he was taught the way of the Lord

“ more perfectly by Aquila and Priscilla, probably  
“ giving prominence to the great doctrine of the bap-  
“ tist, that Jesus was the Lamb of God who taketh  
“ away the sin of the world. Imperfectly acquainted  
“ with the gospel, he baptized his disciples after the  
“ manner which John employed, probably as John  
“ had done, into the profession of repentance prepa-  
“ ratory to the reception of the Messiah. But if his  
“ form of baptism were proper and valid, as we be-  
“ lieve it was, when administered before the resurrec-  
“ tion of Jesus, for the apostles and early disciples  
“ had no other, it was manifestly improper, if so  
“ administered subsequently to that event. Apollos  
“ might have most firmly believed that Jesus was the  
“ Christ, and yet, when he baptized these men, have  
“ known nothing of his death and resurrection, as he  
“ was residing at a great distance from Judea, and  
“ knew nothing of the effusion of the Holy Ghost.  
“ Had they been converted by any other ministry, it  
“ is not probable they would have been ignorant of  
“ the existence of the Holy Ghost. What teacher  
“ who knew the things which had been done at Jeru-  
“ salem, would have said nothing of the effusion of  
“ the Pentecost, nothing of the baptism of the Spirit?  
“ Apollos knew not this baptism. St. Paul says,  
“ ‘ John indeed baptized with the baptism of repen-  
“ tance, saying that they should believe on him who  
“ should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’  
“ It was, therefore, the only proper baptism for his  
“ time. But, sufficient as was its administration dur-  
“ ing the life of our Lord, so that none who then

“ received it, so far as we know, were rebaptized, it  
 “ was not suitable after his resurrection, and therefore  
 “ the disciples of Apollos were rebaptized in the name  
 “ of the Lord Jesus. It is remarkable we do not read  
 “ that Apollos himself, who had received John’s bap-  
 “ tism, was rebaptized, when taught the way of the  
 “ Lord more perfectly. It may be, that I cannot  
 “ prove all these particulars; but their probability,  
 “ even their possibility, is sufficient for my purpose.  
 “ It must be shown, that these twelve men were  
 “ baptized, not by Apollos, but by some one pre-  
 “ viously to the death of our Lord, to establish the  
 “ invalidity of John’s baptism:—but the aspect of  
 “ the narrative being opposed to such a supposition,  
 “ suggests the opinion that they were the disciples  
 “ of Apollos:—and if Apollos, knowing only the bap-  
 “ tism of John, baptized these men in ignorance of  
 “ the resurrection of Christ, (and who shall say he  
 “ did not?) the argument against us falls to pieces.  
 “ Before these men can prove the essential difference,  
 “ they must show that the register of their first bap-  
 “ tism is dated previously to the death of Christ.”\*

With regard to the ground thus taken for invalid-  
 ating the conclusion against the identity of John’s  
 baptism and that of the Apostles after our Lord’s  
 resurrection,—a conclusion, according to Dr. Halley  
 himself, otherwise sound and irresistible,—I offer the  
 following observations:—

1. It is *hypothetical*. Now, on controverted points,

\* Pages 198—200.

there is one case, and, if I mistake not, only one, in which *supposition* is fairly admissible as a foundation of argument. When a thing has been satisfactorily proved otherwise, and a supposition is required to establish consistency in one particular, such supposition may legitimately be made. In other words, when two states of a fact are supposable, that one not only may fairly be preferred, but ought to have the preference, which best harmonises with what has been previously established.—‘This,’ Dr. H. may allege, ‘is precisely the juncture in which I have introduced my supposition. I consider the identity of the baptisms as otherwise satisfactorily shown; and on this account conceive myself entitled to dispose of the difficulty in this particular case by means of that supposition.’ But this I regard as greatly too bold an assumption. The case must be a far clearer one than his, that would justify such a proceeding.—I observe, therefore—

2. The supposition itself *rests on a ground singularly slender*.—The supposition, that these twelve men were disciples of Apollos,—that they were baptized by Apollos,—and that they were baptized by Apollos while he was in ignorance of Christ’s resurrection,—is built upon the words with which the chapter opens—“It came to pass, while Apollos was at Corinth.” From this mention of Apollos it is inferred that he must have had something to do with the transaction which follows in the narrative;—otherwise “the mention of his name would be superfluous and trifling.” And then the nature

of his connexion with the case of these twelve men is hypothetically fitted to the support of the intended conclusion.—But how exceedingly narrow and feeble is the ground for all these inferential deductions! To use a phrase of his own on another part of the subject—“the foundation is too small for the superstructure.” Dr. H. takes notice of the connexion of the introductory clause of this chapter with the close of the preceding. I am obliged to him for calling the reader's attention to this, “and correcting the unfortunate interruption of the narrative;” for it is all in my favour, as contributing to weaken the validity of his ground. It is this very connexion of the verses that undermines it. In the immediately preceding sentence, the fact had been mentioned of Apollos having “passed into Achaia,” with recommendatory letters from Ephesus. What, then, more natural for the historian, in pursuing his narrative, to intimate that the next incident he was about to relate took place while Apollos was away? Nay, more than this. Just before the mention of the coming of Apollos to Ephesus, it had been stated that Paul had arrived there, and, after a very short stay, had left it—verses 19—21. Then, after Paul's departure, Apollos came:—and, having remained, it is not said how long, but apparently only a short time, he too left it for Achaia. Then, last of all, during his absence in Achaia, Paul, having accomplished his visit to Jerusalem, returned; and, on his return, the incident took place relative to the twelve men and their re-baptism. To infer from this simple statement even

so much as that these men had been baptized by Apollos *at all*, seems more than the premises will warrant; but to carry the inference so far as to conclude that the reason of their re-baptism was, not that their former baptism had been only John's baptism, but that it had been the administration of that baptism *at so late a period as to destroy its validity*, is surely beyond all the limits of moderation. For my own part, I think it highly probable,—and I conceive myself to have quite as good if not better grounds for so thinking it,—that but for Apollos's absence from Ephesus at the time, Paul would have pursued the same course with him as with them;—asking him the same question, baptizing him along with them, and, by the laying on of his hands, conferring on him also the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And were I to take a fancy to suppose, that the reason why the absence of Apollos is adverted to was to account for the same thing not having been done in his case as in theirs, I might have about as much to say for my fancy as Dr. H. has for his.—But let it be observed—

3. Even supposing all, in regard to the *facts*, to have been as Dr. H. would have it, his inference from them does not appear to me at all consistent with his own views about the *identity* of the baptisms. If they really were identical, I do not see how difference of time and circumstances could destroy that identity. To say that John's baptism was essentially the same with apostolic baptism provided it was administered *before* the resurrection of Christ, but that it ceased to



be the same if administered *after* it, seems to me to amount to a denial of the *identity*, and an admission of the essential difference. John's baptism, according to Dr. H., was baptism *in the name of Jesus* as the Messiah. Such, then, must have been the baptism of Apollos. In the case of those who had been baptized by John himself before the death and resurrection of Christ, Dr. Halley's sentiment is that this was valid Christian baptism, and that the intervention of these facts and the difference of time altered not its essential character,—so that re-baptism would only have been a repetition of the same thing. The two were *formally* different, but *essentially* one. If so,—if the diversity in the forms of administration before and after the resurrection made no difference in the nature and essence of the rite, I am at a loss to imagine how its being administered in the first form, through the mere ignorance of Apollos, should have made this essential difference *after* the resurrection of Jesus any more than before it. It was still the same baptism; and the question has still the same force in it—if it was the same baptism, why repeat it? The admission that by the intervention of the facts of the death and resurrection of our Lord, baptism according to the first form—that is, John's baptism—was rendered *invalid*,—amounts to an admission of the “essential difference;” for it implies, that *when* these facts had taken place, *the baptism was changed*; not the form merely, but the thing,—for, as the *form* did not change the identity, neither could the *time* of the form so change it,—nor could the ignorance of Apollos

so change it. But after Christ's death and resurrection, it became baptism into *something new*,—something *more*;—and the *new* and the *more* not matters of inferior and trivial moment, but the most important and vital of all.—The apostle Paul, accordingly, describes true Christian baptism in these terms—“ Know “ ye not that as many of us as” (that we whosoever) “ were baptized *into Jesus Christ* were baptized *into “ his death ?”* Rom. vi. 3.—Do not his words imply, that baptism *into Christ's death* is the only *Christian baptism ?*—and, as a consequence, that John's baptism, not having been baptism into his death, was *not* Christian baptism ?—and accordingly, in the passage under review, the language of Paul, used to express the reason of their re-baptism, contains not the remotest hint as to the *time* of their former baptism ; nor does he put to them any inquiry either as to that particular or the person by whom it had been administered ; it is simply a description of *John's baptism* : —he asks the one question—“ *Unto what*, then, were ye baptized ?” —not at all *at what time ?* but “ *unto what ?*” —the answer is simply—“ *Unto John's baptism*,” without allusion to period or person—and the rejoinder, with an equal absence of all such allusion, is, as I have said, a simple description of John's baptism—“ Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the “ baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that “ they should believe on him who should come after “ him ; that is, on Christ Jesus.” —Who, from anything here, could ever be led to imagine, that the reason of the re-baptism was, not their having been

before baptized *only* with John's baptism, but their having been baptized with John's baptism *at a wrong time?* The truth is,—if the words of Paul—“That is, on Christ Jesus”—are not to be considered as explanatory of John's “*him that should come after him*”—and as implying that Christian baptism was baptism into *something more* than John's,—namely, into the faith not only of an immediately coming Messiah, but of Jesus as that Messiah, of the death of Jesus as the finishing of his commissioned work, and of the resurrection of Jesus as the proof of the divine acceptance of that work, the assurance of salvation wrought, and the pledge of its blessings to every believer,—if they are not so to be considered, I am unable to attach any definite meaning to the terms which record their re-baptism, and assign the reason for it—“*And when they heard that, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus:*”—words which, in the connexion in which they thus stand, appear incapable of any other meaning than that they were *now for the first time baptized into that name*, and that they were baptized into it as having now for the first time “heard” of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, and of the pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit as the closing evidence of both.

On such grounds as these, I feel impressed with the conviction of the utter inadequacy of Dr. Halley's supposition to make good his conclusion,—even were the supposition admitted to have been a reality ; while, at the same time, the supposition itself has no such

amount of verisimilitude as to entitle it to be made the ground of any conclusion.

I may just add, that it is rather too bad in my friend to attempt to throw the *onus probandi* respecting the *time* of the first baptism of these twelve men upon us :—“ It must be shown, that these twelve men “ were baptized, not by Apollos, but by some one previously to the death of our Lord, to establish the “ invalidity of John’s baptism :—but the aspect of “ the narrative being opposed to such a supposition, “ suggests the opinion that they were the disciples “ of Apollos ; and if Apollos, knowing only the baptism of John, baptized these men in ignorance of “ the resurrection of Christ (and who shall say he “ did not ?) the argument against us falls to pieces. “ Before these twelve men can prove the essential “ difference, they must show that the register of their “ first baptism is dated previously to the death of “ Christ.”—Pages 199, 200.—This, I repeat, is too bad. “ *It must be shown* that these men were *not* baptized by Apollos !” We cannot admit the obligation to make out this negative ; but, notwithstanding the ground (whose feebleness we have pointed out,) on which Dr. H. rests his assumption, feel ourselves entitled to ask—Why must it not be proved that they *were* ? In answer to the question—“ Who shall say he did not ?” we put the counter-question—“ Who shall say he *did* ?” —And in rejoinder to the legal disqualification of the witnesses in the last sentence, we should deem it enough, as their counsel, simply to turn that sentence the other

way:—"Before these twelve men can *disprove* the "essential difference, they must show that the register of their first baptism is dated *subsequently* to "the death of Christ."—And even if they made good the proof of this, we have endeavoured to show that it would not avail them.

2. I proceed to my second case;—the case which I have described as more *general*, and, although more of a *negative* character, yet *by no means less pertinent and conclusive*.—It is quite simple,—resting on recorded and indubitable facts. The facts are these. In the *first* place, *vast multitudes were baptized by John*. This is not denied, but, although for a different purpose, strongly admitted. The language of the sacred narrative is very unqualified:—"There went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins"—Matt. iii. 5, 6. "There went out to him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan"—Mark i. 8.—"Although," says Dr. H., "we do not understand these expressions literally, yet they must imply that great multitudes followed him, and the language of Mark is express, they were *all* baptized of him."—It is needless here to guess at the numbers,—how many thousands, or myriads, there might be. Dr. Halley himself repeatedly expresses his conviction that the terms of the narrative cannot mean less than "a majority of the population." He mentions Mr Thorn's estimate of the numbers, namely "two mil-

lions," and adds that for his own argument (he is reasoning at the time against *immersion*) he would himself be "content with a fourth, or a tenth, or even a twentieth of it." And although this seems scarcely consistent with the "majority of the population," I think I might be content with it for *my* argument, as well as he for his, different as the subjects of them are. But any attempt to determine definite numbers, or even an approach to them, is altogether needless. It is enough that the flocking to John was very general, and that his baptism was thus very extensively administered. The requisites to its administration, on the part of the recipients, is a totally distinct question,—of which by and by. At present my argument requires no more than the unquestioned fact.—We pass forward, then, to the day of Pentecost, and the administration of baptism by the Apostles, and observe, *secondly*, as another unquestioned fact, that on that day, when the testimony was delivered, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, respecting the death and resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, there were no fewer than *three thousand* who embraced it; and that during the days and weeks of a brief succeeding period, *many thousands more* were added, so that they soon came to amount to *myriads*.\*—Now, we have as clear proof as the simplicity of historical narrative can afford, that these thousands *were all baptized*. With re-

\* See Acts ii. 41; iv. 4; vi. 7; ix. 31; xxi. 20, *in the Greek*.

gard to the three thousand on Pentecost, the statement is express,—“Then they that gladly received his word *were baptized* :”—and, unless it shall be controverted, I hold myself entitled to assume the same to have been the case with the “five thousand” in the fourth chapter, and with all the rest.—The argument, then, lies here :—is it within the limits of the possible,—looking at the vast extent of John’s baptism, and at the largeness of the numbers baptized by the Apostles,—that among those who were the subjects of the latter baptism there were none who had been the subjects of the former? “*All Jerusalem*” is the phrase used respecting the multitude of its inhabitants who went out to be baptized of John ; and it was *in Jerusalem* that the pentecostal baptism of the three thousand took place. Is it imaginable that of these three thousand there were none that had been included in the “all Jerusalem?”—nay, none of the “all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan?”—is it to be credited that the three thousand consisted exclusively of strangers then in Jerusalem from distant countries?—and that all the subsequent thousands were of the same description?—Yet not the remotest hint is to be found of any exception being made, in the charge to be baptized, of those amongst the multitudes addressed who had been *baptized already* ! If the baptisms were identical, and re-baptism was not only unnecessary, but irregular and unconstitutional, this does appear to me altogether unaccountable.—And yet we have not done. Not only is no exception actually hinted ; all

exception is *absolutely interdicted* :—for, in answer to the question of the awakened thousands—“Men and brethren, what shall we do?” what says Peter, —“Repent, and be baptized,”—not “as many of you as have not already been baptized in that name,” but—“*every one of you*, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.”—“*Every one of you!*” Was there not so much as one, then, among all whom he addressed, that had been “baptized with the baptism of John?” As I am unable to imagine a man of Dr. Halley’s candour supposing this, I am unable to imagine his resisting the conclusion, that baptism by John did not preclude baptism by the Apostles.—And, if this conclusion be irresistible, the identity of the baptisms is, by his own admission, disproved, and the “essential difference” established.

I have commended, and sincerely commended my friend’s *candour*. I am not about to recall the commendation. The fact, however, is a somewhat extraordinary one, that, although Mr Hall complains of the author of “a plea for primitive communion,” to whom he replies in his Tract on “the essential difference between Christian baptism and the baptism of John,” in these terms—“To the argument founded “on the extreme improbability that none of the numerous converts on the day of Pentecost were previously disciples of John, no reply is attempted,”—Dr. Halley has maintained, respecting this argument, the same silence with the author of the “plea.”—I am quite disposed to treat this as an oversight. I cannot believe it intentional. His mind was occupied



with the special case of the "twelve men" in Acts xix. and he forgot the thousands in Acts ii. To suppose him to have purposely omitted the notice of the argument from these, is to suppose him to have been secretly convinced by it, and unwilling to avow the conviction. I have a far higher opinion of him than to admit such a supposition into my mind for a moment. And, as I do not believe him capable of any thing so disingenuous,—of any such "handling of the word of God deceitfully,"—not only from all that I know of his manly openness as well as his reverence for truth, but from the very candour displayed by him in his treatment of the special case on which he *has* commented,—I at once impute it to the cause I have mentioned. But it was a faulty oversight. The argument is by no means one of such minor importance and weight as to justify so light a treatment of it. I am persuaded that, if he just looks it fairly in the face, he will blush to say *No* to it. The case being one at the very "beginning of the gospel," he will find no Apollos to help him out.

I have thus stated my two cases, on which I rest my own conviction of the *fact of re-baptism*. I hold them to be quite conclusive:—and, if they are conclusive as to the fact, they are admitted by Dr. H. himself to be conclusive as to the "essential difference."

Still, however, the *theory* of the case is interesting;—the question, I mean, as to *what constituted* this essential difference,—wherein it consisted. It appears to me, that, while the fact, ascertained as above, goes

to settle the theory, a correct view of the theory might prepare our minds to anticipate the fact. The question, indeed, regarding the *theory* is itself a question of *fact*. It is the question, What was the substance of John's preaching, and the substance of our Lord's preaching, by himself or by his Apostles, during his personal ministry?—and What was the substance of the preaching of the Apostles after Pentecost? The *baptism* of each bore reference to the *teaching* of each:—and if we find an essential difference in the *teaching* (not of course in the way of *contrariety*, but in the way of *amount*) we may be prepared to expect an essential difference in the *baptism*;—such a difference as at once to account for the fact of re-baptism.

The first thing, then, to be here noticed, is the fact that the teaching of John the Baptist and the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles during his public ministry, was *substantially the same*.—What was it? The evangelical record answers—“In those days “came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness “of Judea, and saying—*Repent ye; for the kingdom “of heaven is at hand*”—Matt. iii. 1, 2.—“From “that time Jesus began to preach, and to say— “*Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*”—Matt. iv. 17.—And when Jesus, during the time of his personal ministry, sent forth the twelve and the seventy to preach in his name, the instructions given them were in full accordance with his own and the Baptist's practice. To the former he said—“As ye “go, preach, saying—*The kingdom of heaven is at*

“*hand*”—Matt. x. 7 :—to the latter—“ Into whatsoever city ye enter—heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, *The kingdom of heaven is come nigh unto you*”—Luke x. 8, 9.—Here there can be no dispute. I speak now of the great general purport of the ministry of the two—of John and of Jesus. As to *what more* the one or the other taught occasionally, I may notice it by and by.

From this general purport of both the ministries,—the substantial identity of what each, in his preaching, proclaimed,—it seems a fair and natural sequence that at that time the *baptism* of the one and of the other must have been substantially the same. The rite administered, submission to which involved a profession of faith, avowed or tacit, (this I must for the present be allowed to assume) must of course have been in correspondence with the doctrine taught. Those who received the baptism of John did, in the very act of such reception, profess faith in his divine commission, and in the truth of what he was commissioned to proclaim :—and those who submitted to the baptism of Jesus made the same profession in regard to *his* commission, and the doctrine taught by *him*. If the doctrine was the same, the baptism was the same; the profession of faith required in order to it being the same.\*

\* The connexion between the doctrine and the baptism is admitted, and strongly stated, by Dr. Halley :—“ John had to teach a new doctrine. \* \* \* \* So closely were the baptism and the new doctrine connected, that the one term seems

There is another point of fact, then, to be attended to:—namely, that John administered his baptism,—and administered it extensively,—*before he himself personally knew Jesus*. This is clear from a comparison of Luke iii. 21, 22, with John i. 32—34. In the former passage we have this statement:—“Now, *when all the people were baptized*, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove upon him; and lo, a voice came from heaven, which said, “Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased:”—and in the latter:—“John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost:—and I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.”—It will not be questioned, then, surely, that *previously* to the baptism of Jesus by John, John’s preaching related, in general terms, to “him that should come after him” without any declaration of *who that was*,—without his pointing out Jesus personally as the individual whom he meant. Now Luke expressly tells us, that before John himself received the divine intimation that *Jesus*

to be employed for the other.” “The baptism of John,” (the new doctrine) “was it from heaven, or of men?”—“After the baptism,” (the doctrine) “which John preached,” &c. p. 162.

was *He*, "all the people" had been "baptized;" which cannot mean less than that the baptism of Jesus took place towards the close of John's public ministry.

From this the conclusion seems to me inevitable, that John did *not* baptize *in the name of Jesus*. Suppose we grant, that John could not but know of the birth and life of Jesus in the family of his kinswoman Mary and her husband Joseph,—and that neither could he be ignorant of the extraordinary circumstances of that birth and early private life; or, at any rate, that of such knowledge there is the highest degree of probability;—still, nothing can well be more unlikely, than that he should have baptized in the name of one who as yet was *unrevealed* and *unattested*,—at once unknown to others, and unknown to himself!—And if this does not in itself amount to absolute certainty, (in my own mind it does)—it is converted into certainty by another matter of fact,—namely, that of the prevailing surmises whether John himself might not be the Christ, and of the message actually sent to him for the purpose of ascertaining that point. Luke expressly tells us, that "as the  
"people were in expectation, and *all men mused in*  
"*their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ*  
"*or not*, John answered saying unto them all, I indeed baptize with water; but one mightier than I  
"cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy  
"to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy  
"Ghost and with fire"—Luke iii. 15, 16. And this is said at the very time when the multitudes were

flocking to and receiving his baptism.—And John (the evangelist) relates the incident of the message:—“This “ is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and “ Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou ? “ And he confessed, and denied not ; but confessed, I “ am not the Christ”—John i. 19, 20.—Now, the question is—how could these things have been, if John in his general ministry had named Jesus as the Messiah, and administered his baptism in that name ? How could there have been any such “ musings” in the minds of the people “ whether he himself were the Christ,” when, at the very time, he was baptizing the thousands that came to him in the name of another as the Christ?—and how, in the face of such a fact, had it been one, are we to account for the formal deputation sent to wait upon him for the purpose of setting the public mind at rest upon the question ?

I must confess myself surprised at the ease with which Dr. H. assumes the identity of baptism in the name of “ the coming one ” and baptism in the name of Jesus *as* that coming, or rather that already come one ; and with which too he asserts the impossibility of our Lord’s own disciples baptizing, during his lifetime, otherwise than “ in the proper name of their Master, then present with them.”—It is evident that baptism into the name of “ the coming one ” was not baptism into a name at all. It was really no more than baptism into the faith of the testimony that “ the kingdom of heaven was at hand ; ” which was the same proposition as that the Messiah was at hand,—just about to be “ made manifest to Israel.”

—I quite agree with Dr. H. when he represents it as a thing “not to be credited,” that “John baptized merely into the belief of the coming of a Messiah,”—that being the universal doctrine and expectation of all sects among the Jews. What he immediately subjoins, seems to be precisely the truth:—“he baptized in the name of *one coming after him, soon to be declared:*”—only that, for reasons already assigned, baptizing “*in the name*” of that coming one must be understood generally, as meaning into the belief of the Messiah’s immediate appearance; not into the personal name of JESUS as that coming one.—And, with regard to our Lord’s own disciples, the necessity of their baptizing in the proper personal name of their Master as the Christ, is by no means to me so manifest as to justify Dr. Halley in treating the contrary supposition as an incredible one—“*is it credible* that the disciples of Jesus did “not baptize in the proper name of their Master, “then present with them?” I frankly avow that I think it is. If by baptizing in his “proper name” is to be understood the connecting of baptism with the publication of the truth that *Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ*, I conceive their having so baptized so improbable as to be very near to, if not altogether, impossible.

Let us still look at *facts*. There is one, which can hardly fail to strike every reader of the evangelical history. It is the fact of the *reserve* of Jesus, in his public teaching, on the subject of his Messiahship. He did not, indeed, like his forerunner, deny

his being the Christ. Nay, he did, at times, avow it. But the declaration of it was not a part of his ordinary teaching. And with regard to his Apostles, during his own ministry, we find him, on various occasions, charging them to silence on that subject. When, in answer to the question—"Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, for himself and the rest, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" it follows immediately—"Then charged he "his disciples that they should tell no man that he "was the Christ."\*—And there is the same reserve, and the same injunction of secrecy, respecting particular incidents in his life which involved the most striking proofs and divine attestations of his Messiahship. When he and the three disciples whom he had chosen as the witnesses of his glory, were coming down from the mount of transfiguration, we read that "he charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, "until the Son of Man be risen from the dead."—Matt. xvii. 19.—Let the reader mark the time until which they were to keep it to themselves. And they obeyed the injunction:—"They kept it close, and "told no man in those days any of those things "which they had seen"—Luke ix. 36.—They told the vision afterwards; when to their previous testimony that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand," they had to add that the kingdom was come and was

\* In our translation—"that he was JESUS the Christ." But the genuineness of the name *Jesus* is more than doubtful in the judgment of the best critics.



established ; God having “made that same Jesus whom their countrymen had crucified” — and the prelude to whose coming glory they had witnessed on the holy mount — “both Lord and Christ.” My present question is—Whether it be at all imaginable, that the disciples of Jesus were in the practice, when they “made and baptized more disciples than John,” of administering their baptism in the name of their Master *as the Messiah*, at the very time when he was thus charging them not to make him known in that character ;—of baptizing, that is, into the faith of an article, on which, notwithstanding, they were enjoined to keep silence ?

Let me not be misunderstood. I am far from meaning to assert that Jesus, during his life-time, never declared himself the Christ ; or that his attached followers did not know him and own him in that capacity. He did so declare himself ; and they did so own him, and were commended and blessed by him for the believing acknowledgment.—Nay more :—his forerunner, after he had the intimation from heaven respecting him, pointed him out in his supreme dignity as “the Son of God,” and in the nature of his work as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” And Jesus himself spoke of his approaching death as the atonement for sin, as well as of his personal and official dignity. But there is not the remotest evidence that the inculcation of these truths was connected with the baptism administered either by John or by the disciples of our Lord during his life. The reference to these

truths in Christ's public discourses, was rare, reserved, and obscure:—and as to his disciples, they could not teach them; for till the day of Pentecost they gave abundant evidence that they had no distinct apprehension of them themselves. The fact is, that Jesus was then rather *executing his work* than *fully making known the doctrine concerning it*. The atonement was not to be published, till it was made. A time of more clear and full discovery was at hand. To that time he refers in John xvi. 12, 13—“I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come.”—To the same period he looks forward, I presume, when to those Jews who are said to have “believed in him” he says—John viii. 31, 32, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free.” The great difference between his genuine disciples and others lay at that time in this; that, although the views of the former were still dark and confused,—although they had little or no conception of the nature of his work, as a work to be effected by sufferings and death,—yet they “continued in his word:” they had a firm conviction, resting on all they saw and heard, of his being the Christ:—they did not fly off from him, and forsake his instructions in disgust and pride; they were not “offended in him:”—and thus, abid-

ing by him as their acknowledged and authoritative teacher, they, in due time, experienced the verification of his promise—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

My next observation is, that in all this there appears to be an obvious *reasonableness*. To every reflecting mind, I cannot but think, it must be manifest, that, in the time of John, and in the early part at least of our Lord's ministry—I may say indeed during the whole of it,—baptism *into the name of Jesus as the Christ* would have been *quite premature*. It would have been requiring, in order to baptism, a profession of faith in that *of which the evidence was yet to be produced*. The observation has a speciality of application, no doubt, to the beginning of the ministry of our Lord, before "the works which the Father had given him to do had borne witness of him that the Father had sent him." But it may, as I have said, be extended to the whole:—for, until his resurrection,—nay, until the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost,—the evidence of his claims, although from the beginning growing in strength, and in every miracle wrought by him sufficient,—*was not complete*. Now it would have been utterly preposterous to have baptized into the faith of a truth *antecedently to evidence*. And yet this is what they must believe to have been done, who consider the baptism of John as having been baptism into the name of Jesus as the Christ.—I conclude, therefore, that, although the doctrine was declared,—and although important colla-

teral truths respecting the work of Jesus and the nature and ends of his death, were declared along with it, yet it was not an article of which the professed faith was then required in order to baptism;—either by John, or by our Lord himself during his ministry, when he was only finishing his work, and furnishing a part of the evidence on which the faith of it was to rest.

We have thus, then, if I mistake not, arrived at the true difference between the baptism of John, and the baptism of the apostles; between baptism before, and baptism after, the death and resurrection of Jesus. The “good tidings” proclaimed by John, and proclaimed by the disciples of Jesus during the life of their Master, were—that “*the kingdom of heaven was at hand* ;” that the great promised Deliverer was now about to appear, to finish his divinely commissioned work, and on the basis of that finished work to erect his kingdom. The work was not finished till the death of Jesus:—the evidence of its having been finished was not completed till the resurrection of Jesus, and the pentecostal effusion of the Spirit. Then commenced the difference. The baptisms corresponded, respectively, to the extent of the truth revealed. The baptism of John was baptism into the faith of the immediate appearance and kingdom of the promised Messiah. He “baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on *him who should come after him*.” But his baptism was not, as we have endeavoured to show, baptism into the name of Jesus, or into the faith of Jesus per-

sonally as that promised Messiah. Administering his baptism even previously to the divine discovery of Jesus to himself, he could not possibly baptize into his name, or into the faith of that which he himself did not know.—But when the work of Jesus was finished, and the evidence of Jesus being the Christ was completed,—then came baptism into the faith of this farther and fundamental truth:—then came what was properly *christian* baptism. The truth now discovered and established, was an essential advance beyond the former. It was new, and all-important. Let the reader compare the commission given by our Lord to his apostles during his life with that given to them after his resurrection; and he cannot fail to be impressed with the vast amount of the difference. To the former we have before adverted. It ran in these terms:—“As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand:”—“Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you; and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city which cleaveth on us we do wipe off against you:—notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” Matt. x. 7. Luke x. 8—11.—The latter stands thus:—“Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Christ to suffer,

“and to rise from the dead the third day; and that  
“repentance and remission of sins should be preached  
“in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusa-  
“lem. And ye are witnesses of these things.” Luke  
xxiv. 45—48. “Go ye into all the world, and preach  
“the gospel (the glad tidings) to every creature. He  
“that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he  
“that believeth not shall be condemned.” Mark xvi.  
15, 16. But the “glad tidings” of which the faith was  
then to be professed by submission to baptism was  
not merely, nor at all, that “the kingdom of heaven  
was at hand,” but that “Jesus was the Christ, the  
Saviour of the world,” that by his dying for sin the  
work of atonement had been completed, and that God  
had attested this by the fact of his resurrection. This  
was a *new profession*; and with this new profession  
there was connected a *new baptism*. That neither  
John, nor our Lord’s apostles during their Master’s  
life, baptized into the faith of a Messiah that was to  
suffer and die and rise again, is abundantly evident.  
The apostles, to the very last, continued themselves in  
a state of wondering incredulity on these points, when  
they were pre-admonished of them by Jesus; “un-  
derstanding none of these things,” and “questioning  
one with another, what the rising from the dead  
should mean.” But afterwards, when, under the Spir-  
it’s teaching, they obtained the full knowledge of the  
truth, their baptism was into the faith of a suffering,  
dying, rising, glorified Messiah, and of Jesus being  
that Messiah. These were the two points of the doc-  
trine preached by Paul, and argued by him with his

countrymen:—"Three Sabbath-days" (in the Synagogue at Thessalonica—Acts xvii. 2, 3,) "he reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that *the Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead*" (that is, in fulfilment of the "prophecies that had gone before concerning him") "and that *this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Christ.*"—In the baptism to which Peter invited his assembled countrymen on the day of pentecost, there was included the faith of that truth with which he had closed his awakening address—"Wherefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that *God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ.*" Acts ii. 36.

If I am now asked the question—In what light, then, do you regard the baptism of John, as to the position it holds among divine dispensations?—Does it belong to Moses? or does it belong to Christ?—to the former economy, or to the latter?—my answer must be—It belongs to both; and it belongs to neither. It is not a part of the Mosaic economy; nor is it a part of the Christian. It stands between the two; and it bears a relation to each. It may be regarded as an *appendix* to the one, and as an *introduction* to the other. It was intermediate between Moses and Christ; not the abolition of the old system,—not the establishment of the new; but a brief distinct dispensation in itself, preparatory to the downfall of the first, and to the full establishment of the second. I was pleased to see the same idea so happily expressed by Chrysostom, as quoted by Dr. Halley:—"The bap-

“tism of John was, indeed, far superior to the Jewish, but inferior to ours:—it was a kind of bridge between the two baptisms, leading from that to this.”

I conceive that there were three distinct periods,—the Mosaic, the Christian, and the intermediate one of the Baptist. In one important sense, all the three were christian:—inasmuch as they all contained the gospel. But, at the same time, they were distinct in sufficiently marked characteristics. A truly enlightened and intelligent belief in the dispensation and ministry of Moses, implied a belief in the ancient promises of God’s covenant,—in the import of the typical rites of sacrifice and blood-sprinkling,—in the predictions of Moses himself and the prophets,—in the future coming of the predicted and typified Messiah,—the work he was to do,—the kingdom he was to establish. This would have been *an enlightened and intelligent faith in Moses*. That by the mass of the Jewish people the faith of Moses was held very unintelligently, cannot be questioned. Nay more, it cannot be questioned, that the views even of those who “looked for redemption in Jerusalem” were exceedingly limited, confused, and dark; and that, true as it is that the faith of believers, in different periods, could not go beyond the amount of divine discovery in the age in which they lived, yet was there no small measure of culpability in the moral causes by which they were prevented from more clearly discerning the covert meaning of the promises, prophecies, and types of the previous dispensation,—in “the



vail" which, "when Moses was read," continued "upon their hearts."—The Mosaic, then, was a preparatory or introductory dispensation, — prophetic, promissory, typical ;—by which a greater knowledge of the gospel by far than was actually obtained might, —and therefore, it may be presumed, we are warranted to say, *ought* to have been acquired, under the influence of an unprejudiced and spiritual mind guided by the supplicated Spirit of God.—When, therefore, Dr. Halley, in comparing the baptism of John and the baptism of the apostles, says, in proof of their identity, "John baptized because the kingdom of heaven was approaching ; the apostles, because it was announced. But why should the announcement of the kingdom of Christ invalidate the baptism of its precursor? Is it credible, that the event which proved the truth of John's baptism, and conferred upon it all its importance, should, in the same moment, nullify its significance, and require from its possessors a second ablution?" page 192,—when, I say, he writes thus, not only might we ask how the "second ablution" could "nullify the significance" of the first, when that significance was that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand," and when to that significance, signally established, there was only an addition made,—but, as it appears to me, we might carry the principle of his reasoning a step further back. It will not be denied, that in the sprinklings and ablutions of the Jewish ceremonial there was a typified gospel,—that Judaism was christianity in emblem. Why, then, should not the baptisms of

Moses be reckoned christian baptism, as well as the baptism of John? Is not the same reasoning fairly and fully applicable in the one case, as well as in the other? May we not put the very question, in the very terms of it—"Is it credible that the very events which proved the truth of the Jewish baptisms, and conferred upon them all their importance, should, in the same moment, nullify their significance, and require from their possessors a second ablution?" Thus we should have the Mosaic and the Christian identified, as well as that of John and the apostles,—and ground laid for the conclusion, that to those who had received the baptisms of the ancient Mosaic ceremonial baptism by the apostles would have been *re-baptism*, as well as to those who had been the subjects of John's—and therefore, in the one case as well as in the other, a "vain repetition,"—all the three being essentially Christian!

Then we have the *intermediate* period, with its distinct and peculiar ministry,—that, namely, of John the Baptist, and of Jesus and his disciples during his own life. This period could not be said indeed, to *succeed* the Mosaic, for the Mosaic was not yet come to a close:—but it was the period during which the Messiah's commission was executed,—his work wrought out and finished. John's was a distinct commission,—a commission of great importance, deep interest, and high honour,—a commission which had been predicted in terms of sublime elevation and delighted hope, by those "holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:"—see Isa.

xl. 3—5; Mal. iv. 5, 6; with Matt. xi. 13, 14; xvii. 10—13; Luke i. 17.—But still, the very terms which affirmed the greatness of John the Baptist affirmed, at the same time, that “the kingdom of heaven was *only at hand*,”—still unestablished;—the new and anticipated economy not begun,—not yet fully introduced. He was but a forerunner;—only a voice that called—“prepare.” And while Jesus says of him—“Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist,”—he, in the same sentence, adds—“Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he”—Matt. xi. 11. The kingdom of heaven, then, according to this testimony, was not begun. John had the spirit of that kingdom; just as they had who lived at a greater distance back from its commencement, who “saw the promises afar off, and died in the faith of them:”—but he was the precursor and herald of its establishment, rather than a subject of it; inasmuch as being a subject of a kingdom implies the existence of the kingdom itself.—Now, the baptism of John was baptism into the faith of what was the special testimony of that brief intermediate dispensation,—namely, the immediately approaching establishment of the New Testament kingdom,—the “coming of the Just One,”—his work and reign. Although other important truths were, with more or less plainness, taught, this was **THE FAITH** of the particular period; and **THE BAPTISM** correspondent to it.

Then came the *third* period; to which both the others, though in different ways, were introductory;

—the period succeeding the resurrection of Jesus,—the “dispensation of the Spirit,”—“the acceptable year of the Lord,”—the reign of grace. And this period too has its appropriate faith, and its corresponding appropriate baptism. The faith is—“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”—Rom. x. 9. And the baptism, as we have seen, corresponds to the faith. This baptism is “into Christ’s death;” and into his death as connected with his resurrection:—“We are buried with him by baptism into his death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”—Rom. vi. 4.—The dispensation was new:—the profession of faith was new:—the baptism was new.

“It is remarkable,” observes Dr. Halley, “we do not read that Apollos himself, who had received John’s baptism, was rebaptized, when taught the way of the Lord more perfectly.”—It is true. But first of all, the mere silence of the narrative on that point is not *decisive* of the fact of its *not* having been done:—then, even were it so decisive, the question would still remain, whether those concerned were, in this instance, right in neglecting it;—inasmuch as, not being apostles, or acting under the influence of inspiration, their example could have had no binding authority:—and, last of all, we cannot allow this solitary instance, supposing it real, to countervail the recorded re-baptism of the twelve disciples in the

nineteenth chapter of the Acts, and (as to my mind it appears, although not expressly, or in so many words, recorded) the no less certain re-baptism of multitudes of the Jewish converts on and after the day of Pentecost.

It is also true, that we have no recorded account of the baptism of the *twelve*, or of the *hundred and twenty*, on the day of Pentecost.—And on this I would observe—1. That if we are thus to proceed on strict matter-of-fact narrative, and to reckon negatives as equivalent to affirmatives,—the simple absence of a statement as amounting to a statement of the contrary; then, let it not be forgotten, that there is only *one* of the twelve Apostles, respecting whom we have any record of his having been baptized even with *John's baptism*. That record we have, in John i. 40, compared with verse 35, respecting “Andrew, Simon Peter's brother:”—and I am not aware of any other of the twelve, or of the hundred and twenty, being expressly named as having received the baptism of John. There is thus the very same lack of positive evidence of their being at all cases in point;—lack of positive evidence, I mean, that their having been baptized by John was the reason why they were not baptized again:—for, upon the principle of taking the mere absence of the mention of a fact as equivalent to a denial of it, we are entitled to assume that Andrew was the only one of the entire number that had been baptized of John, or was one of John's disciples.—2. It seems a very presumptuous thing, and as vain as presumptuous, to make the procedure of the Lord

himself, in such circumstances, a standard for ours. Surely he who had the power to impart, in a manner so signal and glorious, the baptism of the Spirit,—of which the baptism with water was but an emblem,—had a sovereign title, in laying the foundation of his own kingdom, to supercede his own rite. The rite might be one very appropriate for administration to all who should own his sceptre after the proclamation of his reign went forth,—while it could be of little avail to those whom, by so sudden, direct, and illustrious a manifestation of his exaltation and power, he qualified to be its founders and ambassadors! In the midst of the “rushing mighty wind,” and the “cloven tongues of fire,” and the illumination, and energy, and miraculous utterances, of the Holy Spirit,—all direct from heaven, without any kind of human intervention,—coming at once from the divine source of all authority,—it is surely little better than trifling to institute an inquiry whether those on whom “the promise of the Father”—the “power from on high”—so wonderfully came, were ever subjected to the sprinkling or the immersion of water! In such a case, it was a matter of very little moment indeed, whether they were or were not.—That they were *not* seems far most likely; perhaps may be held for certain. They were already believers in the resurrection of Jesus:—and their baptism—not the mere emblem, but the celestial reality—came immediately from the hand of their glorified Master; who, having “ascended on high, leading captivity captive,” had received these “gifts for men.” “HE, being by the right hand of God

exalted, shed forth that which" the assembled multitudes "saw and heard" with such overwhelming amazement. Truly the baptism with water might well be dispensed with for this. And HE, moreover, who was "Lord of the Sabbath," was Lord also, and equally, of all his own institutions.

In these remarks on John's baptism, I have confined myself chiefly to two points,—the *matter-of-fact* as to *re-baptism*, and the *principle* on which the fact is to be accounted for, or the *really essential difference between the two baptisms*. In this way, the two parts of the argument reciprocally strengthen each other. The proof of the fact establishes the difference; and the proof of the difference establishes the fact.

It is not my purpose to convert this part of my Appendix into a lengthened dissertation, by entering into the merits of Dr. Halley's strictures on the reasonings of the late Mr Hall. In one or two points, he has, I am satisfied, successfully shown their inconclusiveness, or, at least, their doubtful validity:—but it does not appear to me, generally speaking, that he does them justice. The little that he has succeeded in disproving or invalidating, is no more than can easily be spared without in the least exposing to hazard the point at issue. The one or two weak or open parts are not at all such as to admit an adversary into the citadel.

II.—ON THE WARRANTED EXTENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM:—OR, ON THE QUESTION, WHETHER THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROFESSED FAITH OF THE GOSPEL BE REQUISITE IN THE SUBJECTS OF IT.

This is the point of real practical importance to us. And its importance, as will appear before we have done with it, is not small. The subject of the preceding section of this Appendix, how interesting soever, under certain aspects of it, it may be in itself, has more in it of relative than of intrinsic consequence, and principally from its bearing on that of the present section.

“The several principles,” says Dr. H. “variously modified, of the three classes, may, I think, be thus expressed. The first class maintain that baptism is exclusively the privilege of true believers; the second, that, by virtue of a covenant relation between parents and children, it belongs also to the children of believers; the third, that, as no restriction is imposed upon baptism in the New Testament, none ought to be imposed by the ministers of the gospel.”—Page 497.—I have no objection to offer against this threefold distribution of opinions. I must observe, however, that my present inquiry is necessarily restricted. The question as to the baptism of the children of believers forms no part of it. It is not properly a question between baptists and pædobaptists. I hold, of course, with the second of the three



classes enumerated by Dr. Halley. But now, my dispute is not with those who belong to the first of the three, but with those who belong to the third. This will appear, when I have stated my own view. I state it thus:—that no child ought to be admitted to baptism, but the child of a parent who would himself be a proper subject of the rite. I would baptize no child, unless I could conscientiously baptize the parent. The inquiry, therefore, evidently becomes one restricted to the qualifications of *adults*. The question as to parents and children becomes identically the same; inasmuch as, whatever qualifications render it warrantable to baptize the parent's self, render it warrantable to include his infant offspring with him in the administration of the ordinance; and whatever qualifications in the parent render it warrantable to baptize his children, render it equally warrantable to baptize himself. Thus the inquiry now resolves itself into that of *believer baptism*; the inquiry, whether faith, that is, whether a credible profession of faith, should be required *in adults* to justify its being administered to them. The question respecting the association of their offspring with them in such administration has here no place. It is laid aside. For I fully concur with Dr. H. in the position, that if he has succeeded in making good the point that any besides believers—that is, besides professors of the faith—should be baptized, he has succeeded also in proving that there should be no restriction as to children. If the necessity of a profession of the faith of the gospel to baptism were given up, I certainly should not think aught

that remained worth contending for. If there is to be the indiscriminate baptism of adults, who would ever waste a moment in resisting the indiscriminate baptism of children? This indiscriminate baptism of adults, and consequently of children, is the theory—the *third* in his own classification—which Dr. H. adopts. It is a matter of sincere concern to me, that such a man should have embraced and defended a scheme so loose, so unscriptural, so mischievous. This will be characterized as bold assumption. It shall be my endeavour to justify it,—and to show that I do no injustice to the theory in so designating it.

Having, in the Dissertation, stated and vindicated my own sentiments, and those generally held in Scotland, I have now rather to do with combating the reasonings of others in support of a laxer and less restrictive system. And in doing this, it is my purpose to confine myself to Dr. Halley; satisfied that if I can successfully refute his views and reasonings, I shall succeed in settling such general *principles* as there will be no difficulty in applying to the views and reasonings of others:—and this, at the same time, will contribute both to unity and brevity.

In Section III. of the dissertation, I have adverted to the loose notions on this subject prevalent amongst our Congregationalist brethren in the south. See pages 196—203. Of the manner in which the case is briefly argued there, Dr. H. has taken no notice; probably from the observations not occurring in connexion with that particular portion of my treatise which he sets himself chiefly to oppose. The reader

must not be surprised, should he find here a repetition of one or two of the arguments adduced there. This is unavoidable for giving completeness to the present discussion; which I could not, with propriety, leave to be supplemented, in any essential particular, by a mere reference to what had been said elsewhere;—and in which, at the same time, a fuller view is taken of the whole case.

With regard to the order of discussion, it occurs to me as the most natural and reasonable course, that I should begin with the objections which my friend has brought forward and urged against the argument in the preceding Dissertation, in support of infant baptism, drawn from the constitution of the Abrahamic covenant. This argument (which has generally been considered as one of the strongholds of pædobaptism) he entirely abandons. In this I think him wrong,—seriously wrong. I feel it, however, so far satisfactory, to find Dr. Halley so distinctly admitting the *consistency* of the scheme generally held by Scottish Independents,—and I presume I might add, in general, Scottish Presbyterians too,—and of the reasonings by which that scheme is vindicated. After a personal compliment, which I have sufficient vanity thus to refer to, though not quite enough to quote, he says:—  
“ Besides, as the proposition is, that especial privileges  
“ are conferred exclusively upon the children of be-  
“ lievers, of which privileges baptism is the seal, the  
“ reasoning of such theologians as Dr. Wardlaw, and  
“ the Scottish Congregationalists, is at least consistent  
“ throughout:—but when I meet upon this ground

“our English friends of the Episcopal, Methodist, or  
 “Independent denominations, who, like myself, ad-  
 “minister baptism to children irrespective of the faith  
 “of their parents, I am ready to ask, What doest  
 “thou here? Your argument will justify but one  
 “moiety of the baptisms which you solemnize.”—  
 Page 532.—This is perfectly correct. The argument  
 and the practice are, in such cases, decidedly at vari-  
 ance. If, on the one hand, we hold the argument  
 for infant baptism from the Abrahamic covenant,  
 consistency certainly requires that our administration  
 of the ordinance be restricted to the infant seed of  
 believers. If, on the other, we practise its indiscri-  
 minate administration, we must give up the argu-  
 ment. Thus far Dr. Halley is consistent. He does  
 give up the argument. He does it broadly and  
 openly:—“In all arguments, however, which assume  
 “any distinction of privileges among children on ac-  
 “count of the faith of their parents, we must dis-  
 “claim all participation.” Page 533.

Dr. H. agrees with me respecting the evangelical  
 character of the covenant with Abraham. “Agree-  
 “ing with Dr. W. in the commencement of his state-  
 “ment,—‘before the coming of Christ, the covenant  
 “of grace had been revealed,’ I am compelled to  
 “hesitate, and the longer I hesitate the more I de-  
 “mur, on its conclusion, ‘and under that covenant  
 “there existed a divinely instituted connexion between  
 “children and their parents, according to which the  
 “sign and seal of the blessings of the covenant were,  
 “by divine appointment, administered to children;

“and there can be produced no satisfactory evidence of its having been done away.” Pages 535, 536. Of course I freely grant what follows, that “no one is bound to produce ‘satisfactory evidence of its having been done away,’ until some one produce ‘satisfactory evidence of its having ever existed.’” This, he conceives, I have not done;—neither “satisfactory evidence, nor, indeed, any evidence at all.”—Of this I must leave the reader to judge who has, with any care, perused the dissertation. The ground taken by Dr. Halley, in opposition to it, is this:—that the privilege, of having the sign and seal of that covenant applied, did not arise from immediate parentage, but from ultimate connexion with him who was “the head of the covenant,”—that is, with Abraham himself. “That the sign of the blessings of that covenant was by divine appointment administered to children, I, of course, admit:—but it is implied in the argument that it was so administered on account of the connexion between those children and their parents. The sign of the Abrahamic covenant was given to every child, as it appears to me, on account not of his immediate connexion with his parents, but of his remote connexion with the head of the covenant.” Page 536. And again: “The privilege, then, is resolved into the connexion between Abraham and his posterity; and no other seems to be recognized in the Abrahamic covenant:—of no other can I find the slightest trace, in all the reasonings upon the analogy of signs and seals in the ancient and christian dispensation.” Page

573.—Now, surprised as my friend may be by the concession, I have very little to object to this representation, provided only the posterity of Abraham *in the line of Isaac* be specifically understood; agreeably to the restrictive terms of the promise—"In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Dr. Halley shows that the administration of the sign of the covenant—circumcision namely—was not restricted at all to the immediate seed of the godly. "A father," says he, "might by unbelief cut himself off from the people, incur the forfeiture of his privileges; but he could not, by that act, prevent his child from claiming restoration as a son of Abraham: but *if the forfeiture was not hereditary, neither was the privilege.* The proof of ancestry would have been sufficient, however broken might have been the link of connexion. In ascertaining the covenant relation of the children, the character of the immediate parents was never taken into the account. "They might, or they might not, be believers," &c. Pages 537, 538.

There is one important element in my argument on this subject, which by Dr. Halley has been entirely overlooked. It is, that, while the privileges of the covenant, and the covenant sign and seal, were confined to the descendants of Abraham in the line of Isaac,—*all his descendants in that line* constituted, under the then existing dispensation, *the visible church of God.* It was, in the full and proper sense of the designation, a national church; the only national church that ever had the divine sanction. Our in-

quiry now is, not *why* the church was so constituted, but simply whether it was so constituted or not. And as to this, there is and can be no question. It will not be denied, that descent from Abraham in the line of Isaac,—that is, that a parentage in accordance with the constitution of that church,—was necessary to any one's possessing a title to visible membership, or to a participation in its outward privileges and observances. But under the new or gospel dispensation, there has been a change. The church is no longer national. It consists now of "the Israel of God" in a very different sense,—of a spiritual people,—of the children of Abraham by faith and character,—of the "chosen generation," the "royal priesthood," the "holy nation," the "peculiar people," who "show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." The conditions of membership are thus, under the new economy, essentially altered. They are more spiritual; and thus more restricted. And according to the change in the terms of membership, is the corresponding change in regard to the connexion of children with their parents, in the promises of the covenant, and in the administration of its outward sign and seal. The privilege existed *in the church*—and was co-extensive with it—under its more carnal, worldly, national form: and with the spiritual restriction of church-fellowship there was introduced, as a matter of manifest consistency, the restriction in the application, alike to adults and children, of the outward initiatory rite.—On this point—of distinc-

tion between the Old Testament church and the New—I have, in the dissertation, dwelt at some length. Dr. H. does not at all advert to it. And in such omission, for which I am at a loss to account, he has, as I have already said, left out an element in my reasoning essential to its continuity and conclusiveness. I complain of this. The laxity with regard to the faith and character of the immediate parentage of children then admitted to the initiatory ordinance of the covenant, arose from the nature of the existing dispensation. What was then necessary to children partaking in it, was just what was necessary for the membership of their parents in the ancient church. That was, descent from Abraham in the line of Isaac;—every subject of the Israelitish nation being a member of that church. It will not be denied, I presume, that such was the constitution of the church at that time:—and if it is not denied that descent from Abraham in the line of Isaac, associated with a tacit or avowed belief in Jehovah as Abraham's God, the God of the Jewish fathers, was the term of membership in the church of Israel,—nothing is denied that I ever affirmed.

This overlooking of the characters, respectively, of the two dispensations, has, I apprehend, led my friend wide of his mark in this part of his argument. Whatever was requisite to parents being connected with the visible church, as then constituted, was requisite to the circumcision of their children:—whatever is requisite now to parents being connected with the visible church, is requisite now to the baptism of their chil-



dren. In this way, the *argumentum ad absurdum* adduced by my friend, at page 539, is at once bereft of its point. Having shown that of old it was the connexion of children, not with their immediate parentage but, through them, with the "great ancestor," that entitled them to covenant privileges, he there says—"The inference from the analogy, or, if it so please, the identity of the covenants, according to this mode of reasoning, would be, that *the posterity of a believer throughout all generations* ought to be baptized."—Had I, in any part of my reasonings, represented every believer as another *Abraham*, there would have been force in this. But what I have endeavoured to show has been this; that under the ancient economy, Israel after the flesh,—the children of Abraham in the line of Isaac, "in whom his seed was to be called,"—constituted the visible church of God,—this connexion with Abraham being the requisite to the enjoyment of covenant privileges;—whereas now, under the new dispensation, the visible church of God consists (or ought to consist, for abuse and the contravention of divine authority cannot invalidate our argument) of Israel after the Spirit,—of the children of Abraham, not according to the flesh, either in the line of Isaac or in any other line—but according to faith and to spiritual birth;—and, as a consequence, that, just as, under the former state of things, the connexion with Abraham that constituted a man a member of the Israelitish church did not make that man himself an Abraham—the head of a covenant,—so, under the present state of things, the

spiritual relation to Abraham, by which any man is constituted a worthy member of the gospel church, does not make that man himself an Abraham—the head of a covenant. His spiritual relation to Abraham entitles his children to privilege, just as formerly the parent's natural relation to Abraham entitled his. And, as in the one case so in the other, *the man who does not sustain the required relation* has no right to have the initiatory sign and seal of the covenant transmitted to his offspring.

In this point there appears to me to be, on the part of Dr. Halley, a very important error;—strange, as fallen into by him,—and most mischievous in its legitimate consequences. He dwells, emphatically, upon the greater *enlargement* of the church under the Gospel dispensation; while he leaves almost entirely out of his reckoning a no less momentous change in its constitution,—its increased *spirituality*. It must not be forgotten, that, while in one way there is enlargement, in another there is *limitation*.—To do him full justice, I must here introduce a pretty long paragraph. He might have reason to complain of me, were I either to abridge it, or to attempt giving the sense of it in my own words:—“The most important  
“ difference, as it appears to me, between the views of  
“ my respected friend and my own, consists in his re-  
“ garding circumcision as having been performed on  
“ the infant on account of the interest of his parents  
“ in the Abrahamic covenant, and my regarding it as  
“ having been performed on account of his own per-  
“ sonal interest in it, even though his parents, like

“ the Jews who fell in the wilderness, had forfeited  
“ the grace of the covenant, and never received its  
“ sign. So, under the gospel, my friend makes the  
“ application of his argument depend upon a relative  
“ interest of the children of believers, through their  
“ parents, in the evangelical covenant ;—I make it to  
“ depend, so far as I adopt it, upon the personal in-  
“ terest of the children, irrespective of the faith of  
“ their parents, in that covenant. The principal  
“ change, as it appears to me, which the Abrahamic  
“ covenant, essentially the covenant of grace, has sus-  
“ tained, is, that, although previous to the death of  
“ Christ, it recognized only the posterity of Abraham,  
“ subsequently to that event it has received ‘ all the  
“ nations.’ In that state of covenanted privilege,  
“ whatever it be, in which Dr. Wardlaw places the  
“ children of believers, do I, without respect of per-  
“ sons, place the children of all men. Before the  
“ advent of Christ, one nation was blessed in Abra-  
“ ham ; since the advent, in him are blessed all the  
“ families of the earth. Before the advent, Abraham  
“ was inheritor of Canaan ; since, he is become heir  
“ of the world. The termination of the special pri-  
“ vileges of the Jews, is the equal bestowment of  
“ them, without their speciality, upon all mankind :  
“ —the fall of Israel is the riches of the world :—the  
“ casting away of Israel is the reconciling of the  
“ world. The seed of the woman, represented by  
“ Christ, has succeeded, in external privilege, to the  
“ race of Abraham. All the Gentiles are branches  
“ engrafted into the holy root of Abraham, not on

“ account of their faith, (for the Jews were not en-  
“ grafted by faith), and yet standing by faith, as by  
“ unbelief they, like the Jews, may be cut off. The  
“ relation, therefore, is merely external, like that of  
“ Israel, and refers to external privileges. On account  
“ of that relation, no man can now be called common  
“ or unclean. Every Gentile now, as distinctly as was  
“ every Jew, is born entitled to the external privileges  
“ of the gospel. Dying in infancy, he is saved by the  
“ death of Christ;—surviving, he has an inceptive  
“ right, conferred by grace, to salvation by faith in  
“ Christ, the forfeiture of which he incurs by unbelief,  
“ or by what may be considered the guilty act, equiva-  
“ lent to unbelief, which, in Heathen darkness, leaves  
“ him without excuse. On these principles, we claim  
“ all that is valuable in the reasonings of Dr. Wardlaw  
“ on the Abrahamic covenant (how much is valuable  
“ let those say who have carefully studied it) for all  
“ Gentile children; who are, as we believe, in the  
“ exact position, as to privilege, in which he places  
“ the children of believers. Should it be asked, Were  
“ not Gentiles in this state before the advent of  
“ Christ?—we reply, In so far as they were, it was  
“ ‘the mystery’ hidden from the foundation of the  
“ world; and therefore, under the law of circumcision,  
“ no rule of administration for the ancient church. I  
“ have—and I ought to confess it candidly—some  
“ serious objections to the acknowledgment of bap-  
“ tism as the substitute for circumcision; but how far  
“ these objections on the one hand, and the argument  
“ from the analogy on the other, should avail, the

“ more appropriate place to consider will be in another lecture on the specific reasons in favour of infant baptism, and the objections which are alleged against it. All I at present assert is, that the reasoning of my friend, be it valid or invalid, cannot limit the commission to the children of believers ; and, so far as it is valid, I put in a claim to it on behalf of ‘ all the nations.’ ”—Pages 543—545.

Here is the omission of which I complain, in all its glaringness ; the increased *extension* of the church under the Gospel dispensation, to the entire overlooking of what was equally predicted—its increased *spirituality* and *purity*. I am confounded at this. On reading the paragraph, I was ready to ask, Has my worthy non-conforming friend relinquished dissent, and become an advocate of national churches ? Here he is, taking up, and that in its widest and most licentious extent, the very ground which such advocates occupy, when they plead the example of the church of Israel ; when they insist upon placing Gentile nations in a corresponding ecclesiastical position to that of the nation of Israel ; upon having now, as of old, the nation and the church co-extensive. In contradistinction to this, the sentiment which I have ever maintained,—and beyond which I should be sorry to think that any reasoning of mine could be made available,—is, that the church’s nationality is at an end,—that it ceased, and ceased for ever, when the old dispensation “ vanished away,” and the new was introduced and established. The church became more select and spiritual. Gentiles and Jews, it is

true, were, on equal terms, incorporated in it; but they were converted Jews and converted Gentiles, “washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God,”—constituting, unitedly, the “holy nation.”—I must repeat my amazement at the oversight of this essential part of the argument. The principles avowed in the preceding extract, if fairly followed out, go far, in my apprehension, to obliterate the distinction between the church and the world. If the sentence—“the termination of the special privileges of the Jews, is the equal bestowment of them, without their speciality, upon all mankind”—contains a truth, in the sense in which the designation “all mankind” is used by Dr. Halley,—that is, as embracing “all the nations” without discrimination of faith or character;—then must this truth extend to *all* New Testament ordinances. The “special privileges” of the Jews included of course all the ordinances of the church under the former economy. And if the “special privileges” of the church under the new economy are now the equal right of “all mankind,” on what principle is it possible for Dr. Halley to exclude from the Lord’s Supper—the great commemorative ordinance of the New Testament—any one who asks admission to it? Every Jew could demand admission to the passover: and if “all mankind”—“all the nations”—are, in regard to the new institutions, on the same footing with the Jews in regard to the old, then may every Gentile demand his place at the Christian festival, as every Jew demanded his at the Jewish. “Every Gentile now, as

“distinctly as was every Jew, is born entitled to the “external privileges of the gospel.” Is not the Lord’s Supper one of these “external privileges?” Has every man, then, a birth-right privilege to sit down there? So he ought to have, if this representation be a correct one. Yet Dr. Halley is far from allowing free admission to the one christian ordinance, though he demands it, indiscriminately, to the other. Respecting the Lord’s Supper, he says, page 502—“Faith is a prerequisite; and therefore we maintain “that no unbeliever has ever sacramentally commemorated the death of Christ.” I am unable to make out the consistency of this. Every circumcised Jew, unless when under any temporary ceremonial disqualification, was entitled and bound to keep the passover. On what principle, then,—if the cases are parallel except in the one particular of extension, can there be restriction in regard to the Lord’s Supper, when there is none as to baptism? If every circumcised Jew was entitled to the passover, must not every baptized Gentile be entitled to the Lord’s Supper? Can a single proof be produced from the New Testament, of persons having been baptized and yet not being admissible to church-membership, and the table of the Lord? On the day of Pentecost—“As many “as gladly received Peter’s words were baptized:—“and the same day there were added unto them “about three thousand souls. And they continued “stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine, and the fellowship, and the breaking of bread, and the prayers.” Acts ii. 41, 42. In what case do we find

it otherwise? Let an instance be pointed out of any who were baptized not being "added unto the church,"—and, consequently, observing all church ordinances:—an instance of a person or persons being baptized *without* a profession of faith, and being afterwards, *upon* a profession of faith, admitted to church-membership and to the Lord's table. If faith was *not* a prerequisite to baptism,—and faith *was* a prerequisite to communion at the Lord's Supper,—how comes it that we have no such cases? The entire New Testament, in its historical and epistolary parts alike, bears me out in the affirmation that no further profession than that which was made in order to baptism was, in any case, required in order to admission to the church and to the table of the Lord. I know of no other evidence of a profession of faith having been called for in order to admission to church-fellowship, than that which exists of such profession preceding baptism, and being a prerequisite to its administration.—Dr. Halley "puts in a claim for my reasoning"—on behalf of 'all the nations.'" But do "all nations," as such, constitute now the *church of God*? It is surely for no such "enlargement" as this that my friend means to plead. And yet, if it be not, it is nothing to his purpose. Ancient privileges were the privileges of *the church*—of the church as then constituted. And are not New Testament privileges privileges of *the church* too—of the church as now constituted?—Had Dr. Halley limited his conclusion to the church as *gathered out of all nations*, it would have been correct. But when he insists on baptism



unrestrictedly for "all the nations" as such, independently of faith or the profession of it,—and yet equally insists on the necessity of a restriction in regard to church-membership and the Lord's table, and on the indispensableness of faith to these,—he institutes a distinction which the New Testament does not seem to me anywhere to recognize.

No part of the extract on which I am commenting, astonishes me more than the use made of the cutting off of the Jews and the grafting in of the Gentiles,—the figure employed by the Apostle in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans;—especially when I look at the connexion of the figure in the chapter. The previous context relates to the casting off of the mass of the Jewish people for their unbelief, and the retaining of the believing and spiritual portion of that people designated the "remnant according to the election of grace"—verse 5. Now, it is *with them*—with this *spiritual remnant*—that the Gentiles are "grafted in." Is it, then, *all* the Gentiles that are so grafted? We might reasonably ask—how can it be? It would be a strange incongruity indeed. Why all the Gentiles, any more than all the Jews? Why an "election of grace" among the latter, and not among the former? Why are the Jews *as a nation* cut off, that the Gentiles *as nations* may be grafted in? And yet such is the position my friend lays down:—"All the Gentiles are branches "engrafted into the holy root of Abraham, not on "account of their faith (for the Jews were not en- "grafted by faith); and yet standing by faith, as by

“unbelief they, like the Jews, may be cut off.”—This is truly surprising. I grant, and in the Dissertation have insisted on it, that the whole argument of the Apostle goes to prove *the Church* into which the Gentiles are introduced to be *the same* with that out of which the Jews were cast, only in a re-modelled and purified form, “the wicked being shaken out of it.” But, if Dr. H. be right, instead of increased spirituality and purity, there would only be the extension of corruption and worldliness. The Gentiles are grafted in, it seems, “not on account of their faith, for the Jews were not engrafted by faith.” Strange! Did not the Jews, when they were taken into covenant with the God of their fathers, “avouch Jehovah to be their God?” Did they not, when Moses “sprinkled the Book and all the people, saying, This “is the blood of the covenant which God hath en-“joined unto you,”—reply “All that the Lord hath “said unto us will we do, and be obedient?” And was not this obedience,—thus promised, though the engagement was so often falsified,—the obedience of faith? And surely when the Apostle says that “for unbelief they were broken off,” and that “if they “abide not still in unbelief, they shall be grafted in “again,” it is a natural and fair conclusion that it was on the ground of professed faith they were grafted in before. And if it is “by faith that the Gentiles stand”—that is, retain their connexion with the root and their covenant blessings, how can it be that it was not by their faith that they were brought into this connexion? Must they not have obtained by faith

that which by faith alone they keep?—In a word, how can Dr. H. make it out that “all the Gentiles” are “branches engrafted into the holy root,” when the Apostle so manifestly specifies the distinction between those who were “cut out of the olive tree “which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary “to nature into the good olive tree,” and those who continued in connexion with the wild olive tree, or rather continued to constitute that tree?—Let the reader consider all these incongruities,—and especially the incongruity of *all the Gentiles* being engrafted into the olive tree (which symbolizes the Church of God) with the *believing remnant of the Jews*; and I cannot but think he will see reason to agree with me, that the Apostle is speaking, not of all the Gentiles any more than of all the Jews, but of the converted portions of both, as united by their common faith, and “partaking together of the root and fatness of the same tree,”—the privileges, and blessings, and hopes of “the Israel of God.” I fondly trust, that my friend himself, on mature re-consideration, may perceive the unsoundness of his principle of reasoning; that he will be sensible of the incongruity of regarding “the Abrahamic covenant, essentially the covenant of grace,” which, “previously to the death of Christ, recognized only the posterity of Abraham,” as having “subsequently to that event, received *all the nations*”—in such an indiscriminating and wholesale sense as that in which he uses and reiterates the phrase. For, in that case, what good reason can be assigned for the national rejection of the Jews at the

fulness of time? If "all the nations" *as such* came to be embraced in the covenant, why should the Jewish nation *as such* be thrown out? Their national character was just a compound of faith and unbelief, of godliness and wickedness, like that of other nations: so that if others, in this their mixed condition, came to be embraced in the covenant, why should they not be retained in it? I do hope too that he will perceive the defectiveness of his argument, when he dwells so exclusively on the enlargement of the covenant's comprehensiveness under the new dispensation, and so sadly overlooks the predicted improvement in the selectness and spiritual character of its subjects.—Dr. H. speaks of *all children* as being alike entitled to baptism, and of no unbelief on the part of the parent having any power to exclude his children from the precious birthright. But I would put it to my friend, to tell me, wherein consists its preciousness? What is the amount of its value to the children of unbelievers?—what the benefit they derive from it? Unless the ordinance, when administered to children, is felt as a privilege by the parent,—such a recognition of covenant promise as proves a stimulus to the discharge of the duties of the parental trust, and to the exercise of believing and importunate prayer to the God of the covenant for a blessing on the duties discharged, and for the verification, by this means, of his gracious engagements,—what is the rite, in the way of boon or benefit, to them? When so viewed and so felt, I see a rational ground on which I can understand and interpret the words *privilege*, and

*benefit*, and *blessing*, in regard to children. I cannot otherwise.

Did I consider these points of difference between my friend and myself as merely speculative, and possessing no practical bearing, I should not think it worth my while thus to expend time and argument upon them. But they are far from being of this description. They *have* a practical bearing. I regard them as not only unscriptural, but perilously so to the constitution and character of the New Testament Church; as tending, *if consistently followed out*, to undermine and destroy it as a spiritual and separate community. This may appear more fully,—as also the inconsistency of Dr. H.'s principles with his actual practice,—when, having thus adverted to his direct attack on my own argument, I return to the discussion of his more general reasonings. And, for the sake of the best interests of the Church of God, and, through the Church, of the world at large, I entreat my friend's earnest and candid attention.

Dr. Halley begins with a critical discussion of the terms of the commission given by our Lord to his apostles—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”—There are two verbs in these verses, which by our translators are rendered in the same way—*teach* and *teaching*. The former of the two Dr. Halley, with most other critics, renders “*disciple*”—“Go, therefore, *disciple* all the nations,

baptizing them," &c. And he thus critically comments: "The question respecting the subjects of baptism is here resolved into one of grammar and criticism. It is simply, what is the antecedent to the word *them*, or for what noun is that pronoun substituted? Going forth, disciple all the nations (*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*) baptizing *them* (*αὐτοὺς*)—all the nations, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them, all the nations, to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. So far as the grammatical construction is concerned, the meaning of the terms is precisely the same as it would be, if the words of the commission were—*baptize all the nations*. Adhering, therefore, to the grammar of the words, we say the commission, which no man has a right to alter, is—*baptize all the nations*." Pages 488, 489.

—On first reading these sentences, I was startled at the unhesitating confidence with which the assumption contained in them is made—of the identity in meaning of the phrases—"Go, *disciple all the nations, baptizing them*"—and "Go, *baptize all the nations*." I had fancied it self-evidently otherwise,—that the phrases were not, by any means, identical;—but, aware of my friend's superior scholarship, I became distrustful of my own judgment. Reflection, however, has only confirmed me in my former opinion, and has augmented rather than abated my surprise.—Let the reader observe:—there are three things enjoined to be done—"Disciple"—"baptize"—"teach." I say, then, at once—if Dr. H. be correct in affirm-

ing, "Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them"—to be equivalent to "Go, baptize all the nations;" then am I equally entitled to say, that—"Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" is equivalent to—"Go, teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." If we may pass over the *discipling*, and go directly to the *baptizing*, we may pass over both the *discipling* and the *baptizing*, and go directly to the *teaching*. If the *baptizing* may be taken independently of the previous *discipling*, the *teaching* may be taken independently of the previous *discipling and baptizing*. In other words—if the *baptizing* does not imply their having been first *discipled*,—neither does the *teaching* imply their having been first *discipled and baptized*. And in that case, we shall have a charge to "teach all nations" to observe christian institutes, and perform christian functions, without their having been either *discipled or baptized*;—that is, to teach duty apart from doctrine, and enjoin christian observances on those who have made no profession of christian truth!

I am quite at a loss to imagine, on what principle Dr. H. reached his conclusion, that—"disciple, baptizing" is the same thing with "baptize." In the former case, the verb of injunction is—"disciple:"—the participial adjunct "baptizing" expresses an act to be done, or a form to be observed, in fulfilling the injunction to "disciple." I admit that the "discipling" and the "baptizing" have the same extent of

signification ; that they both relate to “all the nations.” But the form of expression—“Go, disciple, baptizing,” I must contend, limits the latter to the measure of success attending the attempt at the former. “*Disciple*”—is the charge:—“*all the nations*” is the extent of the charge. But the charge does not imply any assurance that all the nations were to be *actually made disciples* ; or a command to effect what depended, not upon them, but upon the grace of God accompanying their ministry. It expresses only the amplitude of the range to be embraced by them in the execution of their trust ; amounting, in effect, to much the same thing with the parallel charge—“Go ye into “*all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*.” The charge to “*disciple*,” is manifestly equivalent to a charge to *preach with the view of making disciples*. And this was to be done, not among the Jews only, but among the Gentiles,—among “all the nations.” And—“disciple, baptizing,” I repeat, limits the baptizing to the extent of their success in discipling. Separate the one from the other, and what have we ? A charge, surely, very unlike the Saviour’s ordinary style ;—very unlike the spiritual character of his kingdom, and the “reasonable service” required of its subjects. Understand the commission as meaning—“Baptize all the nations,” independently of their being “discipled ;” and we may well ask *cui bono* ? What end could it serve ? What good could this *opus operatum* do them ? But take the three parts of the commission together, in their connexion with one another ; and all is intelli-



ble, consistent, beautifully appropriate. The gospel is preached; disciples are made; these disciples have the rite of discipular initiation administered to them; and then these baptized disciples are instructed in all the observances and duties, personal and social, of the christian economy. This is rational. But the charge—"Go, baptize all the nations"—taken in this abstract and independent form—seems to me to require a very close search to find in it either reason or common sense.

The sense we put upon the words may be confirmed by the simple phraseology of the evangelist John, when stating the comparative success of John the Baptist's ministry and Christ's:—"When therefore the Lord knew how the pharisees had heard that *Jesus made and baptized more disciples* than John"—John iv. 1. Here is the same order. The disciples are first "made," then "baptized." They are baptized as professed disciples.—This leads me to observe, what is really meant by a *disciple*. And the question here is not whether, according to its etymology, the word may mean simply *one that learns*. This is not denied. But throughout the New Testament, the designation is used for one who professes to have received the distinguishing tenets of the teacher whose disciple he is. I am not in the recollection of a single instance to the contrary. And this, as all are aware, is in harmony with universal usage;—the disciples of any philosopher or political leader being those who profess adherence to his peculiar principles. We may have occasion to revert to this observation again.

Meanwhile we only remark, that it was those who were *made disciples* who were *baptized*. They were initiated by baptism, as the professed adherents, or followers, of John or of Jesus.

I see no necessity for any nice grammatical disquisition or controversy. There are two rules of grammar, respecting the reference of pronouns to their antecedents, to the one of which Dr. Halley appeals, and to the other Dr. Carson. I shall not contend for either; because I do not feel myself at all shut up to the one adopted by Dr. Carson, in order to make out the limitation of the "*them*" in the commission; conceiving, as I do, that, even admitting Dr. Halley's reference of the pronoun to "all the nations" as its antecedent, there is still, on the principles I have been laying down, and independently of all grammatical nicety and casuistry, evident ground for such limitation. This I shall now endeavour more fully to establish, in two ways:—1. By showing that other parts of scripture are in harmony with our interpretation of this; that they prove faith—profession of faith—repentance—discipling—to precede, and to be a requisite to—the administration of baptism; and, consequently, that what Dr. Halley calls the "great law of baptism," as contained in the commission, must be understood accordingly:—and, 2. That the views given by Dr. H. himself, at various times throughout his volume, of the nature and ends of the rite, are themselves inconsistent with the unrestricted administration of it for which he so earnestly pleads; and, consequently, that Dr. H.

himself ought, in consistency, to admit our interpretation.

1. I am *first* to show, that other parts of scripture are in accordance with my interpretation of the commission. And in showing this, some additional remarks may fall to be made on the commission itself.

I certainly was wont, on this point, to lay considerable stress on the language of the evangelist Philip to the Eunuch of Ethiopia, in reply to his question—“What doth hinder me to be baptized?”—“*if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest*”—Acts viii. 36, 37. I had not adverted to the more than doubtful genuineness of the words. As I have ever made it one of my *canons* in controversy, to build nothing upon any text that is thus disputed and dubious, I at once give it up:—and, if there were no other on which to rest my cause, I should of course give up my cause too. But the truth is, my cause can well spare it. There is enough, and more than enough, without it. In support of the connexion between baptism and previous faith,—that is, profession of faith, I first of all quote the following passages:—Mark xvi. 16, “Go—preach the gospel to every creature: he that *believeth and is baptized* shall be saved:”—Acts ii. 38, “*Repent, and be baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins:”—Acts ii. 41. “Then *they that gladly received his word were baptized*:”—Acts viii. 12. “*When they believed Philip* preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, *they were baptized*, both men and women:”—and verse 13, “Then

*Simon himself believed also ; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip,*” &c. :—Acts xvi. 14, 15. “*Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul :—and, when she was baptized and her household,*” &c. :—Acts xvi. 31—34. And they said—“*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straight-way. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house:*” \*—Acts xviii. 8. “*And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized :*”—Gal. iii. 26, 27. “*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, have put on Christ.*”

One should think the connexion between faith and baptism ought to be sufficiently ascertained to the satisfaction of any ingenuous mind, by the simple reading of such texts as these.—“*Our assertion is,*” says Dr. H. “*that there is no text of Holy Scripture “which requires faith, or any other christian principle, as a necessary prerequisite for baptism—no “passage which rejects any candidate for not possessing it. If we are correct in this assertion, our*

\* It will appear by and by why I quote this passage thus at length.

*“ Baptist friends limit the commission of our Lord ;  
 that is, alter its terms, without any scriptural autho-  
 rity whatsoever.”* \*—Page 504.—Of the terms of  
 the commission we have already in part spoken, and  
 may speak again. I deny that in our interpretation  
 of it there is any limitation of those terms. My  
 surprise is, that, with such texts before him, Dr. H.  
 should make such an assertion. And my surprise is  
 not lessened, when he proceeds in these words—  
 “ When we say that as the restriction is not in the  
 “ commission, we must require express authority for  
 “ its insertion, it is surely nothing to the purpose to  
 “ tell us that ‘ many believed and were baptized ;’  
 “ because the question is not whether we ought to  
 “ baptize believers, but whether we ought to baptize  
 “ no other than believers. Good men were baptized .  
 “ by the Apostles, and so were bad men. No argu-  
 “ ment can depend upon the one fact or the other,  
 “ unless it can be shown, on the one side, that the  
 “ Apostles and their assistants baptized only such as  
 “ they believed to be genuine converts, or, on the  
 “ other, that they baptized indiscriminately all appli-  
 “ cants, leaving their characters to be formed and  
 “ tested by subsequent events ”—page 505 :—and  
 when, a little further on, he goes one or two steps  
 further in giving emphasis to his assertion :—“ We  
 “ maintain, there is no direct, nor indirect, nor inci-  
 “ dental evidence in favour of limiting baptism to  
 “ believers : ”—and again—“ Have they (the Bap-

\* The Italics here are Dr. Halley's.

“tists), a text, which indirectly supports them by  
“excluding from baptism unbelievers, or unconverted  
“men, or, in short, excluding any persons whatever?”  
—Page 506.

On these extraordinary sentences (for to me they are very extraordinary) I offer the following brief remarks; for in truth I feel as if I might leave it to my reader to form his own judgment of them, after a simple perusal of the before-cited texts.—1. I have no objection to the statement that the apostles baptized “*all applicants*,”—provided *application* be understood to imply *professing to receive their doctrine*:—nor have I any objection, further, to the statement that they received such applicants, “leaving their characters to be formed and tested by subsequent events:”—that is, not waiting till the genuineness of the professed reception of the doctrine, involved in the application, had been tried and satisfactorily ascertained. I have frequently thought that missionaries have gone to an extreme in the opposite direction from Dr. Halley, when they have kept professed converts for a length of time in the position of *candidates for baptism*.—2. The true and only question is—whether the apostles ever baptized, or ordered to be baptized, any who did not thus profess to have received their doctrine;—and whether they ever baptized but on the assumption of the truth of such profession. Let a solitary instance be produced of any one being baptized without such profession. “The apostles,” Dr. H. says, (in terms that would almost tempt one to imagine it his opinion that to the apostles, so far as

baptism was concerned, it was a matter of no consideration whether those they baptized were the one or the other) "baptized bad men as well as good." I ask—knowing them to be such?—or not regarding them at the time as the subjects of an incipient change? Cases of men who afterwards proved insincere, or turned out bad, are not to the purpose. The question relates, not to the established sincerity of the faith professed, but to the profession of it; not to the proved and developed change of heart and character, but to the assumption of its commencement. Instances of the baptism of believers, my friend alleges, are nothing to the purpose, when the question is "not whether we ought to baptize believers, but whether we ought to baptize no other than believers." Where, then, are his instances of the baptism of unbelievers? And they must be instances, be it remembered, not of persons turning out unbelievers after their baptism, but of persons regarded as unbelievers when they were baptized.—3. While there are no such instances of unbeliever baptism that can be produced,—of the baptism, that is, of known unbelievers, or of persons not regarded at the time as believers,—neither is there any language, in the history, or in the epistles, confirmatory of the interpretation put by Dr. H. upon the commission, similar to that which we have been quoting on the other side. If Dr. H.'s interpretation of the commission were the true one, it might surely be reasonably expected that we should find a phraseology corresponding to it in the rest of the New Testament. Where is it? We have seen how, in New

Testament phraseology, baptism is connected with faith, with repentance, with the glad reception of the word, with the opening of the heart to attend to it, &c. Is there any phraseology of a different kind?—any corresponding to the unrestricted administration of the ordinance,—to the indiscriminate admission to it of believers and unbelievers, of penitent and impenitent, of those who had heard the truth and professed acquiescence in it, and those who were only willing or even desirous to hear it, and who, having heard it, might turn away from it? If, then, in every instance in which apostolic baptism is spoken of, whether in the history, or in the epistles, the phraseology employed is in harmony with one view of the commission, and, apart from the commission itself, there is actually no phraseology to be found in harmony with the other,—ought not the conclusion to be, that my friend is under some mistake in his application of his grammar rules, and that the other is its real meaning?—4. Where are the *instances*, in point of fact, by which Dr. Halley establishes his position that the apostles made no discrimination, but baptized unbelievers as well as believers, bad men as well as good? If he has not corresponding phraseology, has he corresponding cases? We think we have deprived him of the cases which he alleges to have occurred in such multitudes under *John's baptism*, by disproving its identity with christian baptism.—He must not have recourse to those epistles, in which Paul writes so doubtfully about the faith and character of some of the members; for he must bear in mind that these members, even supposing



them as numerous and as unworthy as he will, had been admitted not to baptism merely, but to the Lord's Supper and all the privileges of church-fellowship; which would warrant the inference of a great deal more than he himself would subscribe to, and thus, by proving too much, prove nothing; and the inscriptions of the epistles show "what manner of persons" they ought all to have been, and he had believed them all originally to be. One case, however, there is; and, like that of Onesimus with the advocates of slavery, being a rare, it is a favourite one. It is that of *Simon Magus*. But it is at least as surprising that it should be cited in evidence on this subject, as that Onesimus should be summoned as a witness on the other. It is not enough to say that it furnishes no proof on Dr. Halley's side,—it ranks amongst proofs against him. Nothing can be clearer, than that it was *on a profession of his faith* that he was baptized:—"Then Simon himself *believed also*; and *when he was baptized*," &c. This follows the general statement already cited among examples of prevailing phraseology—"When they *believed Philip* preaching the things pertaining to the "kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they *were baptized*, both men and women." Is it not a legitimate inference from these words, that if there had been no believing, there would have been no baptizing? Well:—Simon, like the rest, professed faith, and, like the rest, was baptized on the credit of that profession. Grant that he subsequently turned out a wicked man. What of that? Who ever argued that

in those times the administrators of baptism were, in all cases, guided by any infallible "discernment of spirits?"—that they knew the heart of every one whom they baptized? All that is pleaded for is a previous profession of faith, and such a profession as there was not, at the time, reason to question in regard to its sincerity. Was there such reason here? We are apt to think so, because we know the result. But it does not at all appear that there was; or even that, on the part of Philip, there was any undue precipitancy. Simon professed to believe what Philip preached:—and he "continued with Philip" after his baptism, both "hearing" his instructions and "seeing the miracles which he did." Appearances would seem to have been in favour of his sincerity. It was not for Philip to fathom the depths of deceit that were in such a heart. The very circumstance of his being what he was, a thorough adept in the arts of imposition, leads us to conclude that the insincerity of the profession was the better covered,—that the feint was the liker to a reality. If we are not to suppose that Simon was for the time really and powerfully awakened and impressed by what he heard and saw, and under the sway of a strong, though, as it proved, a passing conviction; then must we believe that he was "very deep,"—that he affected to wonder at the miracles, and to own supernatural and divine power in them, while he was only wishing, with inquisitive and self-interested curiosity, to find out how they were done. His worldly sordidness afterwards discovered itself. But at the time of his baptism, it was the secret of

his own bosom. Philip was not to blame. There was no hasty and reprehensible credulity. The very relinquishment of magic, with all its credit, and all its profit, and all its influence, for the profession of the gospel, might appear in his eyes one of the most signal triumphs the truth had won. It was, then, on a profession of faith, and a profession which, at the time and in the circumstances in which it was made, there was no ground to question, that Simon Magus was baptized. And is this one instance of such a profession turning out a deception to be set against all the evidence of a profession of faith being connected with baptism, as a prerequisite and a preliminary?—especially when it is itself a case of such profession?—I only add—5. Is baptism a christian rite,—an institute of the spiritual kingdom of Christ?—Regarding it as such, I see in it propriety, congruity, sense, and beauty, when administered as the form of initiation into the profession of the gospel, and the new life of purity and separation from the world, and subjection to Christ. But a christian rite, to be administered indiscriminately to believers and unbelievers, to bad men as well as to good; a christian rite that indicates nothing distinctively christian,—no knowledge and faith of christian truth, or profession founded upon them,—no transition from the world to the christian church,—no incipient christianity,—no adoption of christian principles, or commencement of a christian course:—this is a thing I cannot understand. What is it? What does it mean? What truth does it teach? What benefit does it confer? It is a rite

connected with a kingdom which is not of this world, yet whose administration serves to confound the world with the kingdom, instead of keeping the two apart :—a rite in which the true convert professes his faith, but which, at the same time, does not mean that he is a believer, for unbelievers may legitimately be baptized along with him! What privilege, in these circumstances, can it be, either to believer or unbeliever? Not to the former, for it is common to him with the unbeliever, and indicates no distinction; not to the latter, for, being thus common, it can have no other effect than to deceive him.—I am at a loss to imagine what the satisfaction or pleasure can be to a christian minister in this indiscriminate administration of a christian rite; or what can be the motive of so zealous a pleading for the taking off of restrictions, and for liberty to baptize where baptism can only delude. Is such freedom really a privilege? Wherein does the privilege consist—to the administrator, any more than to the subject, of the ordinance? Is it that it saves him the trouble, or the delicacy, or the sometimes painful fidelity, of discrimination? I am most unwilling to believe, or even surmise, a motive so unworthy. But if, in any instance, it does, even unconsciously, operate, I fear it is at the cost of others,—the fearful cost, in some cases, of the delusion of their souls. It is a liberty which savours too much of licentiousness, to be a part of that wherewith Christ has made us free.

Dr. Halley speaks in terms rather contemptuous of the “*ingenuity*” with which some “most respectable writers” “elicit a *sort of argument* that faith and

repentance should precede baptism” from such expressions as those we have been referring to—“Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved”—“Repent and be baptized.” “As little to the purpose,” he says, “is it to cite such passages;” nor would he have thought it worth his while to “detain his readers with such a remark,” but for the respectability of the writers by whom this ingenuity is practised. But what ingenuity does the argument require to bring it out? The argument itself lies on the very surface; and yet it is not superficial. Let any reader only re-peruse the texts cited, and say whether he can resist the conclusion that they imply professed faith and repentance as a prerequisite to baptism;—or the order—“hearing, believing, and being baptized”—as the order of apostolic practice, and consequently of Christ’s appointment.—“This ingenuity,” adds Dr. H. “may be employed on the other side. ‘And now, why tarriest thou?’ said Ananias to Saul; ‘Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.’ The ‘argument, from the order of the words, sound or ‘unsound let others determine,—is, that baptism ‘should precede the remission of sins.’ Page 505. Is my friend in earnest? He is—he must be. High as my estimate is of his intellect, I can much more easily believe him reduced by the pinching poverty of his cause to the use of a weak argument, than capable of employing a dishonest one. I question whether, of all the intelligent readers that ever perused the narrative of the interview of Ananias with Saul, there has been one who has understood

the words of the former to the latter just cited, as meaning anything else than that in the act itself of being baptized there was an emblematic representation of the washing away of sins, and a profession of that faith through which the remission of sins is obtained. Who ever thought otherwise than that "*be baptized*" and "*wash away thy sins*" referred to the same thing—in the emblem and in the reality,—just as "being born of water and of the Spirit" means having the reality signified by the emblem, as well as the emblem itself?—When the apostle Paul says—"If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus," "and shalt *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved,"—it were a strange conclusion to draw from his words, that confessing with the mouth must precede believing in the heart. The true order is given immediately after—"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."—And to me it appears that the passages before enumerated express as plainly and explicitly the precedence of faith to baptism as this does the precedence of faith to confession;—the baptism, in truth, being the form of incipient confession,—the emblematic avowal of having embraced Christ's cause.

But we must now follow Dr. Halley a little in his examination of particular passages. Our argument will lose nothing by this, but gain at every step.

Mark xvi. 16, "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 be-

lieveth not shall be damned.”—“In answering the question,” says Dr. Halley, “‘Who will be saved?’ by ‘saying ‘he that believeth and is baptized,’ we have ‘the full and complete meaning of the passage. But ‘this is no answer to the question, Who are to be ‘baptized?’” Page 507. No! I grant that the words institute a connexion between the first two and the third,—between “believing and being baptized” and “being saved:” but do they express no connexion between the first and the second,—between the faith and the baptism? It is the denial of *this* that surprises me. It is matter-of-fact, that in the words our Lord connects both with being saved. There is no questioning this. On what principle, then? we ask. If a connexion be admitted between the faith and the baptism, the principle is at once manifest. The baptism is the avowal of the faith,—the profession of discipleship,—the incipient confession of Christ. So that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” amounts to very much the same thing with the apostle’s statement just adverted to, in which he connects salvation not only with “believing in the heart” but with “confessing with the mouth.” The *baptism*, in our Lord’s phraseology, holds the same place as the *confession* in the apostle’s.

I would not cite this text “as if it were an appendage to the baptismal commission and spoken by our Lord in immediate continuation of the words recorded by Matthew,”—as my friend alleges is sometimes done. It is no “appendage.” It is no “continuation.” It is itself the baptismal commission in

other words. Without at all inquiring into the particular interviews at which the words in Matthew and the words in Mark were respectively addressed to the apostles by their master, it is enough to observe that by both evangelists they are considered as *final charges*. Immediately on recording them, Mark adds—"So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God:"—and that the commission, as given by Matthew, is final, no one denies. Now to me it appears very plain, that in the one and in the other the order prescribed is the same, and that by each that of the other is confirmed. Comparing the words—"Go, *disciple* all nations, *baptizing* them," with the words—"Go, preach the gospel to every creature; he that *believeth* and *is baptized* shall be saved," I cannot hesitate in avowing my conviction that the comparison shows the natural meaning of the former to be—"he that *becomes a disciple* and *is baptized* shall be saved,"—that the one is thus equivalent to the other.

"If it be asked," Dr. H. subsequently remarks, "why belief should be mentioned before baptism, we reply,—as one must be mentioned before the other, there may have been no specific reason for the preference;—or the reason may have been in the circumstances of the address, and now may be of no importance;—or usually it was to be expected, that persons would first believe and then apply for baptism." Page 509. This is taking the matter lightly enough, to be sure. Were the words of him



who "spoke as never man spoke" thus ill-assorted and inexplicit? No matter whether faith precedes baptism, or baptism precedes faith,—'tis all the same! There is something in this so devoid of all definiteness and precision, that I cannot imagine it the language of a commission. Dr. H. himself contends for explicitness in the terms of such a commission, and demands that they shall not be altered. But is there any explicitness in the sense he affixes to either form of it? and is it no unwarrantable tampering with the terms, to invert the order of the leading particulars,—and, when our Lord places discipling and believing before baptizing, to affirm that baptizing may as well be first? If believers and unbelievers were to be baptized indiscriminately, we might expect to find occasionally such an inversion. The words of the commission might, with equal propriety, have run—"Go, *baptize* all nations, *discipling them*:"—and "Go, preach the gospel to every creature; he that *is baptized and believeth* shall be saved." I repeat the question, is there ever anything of the kind to be found? My worthy friend appears, in spite of himself, to be somewhat fretted at the uniformly identical collocation of the words; and testy at being questioned at all about its cause or causes. After assigning, as above, the various reasons that might account for it, he adds—"We, however, must protest against the assumption that reasons for the collocation of words are to be demanded in controversy. That he who believeth and is baptized shall be saved, we are bound to believe; but why be-

“lief should be mentioned before baptism, we are not “bound to explain.” No! not even when an important principle, and one that must regulate practice in the administration of a divine ordinance, depends on the collocation?—and when that collocation is *uniform* too,—without a solitary exception? Let my reader present me with a single text in which the collocation is inverted; in which the preacher admonishes his hearers—“*Be baptized and repent every one of you;*” or the historian relates—“Many hearing, *were baptized and believed:*”—and I shall yield my point.

I think it not unworthy of notice, in confirmation of the remarks on this text, that they so happily accord with the fact of *baptism being omitted* in the second, or negative portion of it. It is not said “He that believeth not, *and is not baptized*”—but simply “He that believeth not—shall be damned.” The consistency and propriety of the omission are instantly apparent on the principle of interpretation for which we contend. Understanding “He that believeth and is baptized” as signifying (what it naturally does signify)—he that believeth and by submission to the initiatory rite, avows his faith,—thus “confessing Christ,”—we are prepared for the omission. The supposition is never made that “he that believeth not” should be baptized. Baptism being the profession of faith,—“he that believeth not *and is not baptized*” would have been tautological and superfluous:—as superfluous as if we should suppose it said, “He that believeth and confesseth shall be saved; but he that believeth not *and confesseth not* shall be con-

demned.—There may be another reason for the omission, I freely grant ; namely, that it is not the absence of the baptism, but the absence of the faith, that is to condemn. Had the *non-baptism* been associated with the *unbelief* as procuring the condemnation,—grievous as the amount of self-delusion has been in attaching virtue to the *opus operatum*, there is reason to apprehend it might have been incalculably more extensive and fatal. But the reason I have assigned is in perfect harmony with this ; so that both may have their respective proportions of weight.

By Dr. Halley's remarks on Acts ii. 37, 38, I must confess myself utterly confounded. When Peter's hearers, on the day of Pentecost, "were pricked in their hearts, and said—Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—he replied—"Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."—Surely, from the form of address, it is very natural to consider their repentance as in order to their baptism, and their baptism as the declaration or profession of their repentance or change of mind. If this is not natural, I know not what is. But no:—nothing of the kind. "Peter exhorted every inquirer "to repent. We cannot suppose that, *in exhorting* "them to repentance, he made any selection ; and the "exhortation itself implies that, however anxious "might have been their inquiry, they had not then "repented, or at least were not then to be recognized "as penitents. Nevertheless, he exhorted those "whom, without discrimination, he called to repent, "to be also baptized every one of them. It would be

“ to our purpose to prove, that without any discrimination he exhorted a multitude of inquirers to be baptized. It is more to our purpose to show, that those who were regarded as not having repented were exhorted without delay to be ‘baptized every one in the name of Christ.’ They were told to be baptized for the remission of sins. Neither we nor our opponents believe that baptism would procure the remission of sins: but, whatever our opponents may understand by the phrase, we cannot explain it upon their theory, that the parties were not to be baptized until after their sins were forgiven. The conclusion appears to me inevitable, that persons who were not supposed to have repented, and whose sins were therefore not thought to be pardoned, were exhorted indiscriminately to be baptized. Is this compatible with the opinion that faith and repentance were prerequisites for baptism? Would any Baptist minister at this time exhort a multitude of strangers, in the first moments of alarm, to repent and be baptized every one of them? Would he exhort them in one breath to repent and be baptized; that is, would he exhort any, being considered at the time as not having repented, to be baptized?” Pages 513, 514.

Were I not well aware of the depth of keel and the breadth of beam by which my friend’s intellect is characterized, I really should have feared that, through some mysterious fatality, it had foundered here altogether. For to what does this entire paragraph amount, if not to this—that when Peter ex-

horts his auditors—"Repent, and be baptized," he means "Be baptized, whether you repent or not?"—I do most confidently deny, that he did by any means "exhort those whom without discrimination "he called upon to repent, to be *also* baptized every "one of them;"—that is, (if the *also* have any meaning) indiscriminately, and independently of their repentance. I most confidently deny, that "those "who were regarded as not having repented were "exhorted without delay to be baptized every one in "the name of Christ." On what principle of exegesis does Dr. H. proceed, when with a "*that is*" he identifies the exhortation to "*repent and be baptized*" with "exhorting any, *being considered at the time as "not having repented, to be baptized?*" That at the time when Peter exhorted them to repentance, they were "not considered as having repented," who denies? But the time when Peter so exhorted them was not the time of their baptism. Their baptism was still future—still to be. "*Repent*" comes between. It precedes the exhortation to baptism, and the baptism follows upon the repentance.—I am unable to account for the explanation given by my friend of this passage, except on the ground of his taking a mistaken view of the repentance required. Peter had borne his testimony, along with the other ten apostles, to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth;—had declared "Him whom by wicked hands they had crucified and slain" to have been "made both Lord and Christ." Before their eyes, and in their ears, were the most marvellous and overpowering

evidences of the truth of the testimony. But the blood of this very Jesus they had, with infatuated rashness and impiety, imprecated upon themselves and upon their children. They were now, therefore, filled with alarm. Their consciences were awakened; and their awakened consciences "pricked their hearts." They experienced the agony of a "wounded spirit." Their guilt, they saw and felt, was deep. The question of questions was—Could it be forgiven? Yes, says Peter, it can be forgiven:—"repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins." Repent—of the wickedness with which you stand chargeable in the rejection and crucifixion of Him to whom God has borne his unequivocal attestation. Let what you now see and hear convince you of your error and your sin. Change your minds. Relinquish your opposition, and acknowledge in Jesus the true Messiah and Saviour. In testimony of this change of mind, and of this penitent acknowledgment, submit to the initiatory rite of baptism in his name. Thus, heavy as the load of their guilt is, your sins shall be remitted, freely, fully, and for ever!—We are not left to suppose that the admonition—"repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins,"—or even that all which appears in the record of what Peter delivered, was the whole amount of instruction previously communicated to the converts:—for it is added immediately—"With many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation." Nor was Peter the only speaker. All the other apostles,

there is every reason to believe, were more or less engaged. It was a day's work. "The same day there were added to them about three thousand souls." And how were they added? The answer is—"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." All is thus still consistent. The passage is in perfect harmony with the others.—And yet here again I am confounded:—"If he said to the "crowd of inquirers—Be baptized every one of you, "it is obvious that he was ready to baptize any one." But he said no such thing. He said "Repent, and be baptized." Dr. H. is not entitled thus to separate the one from the other. "If, however," he says, "contrary to all fair interpretation, any insist that "they were to repent, and, after satisfactory evidence of repentance, they were to be baptized, we "are brought to appeal again to the sacred history. "'Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added to them "about three thousand souls.' But evangelical repentance is not a thing of which any sinner can "assure himself in a few hours,—not a thing of which "he can furnish satisfactory evidence to others in 'the "same day,'—nor of which he ought to receive an "assurance at the moment of his first serious impressions." Pages 515, 516.—Surely, when the terms of exhortation are—"repent and be baptized," we may be permitted strongly to demur to its being represented as "contrary to all fair rules of interpretation" to "insist that they were first to repent." We conceive this to be what every reader will naturally con-

clude, who follows any "fair rules of interpretation" at all.—But it is in the latter part of the sentences just cited that I conceive my friend's error to lie. The evidence by which the sincerity of professed repentance is evinced, may be a thing of more than hours or even days:—although the period of probation will be shorter or longer according to the special circumstances of each case; there being some cases, in which the very character of the crisis in which the repentance is professed may be held as an adequate guarantee of its unfeignedness:—nor ought we to forget the rapidity with which the Holy Spirit can open the mind to the perception, and the heart to the subduing influence, of the truth of God. The present was a case of extraordinary peculiarity. The repentance was the result of evidence such as, under that Spirit's influence, flashed instantaneous conviction upon their minds; gave them to see what they had felt and said and done against Jesus of Nazareth in a new light; filled them with emotions unfelt before,—the emotions of conscious guilt, and trembling apprehension, and intense anxiety:—so that, the instant the offer of forgiveness and mercy was set before the penitent, the heart was melted, the fear quelled, the anxiety relieved, the fountain of godly sorrow opened, and opened along with a secret spring of new and inexpressible joy.—In such circumstances, the avowal of a change of mind, the acknowledgment of him whom they had "despised and rejected" as the true Messiah and the only Saviour,—and that too in the face of exasperated authorities and a still hostile multitude,—was a sufficient



voucher for the sincerity of those by whom it was made. It is altogether a gratuitous assumption, that we require waiting till the professed repentance and faith be subjected to a certain process or period of probation. Who contends for such a thing? What we insist upon is simply such a profession as, in the circumstances in which it is made, there is no reason, in the judgment of charity, to suspect. Such a profession, surely, was that made by the thousands of the pentecostal converts. We admit, as the general rule,—from which there ought to be no departure but in reasonably suspicious cases,—that the genuineness of the profession is to be tested subsequently to the baptism. What we plead for is, that there must be profession,—and profession believed at the time to be genuine:—and that this is the plain meaning of—“Repent, and be baptized.”

If Dr. Halley’s “opinion is confirmed as he proceeds,” so is mine; and so is my wonder at his. His next text is Acts viii. 12, 13, “But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, wondering, and beholding the miracles and signs which were done.” On this passage, however, in both its parts, I have already had occasion to comment, and must not resume its discussion.—But “still the wonder grows,” as I proceed to another. It is that which records the baptism of Saul by Ananias:—not in the direct narrative of Saul’s

conversion in Acts ix., but in the account given of the interview by Saul himself to his countrymen in Acts xxii.: and especially the terms of verse 16—"And now, why tarriest thou! Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord."—"Ananias," Dr. H. says, "did not require "the washing away of sin as a prerequisite to baptism; that is, Ananias did not administer believer's "baptism." Page 520. Indeed! and is Saul to be regarded as still not a believer, after he had "seen Jesus Christ the Lord,"—had "heard the voice of his mouth,"—and, after hearing him say "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," had owned him, and owned his authority, in the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—had received from him his commission, to Jews and Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among all them that are sanctified, by faith that is in him!"—Saul not a believer, when Ananias addresses him by the Christian designation of "Brother Saul!"—"Ananias went his way" (in obedience to the command of Jesus given him in vision) "and entered into the house; and, putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was bap-

tized.”—Acts ix. 17, 18. And was he an unbeliever still,—even when, by the restoration of his sight, he had a fresh miraculous attestation that He by the vision of whose glory he had been struck blind was indeed “Jesus whom he had persecuted?”—Surely, if ever there was a case in which there was evidence of faith previous to baptism, this is one. The very question—“Why tarriest thou?”—has a meaning which, in such circumstances, can hardly be mistaken. The question implies, on the part of Ananias, a conviction that there was no room for delay; that, as one to whom the Lord had shown mercy, and who had “believed through grace,” Saul should instantly offer himself to the initiatory rite of baptism, which was the appointed and customary mode of avowing the faith, and entering on the Christian service. There ought not, I think, to be any doubt that the injunction “wash away thy sins” has reference to the use of the cleansing element of water in the ordinance. The real amount of the injunction is—Make the requisite profession of faith in him “whose blood cleanseth from all sin.” Dr. H. does not hold the doctrine that either justification or sanctification is conferred by the *opus operatum* of baptism. Neither did Ananias. And neither, allow me to say, do those who interpret “arise and be baptized” as expressing in the emblem what “wash away thy sins” expresses in the reality. Dr. H. says—“What right have any to represent “the performance of a spiritual duty, as if it meant “only to observe the ritual which represents that “duty?” Page 521. “Only!” But who says only?

Who says that the “washing away of sins” is only baptism?—that the thing signified is only the sign? If a Tractarian chooses to look upon and to represent baptism as literally and really the washing away of sin, whether in its guilt, or its pollution, or both, it does not follow that we are precluded from regarding it as *emblematically* the washing away of sin. According to the sentence just quoted, we are to regard “baptism” and the “washing away of sins” as two distinct things; and the injunctions “be baptized” and “wash away thy sins” as two distinct injunctions; of which the one was first to be obeyed, and then the other to be attended to subsequently: so that, when Saul had been baptized, he was to remain unforgiven and unrenewed, and was to lay to heart these spiritual concerns thereafter!—after his baptism, he was to be justified and regenerated! I can hardly avoid fancying myself mistaken in supposing my friend to attach such a meaning to the words; and yet I cannot understand him otherwise. Does not every simple-minded reader of the passage consider the command or exhortation “wash away thy sins” as bearing reference to the previous command “be baptized?” “Arise, and be baptized, and” *in being thus baptized* “wash away thy sins?” Have we, then, in this, it may be asked, *baptismal regeneration*? No. But we have, what is not unfrequent in scripture, the sign placed in association with the thing signified; an intelligent and believing submission to the one being the recognition and appropriation of the other.—The case is similar, when it is said—“Except a man be

born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven"—John iii. 5. We agree that there is in reality no such thing as being "born of water." But here, as in the other case, the sign and the thing signified are placed in juxtaposition, to convey, we presume, the sentiment that the former without the latter is of no avail; that unless a man have the thing signified as well as the sign,—regeneration by the Spirit as well as its symbol, he cannot have a spiritual status in the kingdom of God, either on earth or in heaven. And that the baptism with water is simply introduced as the emblem of what follows, is further indicated by the circumstance of its being left out in the subsequent statements—"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth:—so is every one that is *born of the Spirit*"—verse 8. Indeed, I am strongly inclined to think that the idea intended to be conveyed by our Lord is akin to that expressed by the Baptist, when, comparing his own ministry with that of Him whose forerunner he was, he says—"I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh—he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." May not our Lord's words, then, be intended to convey to Nicodemus the assurance that his having received the water-baptism of John was not enough,—that in order to his being a true subject of Messiah's kingdom, it was necessary that he should be a partaker of that baptism of the Spirit which John had declared it the peculiar prerogative of "Him who should come after him" to

confer.—At any rate, just as “water and the Spirit” are placed together in this instance, as sign and thing signified,—so in the other are “being baptized” and “the washing away of sins.”—“The name of the “sign may be used to denote the thing signified; but “the name of the thing signified never denotes the “sign. Baptism may mean holiness; but holiness “never means baptism. Such a mode of interpretation we reject, as totally unauthorised, and as being “the life and spirit of Tractarianism. There are no “instances of it to be adduced. It is contrary to all “the analogies of speech. To dilute the washing “away of sins to a figurative representation, is as un- “authorized a process as to convert the grace of the “Holy Ghost into the emblems of the pentecost.” Page 521. Most freely granted. And yet, may not even the emblems of the pentecost furnish us with an additional illustration of the union of the thing signified with its emblem, without any intention to represent them as properly distinct things,—but as one and the same thing emblematically and literally expressed? Thus—“He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost *and with fire.*” Fire was one of “the emblems of the pentecost.” It is coupled here with “the Holy Ghost,”—not as a distinct baptism, far less as “converting the grace of the Holy Ghost into its emblem;” but simply as the symbol which was to accompany and denote the reality:—“He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost—and with fire” *as the outward sign of the spiritual effusion.* Thus the language of Ananias to Saul—“Arise, and be bap-

tized, and wash away thy sins"—may be considered as amounting to—Submit to the outward rite, which emblematically represents the washing away of sins,—thus confessing thy faith in the source from which the blessings of remission and purification come.—“To wash away sin,” we agree with Dr. H., “is a solemn reality, not a ceremonial representation.” Ibid. But the question is—not whether it *be*, but whether it *have*, a ceremonial representation. That it has, will not be denied,—nor that baptism is that representation. Now to me it appears equally beyond a question, that in the address of Ananias to Saul there is no “converting” of the thing signified into its sign,—of the “solemn reality” into its “ceremonial representation;” but an injunction to observe the “sign,” or “ceremonial representation,” in token of the reception of the thing signified, or the “solemn reality.”

In regard to the baptism of Cornelius and his household,—of Lydia,—and of the Philippian jailor,—Dr. H. finds the same difficulty as in the former case, from the suddenness of the change, and the impossibility of its reality being duly tested and ascertained when the rite of baptism was administered. In the first of these cases, “the parties were baptized on the day in which they first heard the preaching of the gospel:”—in the second, Lydia “was baptized with her household on her interview with the apostle Paul, before she returned to her house, having then, for the first time in her life, heard the preaching of the gospel:”—and in the third, the Philippian jailor

“was baptized on the night of the earthquake, within an hour or two of the time in which he was about to commit suicide.” Page 523.—What of that? I repeat. Can the gospel, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, not prove itself “the power of God unto salvation” at one hearing?—and take such an immediate and mighty hold of the heart too as to produce instant and manifest indications of the sincerity with which it is received?—indications, such as, in the judgment of even a discriminating charity, to leave no reasonable doubt of the work being divine?—Was not the descent of the Spirit on Cornelius and his household the divine certificate that “to the Gentiles God had” by the preaching of Peter “granted repentance unto life?”—and does not Peter place his plea for baptism on this very ground—“Who can forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?”—Was not the baptism of Lydia the consequence of “the Lord’s opening her heart that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul,”—and the evidence of Paul and Silas (to use her own expression) “having judged her to be faithful to the Lord?”—And as to the Philippian jailor, a similar question might, with the same confidence, be put. But I have something more to say of that case,—something which I would rather not have had to say. It is, that my friend’s wonted candour seems, in this instance, to have somehow misgiven. He says—“For no evidence of repentance did Paul wait. The same hour of the night the jailor was baptized:—and *after his baptism, not*



*previously to it, we are told he believed in God with all his house.*”\* Page 524. Now this last representation is by no means correct. And yet it is on the correctness of it that all depends. Look at the facts. In reply to the jailor’s question, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul and Silas had given the brief, simple, and memorable reply—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Then they more fully “spake the word of the Lord unto all that were in his house.” Then the jailor was baptized with his household,—“he and all his straightway.” When it is added—“And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and *rejoiced, believing in God with all his house;*”—nothing, surely, can be clearer than that this is a statement, not of his believing subsequently to his having been baptized, but of his rejoicing in that which he had previously believed,—of the gladness of heart with which his belief of the truth had filled him. With equal conclusiveness might Dr. Halley, from the mere collocation of the words, have inferred that his *believing* came after his *rejoicing*, as that it came after his being baptized. The very expression — “he rejoiced, believing” — manifestly implies his being at the time in a believing state of mind, and his experiencing a happiness unfelt before from the truth which he had received,—a happiness in which his believing family participated.—This interpretation of “he rejoiced believing”

\* The Italics are mine.

into an intimation that it was *then* that he *believed*, is, if possible, even more untenable (though proceeding on the same mistaken principle) than the identification of—"Go, disciple, baptizing" with "Go, baptize." The jailor's is still a case of "hearing, believing, and being baptized." He had been baptized into the faith of the gospel testimony; and the faith filled himself and family with personal and social joy.—And all this is confirmed by the circumstance of the participle in the original, translated "believing," being in the perfect tense—*πεπιστευκως*,—"having believed."

The statement, therefore, which follows, I am constrained to say, is very wide of the plain truth:—"As to the jailor, we do not know that he himself was a believer when he was baptized. He was not a believer a short time before; he was a believer a short time afterwards: but whether his baptism preceded his belief, or his belief preceded his baptism, we do not know. All I know is, that his baptism with his household is mentioned first, and his believing with his house is reported afterwards, in the sacred narrative." Page 525. This, I repeat, is wide of the truth. The first injunction is—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house:"—the instruction as to what was to be believed came next:—and when we find the baptism of himself and household following,—and compare the fact with the words of our Lord's commission to his apostles, the order of which Paul without question observed, "He that *believeth and is baptized* shall be saved,"—

we should be quite warranted in the conclusion that the jailor professed his faith of the truth spoken to himself and family before he was baptized. As for the latter part of the statement,—that “his baptism with his household is mentioned first, and his believing with his house is reported afterwards,”—it is not true;—not true in any sense that can suit Dr. Halley’s purpose:—and I shrink from characterizing the representation as I might have been tempted to do, had it come from some other quarter, where ingenuous candour was less a distinguishing virtue. The jailor is not said to have believed afterwards, but to have “rejoiced believing.” It is the joy, not the faith, that is recorded as subsequent.

Finally, I must say that few things have ever astonished me more than the broad unqualified conclusion to which Dr. Halley comes:—“Were any one “to form his opinion from these historical notes without any previous bias, would he not conclude that “baptism was indiscriminately administered, without “any qualification whatever? There is not in one of “them the slightest intimation of any prerequisite.” Page 526. “Not the slightest!”—“Not in any one of them!”—“None whatever!” There is a recklessness in all this, for which I am unable to account. I must not presume to pronounce myself “without any previous bias.” I have, however, endeavoured as much as possible to divest myself of it; and the conclusion to which I have come is,—without the slightest hesitation,—without one if or but,—the precise opposite of what Dr. H. thinks so manifest. And

my wonder at his so thinking does not abate when I reflect on what my respected friend has himself admitted—*passim*, in every part of his volume—about the nature and design of christian baptism, and the designations and descriptions under which he introduces it.—This was the second point which I undertook to show.

2. I did feel surprise, in perusing the volume, at the variety of expressions incidentally used by Dr. H. which seemed to imply the sentiment that baptism presupposed a profession of faith in the doctrine taught.—Thus, even with regard to the baptism of John, he says—page 162—“John had to teach a  
 “new doctrine. He was commissioned to declare that  
 “the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The older  
 “prophets had described the reign of Messiah; John  
 “announced his advent. The near approach of that  
 “reign was the new doctrine, which attracted the  
 “attention of great multitudes, who received baptism  
 “from him, and were thenceforward called his dis-  
 “ciples. That his baptism was regarded as the in-  
 “itiatory rite by which the Jews were made disciples  
 “of John, is evident from the words of the evange-  
 “list:—‘the Pharisees heard that Jesus made and  
 “baptized more disciples than John.’ Those that  
 “Jesus baptized were called his disciples; those that  
 “John baptized were his disciples. So closely were  
 “the baptism and the new doctrine connected, that  
 “the one term seems to be employed for the other.  
 “‘The baptism of John’ (the new doctrine) ‘was  
 “it from heaven or of men?’ ‘After the baptism’

“(the doctrine) ‘which John preached.’ To be baptized, then, was to be ‘initiated as a disciple, or learner of the new doctrine—the speedy coming of Christ.’”

Many remarks suggest themselves here. *First* :—baptism is designated the “initiator rite” to discipleship,—whether to Jesus or to John. “To be baptized was to be initiated as a disciple, or learner, of the new doctrine—the speedy coming of Christ.”—*Secondly* :—Dr. Halley frees his theory of any previous profession of faith in the doctrine taught, by his definition, or explanation, of the designation disciple, contained in the words—“*or learner.*” I demur to this. Though a disciple does mean a learner, yet in the New Testament, this is not the sense in which, as already observed, the designation is employed. It invariably denotes there, not one who merely comes to be taught, and submits to instruction, without at all committing himself to the doctrine of the teacher—but one who has heard, and who professes to receive, the lessons, and becomes an avowed adherent of the master from whom he has learned them. Nowhere is any one called a disciple there, who merely presented himself as a learner, holding himself at liberty to receive or reject what was taught when he had heard and considered it; nor can a single example be produced of any one having been baptized in such a predicament.—*Thirdly* :—When Dr. Halley speaks of baptism as the rite by which “the Jews *were made* disciples of John,” I am not sure of the correctness of the representation.

We have before adverted to the terms of the evangelist, that “Jesus *made and baptized* more disciples than John;” terms, according to which they were not made by baptism, but *made* and then *baptized*,—made disciples by their acceptance of the doctrine, and initiated by baptism into their new position, as the followers of the Master whose doctrine they had embraced. “Those that Jesus baptized were called “his disciples; those that John baptized were his “disciples.” Does not the designation in this very sentence mean, not merely persons come to learn, but followers, adherents, of Jesus and John respectively,—professed believers in their authority, and in the truth of what they taught?—*Fourthly* :—let my reader mark the close connexion, as stated by Dr. H., between the doctrine and the baptism,—a connexion so close, that the one is used, interchangeably, for the other; “the baptism of John” for “the new doctrine” taught by him :—and yet the baptism is not to be understood as implying any previous understanding, or professed reception, of the doctrine! If the baptism and the doctrine are thus interchangeable, it is surely not easy to imagine any one submitting to the baptism otherwise than as receiving the doctrine. Does not the very question put by our Lord—“The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?”—imply that those who submitted to that baptism acknowledged it, with John’s commission and doctrine, to be from heaven?—*Fifthly* :—It would seem as if Dr. H. conceived that not all but some only of the baptized were taught

John's doctrine ; and even these subsequently to their baptism. He writes—"The amount of what we learn from the evangelical history is, that multitudes received the rite of baptism from John, and many of them were taught the new doctrine on which he founded his exhortation to repentance." Page 163. But is not this entirely a *gratis dictum*? Where is the proof of one more than another being baptized *without* being "taught the new doctrine on which he founded his admonition to repentance?" Is not the very same thing said in the narrative respecting all alike? Nay, the very next sentence in Dr. H. himself overturns every such distinction between the taught and the untaught,—between the baptized with instruction and the baptized without it:—"It is, indeed, said, they were baptized confessing their sins ; but whether they uttered an audible confession as they stood in crowds listening to his preaching, or their baptism itself was an act of confession, an acknowledgment that they needed repentance, we are not able to ascertain." Nor is it at all necessary that we should ; for it is no matter which. It is quite enough that they were baptized "confessing their sins ;" such confession amounting to the very same thing with professing repentance. And there cannot be a reasonable question, when the call to repentance was enforced by the proclamation of "the new doctrine" as the motive, that their submission to baptism involved, along with confession of sin and profession of repentance, an avowal of faith in that doctrine,—of their belief in the immediate ap-

proach of the kingdom of God.—It appears to me, that in laying hold of particular expressions, and making the most of them, Dr. H. has forgotten the extreme brevity of the narrative, and has proceeded on the manifestly false assumption that no more was said by John, and that no more passed between him and the people that “came to his baptism,” than the few short words which the Spirit has thought fit to put on record.

Another exemplification of the inconsistency of the principle of Dr. Halley’s theory with his own incidental admissions—(not *accidental*, for the admissions are essential to his reasoning at the time when they are introduced,—but *incidental*)—occurs in page 164 —“Have we, then, any right to assume, in contradiction to the letter of the text, that there was any selection, any test of fitness, any thing required beyond the application of the parties to receive the sign of his doctrine? It seems to have been the duty of every Jew to enrol himself as an expectant of the coming Messiah, or, what was the same thing, as a disciple of John. The pharisees and lawyers, in not being baptized of him, “rejected the counsel of God against themselves.”—Now here observe—*First* :—if baptism was “the sign of his doctrine,” did not application for, and actual submission to, the sign, imply the professed reception of the doctrine? The doctrine was that of the Messiah being immediately to come; and those Jews who “enrolled themselves” by baptism as “the disciples of John” enrolled themselves, at the same time, as is here admitted, as



“expectants of this coming Messiah,”—which is the same thing with enrolling themselves, or being baptized, *as believers of his doctrine.*—And *secondly* :—this is confirmed by what is here said of the pharisees and the lawyers; for if, in not being baptized of John, they “rejected the counsel of God against themselves,” those who *were* baptized of him must be regarded as, by profession at least, receiving that counsel. This is enough. Let the numbers have been as great as you may choose to make them; let the profession have been made in what way soever you may conceive most likely; and let it, in as many instances as facts can prove or fancy may please to imagine, have proved insincere and abortive :—that which we plead for is, that the profession *was made*, and that on the footing of it baptism was administered; and that this is essential to the consistency of Dr. Halley’s own statements.

The entire strain, indeed, of my esteemed friend’s phraseology, does seem to me remarkably out of harmony with the great general principle of his theory.—At page 7, baptism is represented as “the initiatory rite of the christian church,” and, in common with the Lord’s Supper (the church’s “commemorative institution”) “a symbolic representation of evangelical truth:”—at page 81, as “the sign of discipleship,” and as “in the first instance, enjoined upon every proselyte.”—If it was “the initiatory rite of the christian church,” it was the rite by which members were initiated, or introduced, into the christian church. And was this independant of any profession

of faith and repentance?—And if it was “enjoined on every proselyte,”—what was a proselyte but a professed recipient of the new doctrine,—a professed convert to the new faith?—At page 95, it is—“the sign of purification on being admitted into the kingdom of Christ:”—at page 293, “the emblem of the cleansing of the heart by the truth and spirit of Christ:”—at page 229, “the visible sign of that new birth, of which regeneration is the internal reality.” And yet to a rite of which such things are said there is to be indiscriminate admission:—no faith, no repentance, no purification, no new birth, no cleansing of the heart, no one of those things of which it is the sign and the symbol, and which are indispensable to any one’s “introduction into the church of God,”—is at all to be regarded!—every prerequisite being an unauthorised limitation of an unrestricted and unqualified commission! Is there not great incongruity, —nay, is there not something very like profanation, —in the administration of an ordinance of which such representations are given, thus indiscriminately—to believing and unbelieving, to penitent and impenitent, to renewed and unrenewed, to men of any character or of no character, to bad as well as good?

But still more. On various occasions Dr. H. actually admits faith—that is, faith in profession—to be a prerequisite to baptism; even although his whole argument on this subject is in support of the contrary. He cannot get quit of the connexion. So reasonable is it, and so clear is the New Testament about it,—that he finds it in spite of himself, and it comes out

at unawares. "That central point of controversy respecting infant baptism, on which the whole depends, appears to be, so far as I can judge, whether faith be or be not the proper qualification for baptism"—page 113. Of this "central point of controversy," it is his leading object to affirm and argue the negative. Yet, when reasoning, and reasoning admirably, on the subject of baptismal regeneration, we find him thus expressing himself—I quote at large, that I may shun the charge of partial citation:—"If the sinner believe in Christ, or believe the evangelical message, that Christ Jesus is the only Saviour, who died for his sins and lives again for his justification, *he is regenerate and justified*: but if he do not so believe in Christ, he can be neither regenerate nor justified. The man is not at this point to be taught to look to the charm of a sacrament; he is not to be told that he will certainly believe, or will be more likely to believe, or, believing, will be regenerate, if he be baptized, baptism being the invariable, or the usual means of regeneration. Such a direction is felt to be inconsistent with the simple declaration of the gospel; yet such a direction is the natural and proper consequence of regeneration by baptism, in whatever manner it be explained. *If a person receives the sacrament with proper dispositions, with faith, without which it is impossible to please God*, he is already a believer, and therefore regenerate: he *believes in the mystery of baptism, the truth set forth in the sign*. *If he does not believe, he does not receive the sacrament worthily,*

“and therefore he is not regenerate by the observance  
“of the means. For spiritual blessings a man must  
“look, not to the sacraments, but to the cross; and  
“instantly, before his believing eye, without a shade,  
“Christ Jesus is made of God unto him wisdom,  
“righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”—  
Pages 103, 104.—Thus writes my friend, judiciously  
and well, when he is not in the act of maintaining an  
untenable theory. Let the reader mark the tenor of  
the entire passage; and especially the sentiment in  
the sentences marked by me in italics. If “*right  
dispositions*”—if “*faith*” be necessary to the sacra-  
ment’s being “*worthily*” received, the question arises,  
ought it by any to be received otherwise than wor-  
thily?—and if not, ought it, with the knowledge  
of the administrator, to be administered otherwise  
than worthily,—administered, that is, to those whom  
he has no reason to consider as receiving it with  
“right dispositions,” “with faith,”—nay of whom  
he has reason to think the contrary? Surely, that  
which would not be right in the recipient cannot well  
be right in the administrator.—In the close of  
the extract too, the language implies the just senti-  
ment, in opposition to all that we have found him  
saying about the time requisite for testing professed  
faith and repentance, and ascertaining satisfactorily  
the genuineness of conversion, that, under the en-  
lightening influence of the Spirit of God, the sinner’s  
perception of the suitableness of the gospel to his  
exigencies, and his apprehension of it to his personal  
salvation, may at once be immediate and immediately

apparent—"For spiritual blessings a man must look  
 "not to the sacraments but to the cross; *and in-*  
*stantly, before his believing eye, without a shade,*  
 "Christ Jesus is made of God unto him wisdom, and  
 "righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Is there any need for the delay of baptism in such a case? And a large proportion of the early conversions,—the conversions made by "the preaching of the cross" in "the beginning of the gospel," there is reason to think were of this description. That in some instances there was appearance without reality,—temporary excitement without permanent impression;—that there were hasty and superficial professors, who, though they had "heard the word, and anon with joy received it, had no root in themselves, and in time of temptation fell away,"—and others who, after making a profession, were "choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and brought no fruit to perfection,"—is not denied. But these were the exceptions: and even these were admitted to baptism, not indiscriminately, and with no inquiry and no concern whether they were believers or not, but upon a profession made of faith and repentance; just as in the case of the many who "having heard the word, kept it in an honest and good heart, and brought forth fruit with patience,"—genuine, spiritual converts.

Again—at page 108, Dr. H. says:—"If, however, by this seal is meant nothing more than *the sign or emblem of our receiving the covenant by faith,*—on that supposition, the sacraments are only sacred

“ signs, symbolic observances, as we believe them to be ; although not of our acts of faith, but of the “ purifying and life-giving blessings of the gospel.”— I agree with Dr. Halley, that “ faith in itself, is the “ reception of the covenant,” and that “ immediately “ on our belief the covenant is sealed and certain, without the possibility of a failure :”—but I understand the hypothetical sentence now quoted as expressing a view of baptism coincident with his own ;—and if it is to be regarded in the light of a “ sign or symbol of our *receiving the covenant by faith,*”—this is all that I am desirous to establish.

In speaking, at page 119, of the case of Nicodemus, Dr. H. says :—“ Without at present citing the Jewish “ authorities, in support of the opinion that the Rab- “ bins, as early as the time of our Lord, called a “ change of religion a new birth, it is manifest, if “ such was their customary language, that a master in “ Israel, acquainted with the traditions and usages of “ the people, might have been expected to understand “ the words of our Lord, as implying, *unless a man “ became a subject of a change, of which baptism was “ the symbol and profession,* he could not be ac- “ credited as a disciple of Christ.”—If our Lord’s words are admitted to have implied this,—that baptism was, not the “ symbol” only, but the “ profes- sion” of that spiritual change by which a man became an accredited disciple of Christ,—what can we wish for more ?

In reference to the same case of Nicodemus, it is said—page 147—“ John had baptized great numbers

“of all classes, *with the profession of the new doctrine.*” What can this mean, but into the *professed faith* of the doctrine? Hence it follows, in explanation of our Lord’s words—(“Verily, verily, “I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and “of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of “God”) “*unless he become a proselyte* by baptism, “he is not, ostensibly, and as entitled to its external “privileges, a member of that kingdom; unless he “become a convert by the Spirit, he is not, really “and as entitled to its everlasting rewards, a mem- “ber of that kingdom.”—Now, besides that “*becoming a proselyte* by baptism” can mean nothing short of professing in baptism to have *embraced the doctrine* of the kingdom,—we may here ask, whether it would have been right—consistent with the nature and design of the ordinance—to admit to baptism a man known not to be “a convert by the Spirit,”—to admit to the external rite a man known not to be a partaker of the inward reality. Would my friend himself do this?—not merely not knowing the man to be such, but knowing him not to be such? According to the principles of his theory, he should have no scruple to baptize an unbeliever more than a believer, an unconverted more than a converted man. And yet we are constrained to answer for him in the negative the questions just asked. For how, with any consistency, could he baptize a known unbeliever, when he writes as follows—(he is comparing the language of Rom. x. 9, with that of Tit. iii. 5, in opposition to the baptismal regenerationists;—pages 236, 237):—

“All christians agree, that the confession was regarded only as the appropriate and obligatory expression of the faith of the heart; and so it would follow that baptism was regarded as the appropriate and only sign of the renewal of the Holy Ghost. As the apostle wrote to professed and baptized christians, his meaning, allowing him to be his own expositor, must have been, in one instance—if the confession of the mouth corresponded as a true sign with the faith of the heart, the person would be saved; so in the other, if the washing of regeneration corresponded as a true sign with the renewal of the Holy Ghost, the person would be saved. Professed and baptized men were taught that their profession and their baptism were or were not of avail, as they were true signs of the great and momentous realities,—faith, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.”—It is too obvious to require notice, that baptism, being a sign or symbol of the regenerating and purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, can never, in this its simple ritual import, be anything else than “a true sign.” When this phrase is used, it must necessarily have respect, not to baptism considered in itself, but to baptism in the particular case of its administration. It is a true or a false sign, according as the subject of it is or is not a partaker of the “great and momentous reality—the renewing of the Holy Ghost;”—and, since this renewing can only be by the truth, and by the faith of the truth,—it is true or false according as he is or is not a partaker of this faith. The reality of the thing signified, then, must



have been presupposed in every case of the administration of the sign ; else we must suppose the Apostles and first preachers administering the sign when they knew it to be not a true sign but a false ; and thus, if not uttering, acting a falsehood, and contributing to the delusion of men's souls !—Would my friend do this ? I answer for him in the negative—*he would not.*

Consistent with this is what follows, in reference still to the same case :—“ If to be born of water is not baptism, what was it as distinguished from the birth of the Spirit ?—This interpretation exactly applies to the character and conduct of Nicodemus. He hoped, in his timidity, or probably on account of his pharisaical connexions, to be saved without confessing Christ ; and Jesus would expose the vanity of the hope. The badge of a disciple must be worn by Nicodemus. Although a ruler, he was to be allowed no exemption from the ordinary profession of the members of Christ's kingdom. He must take up his cross, and enter the kingdom of God, in the same manner as a despised publican or a polluted Gentile.”—page 148. It had just before been said of Nicodemus, that, as “ a ruler and a rabbi, he *had not courage to submit to the baptismal service.*” It is to it, therefore, that the language now cited relates. In that language, baptism is “ confessing Christ ;”—assuming “ the badge of a disciple”—i. e. of a believer in and follower of Jesus ;—“ the ordinary profession of the members of Christ's kingdom ;”—the initiatory rite by which, “ in the same manner

as publicans and Gentiles," he "entered that kingdom."—And how all this is consistent with baptism being administered promiscuously to believers and unbelievers, independently of faith, or repentance, or profession, or any prerequisite whatever,—I am utterly at a loss to imagine.

The last thing I shall quote in evidence of my second proposition—the difficulty, the impossibility, experienced by Dr. Halley, of writing on the subject in any thing like harmony with the principle and spirit of his theory,—shall be the general sentiment, tersely and forcibly expressed, in page 295—"In any sacrament, there is nothing moral, nothing holy, nothing religious, nothing of the least worth, except conscientious obedience to Christ."—Although the sentence has more immediate reference to the difference between baptists and pædobaptists respecting the *mode* of baptism, yet it expresses an important general principle. If "conscientious obedience to Christ" be the only thing in a sacrament that can impart to it any morality, or holiness, or religion, or worth of any sort, what are we to think of pleading for the administration of *this* sacrament to those who, making no profession of faith, can be rendering, in their submission to it, no such "conscientious obedience;" seeing all acceptable obedience to Christ must be the obedience of faith? Or are we to understand my friend as meaning to place the morality, the holiness, the religion, the worth, of the sacrament in the "conscientious obedience" of him who administers, not of him who receives it? He cannot mean

this. He is not so much of a Puseyite as to place either the value or the virtue of a sacrament in the secret character of the administrator, or his conscientiousness in any particular case of its administration. And if, on the part of its recipient, it is altogether without principle or worth, unless submitted to as an act of "conscientious obedience to Christ,"—where is his theory of indiscriminate administration, without prerequisite of any kind, to all who are willing to receive it, good, bad, or indifferent?

It is in statements such as those I have now been quoting, that I regard my valued friend as right,—soundly, scripturally right. But I am at a loss to understand how he can consistently hold at once these views and that which is involved in his general theory,—and which, indeed, constitutes its very basis. The one or the other, as it appears to me, must be relinquished. We have seen how unsatisfactorily he endeavours to explain various passages of scripture so as to quadrate with the principles of that theory. But those very passages require no effort to harmonize them with the views which we have selected from other portions of his volume. The accordance of the two is manifest and perfect. And they are the only views which on this subject will harmonize the Bible.

My Baptist friends will be apt to think that in the second part of my appendix, I have been advocating their cause,—maintaining *believer baptism*. And so I have. In regard to *adults*, I am one with them. I hold them, though baptists, right, and my friend Dr. Halley, though a paedobaptist, wrong. But the

question whether there be scripture authority, in the form of precept, or example, or obvious implication, or legitimate inference, or all the four, for baptizing the infant seed of adult believers along with their believing parents, is a question altogether distinct from the one we have been discussing, and one which must be settled by totally different evidence. That evidence it has been the object of the preceding dissertation to produce, and to place in a light as clear and convincing as I could. With what success either that argument or the present has been conducted, must be left with others to judge. I have written freely and unreservedly, because I have written under a deep and grave conviction that the points in debate are very far from being points of mere externalism, unimportant in themselves, affecting no vital interests, and drawing after them no serious consequences;—that, on the contrary, they involve principles,—principles closely connected with the safety and prosperity of individual souls, and pregnant with good or with evil to the church of God, especially in regard to its purity, and spirituality, and separation from the world; the features of its character that are most essential to its fitness, as an instrument, both for displaying the glory of Christ, and for promoting the best interests of mankind.—But while, for this reason, I have written freely, I have written in the conscious spirit, and therefore, I may trust, also in the terms and manner, of christian respect and affection. I do not say I have *endeavoured* to do this; for I have been sensible

of not the slightest inclination to the contrary. Well aware, however, how apt particular modes of speech are to be differently interpreted by the opposite parties in a discussion, I conclude by assuring the esteemed and able friend and christian brother whose views I have been impugning, that if, in any one instance, a word or phrase has escaped my pen that has seemed to his mind to indicate a state of feeling at variance with what I have just expressed, and has thus given him one moment's pain, it will give me still greater pain to learn it; that I must have used the word or the phrase in ignorance or inconsideration of its capabilities of meaning; and that, if it is not to be supposed that he should have misunderstood the one or the other, he has at all events, beyond a doubt, misunderstood ME.

GLASGOW:

PRINTED BY D. RUSSELL, BUCHANAN COURT,  
ARGYLL STREET.



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