

*Library of the Theological Seminary,*  
PRINCETON, N. J.

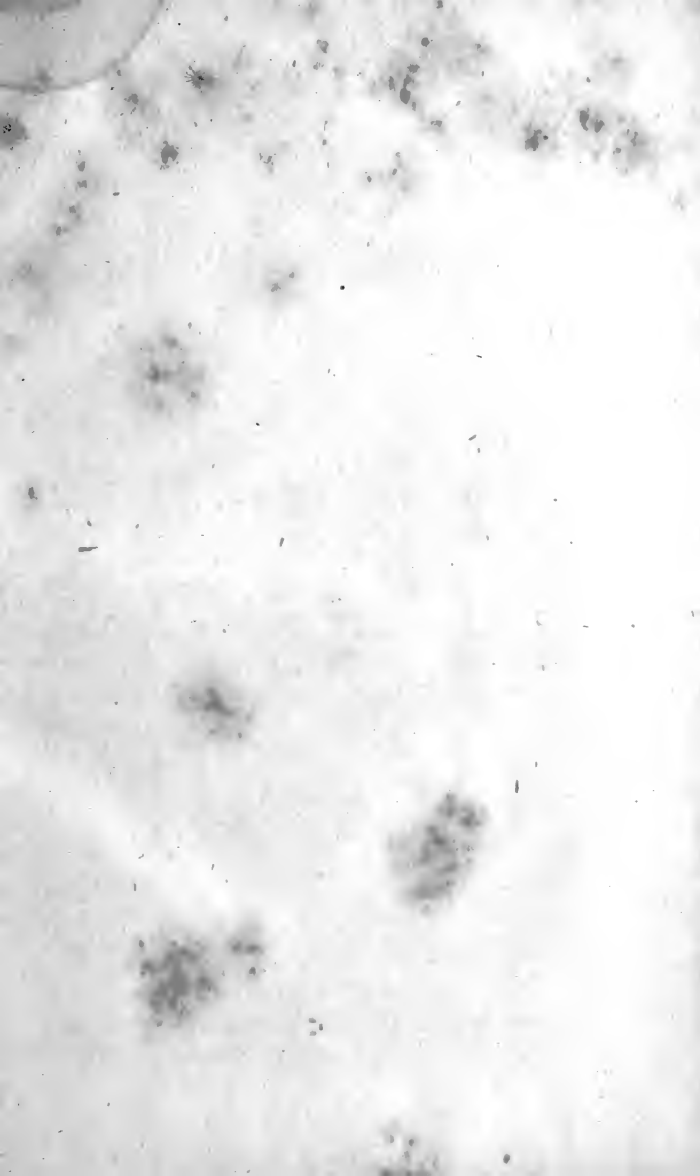
Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

*Agnew Coll. on Baptism, No. ....*

SCB  
10279







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2011 with funding from  
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

ESSAYS

ON THE

Baptist Controversy:

OR, AN

EXAMINATION OF THE MODE AND SUBJECTS OF

BAPTISM:

TOGETHER WITH THE RIGHT OF ALL DENOMINATIONS TO  
THE PRIVILEGE OF

Sacramental Communion with Each Other.

BY RUSSELL RENEAU.

PHILADELPHIA:

HIGGINS & PERKINPINE, 40 N. FOURTH ST.

1856.

---

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by  
RUSSELL RENEAU,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

STEREOTYPED BY L. JOHNSON & CO.  
PHILADELPHIA.

---



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

---

THE following Essays were first published in 1846. They were written to meet a local necessity, and the idea that a reprint would ever be called for was not in the mind of the author at all. Although the work has been out of print for nine years, it is still called for. It is now revised, and sent out once more.

The sentiment expressed near the close of the work—that the existence of sects in the church is no evil—is to be received in a qualified sense. For sixteen centuries the church has been governed too much, especially in matters of conscience, of which God alone is the rightful arbiter. Separate sects have been organized by minorities solely on account of the oppressions and usurpations of majorities. These evils, in the providence of God, do good by counteracting each other, just as one poison is an antidote for another. In a few months the author expects to have ready for the press a new work, to be entitled “The Reign of Satan,” in which many of the evils of the church and the state will be discussed with the greatest freedom,—

among which sectarianism will receive the attention its merits demand.

The author has no desire to believe any thing but the truth himself, and surely does not desire to inculcate any thing which is untrue. It was his aim to write these Essays in conformity with this sentiment, and he hopes he has succeeded in showing that such was his intention throughout the entire work. He prays the blessing of God upon the work and upon its readers.

RUSSELL RENEAU.

March, 1856.

ESSAYS  
ON THE  
BAPTIST CONTROVERSY.

---

ESSAY I.

ON CONTROVERSIAL DISCUSSIONS.

*“It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”* JUDE 3.

As no man can know every thing, and as the wisest and best of us are but erring, fallible creatures, ever liable to be mistaken, so is it unavoidable that men, from ignorance, weakness, and surrounding circumstances, should reach conclusions, even on plain subjects, totally different from each other. However difficult the acquiring of truth may be, it is nevertheless a treasure that enriches the mind and elevates the affections; while error and false doctrine can only deceive, impoverish, and ruin all who trust in them.

When a doctrine claims admittance into our creed, we should patiently examine the argu-

ments used by its friends in its favor; and also those used by its enemies for its refutation. We are then to decide upon which side the weight of testimony lies, and whether the doctrine be true. Those who investigate in this way will not often be deceived, unless the subject be too great for them, or they suffer their prejudices to blind their understandings.

This being the only safe way of arriving at a knowledge of the truth, it, of necessity, must be the surest method of imparting it to others. Hence, controversy is unavoidable, whether the world will have it so or not. Controversy presupposes the existence of opposing parties, *both* of which *cannot be right*. If there be any virtue in maintaining religious truth and opposing error, there is the greatest propriety in controversial preaching. Concerning this, however, there is a great variety of opinion. Some men seem to be so fond of peace that they wish all controversy banished from the church. Some others will barely allow a little controversy in self-defence, provided a direct assault is made upon us; and provided we only bring arguments to support our own doctrines, without saying any thing against the doctrines of our assailants. The war must be defensive altogether. This is a popular form of controversy; or it is, at least, much less offensive than that

which assails the doctrine of our opponents. If, however, it be our duty to maintain what we believe to be true, it is equally our duty to *displace*, as far as we can by fair means, what we believe to be error. Hence it is our duty to defend our own doctrines, and we have the right to assail the doctrines of our opponents.

While it is our undoubted right to refute, as far as we can, every doctrine we honestly believe to be false, yet we have no right to assail the feelings of those who hold such doctrines. Their doctrines and arguments should be fairly stated and fairly met. No caricatures should be resorted to. These are very offensive, and do not advance the cause of truth; but, rather, they do gender strife. Severity of animadversion is no just cause of offence, where there is no misrepresentation. It is impossible, however, to avoid giving offence in controversial discussions, though they may be so conducted as to avoid any *just cause*. This giving offence is surely an evil, the avoiding of which is very desirable. But it would be a much greater evil to abandon all discussion, which would be to place truth and falsehood upon equal footing. Since, then, controversy must exist, let every controversialist state the question honestly, argue it fairly, and do all in the spirit of Christian kindness, and much good will be the result.

A man who believes a doctrine to be true, not because he has scriptural reasons for it, but because his party or denomination believes it, or because he was taught it by his parents, will be apt to be displeased at your attacking his doctrine, whether you do it kindly or otherwise. Having made up his opinion regardless of proof, he dislikes to hear any thing against such opinion.

He that thinks it is sufficient to know that respectable writers have advocated his doctrine, will be offended at controversy, because he thinks those writers have settled and have the right to settle all such differences, and everybody ought to embrace their opinion and join their party.

He that thinks it is better to embrace a ready-made opinion, though it be false, than to investigate the subject and form one of his own, will be offended at controversy, because, being too lazy to search out the reason of things, he dislikes to be disturbed in the enjoyment of his borrowed creed.

He that believes that a falsehood, advocated by *respectable* men, and *honestly* believed by their *dupes*, is as good as the truth, without such auxiliary, will be displeased, because he likes to be quiet in good company.

He that thinks it is better to hold doctrines in

concealment, because of their real or supposed want of popularity, will be displeased, because he dislikes exposure. It may, he fears, prevent the accomplishment of his by-ends. He wants to have a popular creed.

The prejudiced man is unwilling to submit his opinions to investigation, because he would rather support them, true or false, than to learn the truth from the opinions of others. It is not strange, therefore, that he should be opposed to controversy, and displeased with the man who preaches it.

The man who *prefers the truth* to his own opinions, or to the opinions of any, or of all others, is pleased to see his doctrines put to the test. He knows truth will always bear examination; and however unpopular it may be, it is, nevertheless, worth more than the most reputable falsehood by whomsoever advocated. He will not shun controversy, because some silly ones may, perchance, be offended at it.

To controversy it is objected, that it destroys the peace and harmony of the different denominations. To which we may answer, a peace that can be maintained only by the abandonment of truth, is not worth having; and harmony in error is the harmony of perdition. The true state of the case, conceal it who may, teaches us that men are not agreed in their

religious belief; and to pretend they are, is to act more like knaves than Christians. *Peace men* would have us *throw away* our doctrines, *for peace' sake*, or cease to advocate them, which is the same thing in the sight of God, and in its practical results. Suppose, for example, an Arminian brother proposes to a Calvinist as follows: "Well, brother, on the subject of final apostasy, we have never been able to agree; but have, sometimes, felt warm when talking about it, and more especially when our preachers have been arguing on the subject; and as peace is worth more than every thing else, *if you will abandon yours, I will throw away my opinion, for peace' sake.*" To this the brother Calvinist answers, "I am decidedly of your opinion, I will make any sacrifice *for peace' sake.* I am opposed to controversy any how. I will discountenance, if you say so, all controversial preachers, *for peace' sake.*" Will any be so hardy as to suppose these brethren would not gain *peace* by such a bargain? But what do such peace men propose to do with their doctrines? Why, just throw them away *for peace' sake.* That is all. They think so much of their notions, that the spirit of war rises, and they get mad whenever they hear arguments urged against them. But then again, they love peace so well, that they will, each, give up this pre-



cious prize, rather than fight for it. But is this the peace of God?

Though the view we have just taken of such peace measures makes the whole look ridiculous enough, yet, ridiculous as it is, the *public* conduct of many in the present day is equally ridiculous. I do not say or believe as much of their *private* conduct. For really, while they *publicly* declaim against controversy, they *privately* advocate their own doctrines, and assail other people's, taking care *who* is present *for peace' sake*. Then, even among peace men, we have the real war; *privately*, it is true, *for peace' sake*. They *really* assail each other's doctrines in private. The great difference between such peace men and public controversialists is, the peace men give each other no opportunity of defence, it all being *private for peace' sake*. They stab each other in the dark *for peace' sake*. They pretend peace while war is in their habitations. The whole plan is deceptive; and the man who practises it is a hypocrite. Dare any one say we misrepresent facts? Or do we draw erroneous conclusions? He who can only love me because I think as he does, or be at peace with me while I either pretend so to think, or hold the difference in concealment, does not intend to esteem me as a Christian at all. He who is himself a sincere Christian, and regards me as

such, loves me on that account; our agreement or non-agreement being of but little importance. He will neither require me to conceal nor abandon my opinions for the sake of his friendship. Should he do so, I assure him he requires of me a much greater sacrifice than I am willing to make, and a much higher price for his friendship than I ask for mine.

To controversy it is objected again, that it prevents the union of the different denominations in their efforts to promote the glory of the kingdom of Christ. If by union be intended amalgamation, it is entirely illusive. I have been acquainted with many of these union men. They are of all denominations. They wish all others to adopt their peace measures, and unite with them, *i. e.* join them. This is all a chimera. Men will be able to think alike when their faces are made to look alike. All this parade about union and amalgamation is more the evidence of hypocrisy than of *Christian charity*. Since men have the right to think for themselves, and to advocate their opinions, we should all love one another regardless of our sectarian peculiarities. There would be about as much wisdom in withholding my Christian regard from a brother because he was unable to think as I did, as there would be in withholding it because his nose was not made

like mine. If a man sincerely believes himself to be in the right, while he as honestly believes me to be wrong, I would think more of him, while he honestly tried to convince me of my error, than I would of a thousand peace men, who are equally opposed to me in sentiment; but for reasons best known to themselves, were always controverting, in my absence, the propriety of controversy. I hold all such in utter detestation.

The author of these essays preaches controversy for conscience' sake, believing that his heavenly Father has called him to this work. In doing this, he takes no greater liberty with the doctrines of other men than he allows them to take with his. He would, however, thank those gentlemen who have no doctrines of their own that they think worth defending, and have found no error in this naughty world large enough to be worth opposing, and are so very much opposed to all controversy that they cannot do any of it publicly, to cease *controverting* so privately his *controversial* preaching. If controvert you must, do it a little more publicly, that the assailed may defend his own course, while he "contends earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

## ESSAY II.

## ON THE PREROGATIVES OF CHRIST.

*“The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; he will save us.”—ISA. xxxiii. 22.*

THE three component parts of government are the Legislative, the Executive, and Judicial. These are clearly set forth in the above text. Of Jesus it is said, “The government shall be upon his shoulder.” Isa. ix. 6. Jesus says of himself, “All *power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Matt. xxviii. 18. This government is called the *kingdom of God*—the kingdom of heaven. All the power there is in this kingdom, whether in heaven or in earth, is given to Jesus. The whole weight of it rests upon his shoulder:—a weight, this, too heavy for any other than the “mighty God, the everlasting Father.” True allegiance to Christ requires that we acknowledge his prerogatives as herein set forth.

Seeing all power is primarily in the Lord Jesus Christ, our King, it will chiefly concern us, at present, to ascertain what powers he has delegated to men. It is a question of very great importance, whether the church possesses any *legislative* authority or not. We advocate

the negative. Power has indeed been delegated. But this power is *executive* only. The power of disciplining the nations has been delegated to God's ministers; but they are, in doing this, to teach them to observe all things whatsoever *Christ has commanded them*. They are not allowed to exact obedience to human laws. We may add that the church not only has no legislative authority, but she is absolutely forbidden to exercise it. "If *any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*" Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Thus, it is plain that no human being has the authority to enact any law for church observance; nor has any the power to repeal, modify, or change, any law of the kingdom whatever. *There is one lawgiver.* James iv. 12. The holy Bible contains the laws of Christ's kingdom. An attempt to add to this or take from it is nothing short of *high treason* against the government of the King, our blessed Lord. God will punish this treason with the severest penalties. He will take the traitor's part out of the book of life, and add to him the plagues

written in the book. Members are to be admitted into the church in the observance of Christ's laws alone. They are to be admitted to all church privileges in the same way; and in obedience to the same authority they are to be expelled, when that thing is done.

What, then, will we say of those who expel their members for joining temperance societies? What of those who expel their members for taking the sacrament with other denominations? Are not these things, with some others of the same or similar character, done in obedience to human laws? It does not do away the error of introducing the commandments of men, to urge the goodness of the motives which prompted their introduction. For men have no more power to enact good laws for the church than bad ones. They have not the authority to enact any, of any sort. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth men live." Deut. viii. 3; Matt. iv. 4. We are not, then, to live by obeying men. Obedience to men is vain and hateful in the sight of God. "But *in vain* they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the *commandments of men.*" Matt. xv. 9.

When, from thirst of power, doctrines and practices which are contrary to God's word are introduced into the church, its faith is subverted and its practice corrupted in exact pro-

portion to the triumph of human tradition over the commandments of God. For this crime the Jews have been driven to the four winds for near two thousand years.

The hatefulness of this high treason against the kingdom of Christ cannot be more clearly set forth than in his own words. He says:—

“Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites! well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”  
Matt. xv. 6–14.

In this passage our Lord alludes to Isa. xxix. 13, where the prophet represents the Lord as

complaining that the Jews taught "their fear towards him by the *precepts of men*." If it be possible to condemn the introduction of human laws and tests into the church, here that condemnation is set forth in language we cannot misunderstand. Those who blindly lead a deluded multitude into the observance of human tradition, instead of the commandments of Christ, shall, with their followers, fall into the ditch. God shall add to them the plagues written in the book. This making void the law of God by human laws is the sin of Rome. Sooner or later, God will overthrow her by the sword of his mouth. Let every Protestant adhere to the Bible, which, we once heard Bishop Janes say, "was *older* than the fathers,—*wiser* than councils,—*truer* than tradition,—*more orthodox* than creeds,—*more infallible* than popes,—*more authoritative* than priests,—*more saving* than ceremonies." It is the infallible word of God. It is the religion of the Protestants. Let all follow its teaching and believe in its Christ.



## ESSAY III.

## ON THE TERMS OF DISCIPLESHIP.

THE term "Disciple," so frequently used in the New Testament, is simply the appellation of a learner. The twelve were called his disciples because they learned of Christ the doctrines he taught. For the same reason those who learned of John were called his disciples. Students in the ancient schools were called disciples. Thus, the church is a religious school, instituted by the great Teacher for the purpose of *teaching* and making *disciples* of all nations. The ministers are subordinate teachers, sent out to teach all nations the importance of observing all things whatsoever Christ had commanded them. In this school men are to be taught, or schooled, till they become wise unto salvation,—till they come fully to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. This school is a labor school. While students learn, they labor in connection with others, like oxen in a yoke, and bear a burden, like travellers far from home who carry their own equipage.

All who desire admission into this school will naturally enough wish to know what characters the great Master admits, and also the

terms upon which he admits them. These we shall examine carefully. We will quote from the laws of the school, as laid down by the Master.

“If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” Luke ix. 23.

Here we have, first, the character pointed out. He desires “to come after Christ,”—to flee from the wrath to come: plainly, he desires to be a Christian. Two things are to be done:—

1. He must deny himself.
2. He must take up his cross daily.

The only thing mentioned in the character of this applicant for admission is simply that he *wills* to come after Christ. He is therefore a *seeker*. When a man denies himself and takes up his cross, he must, of course, join the church.

Therefore, it is plain, according to this law, that seekers may join the church. We will quote from the law again:—

“Come unto me, *all ye that labor* and are *heavy laden*, and I *will give you rest*. *Take my yoke upon you*, and *learn of me*; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye *shall find rest* unto your souls. For *my yoke is easy*, and *my burden is light*.” Matt. xi. 28, 30.

Here again we have the character of a seeker

plainly laid down. Of him it is said, he labors and is heavy laden, and that he has no *rest to his soul*. *He labors*. He struggles hard with sin. This labor was rendered doubly hard with those that wore the Jewish yoke. This yoke was *hard*. The Jewish burden was *heavy*. This added greatly to that heavy load of guilt under which the penitent groaned, bewailing the days of his folly. He could find no rest in that hard yoke which gendereth to bondage, (Gal. iv. 24,) because it could not relieve him of his burden, seeing it had no commandment that could give life. Such in modern times would be denominated seekers, mourners, or anxious persons. Jesus *commands* these seekers to *take upon them his easy yoke*, or join the church.

Lest, however, a remaining doubt may linger in the mind of any of my readers, I will remark further upon the command, "Take my yoke," &c.

Every one knows that a yoke, literally, is that which unites two oxen in the same labor. It is used in the above text to represent that which unites men in the labor of religion. Thus circumcision was the yoke of the Mosaic dispensation. All who took upon them this yoke were debtors to do the whole law. Gal. v. 3. It was a yoke of bondage. Gal. v. 1. Peter calls it a "yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." Acts xv. 10. The

Jews were obliged to conform to this law, perform its labors, and bear its burdens; all which required united efforts, and, as such, that institution which united them together was properly called a yoke. This was circumcision. From this yoke Christ has made us free. We should, therefore, stand fast in that liberty. Circumcision is the *hard yoke* to which Jesus doubtless alludes when he says, "*My yoke is easy.*" It now remains to be seen what his *easy yoke* is. That something was in use called a yoke, in the days of the apostles, is evident. Paul calls a brother a "true yoke-fellow." Phil. iv. 3. The great end of the gospel was to get men to forsake their sins and to live in obedience to the law of Christ. Baptism obliges its subjects to walk in newness of life. In this ordinance the vows of the gospel are taken upon us. This ordinance has taken the place of circumcision, and must, therefore, be the easy yoke of the gospel dispensation. "Take my yoke upon you," is then, plainly, a command to be baptized, or join the church. That baptism was Christ's easy yoke is the more probable, if not certain, from the connection between wearing the yoke and becoming a learner. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me" is equal to saying, "Submit to my baptism and become my disciple." If we have not misapprehended

these passages it is plainly the law of Christ that seekers are to be received into the church; that it is their duty to join; and that ministers are bound to teach them to observe this plain command of our great Lawgiver.

It may not be amiss to make a remark or two upon the obligation of taking up the cross daily. The death of the cross, though too scandalous to be inflicted on a citizen, be his crime what it might, was so common among the Romans that affliction and trouble of every sort came to be called crosses. To this use of the term our Lord undoubtedly alludes when he says, "Let him take up his cross daily and follow me." The cross to be borne is a quiet submission to persecution, and a patient endurance of the sorrows and afflictions which come upon men on account of their allegiance to Christ. Baptism pledges us to the endurance of such things; for by it we are planted into even the likeness of his death. Rom. vi. 5.

From what has been said, we think one who labors, is heavy laden, has *no rest* to his *soul*, and wills or desires to come after Christ, *must be a seeker* of religion: it also appears that when such a seeker is commanded to come to Christ, to submit to his easy yoke, to learn of him, to deny himself, to take up his cross daily, and to follow Jesus, he must be commanded to join

the church, unless we suppose that all these can be done as well out of the church as in it, which would be to deny that the church relation was worth any thing at all.

Seeing, then, that seekers are commanded to join the church, to forbid them to do so is to make void the commandments of God by the doctrines and commandments of men. If the master himself has indeed guaranteed to the humble but sincere seeker the right to join the church, such a one has, by necessary consequence, the right to all the ordinances secured by that relation. Many, very honestly, I allow, feel strong opposition to this view of the subject, and oppose it with a zeal worthy of the best of causes. Such opposition, however honestly and zealously made, no more proves it to be wrong than the indignation of the Jews proves that it was wrong for the Lord to eat and drink with publicans and sinners.

An examination of a few examples left us by our Lord and his apostles will, we think, establish the view we have taken of the law of Christ. Let it be remembered that many sects in the present day contend that none but truly regenerated persons have any right to join the church. These have introduced the practice of hearing the experiences of those who wish to join the church, in order that they may be able

to determine whether such applicants have the right to join or not. Now, for this practice there is either the law of Christ or it is from man only. If there be a law of Christ authorizing the church to receive members by making a decision upon their religious experience, that law can be found in the New Testament, or, at least, what I admit would be equal to it, the evidence that Christ or his apostles received members in that way. But, if neither Christ nor his apostles received members by experience, and left no command for us to receive in that way, it is manifest the law requiring it is a human law, by the observance of which men make void those commandments of Christ which we have already brought to view, by the traditions of men. Unless this law, or the evidence of its observance, can be found in the New Testament, it is in itself a nullity, and those who exact obedience to it act without law, above law, and contrary to law, having no other than human authority. If Christ be the only lawgiver in his own kingdom, as we most strenuously contend he is, those who enacted this man-made law usurped the divine prerogative by assuming the law-making power.

Let us now see what we can learn from Scripture example. We will first see how the Lord received his twelve disciples.

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren; Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.” Matt. iv. 17-22.

“And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alpheus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.” Mark ii. 14.

All the Evangelists have given us the account of the call of these disciples. None but Luke records any fact omitted in the account given by Matthew as quoted above. Here is the fact alluded to. It is in regard to Peter. He said, “I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Luke v. 8. We conclude that we have all the material facts before us,—at least a sufficiency to enable us to determine whether Christ received these disciples by experience or in some other way. There



is no mention made of any of them relating their experience, the reason of which, doubtless, is, no such thing took place. If not, it is because Christ did not receive disciples in that way.

We would ask the advocates of this modern usage whether Simon Peter could have given in, as it is called, a Christian experience? He said he was a sinful man. If he told the truth, he had no experience to relate; if not, he was guilty of falsehood, for which he should have been expelled, if he had been in previously. So far, the law we have examined in the former part of this essay, and the examples now before us, correspond exactly. Let us see how the apostles practised under their view of the divine law.

Every one would expect to find something explicit from the apostles as to their mode of receiving members. It will be interesting to follow the accounts of their revivals. The most interesting account is the first one. On the day of Pentecost three thousand were received into the church. In the reception of these we may learn the apostolic mode of receiving members.

“Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren,

what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts ii. 37, 38.

No regular comment on this passage is necessary. The multitude must have been under great excitement, many of them truly awakened. From these the general cry was, "What shall we do?" *At the time* this solemn inquiry was made, no experience of grace could have been related; and, *at the same time*, Peter directed them to be *baptized for the remission of sins*. It seems that baptism was to precede remission; consequently, there was no place for this new method. If the apostles ever intended to introduce this law, the day of Pentecost was a favorable time for it. I cannot think the account of this would have been omitted if it had taken place. There were *too many* to be received by experience *in one day*. "The same day there were added unto them about *three thousand souls*." Acts ii. 41. Who can believe that the apostles heard an account of conviction and conversion from three thousand, and then baptized the same number, in one day? No man living, we imagine, either does or can believe any such thing, let his prepossessions be what they may. We insist these three thou-

sand did not join by experience, not only because the thing appears to be impossible, but because not one word is said about their joining in that way: the reason of which most obviously is, no such thing took place. If not, it was because the apostles did not receive in that way. They understood the law of Christ differently and better.

It is supposed the case of the Ethiopian eunuch is an example in favor of the new law. Mr. Howell, a leading Baptist writer, has the following reckless assertions on the subject:—

“So scrupulous was this evangelist in his determination to conform to the commission by baptizing believers, and believers only, that, on another memorable occasion, although previously divinely instructed as to his character, when the treasurer of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, had been taught by him, had avowed himself a convert, and had made application for baptism, *he paused to question him on his religious experience*, and replied to his request, Acts viii. 38, by saying, ‘If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest’ be baptized.”  
—*Sacramental Communion*, p. 154.

How Mr. Howell could find it in his conscience to pen the above is truly astonishing. It only shows what fanaticism will drive great

men to. All that St. Luke has said on that point is the following:—

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*” Acts viii. 37.

So far as the proof goes, Philip did not *question* him on his “religious experience;” nor did he relate any. Instead of any such, he tells the applicant for admission into the church that, if he believed, he might. Upon a profession, not of conversion, Mr. Howell, but of faith, he baptized him. But what did the eunuch believe? Did he believe himself regenerated? He doubtless did, if such were the fact. But was he baptized upon a profession of this faith? Or was he baptized upon a profession of his faith in the Messiahship of Christ? These inquiries are easily answered.

But to this it will be objected that such faith as Philip required and the eunuch professed implies a regenerate heart. If this be so, it will upset all we have said about it. Let the Bible answer this objection. “Then Simon himself believed also.” Acts viii. 13. Now, what did Simon the sorcerer believe? Did he believe himself regenerated? If he did, he believed a lie, unless he fell from grace before Peter arrived; for Peter said to him, “I per-

ceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Acts viii. 23. It is not said what Simon believed; but we may suppose that he "believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God." I am aware that some consider Simon Magus as a *pretended* believer; but of this there is not the least evidence. If he had the required faith when he was baptized,—and this we cannot deny without flatly contradicting the Bible,—then is it certain that either the apostles did not require those they baptized to believe themselves regenerated, or that Simon was truly regenerated when Philip baptized him, but apostatized before Peter arrived. But this latter cannot be, for he had never received the Holy Ghost. The conclusion is inevitable. Here then is believers' baptism without any experience to tell. This is the case with all these Samaritans baptized by Philip; they believed his preaching, but the Holy Ghost had fallen on none of them till Peter and John came down and laid their hands upon them.

Let us not be told that these Samaritans deceived Philip; for of this there is no proof. I cannot receive conjecture. I must learn what apostolic usage was by what the Bible says, not by what interested sectarians say. The truth must be that Simon gave in no experience when he received baptism; not any more.

than Judas. Now, Mr. Howell, as you know so much about Philip, and the eunuch, it may be that you could tell us something about Judas. If you can, I would be glad the next book you write on Sacramental Communion, you would answer the following questions:—When Christ received the twelve, did he “question them on their religious experience?” If Judas was “questioned on his religious experience,” and gave satisfaction, did he profess a lie, or the truth? If the truth, did he retain his grace, and die in the divine favor? If a lie, did he deceive Christ? Or did Christ receive him with a lie in his mouth, knowing such to be the fact? If you can answer these questions satisfactorily, many would be obliged to you.

Saul of Tarsus, (Acts ix. 18,) and the company at the house of Cornelius, (Acts x. 44–48,) could have given a true gospel experience if it had been required; but there is not the least evidence that they did it, or that they were required to do it. Far from it.

On the supposition that the apostles received by experience, is it not strange that the whole New Testament furnishes no example of any one relating an experience as evidence of fitness for baptism? Experiences are recorded, which shows they were considered of great im-

portance, but neither law nor precedent for the relation of them preparatory to baptism.

The conclusion to which our examination has brought us in regard to the practice of the apostles is that they baptized all who professed to believe that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah, and, by consequence, the Saviour of the world. It is altogether probable that the receiving by experience is quite a modern practice, having no other than the authority of human tradition. Where this usage has obtained, we insist a *change* in the terms of discipleship has taken place. We are not alone in this.

Dr. Mosheim may be considered against us as to the *propriety* of the change in the order of receiving members into the church; but he amply sustains our position as to the *reality of such change*. See his Ecclesiastical History, book i. part ii. century i. chapter iii. section v. He says:—

“*In the earliest times of the church, all who professed firmly to believe that Jesus was the only Redeemer of the world, and who, in consequence of this profession, promised to live in a manner conformable to the purity of his holy religion, were immediately received among the disciples of Christ. THIS was ALL the preparation for baptism THEN required; and a more accurate in-*

struction in the doctrines of Christianity was to be administered to them *after* their receiving that sacrament. But when Christianity had acquired *more consistence*, and churches rose to God and his eternal Son almost in every nation, THIS CUSTOM WAS CHANGED, *for the wisest and most solid reasons.* Then none were admitted to baptism but such as had been previously instructed in the principal points of Christianity, and had also *given satisfactory proofs of pious dispositions and upright intentions.*"

Now, according to the doctor, "from the earliest times," during the first century, or "times" of the apostles, members were received into the church "*immediately,*" without examining into the "satisfactory proofs of pious dispositions and upright intentions." No such thing as receiving by experience was then known. This improvement was left for the wisdom of after times, when men had leisure to become wise above what was written.

I agree that in the "times" of the apostles, which were "the earliest times" to which the learned doctor alludes, "a firm belief that Jesus was the only Redeemer of the world," and a promise to conform to the purity of his religion, was all the preparation required for baptism; and I also agree that this scriptural "custom was changed:" but when the doctor



says this change was for "the wisest and most solid reasons," I disagree with him altogether. These reasons, be they what they may, can neither be wise nor solid, since they make void the law of Christ. The reality of this change is further confirmed by Dr. Ruter in his Church History, Century I. chapter iii. p. 27. He says:—

"The initiatory rite of baptism was permitted to *all* who acknowledged the truths of the gospel and promised conformity to its laws. The introduction of unworthy and disorderly persons into the church, from this *easiness of admission, naturally narrowed* the terms of communion; and baptism was afterward *confined* to those who had been *previously instructed* in religious knowledge and *proved* the sincerity of their profession by the regularity of their lives. The probationers for admission into the society of Christians took the humble name of catechumens, while *those* who were *already* consecrated by baptism were distinguished by the *superior title of believers.*"

Very little comment on this passage is necessary. Dr. Ruter, instead of giving his opinion of either the wisdom or the solidity of the reasons for this change, gives the reasons themselves. These were the "introduction of unworthy and disorderly persons into the church,"

which, as he says, "*naturally* narrowed the terms of communion," &c. This "narrowing" may, for what I know, have been "natural," but it surely was unscriptural; it set aside the apostolic "easiness of admission," and made void the law of Christ by the commandments of men. Narrowing the terms of communion has not cured the evil: disorderly persons are still received into the church. By such departures the church has wandered very far from the laws of the kingdom. May she speedily return!

According to the quotation from Dr. Ruter, "those who were already consecrated by baptism were distinguished by the superior title of believers." Thus, it is plain, they were called believers on account of their submitting to baptism, without any reference to the state of the heart. This explains the case of Simon the sorcerer, concerning whom we have elsewhere spoken. The term believer did not in those times imply, necessarily, a regenerate heart, as it has been made to do in modern times. It is more than probable that they were so called, not because they *believed* themselves regenerated, but because they believed that Jesus was the Son of God. All who believed this were entitled to baptism, whether they believed themselves regenerated or not.

In the profession of this faith and the reception of baptism, the pagan Gentiles renounced their idols, as did the Jews their Judaism. It is, therefore, natural that even a seeker who has been baptized should be called a believer. Two classes of believers seem to have received baptism in the days of the apostles:—1. Regenerated believers, such as Saul and the converts at the house of Cornelius; and, 2. Those who were seekers only, such as the three thousand on the day of Pentecost and those whom Philip baptized in Samaria. Acts viii. 12, 13. Of these Samaritans, we are expressly told that they had not received the Holy Ghost, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts viii. 15, 16. It may not be amiss to remark that there are two general classes of unbelievers who are not entitled to baptism:—1. Such as have examined Christianity, more or less, and have rejected the evidence which convinces others that Jesus was the true Messiah, and have settled down in unbelief; 2. Such as have cared nothing about it, consequently examined nothing concerning it; whose god is their belly, and their end destruction.

Having, as we believe, proved from the Bible itself that the law of Christ authorizes seekers to join the church, and that the apostles received them without their relating any experi-

ence of grace whatever, we shall now proceed to show, if we can, that the professed object of receiving by experience is not, nor can it ever be, realized.

The avowed object of receiving members in this way is, that the church may be composed entirely of regenerate persons. To show that this object is not attained, it is only necessary to mention it. There is not a sect in all the land that thinks that it has accomplished any such thing. We know of no denomination that has come any nearer the attainment of this object than the Methodists, who receive seekers, and who examine the experience of none, as preparatory to baptism. If we are right in this, those who practise upon this man-made law accomplish nothing at all by such practice. This complete and entire failure is no mean comment upon the wisdom of the measure. This failure is not only complete now, but it must continue to be a failure until *man can look upon the heart*. “Man looketh on the *outward* appearance, but the *Lord* looketh on the *heart*.” 1 Samuel xvi. 7. Now, who can determine the state of the heart without looking into it? If you say, No one, then you acknowledge that the relation of an experience is useless so far as that matter is concerned. If you say, The church, then I ask how a church made

up of those who do not know whether their own hearts are regenerated could decide upon a brother's experience? For let it be remembered, that most of those who advocate this mode of receiving members hold that a man may have religion without knowing it; and some of them hold that no one can know it. One would suppose that such a set would be poor judges of such matters. How often the church hears and decides, gives the right hand of fellowship, and then shortly confesses that she was deceived! Yes, brethren, you know the church is *often* deceived in that matter; and I would affectionately remind you that candidates for admission can be, and, in my opinion, often are, deceived. The church cannot decide, understandingly, such a matter. If not, she should not attempt it. She should not, because there is danger of an inexperienced man's believing himself converted, without any other reason for it than the decision of the church on his case. If so, no decision of the church can ever make his conversion real. If not, no such decision ought to be made, or any step taken to delude him, to confirm him in his delusion. This is rather a serious business. A man thus deluded may consider himself safe when he has never felt the power of God's converting grace. This delusion is the more

hazardous, seeing that those denominations which make such decisions teach their people that they can never fall from grace, and also that they may have religion and not know it. To settle men down in this way is dangerous in the extreme.

This is a painful part of the subject, but I dare not pass it. If the evidences of a regenerate heart be so superficial that a man may experience that great work and not know it, must they not be too superficial to enable those who do not know their own hearts to be right to make up a correct judgment upon the work? We object not to the relation of experiences for the purpose of edifying and comforting one another. What we object to is the requiring a relation of them as a prerequisite to baptism. Where this is the case, there are frequently many temptations to receive upon very superficial experiences,—so superficial, indeed, that frequently they are heard privately. Some denominations have what they call church sessions, who always receive privately. The object of receiving thus privately is very obvious. The Baptists usually hear these dreams and the like publicly. It is only when they have a special case that they hear it privately, and then get some one, that is better up to it, to tell it to the church. Very good people

sometimes allow themselves to become very anxious for those to join the church about whom they feel special concern. In such case, there is great danger of deceiving and being deceived. Thus men are persuaded that they are converted when they are not. We should never persuade a man that he has religion. We may persuade him to join the church as a means of conversion, without running the risk of deceiving him. When a man realizes that great work, he needs no persuasion of it. He knows it himself. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and *knoweth God.*" 1 John iv. 7. "He that believeth on the Son of God *hath the witness in himself.*" 1 John v. 10. Let no man consider this matter settled till the "Spirit itself bear witness with his spirit that he is a child of God." Rom. viii. 16. Such a one will need no persuasion to induce him to believe himself converted. Our inability to judge correctly is a sufficient reason why we should not judge at all. By this hearing, guessing, and judging, we can only deceive ourselves, and settle down irreligious men under the most fearful delusion. An economy that so constantly exposes us to this great evil cannot be the economy of the New Testament. The Lord alone can look upon the heart.

Our views are now before the reader. Let

the whole be examined in the fear of God. Let nothing but the truth be received. Let the Bible be followed. I ask no more.

---

## ESSAY IV.

### ON THE RIGHT OF INFANTS TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

THE Abrahamic covenant secured the right of infants to church membership; and that right must of necessity remain as long as that covenant remains in full force. Hence the great question to be settled is, whether *that covenant* is done away or yet remains. We contend that the Abrahamic covenant is not done away,

1. *Because it is the promise of salvation through the Messiah.*

This we prove by the following passages:—  
“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man’s *covenant*, yet if it be *confirmed*, no man *disannulleth*, 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*. And this I say, That the *covenant* that 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 none effect.*" Gal. iii. 15, 17. In this quotation the word "covenant" is used twice, the word "promise" twice. They are used interchangeably, the one for the other, and, therefore, mean the same thing. But what was the "promise" here called a "covenant"? "And in thy seed (thy Christ) shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18. We insist that this covenant is not abrogated,

2. *Because Christians are called the children of it.*

"Ye are the *children* of the prophets, and of the *covenant* which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, *And in thy seed* (thy Christ) shall *all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.*" Acts iii. 25. Here the promise of Christ is called the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, &c. How dare any one to say this covenant is done away? It is not done away,

3. *Because Abraham is called the father of believing Christians.*

"The father of all them that believe." Rom. iv. 11. It is not done away,

4. *Because Christians are called the children of Abraham.*

"Know ye, therefore, that *they* which are of

faith, *the same* are the *children of Abraham.*" Gal. iii. 7. It is not done away,

5. *Because the proclamation of it is called preaching the gospel.*

"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.

From this passage we learn that Abraham was fully instructed in the nature of the blessing promised through Christ. How else could the gospel be preached to him? When this gospel was preached to Abraham, he "believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." Rom. iv. 3.

If the promise of a Messiah be indeed the covenant of the Lord, established with Abraham, then are the privileges and blessings of the church such as flow from such promise. Salvation was the chief blessing promised through Christ. It was justification through faith, (Gal. iii. 8;) the "righteousness of faith." Rom. iv. 11. There were two ways of representing these blessings:—The offering of sacrifices, typifying the blood of Christ shed for our pardon; Circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, secured by the application of the merit of that blood by the Spirit. All who were interested in this promised atonement

were required to be circumcised. It being in the mind of God to save children, he made the promise of it to them, and enjoined their circumcision, which secured religious training. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him," &c. Gen. xviii. 19. If infants were fit subjects to be made partakers of eternal life, it was suitable to give them the outward sign of the Spirit's work. Infants were circumcised because they were interested in the Saviour. Their right to the church was founded on their right to salvation. It will be hard to prove that they have lost the one while the other is retained. While their right to salvation through the Saviour remains, their right to the church, in which they are to be trained for bliss, must remain; they should, therefore, be inducted into the church by its distinguishing ceremony, baptism.

The *essentials* of religion have never changed; nor can they change. They are the same they have always been. We have seen that the covenant which secured the right of church-membership to infants contained those essentials, and that infants are interested in them, on which account, no doubt, the right was secured. If religion be ever the same, and the covenant an everlasting covenant in which God has promised to be a God to us and our

children, (Gen. xvii. 7,) then should we keep the covenant, we and our children, in our generations: Gen. xvii. 9.

The true state of the case seems to be this:—Circumcision was a seal of the *righteousness of faith*, *i. e.* a seal of the plan of *salvation*. The plan is unchangeably, from first to last, salvation by faith in Christ, and is not done away. Nor is it without a seal. The seal has been changed by our great Lawgiver from circumcision to baptism: for “he that believeth,” *i. e.* obtains the righteousness of faith, “and is baptized,” *i. e.* takes on him this easy seal, “*shall be saved.*” The changing of the seal, or sign, by no means argues a change in the religion of the Lord.

Let us see if circumcision under the old dispensation, and baptism under the new, are not used for the same purpose.

1. Circumcision represents “the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart.

“And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of *thy seed*, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Deut. xxx. 6. But “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.” Rom. v. 5. Therefore, circumcision represents

the baptismal influence of the Holy Ghost. Again:—

“He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one *inwardly*, and *circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit*, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Rom. ii. 28, 29. This heart-work must be the work of the Holy Ghost. The apostle calls it the work of the heart, *in the spirit*. He also calls it the *circumcision of the heart*. Outward circumcision avail-eth nothing, if it be without the inward circumcision, by which a man becomes a new creature. The circumcision of the heart must be what our Lord calls the new birth.

A Baptist brother once said, in my hearing, that the baptism of the Spirit came in the room of circumcision. That brother, and all of his faith, would do well to remember that the baptism of the Spirit has always stood in its own place.

Having shown that circumcision represented the baptismal influence of the Holy Ghost, we shall now proceed to see whether baptism does not represent the same influence.

2. Baptism represents the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart.

“I indeed baptize you with water, but he

shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Matt. iii. 11. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts i. 5; Acts xi. 16. Paul calls baptism "the washing of regeneration," (Titus iii. 5,) "the washing of water." "Wash away thy sins." This *washing* of regeneration has taken the place of circumcision.

Circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of Abraham's faith. Rom. iv. 11. So Paul's baptism represented the washing away of his sins. Acts xxii. 16. The *righteousness of faith* was the same in the patriarch and the apostle. In one it was represented by circumcision; in the other, by baptism. The righteousness of faith never has changed, and never will change. Seals have changed, but the righteousness of that faith which takes hold of the great atonement has not changed, and *never* can change till the government of God changes. The church of God yet stands unchanged. The good olive-tree yet remains. Some of its branches—the Jews and their children—have been broken off; and branches from the wild olive-tree—the Gentiles and their children—have been grafted into it. The Lord's vineyard has not been turned out to the wild beasts; but it has been taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. Infants have a

divine right to church privileges, clearly, under the Old Testament times. The church being the same under all dispensations, that right remains unimpaired, unless their Christ has deprived them of it. If he has not done so, no other has the power to do it, nor can it be done without making void the commandments of God by the traditions of men.

We are sometimes told that circumcision was simply intended to distinguish the Israelites from all other people. This it did not do. The Ishmaelites, the Edomites, the descendants of the sons Abraham had by Keturah, the servants born in his house, and the Egyptians, were all circumcised. We are also told that it was a sort of political pledge that God would give to Abraham's posterity the land of Canaan. This could not be. The Ishmaelites, the sons of Keturah, and the Edomites, were all the posterity of Abraham, but never did receive any part of that land. These were, therefore, circumcised for something else. Similar difficulties occur in making it a pledge that the Messiah should descend from them. This it could not be to any but his immediate progenitors. Put the pledge of this promise upon Ishmael, and you put the pledge of a falsehood upon him. We must look, therefore, for something in which the Ishmaelites, the Edomites,

the children of Keturah, and Abraham's servants, were all interested. Now, what was that? "In thy seed (in thy Christ) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18. This makes it all plain. Christ has come and ordered the blessing to be proclaimed to all nations. Abraham believed in Christ, and God counted it to him for righteousness. He then received circumcision as a seal of that righteousness. Faith in nothing but the atonement of Christ could make Abraham or any one else righteous. If not, the whole is plain. Children were circumcised because the promise was made to them. For the same reason they should be baptized: for the apostle says, "The promise is unto you and your children," &c.

Having shown that infants were admitted to a place in the only church God ever instituted, upon the authority of God himself, and that no other than Christ can have any authority to deprive them of that right, we shall now proceed to show that Christ not only has not deprived our children of a place in his kingdom, but that he has confirmed their right to it, and sanctioned, if not commanded, their reception. Take the following:—

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the *kingdom of heaven*? And Jesus called a *little child*



unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, *I say* unto you, Except ye be converted, and *become as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall *humble himself* as this *little child*, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall *receive one such little child* in *my name* receiveth me." Matt. xviii. 1-5.

1. This "little child" was literally an infant. We are aware that some believe that a young convert is meant by the expression "*little child*." That even old converts are sometimes called "little children" we do not deny; but that any sort of an adult is called by that appellation in the text now under consideration is what no man, living or dead, ever did or ever will prove. When we consult the parallel passage in Mark's account, the whole is plain:—"And he took *a child*, and set him in the midst of them: and when *he had taken him in his arms*, he said unto them, Whosoever shall *receive one of such little children in my name* receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth not me, but him that sent me." Mark ix. 36, 37. Here we are informed explicitly that this "little child" was "taken in his arms," which proves beyond successful contradiction that it was a little infant, and not a young convert. Nothing

further, it is presumed, need be said on this head.

2. The kingdom of heaven, in this passage, means the church on earth. This we argue as follows:—

The disciples had so far misunderstood the nature of the kingdom of heaven, then near at hand, that they supposed it to be secular, and so fell into a dispute about which of themselves should be the greatest man in it. This gave Christ an opportunity of informing them that none of them were entitled to be in it, much less to be the greatest of all that were in it, except they should be converted from these notions of worldly power and greatness, and become as little children, to feel their weakness and helplessness.

3. Infants, or little children, are to be received into this kingdom of heaven. This the text itself declares:—“And whoso shall receive one such little child [into the kingdom of heaven] in my name receiveth me.”

4. Infants are not only to be received into the church, but the Saviour has there made them the models to the likeness of which adults are to be converted before they are entitled to enter into this kingdom. This the text also declares:—“Except ye be converted,

and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

If that conversion which causes an adult to resemble a little child makes him a proper subject to be received into the church or to enter into the kingdom of heaven, must not the little child himself be a fit subject to enter into that kingdom? On the supposition that infants are not proper subjects to be received, how could an adult that had become as a little child be properly received?

It was a severe reproof to tell his worldly-minded disciples, who were proudly looking forward to their future greatness when their Master should sit upon the throne of an earthly monarch, making all nations tributary to them, that, to become the greatest in his coming kingdom, they must humble themselves as the little child he had in his arms; and that they were not only to be humble like a child in order that they might enter into it, but that the children were also to be received in his name, and be as great as any adult could be. Upon the whole, we think it clear enough that by the kingdom of heaven, in this text, is meant the Christian church, and that infants are to be received into it in the name of Christ. We proceed then to examine his declaration on another occasion:—

“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.” Mark x. 13, 16.

Here we have:—

1. Infants, “young children,” presented to the Master for his blessing.

2. Those who brought these infants to Christ were rebuked.

3. At this rebuke, Christ, the lawgiver, was displeased, and revoked it with his own authority.

4. He ordered the disciples to allow them to come to him, and never forbid them any more.

5. He declares that of such children was the kingdom of God.

6. He declares them to be the model after which adults were to be received. They were to receive the kingdom just as little children receive it.

7. He ordained them, by the imposition of his own hands, and prayer, (Matt. xix. 13, 15,)

to the rights, privileges, and "blessings" of that kingdom of which he declared them the subjects.

By "the kingdom of God" in this passage is certainly meant the Christian church. This is the only kingdom the keys of which (Matt. xvi. 19) were ever given to the apostles who had now shut the door against these little children. Into this kingdom we are commanded to suffer the little children to come, and to forbid them not. This command is given for the best of reasons:—"Of such is the kingdom of God." But how are they to receive the kingdom of God? Just as an adult does:—by baptism, without giving in any experience. If we have rightly interpreted these passages of God's word, we have the sanction of the Saviour for infant baptism most clearly set forth and established.

Will our opponents give us the true exposition of these texts if we have not done it? Will they show that the phrases "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" do not mean the Christian church, as we have set forth? If they mean any thing else, what is that other thing? Will they show that the apostles could "receive little children in the name of Christ," and that little children could receive the kingdom of God without baptism? These questions

they will never answer. They, as usual, will give them the go by.

“He saith unto him, Feed *my lambs*.” John xxi. 15.

1. These lambs are little children. We argue this from adult Christians being called sheep in the 16th and 17th verses of the chapter.

2. These children are called *Christ's lambs*. They must therefore have been “*received in his name*” into his kingdom; and they must also have received his mark in their foreheads. Ezek. ix. 4; Rev. vii. 3.

3. These lambs are to be fed. This explains the pastoral labors spoken of by the prophet:—“Gather the children, and those that suck the breasts.” Joel ii. 16. But why would the prophet have these lambs gathered into the fold of Christ? We answer, that they might be fed; that they might be trained up in the way they should go, or in the church.

We must now proceed to notice the view the apostles took of the law of Christ. The first clue we get to this part of our subject is found in Acts ii. 38, 39. “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, *in the name* of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to *your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God

shall call." The promise which is here said to be made to them and their children is, doubtless, the one made at the first institution of circumcision:—"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." Gen. xvii. 7. For the meaning of this "everlasting covenant," see Acts iii. 25, Gen. xii. 3, where it is proven to be the promise of a Saviour,—the right promise to renew with children at the inauguration of the apostles, unless they have lost their interest in the Messiah. See Acts xvi. 31, where the promise is made to the jailer and to all his house.

We must look further to the practice of the apostles for their faith in the validity of infant baptism. They baptized the household of Lydia, (Acts xvi. 14, 15,) of the jailer, (33,) of Stephanas, (1 Cor. i. 16.) I am aware that it is said there were no infants in any of these households. But this is asserted without any evidence or probability to sustain it. We purpose no regular comment upon these household baptisms. It must be owned on both sides that the Bible does not say whether there were any infants in any of them. We are only informed that whole families were baptized. There is one circumstance which throws light

upon the subject, connected with the case of both Lydia and the jailer:—that is, the account proves the conversion of the head of the family *only*. Their families seem to have been baptized on account of the faith of the parent.

The presumption is therefore strong, that there were infants among them. And what increases the probability in the case of the jailer is, the apostolic answer to his question, “*What must I do to be saved?*” To this Paul and Silas answered, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*” Acts xvi. 31. Here is a positive promise that his house should partake of the privileges and benefits of his faith. The similarity in this promise to the one on the day of Pentecost must appear to all.

The reader may judge whether these texts throw light on this subject or not. They teach, to our mind, a very interesting lesson. Whether there were infants in these households, or not, is of no consequence, if we feel satisfied that children were baptized on the faith of their parents, just as they were circumcised on such faith.

The case in the 7th chapter of 1st Corinthians throws some light on the subject. They seem to have gotten into numerous difficulties, which induced them to write to the apostle for advice,



(ver. 1.) They were perplexed to know whether the Christian husband should continue to live with an unconverted wife; to which Paul answered, "*Let not the husband put away his wife,*" (ver. 11.) To a Christian wife having a heathen husband, he says, "Let not the wife depart from her husband," (ver. 10;) "let her not leave him," (ver. 13.) There seems likewise to have been a doubt whether the promise was made to children, unless both father and mother were Christians; to which the apostle answers, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy," (ver. 14.) Now, everybody knows that the Jews considered all other nations unclean; and there is little doubt that there was enough of Jewish influence at Corinth to produce all this difficulty about the uncleanness of children who had but one Christian parent. The very existence of the difficulty proves much. How could there be any serious difficulty about the children unless there had been objections to their being baptized on account of one of their parents being in unbelief? This accounts for the whole difficulty; while on any other supposition it is wholly unaccountable. This view is further strengthened from Paul's calling the children

“*holy.*” He must have intended to teach that they were ceremonially holy, and so there was nothing in the way of their receiving baptism. He could not have meant they were personally holy; for such a state is noway connected with the moral character of the parent. It could be of no consequence whether the parents believed or not; they were by nature the children of wrath. But when we consider them holy, in reference to their parents, it must be considered in view of the promise which is made to the children of pious parents: Acts ii. 39, xvi. 31; Gal. iii. 16, 17; Gen. xvii. 7. If they were thus holy, they had a right to be partakers of the promise in the ordinance of baptism: Acts xvi. 33. Once more:—

“Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ.” 1 Cor. x. 1–4.

“Now these things were our examples,” (ver. 6.) But who were they that were baptized for “our examples”? “Six hundred thousand on foot that were men, *besides children.*” Ex.

xii. 37. This army of Israelites who were "all baptized unto Moses for an example" to the Christian church had many "children." Here we not only have the proof that the children were baptized, but, likewise, that it was done as an example to us.

We have seen that baptism came in the stead of circumcision, and that God's church had children in it from the days of Abraham, upon *divine authority*, and that, instead of depriving them of this divine right, our blessed Lord expressly declares them to be the subjects of his kingdom, and also sanctions the reception of them in his name. We have likewise seen, that when the Christian church was fully organized under the new dispensation, the promise to children was distinctly renewed. We have also seen that whole families were baptized without any evidence that any but the parents were converted or consulted. How can we escape the conclusion that infants were baptized by the apostles in the name of Christ and upon his authority?

As we flatter ourselves that we have established our point, we shall close this part of our subject with this remark:—God never has had a church since the days of Abraham, in heaven above or on earth below, that had no infants in it; nor do we believe he ever will. When

we speak of God's church, we do not mean a sect. We are aware that several sects not only exclude children from *their pale* and from *the church*, but also make a great deal of sectarian noise because others suffer the little children to come.

---

## ESSAY V.

### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

WE propose in this Essay to state and answer some of the objections most commonly urged against infant baptism.

1. *Infants cannot believe; therefore, they should not be baptized.*

Let us put this in the form of a syllogism, thus:—

Baptism has reference to faith;

But infants cannot exercise faith;

Therefore, infants should not be baptized.

This argument takes for granted what is not true;—that is, that baptism can be of no benefit till the subject can act faith. It is an advantage to a child to be raised up under church discipline, and should be esteemed a very high privilege. We therefore answer:—

Baptism entitles us to church privileges;  
 Infants need such privileges;  
 Therefore, they should be baptized.

But let us try this objection on a kindred subject.

Circumcision is a seal of the righteousness of faith;

Infants cannot believe;

Therefore, they should not be circumcised.

But if we do not take care, we will make void the commandments of God by our reasoning.

Again:—

He that believeth shall be saved;

Infants cannot believe;

Therefore, they cannot be saved.

Again:—

He that will not work should not eat;

But infants cannot work;

Therefore, they should not eat.

This shows the force of all such objections, and need not be pursued.

2. It is objected that infant baptism deprives our children of the right of choosing what denomination they will join.

To this we reply, that those who have been baptized can make as judicious and as free a choice as those who have not. Baptism does not take away their understanding, nor does it deprive them of Christian liberty. It is very

easy to run away with the idea of the supposed right of choosing. Will any one contend that our children have a *right to choose* before they are *capable of judging* between truth and error? Do any take more pains to prepossess their children in favor of their own sectarian dogmas than the Baptists do? Everybody knows that, when parents wish to proselyte their children to their own sectarian views, they never think of relying upon their baptism, but upon a different thing. Moreover, the child is not by its baptism constituted a member of any *sect*. It does connect him with the catholic or general church, but not with any particular sect. But suppose it did; does it follow, therefore, that children should be taught to consider themselves as having nothing *to do* with the religion of the gospel. Are they to *think* only? Or are they *to act*?

We are required to “train up our children *in the way they should go*: and when they are old they *will not depart from it*.” Prov. xxii. 6. By this we learn that parents and guardians are to *choose the way* IN WHICH children are *to go*, and *train them up in it*. But if we train up our children in any way, we must first put them *in that way* before we can so train them. The church is the school of Christ, in which our minds are to be disciplined to the service of

the Lord. If we would train our children to serve God, where could we train them better than in his church? Where can they labor better than *in* the Lord's vineyard? If early habits have an almost omnipotent control over us in after-life, is it not of great importance that we should endeavor to have as many religious habits formed in childhood as possible? But where can children learn this sort of habit so readily as in the church? We might as well argue against the teaching of children industrious habits that they may get along in the world, as to argue against teaching them religious habits that they may be prepared for the world to come. To train up a child in idleness in regard to domestic affairs is to prepare him to be a vagabond in human society. If a child be trained in a total neglect of religion, he is apt to live a wicked life and die in his sins.

3. It is objected that it does a child no good to baptize it; therefore, it should not be baptized.

To which we might reply that it does them as much good as it does an adult; but this would be to answer one assertion with another. Let us, therefore, examine the case carefully and in the light of God's word. To object to infant baptism is to object to *infant religion*, as

I understand it, unless we intend our children to be Quakers. I understand the objections of our Baptist brethren to be against infant religion as much or more than against infant baptism. They object, as we understand them, to the Quakers as much as to us. The Quakers connect their children with religious duty without baptism, and we by baptism. Then, if we mistake not, the objections are not so much to their being baptized as to their being religious. All must admit, who admit baptism at all, that, if children may be religious, they, by necessary consequence, may be baptized. If one child has ever been religious, that one demonstrates that the thing is possible. JOHN THE BAPTIST was "*filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth.*" Luke i. 15. "And the hand of the Lord was with him," (verse 66.) "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit," (verse 80.) Thus, it appears that the only baptism *ever* received by *John the Baptist* was received *in infancy*. Strange, that a sect, who claim to be descended from this same John should deny infant baptism altogether! John would be everyway disqualified to take the sacrament with modern Baptists: for he was never baptized, only in his infancy, which they say is no baptism at all; and even then he was not immersed. How could they give him the sacra-



ment of the Supper? If John were to come down from heaven, everybody knows where he would have to go for the holy communion. They know where, too, he could not get it.

If it can be proven that a child ever did serve God, then is it proven that the service of God is suitable for children. "And the *child did minister unto the Lord* before Eli the priest." 1 Sam. ii. 11. "And the *child* was young." 1 Sam. i. 24. The age of Samuel is supposed to have been three years when he commenced the service of God. At any rate, it was when his mother weaned him. Of this child his mother said, "I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life." 1 Sam. i. 11. "Then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide forever." 1 Sam. i. 22.

The lesson to be learned from the history of Samuel is, that his mother dedicated him to God even *before* his birth, and God made him one of the most eminent of all the prophets. Our faith in the promise made to our children (Acts ii. 39) should be greatly strengthened from the success of Hannah with her *little Samuel*. If God blessed her son on account of her piety in giving him to the Lord, so will he bless mine, and yours, and all who may be thus piously given to him.

We might enumerate many such objections;

but, really, it is a small business. But one more will be noticed:—

4. Baptism entitles those who are baptized, infants as well as adults, to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Mr. Howell, a late Baptist writer, thus reproaches us on this subject:—

“We most cheerfully sit down at the table of the Lord with all those, if they have not forfeited their claims by heresy or immorality, whom we believe to be baptized. Do our pedobaptist brethren act with the same liberality? Very far from it. Their public professions would lead us to conclude that this is their practice, but when brought to the point they positively refuse! Is proof of this statement needed? I ask, then, do they not believe their infants are baptized? Most certainly. Are they either heretical or immoral? Neither is pretended. Do they commune with them? No, never. Thus they at once exclude *two-thirds* of the members of their own churches from the Lord's table!” (Sacramental Communion, page 265.)

All this depends on the assumption that all who have been baptized are entitled to the sacrament of the Supper. Although Mr. H. works this assumption on our infant members, yet he furnishes in almost the same breath the proof that he himself holds that

something else is necessary. According to the above extract, he can commune with baptized persons "*if they* have not forfeited their claim by *heresy* or *immorality*." Then Mr. Howell would exclude baptized adults, under certain circumstances, from the holy communion. Now, we exclude baptized infants from the communion because they are not capable of doing it in remembrance of Christ. In this we follow the example the Lord set us in regard to the Passover. He was circumcised the eighth day, which entitled him to that feast, as much as baptism can to the Supper, yet he attended no such feast until he was twelve years old. Luke ii. 41, 42. Though we were to admit that all who approach the holy communion must be baptized, it does not follow that all who are baptized should commune. There is nothing in this, therefore, against infant baptism.

---

## ESSAY VI.

### ON THE TESTIMONY OF THE PRIMITIVE FATHERS IN FAVOR OF INFANT BAPTISM.

OUR argument, thus far, has sought no other evidence of infant baptism, as a Christian institution, than the Holy Scriptures. In this

Essay we shall attempt to show that it was in universal use during the second, third, and fourth centuries, no one objecting. We may remark that no serious opposition was ever made, so far as we can learn, to the validity of infant baptism, until the twelfth century. If there was, who made it? Will our opponents answer? We do not quote the fathers for any other purpose than to show what was the practice of the church in their day. If the practice was *universal* in the second and third centuries, it is worthy of our consideration.

Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the death of St. John, says:—

“We also, who by him have had access to God, have not received this carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision which Enoch, and those like him, observed. And we have received it by baptism, by the mercy of God, because we were sinners: and it is enjoined upon all persons to receive it in the same way.” Again:—

“WE ARE CIRCUMCISED BY BAPTISM WITH CHRIST’S CIRCUMCISION.” (Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew.) Again:—

“Many persons among us, of *sixty and seventy years old*, of both sexes, who were *discipled* to Christ *in their childhood*, do continue uncorrupted.” (Apologia Prima.)

It is quite clear that this father believed baptism had taken the place of circumcision, and that, like circumcision, it was to be used in *childhood*, with the exception, it was to be applied to "both sexes."

Let it be remembered that we do not introduce Justin to prove the *validity* of infant baptism, but to show the antiquity of the custom, that our readers may consider for themselves where and from whom the practice was derived. A few things we will notice:—

Justin wrote within forty years of St. John, and was converted some eight or ten years previous to the time of his writing. He was so near the apostolic times as to make it difficult to see how he could speak in truth of "*many persons sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were discipled to Christ in their childhood,*" without making it certain that these old disciples were baptized from twenty to thirty years before the death of St. John; *and that in their childhood.* It is likewise difficult to account for his calling baptism Christ's circumcision, *at that early period*, without believing that the apostles had taught them that baptism had taken the place of that ordinance; in which case, infant baptism must follow as matter of course. Well might Origen, who was born A. D. 185, about eighty-five years after the

death of St. John, say "*the church received from the apostles a tradition even to give baptism to infants.*" (Comment on the Epistle to the Romans.)

That infant baptism was in use at the time Justin wrote there is not, we think, a reasonable doubt. It was done either in obedience to the teaching of the inspired apostles, or was a human invention, introduced at that early period, by which that teaching was made void. But if it be a human invention, as modern Baptists constantly insist, this invention was introduced from twenty to thirty years before the death of the beloved disciple, John. Why is it then that we have nothing against it from any writer of those times? Justin wrote about the year 140. He spake of some, seventy years old, who had been baptized in infancy or childhood. Then, in this historical fact, we are compelled to date infant baptism as early as A. D. 70,—twenty-six years before John wrote the book of Revelation; twenty years before the writing of his three Epistles; four years after the writing of the Epistles of Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 Timothy; five years after 1 Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus; six years after the Epistle to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and the Hebrews; and only ten years after the Epistle to Romans, 2 Corin-

thians, as well as the Epistle of James and 1 Peter. We may also remark, as John wrote the Gospel about A. D. 97 or 98, that infant baptism must have been in practice twenty-seven or twenty-eight years before that period. If so, is it unnatural to believe it had apostolic sanction? We may rest assured, if the apostles were as zealous against infant baptism as modern Baptists are, they would have made the stoutest opposition to it. Nay, we would have heard this, in the book of Revelation, ranked with the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing the Lord hates. Is it probable that John would have made no mention of this innovation, even in his Gospel, when it had been in existence twenty-eight years, if he had been as hostile to it as some of the moderns are? Now, according to Justin, the church baptized children thirty years before the death of St. John. Why did that holy apostle never oppose it? This is a question the Baptists will not answer. There may be some who question the veracity of Justin, as he was not a Baptist, and, therefore, incapable of giving testimony against Mr. Howell's old church, which, he says, is 1800 years old. This Justin must have been a sincere man, as he proved his sincerity by his martyrdom. If Justin told the truth, here is pedobaptism in the days of the

apostles without opposition. We shall proceed to show that shortly after we have others bearing important testimony.

Irenæus was born about the time of the death of John, in the same country where the Evangelist died. He was well acquainted with the sainted Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna in Asia, according to Eusebius; and the same that St. John calls the Angel of the church in Smyrna. Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, book iv. chap. 14) represents Irenæus as giving the following account of Polycarp:—

“And Polycarp, a man who had been instructed by the apostles, and had familiar intercourse with many that had seen Christ, and also been appointed bishop by the apostles in Asia, in the church at Smyrna, whom we also have seen in our youth, for he lived a long time and to a very advanced age, when, after a glorious and most distinguished martyrdom, he departed this life. He always taught what he had learned from the apostles, what the church had handed down, and what is the only true doctrine.”

This is the Polycarp who, at his martyrdom, when the governor urged him to revile Christ, replied, “Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong; and how can



I now blaspheme my King that has saved me?" (Eusebius, book iv. chap. 15.)

Eusebius (book v. chap. xx) records a letter Irenæus addressed to Florinus, in which Irenæus thus speaks of Polycarp and himself:—

“For I saw thee, when I was yet a boy, in the Lower Asia with Polycarp, moving in great splendor at court, and endeavoring by all means to gain his esteem. I remember the events of those times much better than those of more recent occurrence. As the studies of our youth growing with our minds unite with it so firmly that I can tell also the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse; and also his entrances, his walks, the complexion of his life and the form of his body, and his conversations with the people, and his familiar intercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord. How also he used to relate their discourses, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord. Also, concerning his miracles, his doctrine; all these were told by Polycarp, in consistency with the Holy Scriptures, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the doctrine of salvation. These things, by the mercy of God, and the opportunity then afforded me, *I attentively heard, noting down, not*

on paper, but in my heart; and these *same facts I am always in the habit*, by the grace of God, *to recall faithfully to mind.*”

The reader knows now enough of Irenæus, the Bishop of Lyons, to appreciate the following declaration in favor of infant baptism:—

“For he came to save all persons by himself: all, I say, who by him are regenerated to God; *infants and little ones, and children*, and youth, and elder persons.” (Second book against heresies.)

Where this father speaks of infants, little ones, and children being regenerated to God, he means they were baptized to God. A multitude of quotations might be brought forward to prove that the fathers were accustomed to use baptism and regeneration as meaning the same thing. We shall introduce but one.

Justin Martyr, in his first Apology, has the following:—

“We bring them to some place where there is water, and they are *regenerated* by the same way of *regeneration* by which we were *regenerated*; for they are *washed with water in the name of God the Father and Lord of all things, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.*”

What Irenæus says does not prove that infant baptism is right, for he was not inspired:

but it does prove that it was in use in his day; and, although he wrote against heresy, he did not write against infant baptism; nor did any other in those times write against it, which they most assuredly would if they had been opposed to it. What the reader will please remember is that Polycarp was the disciple of St. John, and Irenæus the disciple of Polycarp. As to the probability of his being in error, every one will form his own opinion.

Origen, who was born A. D. 185, about eighty-five years after the apostle John, says:—

“Besides all this, let it be considered what is the reason that, whereas the baptism of the church is given for forgiveness of sins, *infants also, according to the USAGE OF THE CHURCH, are baptized*; when, if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be superfluous to them.” (Eighth homily on Leviticus.)

“*Infants are baptized* for the remission of sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good but according to that sense we mentioned even now:—‘None is free from pollution, though his life be but the length of a single day upon the earth?’” (Homily on Luke.)

“*For this, the church received from the apostles*

*a tradition even to give baptism to infants.* For they to whom the divine mysteries were committed knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, *which must be done away by water and the Spirit.*" (Comment on Ep. to the Romans.)

Eusebius, who wrote in the fourth century, informs us that Origen was "conversant with the Holy Scriptures even when a child. He had been considerably trained in them by his father, who, besides the study of the liberal sciences, had also carefully stored his mind with these." (Book vi. chap. 2.)

The same author informs us of the martyrdom of his father when he was about seventeen years old. Some have alleged that his grandfather and great-grandfather were Christians. How this may be we pretend not to know. It is, however, well established that he was raised a Christian. He is considered on many accounts among the most eminent of the fathers. When he tells us that "*the church received from the apostles a tradition to give baptism to infants,*" although we admit that this does not necessarily prove that it did so receive it, yet it must prove that *Origen thought so.* As to the probability of his being mistaken, every one has a right to his own opinion. The reader will bear in mind that Origen never

had any controversy on the subject of infant baptism, nor did any one in his day; his declaration is therefore to be understood as voluntary, and also as being the general opinion of the church in his day. Is it probable that the whole church was deceived on this point within two hundred years from the death of Christ?

Origen tells us with whom infant baptism originated. If he *does not tell the truth about it*, will the Baptists give us the *true account*? Mr. Howell, can you tell us how the eighteen-hundred-years' old Baptist church came to have pedobaptism in it from the times of the apostles, *nem con.*, to the days of *Peter de Bruis*? But Mr. Howell has said one truth, (Sac. Com. p. 202:) "Testimonies proving that \* \* the church considered baptism essential to salvation abound everywhere." But there is doubt about the following, (pp. 202, 203:) "This error *originated* two others equally egregious. The former was the *administration of baptism to infants* in cases of danger of death." "The latter error was substitution of a more agreeable form than immersion."

Now, that the error of which Mr. Howell speaks—namely, the considering of baptism necessary to salvation,—did exist in the second and third centuries, no one doubts. Nor is

there any reason to doubt that such error would lead to superstition in various ways. But that this error "*originated*" the administration of baptism to infants *in* or *out of* the danger of death, is what no living man can prove. Mr. H. does not—he dare not—try to prove it otherwise than by broad assertion, at which he is good—very good. Mr. H. evidently intends to produce the impression that infant baptism at first was only administered to such as were sick, though he does not directly say so. Reckless as he frequently is, he dare not say so.

As to whether this error "*originated*" "*a more agreeable form than immersion,*" we shall consider in a future essay.

We will now lay before the public the answer of the Council at Carthage to a letter addressed to that body by Fidus. This council was composed of sixty-six bishops, and convened A. D. 253, a little more than two hundred years from the crucifixion, and about one hundred and fifty years from the death of St. John.

The following is the answer:—

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

"We read your letter, most esteemed brother, in which you write of one Victor, a priest, &c.

But to the case of *infants*:—Whereas you judge ‘that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born,’ *we were ALL in our assembly of a CONTRARY opinion.* For, as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was *not one* that was of your mind; but *all of us*, on the contrary, *judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born.* For whereas our Lord, in his gospel, says, ‘The Son of man came not to destroy men’s souls, but to save them,’ as far as lies in us, no soul, if possible, is to be lost. So that we judge that no person is to be hindered from obtaining the grace by the law that is now appointed, and that the spiritual circumcision ought not to be impeded by the circumcision that was according to the flesh, but that all are to be admitted to the grace of Christ; since Peter, speaking in the Acts of the Apostles, says, ‘The Lord has shown me that no person is to be called common or unclean.’

“If any thing could be an obstacle to persons against their obtaining the grace, the adult, and grown, and aged would be rather hindered by their more grievous sins. If, then, the greatest offenders, and those that

have grievously sinned against God before, have, when they afterward come to believe, forgiveness of their sins, and no person is prohibited from baptism and grace, how much less reason is there to refuse an infant, who, being newly born, has no sin save that, being descended from Adam according to the flesh, he has from his very birth contracted the contagion of the death anciently threatened, who comes for this reason more easily to receive the forgiveness of sins, because they are not his own, but others' sins that are forgiven him!

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

“Dearest brother, we wish you always good health.” (Cyprian's epistle to Fidus.)

If we had introduced this epistle to settle matters of opinion, it would settle several, so far as such a *General Conference* of Arminians,



as they undoubtedly were, could settle them. But in it we have the *unanimous* consent of sixty-six bishops to infant baptism. This is the *fact* we wish to establish,—namely, that in two hundred years after Christ the practice was universal, no one disputing its validity. Fidus had nothing to say against its validity. He only wished to prohibit them till they were eight days old. Not an hour longer. Another fact in the case is this:—this council founded their argument in favor of the right of infants to baptism from their birth upon their right to salvation in the Redeemer. In whatever else they were wrong, they were right in this. “*The promise is unto you and to your children.*” “*For of such is the kingdom of God.*”

We would hazard nothing in asserting that not the first scrape of the pen can be found against the *validity* of infant baptism while the doctrine of a general atonement was the doctrine of the whole church, which was the case until after the above council. Nay, the doctrine of a partial atonement was taught centuries before much opposition was made to infant baptism. One followed the other in process of time. Men will have their own opinion as to the connection between the two. If I believed there were *non-elect* infants, I would join the Baptists at once. At any rate, I would reject infant bap-

tism. Not being of this faith, I shall not only consider our children fit subjects for the kingdom of heaven,—*i. e.* the church,—but also a proper model after which to fashion adults.

Passing many of the primitive fathers, all to the same purpose with those already noticed, we will make some extracts from St. Austin, or St. Augustin, (as he is called by both names,) with but little comment. He lived about three hundred years after the apostles, and no doubt sets forth the universal practice in his day. He says:—"So that many persons, increasing in knowledge after their baptism, and especially those who have been baptized either *when they were infants*, or when they were youths," &c.

Again:—

"And as the thief, who, by necessity, went without baptism, was saved, because by his piety he had it spiritually; so, where baptism is had, though the party by necessity go without that which the thief had, yet he is saved; which, being handed down to them, the *universal church holds with respect to infants who are baptized*, who certainly cannot yet believe with the heart to righteousness or confess with the mouth to salvation, as the thief could; nay, by their crying and noise, while the sacrament is being administered, they disturb the holy

mysteries; and yet *no Christian will say they are baptized to no purpose.*"

Had there been any such Baptists as we have in these times, they would have said these crying children were baptized to no purpose. There being "*no Christian*" that would say so proves there were none such in being. But we continue our quotations.

"And if any one do ask for *divine authority* in this matter, though that which the universal church practises, *which has not been instituted* by councils, but has *always been observed*, is most justly believed to be *nothing else than a thing delivered by the authority of the apostles*, yet we may, besides, take a true estimate how much the sacrament of baptism does avail infants, by the circumcision which God's former people received." (Fourth book against the Donatists; Baptism.)

Here he declares the authority to baptize infants was from the apostles. We cannot question the sincerity of this declaration. The apostles either did deliver such authority, or St. Austin was mistaken. Concerning this we will think our own thoughts. Again:—

"The whole church has of old constantly held *baptized infants* do obtain remission of original sin by the baptism of Christ." "For my part, *I do not remember that I ever heard any*

*other thing from any Christians* that received the Old and New Testaments, neither *from such* as were in the *Catholic church*, nor yet *from such* as belonged to *any sect* or *schism*. I do not remember that *I ever read* otherwise in *any writer*, treating of these matters, that *followed* the canonical Scriptures or *did mean* or *pretend so to do.*”

Now, if St. Austin never heard of any Christian, Catholic, sectarian, schismatic, nor any writer that followed or pretended to follow the Scriptures, denying infant baptism, there must have been an entire new class of all these come into being since his day. For no writer could say such things in the present day without being guilty of the most glaring falsehood. Nor is St. Austin the only one who bears this sort of testimony. Hear Pelagius, in a letter to the Bishop of Rome, not far from the time St. Austin wrote:—

He says, “Men do slander me, as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants,” &c. Again, “He never heard *even an impious heretic* who would affirm this concerning infants.” He asks—

“For who is so ignorant of the reading of the evangelists as to attempt (not to say to establish this, but) to speak of it heedlessly, or even have such a thought? In fine, who can

be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and thus cause them to miss the kingdom of heaven? since our Saviour has said that none can enter into the kingdom of heaven that is not born again of water and the Holy Spirit. Who is there so impious as to refuse to an infant, of what age soever, the common redemption of mankind, and to hinder him that is born to an uncertain life from being born again to an everlasting and certain one?" (Letter to Innocent, A. D. 417.)

We might have added many more quotations from the fathers, all going to show what the usage of the church during the first four hundred years was; but it is thought these are sufficient. If infant baptism was in universal use up to the commencement of the fifth century, it is fair to conclude that the usage commenced in apostolic times. This presumption is much stronger when we consider that Irenæus, Epiphanius, Philastrius, St. Austin, and Theodoret, all wrote historical accounts of the different sects and heresies which had made their appearance in those times, and not one of them mentions a single sect or heretic that denied it, with the exception of an impious sect that denied baptism altogether.

It may not be amiss to make a remark or

two about Tertullian—the only one that even seems to write against it. He did not, however, write against infant baptism any more than against adult baptism. He thought it best to delay baptism till old age, so that there would be less danger of contracting pollution after baptism. He never said one word against the validity of infant baptism.

Before we close this essay we will call attention to what we believe to be the first rejection of infant baptism. This took place about A. D. 1128, under the teaching of Peter Bruis. The ground on which the Petrobruisians rejected infant baptism was, that all infants dying in that state *were lost*, and should not therefore be baptized. It is not very strange that the whole Christian world considered it an entire new doctrine. We quote the following from Mr. Hibbard, on infant baptism, p. 323, which he quotes from Wall's History, part ii. c. vii. sec. 5.

“Christ sending his disciples to preach,” say the Petrobruisians, “says in the gospel, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.’” From these words of our Saviour it is plain that none can be saved unless he believe and be baptized:—that is, have *both* Christian faith and baptism. For not one

of these, but both together, doth save. So that infants, though they be by you baptized, yet, since by reason of their age they cannot believe, *are not saved*. It is, therefore, an idle and vain thing for you to wash persons with water, at such a time when you may indeed cleanse their skin from dirt in a carnal manner, but not purge their souls from sin. But we do stay till the proper time of faith; and when a person is capable to know his God and believe in him, then we do (not, as you charge us, rebaptize him, but) baptize him. For he is to be accounted as not yet baptized who is not washed with that baptism by which sins are done away.”

The Petrobruisians give a very effectual argument against infant baptism, if it were true; —that is, the impossibility of infant salvation. If they could not be saved, then, and then only, they should not be baptized. But since the promise is made to children as well as adults, and since the promise is to be realized by the use of means, we cannot commence the use of those means too soon.

This Petrobruisian heresy, which contains the first opposition to the validity of infant baptism left upon record that we have been able to find, lasted about thirty years, and perished under the authority of his holiness.

Nothing more was heard of anti-pedobaptism till about the year 1522, the time the Anabaptists rose in Germany. Since that date we have had boasting, wind, and rant. We have opposition sufficient to satisfy all who desire such things.

We have now gone through our remarks upon infant baptism. With the hope of having convinced some one who has hitherto wavered, we dismiss the subject.

---

## ESSAY VII.

### ON THE MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTISM, AND THE MODE.

THE word *baptism* has been so variously defined by theological writers that the Christian public is literally bewildered. Lexicographers, being uninspired, are wholly unable to settle the controversy that continually harasses the church in the present day. It has, therefore, been left to the critics, who have found as much as they could do to keep up with one another, without trying much to find out the real truth about the matter. One great obstacle in the way of settling this controversy is, that most of those who engage in it make up



no particular issue upon the subject itself, but upon the whether *baptizo*, the Greek word for baptism, means immersion and nothing else. Now, these criticisms may be useful to some men, but we object to making them the main proof. We object to it more, because nine out of ten of those who surfeit the country with their Greek know really very little about that language. In the present day there are many who spit Greek on their congregations that do not know the alphabet of that language. It is to be feared that, even among those critics who can read the Greek Testament, there is a greater desire to make a show of their learning than to exhibit the truth.

The author of these sheets makes no great pretensions to learning. But learned men will allow that the true definition of any word is to be learned by ascertaining the use writers and speakers have made of it. For example, to know the use John the Baptist made of the word baptism, you have to examine his discourses, allusions, &c. in which he has used the word; and so of any other writer or speaker. It is believed that such investigation can be more easily made in the English translation, if not more correctly. This will be apparent when we consider that the word baptism in the English means precisely the same

that *baptizo* in Greek does. If *baptizo* means to immerse, baptize means the same thing. The very same argument that will prove the Greek word to mean immersion will prove the English to mean the same mode. Why then carry this controversy out of our own language? The Bible must furnish the means of ascertaining the sense in which its terms are used. This, then, being God's own lexicon, we shall consult this and no other. Our Greek lexicons, some of them made by infidels and wicked men, furnish every sort of definition of baptism. Some of these definitions favor our views, and, as such, following the example of others, we might use them. But we desire none of their man-made assistance. If we cannot ascertain from the Bible the meaning of the word baptism, it must be a failure:—that's all.

When the Bible uses different words one for another, those different words mean the same thing and mutually explain each other. Allowing this, it will be easy to show that *baptism is a generic word, and means purification.*

This we proceed to prove. "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and *baptized*. And John also was *baptizing* in *Ænon*, near to Salim, because there was much

water there; and they came and were *baptized*. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a *question* between some of John's disciples and the Jews about *purifying*. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold the same *baptizeth*, and all men come to him." John iii. 22-26.

"When, therefore, the *Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and BAPTIZED more disciples than John*, (though Jesus himself *baptized* not, but his disciples,) he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee." John iv. 1-3.

This dispute between "*the Jews and some of John's disciples about purifying*" was a dispute about John and Christ's *baptizing*. The following seems to be the correct view of the subject:—

The Jews had looked at the doings of John with admiration, "musing in their hearts whether he were the Christ," Luke iii. 15; and, as was natural, when Jesus and his disciples came into the same country, baptizing and making disciples, some of the Jews, inclining to prefer Jesus for a leader, raised a dispute with the disciples of John about their master continuing to baptize after a superior personage had commenced making disciples. These disciples knew that John himself had told them that

Jesus was entitled to the pre-eminence, that he was scarce worthy to loose his shoes as a servant; and, consequently, they knew not what to say to the Jews, and so they came and told their master that Jesus was making and baptizing disciples, and all the people are going to him, and the Jews had disputed with them, and gotten them into a difficulty about it. John heard of the success of Jesus with joy; he informed his disciples that his joy was now full, &c. To prevent his popularity from injuring the ministry of John, Jesus retired into Galilee. Manifestly, then, the dispute was about these extraordinary personages each one baptizing. If so, the words *purifying* and *baptizing* are used interchangeably, the one for the other, and therefore mean the same thing.

Of Jesus it is said:—"And he shall sit as a *refiner* and *purifier* of silver; and he shall *purify* the sons of Levi," &c. Mal. iii. 3. In the preceding verse the prophet says, "He is like a refiner's *fire*, and like fullers' soap." John the Baptist says, "He shall *baptize you with the Holy Ghost*, and with *fire*." Matt. iii. 11. Paul says, "That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and *purify* unto himself a peculiar people," &c. Tit. ii. 14. There is no doubt what Malachi and Paul call *purify* John calls *baptize*: these words, therefore, mean the same thing.

Baptism being a purification, it is also called a *washing*; which is a kindred word in meaning. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the *washing of water* by the word." Eph. v. 26. "Be *baptized*, and *wash* away thy sins." Acts xxii. 16.

Wherever the word baptism is used in regard to the work of the Spirit or to the washing of water, the word purification can be substituted for it without at all changing the meaning of the passage where it is used. Take the following, for example:—"I indeed *purify* you with water; he shall *purify* you with the Holy Ghost." "Teach all nations, *purifying* them," &c. "He that believeth and is *purified*," &c. "Repent, and be *purified* every one of you," &c. "Jesus made and *purified* more disciples than John," &c. "They were *purified*, both men and women." This mode of illustration might be carried to a great extent. The reader can get his Bible and try it till he is perfectly satisfied. The very word purification carries a charm with it, it agrees so well with the whole gospel scheme. To be purified with water and the Spirit is to be born again—to be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost.

Two purifications pervade the teachings of the Old and New Testaments. The great work

in the heart performed by the energy of the divine Spirit is the principal one, the other is ceremonial and representative. It consists in the external application of water. We have seen that the word baptism, in the New Testament, is mostly used in reference to both these purifications. We shall now proceed to examine the modes of purification or baptism, both of the Holy Ghost and of water. Before entering upon this investigation, however, it will be proper to remind the reader that our Baptist brethren insist that baptism always means *immersion* and *nothing else*. Indeed, this view governs their whole system. Mr. Howell, a standard writer among them, says, "In the whole history of the Greek language it has but one meaning; it not only means to dip or immerse, but it never has any other meaning." "If, therefore, any respect is due to the meaning of words used to describe actions, Christian baptism is confined to immersion." (Sac. Com. p. 172.) Their ministers, writers, and people generally, say the same thing.

If baptism, in Greek, always means immersion and nothing else, it always means the same thing in English and nothing else. We propose, therefore, no issue about Greek or any other language; we wish no foreign issue. We join issue on the mode. We care not what word

is used, provided it be consistent with the Bible. I now advertise my readers that I do not concede to the Baptists that no mode is pointed out in the Bible, as pedobaptist writers usually do. Although I believe a change of mode would not invalidate the ordinance, yet I do not believe the Scriptures have left us in the dark on the subject.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost being the principal one, we will examine its mode first. John the Baptist says of Jesus, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Matt. iii. 11. Jesus said, in regard to this same baptism, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts i. 5. No one will deny that "*not many days hence*" alluded to the day of Pentecost. When they were baptized with the Holy Ghost on that day, Peter, under its influence, preached a sermon, taking for his text a prediction of this baptism from the prophet Joel. In this text he gives us the mode by which this baptism was performed, in these words:—"I will *POUR out of my Spirit UPON all flesh.*" Acts ii. 17. Here, what Jesus and John the Baptist call "baptize" Peter and Joel call "*pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.*"

To *pour upon*, then, is to *baptize with*.

At the house of Cornelius we have this bap-

tism of the Holy Ghost repeated. "While Peter yet spake these words, the *Holy Ghost fell on all them* which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts x. 44, 45. Peter commanded these Gentiles to be baptized, (verse 48,) for which the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem contended with him, (xi. 1, 2.) Peter, in his defence, related the providential occurrences which brought him to the place, and then rehearsed the effect of his preaching in the following words:—"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. Mark the expressions—"The Holy Ghost *fell on all them which heard*," "*Poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost*," "*The Holy Ghost fell on them as on us*," &c., on the day of Pentecost, when all agree the "*Spirit was poured out*." How could these pourings and fallings upon cause Peter to remember the word of the Lord in regard to baptism, if he did not understand baptism and pouring to mean the same thing?

Now, Mr. Howell, you say "baptism, *in*



*Greek*, not only means to dip or immerse, but it never has any other meaning." Here we have seen John and Christ speaking of a work they call *baptism*; Joel, Peter, and Luke, call the very same work *pouring*. This is the way it is in English. Now, Mr. Howell, if the *Greek* word always means immersion and nothing else, immersion must always be meant when the baptism of the Spirit is spoken of. Let us see how that is: if it always means immersion, it will not change the meaning to use that word in every instance. We will then have it thus:—

"The Holy Ghost *immersed* all them which heard the word." "The Holy Ghost *immersed* them as it did us at the beginning." I give it over to your Greek. The English Bible won't answer the purpose at all.

My reader will please bear in mind that, to sustain the Baptists, baptism must always mean immersion *and nothing else*. The proof that it ever means to pour, even in one solitary instance, overturns the whole Baptist system of exclusiveness. Though it might be proven that immersion was sometimes the meaning, yet they would be defeated. If we have proven that the word, in several places, means to pour,—as we think we have done most clearly, yea, to POUR *and nothing else*, so far as mode or action is concerned,—then must the doctrine of exclu-

sive immersion be false, as well as restricted communion, without any thing to support it.

We now hazard the assertion that the word baptism, in every place in the New Testament where the baptism of the Spirit is intended, means to *pour and nothing else*, so far as mode or action is concerned. The whole Baptist world cannot refute it. They dare not try.

Now we proceed to examine the subject of water baptism. Does Paul mean immersion when he says they "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea"? 1 Cor. x. 2. The place where this baptism occurred forbids that it should have been by immersion. "The children of Israel walked upon *dry land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." Ex. xiv. 29. The Baptists try to get clear of this by making it a figure. But what evidence is there that baptism in this text was a figurative baptism more than any other? Was eating the same spiritual meat a figure also? Was drinking of that spiritual rock that followed them a figure too? As well might we say the baptism of our Lord was a figure. But what was the mode of this baptism in the cloud and in the sea? "*The clouds poured out water.*" Ps. lxxvii. 17. About the very same affair, Paul says "they were baptized;" Moses says it

was "on dry ground;" and David says "the clouds poured out rain." Then, what Paul calls *baptism* David calls "*pouring out rain.*" You must try your Greek again, my Baptist friends. You perceive the English Bible makes baptism, in this place, mean *to pour and nothing else.*

Let us next hear from Isaiah. "I will *pour water upon him* that is *thirsty*, and floods upon the dry ground: I will *pour my spirit upon thy seed,*" &c. Isa. xlv. 3. Here we have a prophet writing about the Christian dispensation, representing our Lord as saying, "I will pour water;" "I will pour out my spirit." How much this resembles the language of another prophet:—"I indeed baptize you with water, (*pour it on you;*) he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, (*pour it upon you.*") But when did the Lord *pour* out his spirit? On the day of Pentecost, we answer. When did he *pour water* on him that was thirsty? On the day of Pentecost. Three thousand were thirsty; and there is no reason to doubt that water was poured upon them at that time, according to the prediction of the prophet. And we may add that water was poured by John, for he says, "I indeed baptize you with water;" and there is no reason to doubt his doing it in the same way the baptism of the spirit was per-

formed, which, we have seen, was by pouring, certainly.

Now, whether we are right in making this pouring of water refer to baptism, as set forth in the New Testament, men will and ought to think for themselves. We may challenge the whole Baptist world to produce such a prediction from any of the prophets in favor of immersion. If we are not right in our interpretation, will the Baptists set us right? We have now given reasons from the Bible itself for believing that baptism sometimes means to pour, and that the apostles so understood and practised. We believe no reasons equally strong can be brought from the same source in favor of immersion; much less can it be shown that it always means to immerse and nothing else.

That baptism was administered by *sprinkling* there is yet more abundant proof. Let us first hear the prophets.

“Behold, my servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which

they had not heard shall they consider." Isa. lii. 13-15.

No one will deny that this passage is spoken of the Messiah. It may be paraphrased thus:—

My servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall deal prudently, or prosper, (as in the margin;) among the nations, he shall be exalted and extolled on account of his divine prudence. Many people were astonished at thee on account of the cruelty of thy treatment, under which his visage was so marred more than any man, even those guilty of sedition and murder, and his form more than the sons of men, or more than can happen to any citizen: as the nations were astonished at thee, on account of thy cruelty to him, so, to thy astonishment, shall he sprinkle many nations, bringing them into the church by baptism, and granting them equal privileges with you: for this he will be opposed by principalities and powers; but the kings shall shut their mouths at him, when they see for themselves the exercise of that divine authority of which they had never heard, but which they will then consider.

Let any one read this whole chapter attentively, with the following two, and he must see that our paraphrase is just and in accordance with the whole. The baptizing of the nations agrees well with the declaration, "All the ends

of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Isa. lxii. 10.

But is it *water* or blood that was to be sprinkled upon the Gentile nations? Upon this inquiry we may observe:—

1. The sprinkling of blood (Heb. ix. 13) represents the blood of Christ, (Heb. ix. 14,) without which there is no remission, (Heb. ix. 22,) and by virtue of which their consciences were *purged*. By virtue of this blood we have our *hearts sprinkled from* an evil conscience, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in token of which inward cleansing we have our bodies *washed with pure water* (Heb. x. 22) or baptized with pure water.

2. The sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer (Heb. ix. 13) was connected with the cleansing of those typical atonements by which the unclean was sanctified or cleansed. But how was this done? The following Scripture will show:—

“And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and *sprinkle* it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one

dead, or a grave: and the clean person shall *sprinkle* upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall *purify himself*, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even." Lev. xix. 17-19.

The ashes of a burnt heifer, mixed with running water, made the water of purification, to the *sprinkling* of which the apostle undoubtedly alludes in Heb. x. 32, which we paraphrase thus:—

Let us draw near to Jesus, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience through the merits of his blood and by the power of the Holy Ghost, and our bodies washed in baptism with pure or clean water, which is sprinkled upon them as the antetype of the water of purification.

Thus we have before us the sprinkling of both blood and water. To one of these Isaiah certainly alludes when he informs us that "*He shall sprinkle many nations.*" We believe he speaks of the sprinkling of water, for the following reasons:—

The prediction is concerning the times of the gospel, under which the sprinkling of blood was to cease. When he speaks of sprinkling the Gentiles, therefore, he could not mean that they were to be sprinkled with blood. Again:—

We have a very circumstantial prediction of the return of the Jews to their own land, and of their conversion to Christianity, and also their being baptized by *sprinkling clean water* upon them. If, then, the "many nations" were to be sprinkled in the same way the Jews were upon their return to their own land, the whole is plain enough. Let us see how that is.

"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 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. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." Ezek. xxxvi. 24-28.

We hope the time is near at hand when the house of Israel will all return to their own land, and again be grafted into the good olive-tree by God's giving them a new heart and baptizing them by sprinkling clean water upon them; so that they may become his people again, and



he be their God. This event must happen as sure as there is any truth in prophecy. Let the Gentiles be baptized as they may, it is certain the Jews will be sprinkled when they are converted. Since Isaiah says many nations shall be sprinkled, it is not unreasonable to believe that it is to be done with clean water. If so, the Scriptures require the ordinance to be administered in that way. This is the conclusion to which God's lexicon, the Bible, conducts us. Where is the proof that baptism always means to immerse and nothing else?

Having now shown clearly, as we believe, that the Scriptures do point out the mode or modes of baptism, and that those modes are *sprinkling* and pouring, and that there is no evidence that the word baptize "means to immerse and nothing else," as the Baptists constantly affirm, we shall attempt to illustrate the whole from examples recorded in the New Testament. In doing this, we shall keep a Baptist antagonist constantly before us, making his objections. We will commence with the baptism of our Lord.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John *forbade him*, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus, answering, said unto him, *Suffer it to be so now,*

for *thus* it becometh us to *fulfil all righteousness*. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. iii. 13-17.

In this account there is supposed to be very strong evidence of immersion. But, after a very careful examination of the subject, we must confess, if there be *any proof* of it, we are wholly unable to perceive it. The passage certainly says not one word about immersion, nor does it give the remotest hint of any such thing. We are simply told that "when he was baptized he came straightway out of the water," &c. This proves no more in favor of one mode than another; for it says not one word about mode. If the mode is ascertained, it must be found somewhere else. Now, brother, where will you find the proof that the Saviour was immersed? Oh, say you, I *think* John must have immersed him when he had him in Jordan. But stop, brother, you do not offer your *thoughts* as Scripture proof, do you? You ask, What did he go into Jordan for? If I were to answer, I do not know, would you dare to say

that you do know? The only probability of such a thing deducible from the history of the transaction is that he went into Jordan to be baptized. But as to the mode not one syllable is uttered anyway.

But then, you say, there is proof that he was baptized, and the word, in Greek, means immersion. Brother, that is the very thing we dispute about. I fear you have had sand thrown in your eyes about Greek. You may rest assured, if the word means immersion in Greek, it means the same thing in English. But who told you that it means that and nothing else in Greek? Did the Bible tell you so? If not, I cannot admit your testimony. We must look to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, for proof; and neither you nor I have any right to believe any thing on the subject that is not taught in the Bible. But you say you cannot see what he was in the water for unless it was to be immersed. That may be. A thousand others may be unable to see why he was there; but neither will their ignorance nor your inability to see ever prove that he was immersed.

But now, brother, I will give you my reasons for thinking he was sprinkled and not immersed. He informs us it was done to "fulfil all righteousness." Then it must have been

required by that law which he came not to destroy but to "fulfil." That law does not require immersion; but it does require sprinkling expressly; and that frequently. It is not hazardous to believe that he was sprinkled according to the law.

Let us now inquire more particularly what the Bible does teach on the subject. It proves—

1. *That Christ was a priest*:—"Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec." Heb. vii. 17-21; Psa. cx. 4; Heb. v. 6, 10.

2. That he was a HIGH-PRIEST:—"Consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Heb. iii. 1, iv. 14, 15.

He is a *consecrated priest*:—"Who is *consecrated* for evermore." Heb. vii. 28. He was made a priest "like unto his brethren." Heb. ii. 17. It was done in accordance with the law. "And no man taketh this honor unto himself but he that was called of God; *as was Aaron.*" Heb. v. 4.

Let us next see how Aaron was consecrated to the office of high-priest. In this we will probably learn the meaning of the words, "*thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*"

"But Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt *wash them with water.*" Ex. xxix. 4.

“And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and *washed them with water.*” Lev. viii. 6.

2. “Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.” Ex. xxix. 7.

“And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.” Lev. viii. 12.

3. The third thing in the consecration of Aaron and his sons is the *offering* for an *atonement*. The description of this part of the ceremony is too lengthy for insertion here. Those who wish to examine it will find the account in the 29th chapter of Exodus and the 8th chapter of Leviticus.

The Aaronic priesthood was only typical of a better. It was but the shadow of good things to come. If so, its consecration is only typical; the law requiring it must be *fulfilled* and have its *end* in the high-priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The *washing of Aaron*, then, typifies the washing or baptizing of Christ; the anointing of Aaron points to the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Saviour; the offering of sacrifices looks to the great offering of himself for sin. The sprinkling of blood points to the shedding of that blood by which he entered into the holiest of all.

We, however, at present, are chiefly concerned with the washing with water.

The *mode* by which Aaron was washed is now to be considered. It could not be by immersion, seeing it was done at the door of the tabernacle. The term "wash" is not determinate as to mode: we must therefore examine other passages to determine what the mode was. The reader will please remember, the whole tribe of Levi was set apart to the service of the tabernacle, though not to the high-priesthood. In their consecration what we believe to be a similar washing was used.

"And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: sprinkle water of purifying upon them," &c. Numbers viii. 7.

From all this it appears that Aaron was *sprinkled*. The law required it. If neither "jot nor tittle" (Matt. v. 18) can "in anywise pass from the law till all be fulfilled," then is it apparent that Jesus must have been sprinkled at some time. And when we consider that his baptism was to "*to fulfil all righteousness,*" even the righteousness of the law, and especially as the law nowhere requires *immersion*, it must be clear that Jesus was sprinkled, and not immersed, in his baptism. If our opponents cannot show that the law required immersion, they can hardly tell

what righteousness the Saviour's baptism *fulfilled*. Consequently, they usually evade the discussion of this point. The only account I have either seen or heard from them on this point is the unsupported and insupportable assertion that he was baptized as an example for our imitation. Hence they make much noise about following the Saviour into his *watery grave*. They know how to make capital among the ignorant with such things. Let them first prove that Jesus was ever in a watery grave, by the Bible; and then from the Bible let them prove that Christ designed his baptism as an example for us to follow. In this they will find enough to do.

Although I am not willing to make Greek criticisms of my own, yet I could have quoted from various authors of ability, such as the Baptists have never answered, showing that it is at least doubtful whether Christ was ever in Jordan or not. This I have chosen not to do; not, indeed, because I thought them of no use, but because I do not wish the reader's attention led off upon foreign issues. The main issue is not whether Jesus was in Jordan or out of Jordan, but whether he was immersed. If it were proven by the Bible that the Jordan was a mile wide, and that the Saviour was baptized in the middle of it, still it would not be proved

thereby that he was immersed. Any man that will take the trouble to think about it will be compelled to see that the Bible does not say any thing about his being immersed. That our Baptist brethren believe he was I do not question; but do they believe it upon conjecture or upon Scripture testimony? If proving that he was baptized and *conjecturing* that it was done by their mode proves immersion, then have the Baptists proven that Christ was immersed.

Let the reader carefully weigh what has been said. If he still believes he can see evidence of his immersion, I shall not complain. Let him reflect, however, there are many who cannot.

The next circumstance relied on by our opponents is the following:—

“And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim; because there was much water there.” John iii. 23.

Although I do not believe John’s baptism to have been the Christian, yet I do believe them to have been the same in one respect,—that is, the mode. Since, then, the mode is what we are now considering, the above passage merits our consideration. The Baptists usually take for granted—1. That Ænon was a river; 2. That the “much water” was wanted for the administration of baptism; and 3. That immersion took place at Ænon. But this is taking for granted



what ought to be proven. According to the maps of that country, *Ænon* was not a river, but a town. That it was a well-watered place there is not any doubt; but, whether the "*much water*" was in a river, creek, spring, or even in wells, we are not told.

Much water would be necessary for the accommodation of such multitudes, whether baptism was administered at all or not. I would not hesitate to guess that the *much water* was needed to cook their provision, to drink, and to wash themselves, as well as for the administration of the ordinance. This would be to adopt the mode of argumentation used by our opponents:—*i. e.* prove what I could, and guess at the balance.

As to the guess that immersion took place at *Ænon*, we admit that it is possible. If the reader will reflect that, though we were to prove that *Ænon* was a river, and that John baptized in the middle of it, still immersion would remain to be proved. But neither of these have been proven. All the proof there is in this world that John immersed in *Ænon* is, the Baptists say so. The Bible says nothing of the sort.

If my Baptist brother ask me what John wanted with much water, if not to immerse, I answer promptly, I do not know. Dare you,

brother, say that you know? But perhaps you say you cannot see what he wanted with much water, unless it were to immerse in. That all may be. But your seeing or not seeing is no proof either way, unless your powers of perception were inspired. You must bring Scripture proof or give up your exclusiveness. This way of proving people out of the church by conjecture will not do. Take another Scripture:—

“And they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water,” &c. Acts viii. 38, 39.

This passage certainly proves that the eunuch was baptized, and that they went into the water to do it, according to our version. But as to the mode, all is conjecture; for not one word is said about it. Some ignorant, superstitious people prove by this very passage that they ought to wade into the water, and there be sprinkled. I admit the passage does not certainly sustain them. But I must say it proves as much for them as it does for the Baptists.

Now, brother, you *guess* they went into the water for the purpose of immersion; I *guess* they went into the water because they had nothing to get it in. But this is all guess-work. I frankly confess I do not know. You must

likewise acknowledge that you do not know. If you do not know, you ought not to require me to abide by your guess.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death,” &c. Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12.

It does seem to me that any one who had no sectarian purpose to answer would understand these passages to refer to the baptism of the spirit, and not water-baptism at all. To make this manifest, we will examine the passage from Colossians.

“And ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are *circumcised* with the *circumcision made without hands*, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the *circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh*, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses,” &c. Col. ii. 10–13.

No one is at a loss to understand the expressions, “being dead in sin;” “the uncircumcision of the flesh;” “the body of the sins of the flesh.” All understand these expressions to refer to their moral state, and not to their church relation or their connection with ex-

ternal ceremonies. Why not understand the following to refer to their moral state also? "You hath he quickened;" "circumcised without hands;" "buried with him in baptism;" which is "Christ's circumcision." This baptism which quickens, circumcises, buries our old man with all his deeds, and forgives all trespasses, must be the baptism of the Spirit.

But, if we adopt Mr. Howell's exposition of the Greek word, as contained in the following quotation, we will have some difficulty in making immersion out of this burial in baptism.

"It has also been said that it is a generic word, and, without respect to mode or exclusion of all modes, denotes any application of water. This idea is wholly fanciful. Except when the word signifies to die, it denotes *mode* and nothing else." (Sac. Com. p. 171.)

"If, therefore, any respect is due to the meaning of words used to describe actions, Christian baptism is confined exclusively to immersion." (Sac. Com. p. 172.)

Now, according to this rule of interpretation, the word baptism "*denotes mode and nothing else:*"—mode of action. Well, what is the *mode* of action in a burial? It is the sprinkling and pouring of the earth upon the dead body. Then, if in a burial "it denotes mode and nothing else," it denotes sprinkling and pouring.

Now, I have no special confidence in this application of Mr. Howell's rule. I should not have noticed it at all, but we are frequently told that baptism does not consist in the thing done, but in the action, mode, or manner of doing it. I guess, likewise, the Baptists will not soon abandon this position. If so, it is fair to work their own doctrines upon them.

We have now gone through a hasty, but, it is hoped, a sufficient, examination of the mode of baptism. If we have taken a correct view of the subject, immersion cannot be defended from the inspired record. And, in fact, the advocates of that mode, in the present day, seem to be aware that the English Bible does not prove it: they therefore rely upon learned and unlearned appeals to the Greek. They find fault with the commonly-received version of the Bible. They censure without mercy the translators. They even inform us that King James prohibited them from translating the word *baptizo*.

Even Mr. Howell does not hesitate to censure the bishops and the king after the following manner:—

“The bishops, with the consent of King James, prohibited, therefore, the translation of all the old ecclesiastical words, among which, with others, baptism was found. They re-

quired that the original Greek words should be transferred, only changing them so much as to give them an English termination. Thus the term *baptism* obtained admission into the version, and immersion, the true rendering, was excluded from our Bible." (Sac. Com. p. 181.)

The reader will be surprised to learn that neither the bishops nor the king could have any motive to prompt them to this great wickedness, seeing the established church baptized by immersion as well as by pouring. I copy the following from the book of Common Prayer. In the baptism of infants, the minister is required to "say to the godfathers and godmothers,

*"Name this child;*

"And then, naming it after them, he shall dip it in the water discreetly, or shall pour water upon it, saying,

"N., I baptize thee, in the name," &c.

The same occurs in the baptism of adults:—

"Then shall the minister take each person to be baptized by the right hand, and, placing him conveniently by the font, according to his discretion, shall ask the godfathers and the godmothers the name; and then shall dip him in the water, or pour water upon him, saying,

"N., I baptize thee," &c.

Here it will be observed that "*dip*" comes

first, in both instances. It must, therefore, stand on equal footing with "*pour*," if it have not the preference. Now, why should Mr. H. talk so piteously about the injustice of the king and bishops?

Mr. Howell, after garbling and much insinuation, although he was unable to bring the first extract to prove this war by king and bishops upon immersion, breaks out in the following very pious exclamation:—

"But when the temporal interests of men come in conflict with any portion of divine truth, how prone is poor human nature to sacrifice the latter to advance the former!" (p. 182.)

All the crime of which the translators were guilty was giving us the word *baptism* instead of *immersion*. He *pretends* to quote authority to show corruption on the part of the translators. His quotations, however, prove no such thing. The truth is, Mr. H. is greatly dissatisfied with our present Bible, and wishes to have one that *will prove* immersion. I must say, however, this is rather a convenient mode of establishing a doctrine:—that is, when the Bible does not prove it, alter it till it will.

Perfectly fanatical on this subject, Mr. H. pounces on the British and Foreign and the American Bible Societies, (p. 183,) for "engraft-

ing on their Foreign Translation these pedo-baptist corruptions.”

The Baptists, since the formation of their Bible Society, in 1837, have been very free in their censures of King James; who, they say, would not let the translators translate the word *baptizo*. A great portion of this country is, at this moment, of opinion that, had the king allowed it, we should have had the word *baptism* left out of the Bible, and the word *immersion* in its place. It happens that the directions given by the king to the translators are printed and preserved. Here they are:—

“1. The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishops’ Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit.

“2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained as near as may be, according as they are vulgarly used.

“3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word church not to be translated congregations.

“4. When any word hath divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most eminent fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of faith.



“5. The division of the chapters to be altered either not at all, or as little as may be, if necessity so require.

“6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.

“7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit references of one Scripture to another.

“8. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters; and having translated, amended them severally by himself, where he thinks good; all to meet together, to confer what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand.

“9. As any one company hath despatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for his majesty is very careful in this point.

“10. If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, shall doubt or differ upon any places, to send them word thereof, to note the places, and therewithal to send their reasons; to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meet-

ing, which is to be of the chief persons of each company, at the end of the work.

“11. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority, to send to any learned in the land for his judgment in such a place.

“12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as, being skilful in the tongues, have taken pains in that kind, to send their particular observations to the company, either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford, according as it was directed before in the King's letter to the archbishop.

“13. The directors in each company to be the Deans of Westminster and Chester for Westminster, and the King's Professors in Hebrew and Greek in the two Universities.

“14. These translations to be used, when they agree better with the text than the Bishop's Bible, viz.:—Tindal's, Coverdale's, Matthew's, Whitchurch's, Geneva.

“15. Besides the said directors before mentioned, three or four of the most ancient and grave divines in either of the Universities, not employed in translating, to be assigned by the vice-chancellor, upon conference with the rest of the heads, to be overseers of the translation,

as well Hebrew as Greek, for the better observation of the 4th rule above specified."

I have copied the whole of the king's directions to the translators, from Horne's Introduction, vol. ii., for the purpose of disabusing the public mind on the subject. My readers, I am sure, will say with me that the instructions not only do not prohibit the translation of *baptizo* or any other *zo*, but are as clear of any thing to be complained of as human nature is capable of producing.

I wish I could cover with the mantle of charity these palpable misrepresentations of matters of fact. This I can easily do with the ignorant; but some of them are not of this class. If the king and bishops did prevent the translation of *baptizo*, the proof can be produced. Let them produce it. This they will never do. I challenge them to produce it. Let them cease this endless whining about a correct translation, or show their authority.

In the year 1837 the Baptists, with some few honorable exceptions, withdrew their patronage from the American Bible Society, and formed one of their own, assigning as the reason for that step the incorrectness of the Bible published by the American Bible Society. Their great concern to furnish the world with a correct Bible seems, however, so far, to ex-

haust itself on their foreign missions. The people of our own country are left to struggle with the common version, with all its "pedobaptist corruptions." Let that Society publish such a version of the New Testament in English, as it has in some other languages, if it dare. There is little doubt they will work the heathen, to whom they send their translations, into the water. This course may all be correct. Many, however, doubt it.

I had intended to introduce many extracts from documents in my possession, showing the history, doings, &c. of their Society. But these essays are already becoming tedious. In the next we will examine a different subject,—viz.: *Restricted Communion*.

---

## ESSAY VIII.

### ON RESTRICTED COMMUNION.

*Are the Baptists justifiable in restricting Sacramental Communion to their own sect?*

In maintaining the negative of this question, we shall endeavor to establish a free communion by considering—

1. The unity and identity of the church.

That there is but one church is clearly set forth in the Holy Scriptures. It is equally clear that there *never has been but one*, nor can there ever be. To support our position, we rely upon the following, with many other passages of God's word:—

“*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*” 1 Cor. xii. 27.

“For, as the *body is one*, and hath many members, and all the members of that *one body*, being many, *are one body*: so also is Christ. For by *one spirit* are we all baptized into *one body*, whether we be *Jews or Gentiles*, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into *one spirit*. For the body is not one member, but many.” 1 Cor. xii. 12–14.

“But now are they many members, yet but *one body.*” 1 Cor. xii. 20.

“For, as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, *are one body in Christ*, and every one members one of another.” Rom. xii. 4, 5.

From these plain quotations it is manifest that the church is *one body*, and that it must remain one as long as Christ is one. It is also clear that we are constituted members of that *one body*, not by water-baptism, but by the baptism of one spirit. Hence we argue that the

whole church, gathered together under one administration or scattered abroad under divers administrations, must recognise in each of its members the right to commune. That every member of this one body has the right to commune we are not left to inference alone.

The apostle says, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and *one body*; for we are *all partakers* of that *one bread*. 1 Cor. x. 15-17.

In this quotation the apostle argues that the church is *one body*, from the fact that they had all been partakers of that *one bread*. We design by this passage to prove that the right to commune at the Lord's table belongs to every member of that *one body*. If it establish this right, then does it follow that a restricted communion cannot be maintained without a violation of the children's rights, where such children are acknowledged to exist. As long, therefore, as our Baptist brethren acknowledge there are Christians among other denominations, so long do they deprive such Christians of their acknowledged right; so long are the

*heirs* of God disinherited in their Father's house.

To get clear of this reasoning, the advocates of restricted communion must contend either that other denominations constitute no part of the body of Christ, or that the church has been divided and its unity destroyed. And it is possible that they suppose that each fragment has become a church itself, and has in itself its own peculiar unity and identity. There has been lamenting, therefore, about the division of the church. It is an interesting question, whether, indeed, the church has been divided. If it be divided, it can, and will, I fear, be destroyed: but if, on the other hand, she has maintained her identity and remained united in one body for near six thousand years, we need not now feel any alarm at all at the hate of Satan and the malice of wicked men. She will present *one broad front* to the armies of the prince of darkness.

We deny most strenuously that any division has ever taken place. As reasons against this division of the church, we submit the following:—

1. Christ pledges himself that no such thing shall take place.

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church;

and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18. We say of this foundation, after the apostle, "*that Rock was Christ.*" 1 Cor. x. 4. If there ever was a church built upon any other foundation, it was not a true church. On this foundation there can be built but one church. There has, therefore, never been any but one church since the world began.

2. Christ took his church from the Jews and gave it to the Gentiles.

"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the



vineyard cometh, *what will he do unto those husbandmen?* They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, *the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*" Matt. xxi. 33-43.

In this parable, the wicked husbandmen were doubtless the Jews; the vineyard, the church, or "the kingdom of God." Those other husbandmen, "a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," were the Gentiles, who are *now the people of God*. Then the very *same vineyard*, let out to the wicked Jews, is now among the Gentiles. The Lord did not destroy the old vineyard and plant another. He only built a new fence around the old one. Seeing a new fence, many have supposed it was a new vineyard. They forget that it stands upon the one only foundation which has been laid in Zion.

In the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul represents the church under the figure of a *good olive-tree*. The Jews he calls

the natural branches, which, he says, were broken off. The Gentiles he styles branches, taken from a wild olive-tree and grafted into the good one,—*the same one* off of which the Jews were broken. No digging up the *old olive-tree* and planting a new one.

If, then, the vineyard was the same under the old covenant that it continued to be under the new, and it could pass through a change of dispensations from one nation to another without change or division, are we to suppose that it has been *divided since that period*? Impossible! It is still one body. All should, therefore, be allowed to commune.

3. Christ prayed for the unity of the church.

“Holy Father, *keep* through thine own name *those* whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one*, as we are.” John xvii. 11. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: *that they all may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also *may be one in us*: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; *that they may be one*, even as we are one—I in them, and thou in me; that they *may be made perfect in one*, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” John xvii.

20-23. Jesus never trusted the unity of the church to men, but to the Father. This unity is not found in water-baptism, by any mode, but in that of the Spirit.

Mr. Howell (p. 287) asks, "How is this union, for the blessed consummation of which all hearts must glow with anxious desire, to be produced?" "It must be *a union IN the truth*, otherwise it would not deserve the name." Mr. H. can always solve a difficulty of this sort. He says, (p. 288,) "It can be attained only by a return to original gospel principles." The plain English of this is, We can all join the Baptists, whether we believe their doctrines and usages or not. There are many of us who would think we were leaving "original gospel principles." What then? Mr. H. can fix all this. "This they can easily do without violating their consciences in any particular," (page 288.) He goes on, (same page,) "A believer as the candidate, and immersion as baptism, all confess to be legitimate." To this intelligent pedobaptists can, with as good conscience, confine themselves. Beyond this we cannot—we dare not—go. Our conscience will not permit us. Thus far all perfectly harmonize. Here let us *pause, meet, and unite*, and the results will gloriously accelerate that concord to which prophecy has taught us to look forward, when

“every one shall see eye to eye and speak the same thing.”

In what does Mr. Howell suppose that all would see eye to eye if they were to join the Baptists? Evidently in adult baptism. He does not pretend they would see eye to eye in any thing else more than they now do. It is evidently set forth in our quotations from Mr. H. that he thinks Christ's prayer for the union of his people has not been answered, nor will it be until all join the Baptists. But why, Mr. H., has this prayer never been answered? Have “the pedobaptists brought in and kept up the impediment?” Now, I call in question this whole scheme. When it is said that the Christians are *not one*, those who say it do nothing less than contradict the apostle flatly. What would one naturally think to sit down and read the Saviour's prayer that all that should believe on his name should be one, and then, some thirty or forty years after the prayer was uttered, hear the apostle say, Ye are the “body of Christ,” “ye are all baptized into one body by one spirit,” &c.? Could he conclude that the prayer was not answered? To suit Mr. Howell's view, the apostle should have said, We are all baptized into one body by one mode of baptism. Now Mr. H. does not pretend that we are not baptized by the Spirit; yet we cannot see eye

to eye; we cannot be *one* at all. But, if we just let a Baptist preacher immerse us, (all which he says we could do without injuring our conscience,) we would then “gloriously accelerate that concord to which prophecy has taught us to look forward, when every one shall see eye to eye,” &c. Thus, if Mr. H. has clearly set forth his own principles, he believes that immersion has more virtue than the baptism of the Holy Ghost,—that is, when it is done by a Baptist: it would be no better than sprinkling if it were performed by a Methodist or Presbyterian. To make the brethren “see eye to eye,” a Baptist administrator is indispensable. With this, all would be perfect harmony—all baptized into one body—the Saviour’s prayer would be answered—we would all get into the old church, “which is neither Catholic nor Protestant, but apostolic.”

It is little less than impious to suppose that our Lord’s prayer for union did not prevail. If it did prevail, then the church is one, and should therefore commune together.

4. I argue for a free communion on the ground that we all come in at the right door.

“I am the door of the sheep.” John x. 7. “I am the door. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved,” &c. John x. 9. How does Jesus bring disciples into the fold? “He shall

*baptize* you with the *Holy Ghost*." Matt. iii. 11. "*By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.*" 1 Cor. xii. 13. If the baptism of the Holy Ghost, administered by Jesus, will not entitle us to commune at the Lord's Table, will immersion, administered by a Baptist, give such right? Or which of the two has the most virtue?

Having gone through the argument as far as we intended in favor of a free communion, it now remains for us to attempt the refutation of our opponents.

The Baptists defend their restricted communion by asserting that *baptism* must go before communion, and that nothing is baptism but immersion. From these premises they conclude that no one has a right to commune who is not immersed. If these could both be proven, then they would be correct. But where is the proof of either? In what chapter and verse is the passage requiring baptism by any mode, as being an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, to be found? Or is that a human tradition?

If the law of Christ require baptism before the Lord's Supper, the command can be found in the New Testament. Mr. Howell devotes two chapters to this subject. The first one is his Scriptural argument. I call it Scriptural only

because he quotes many passages. He says these passages prove that baptism must go before communion. But, I confess, if there be the least proof in any of them I am too dull to perceive it. For example, he tries to prove it by the commission Christ gave the disciples. Everybody knows that the commission says not one word about it. The whole chapter is a perfect failure. It would be quite an easy task to answer every thing in it. He succeeds, however, much better in his second chapter on the subject.

I shall content myself with giving a list of his witnesses, introduced in his last effort. Here is the list:—Justin Martyr, Jerome, Austin, Bede, Theophylact, Bonaventure, Fried. Spanheim, Lord-Chancellor King, Wall, Doddridge, Manton, Dwight, all the catechisms and confessions of faith, and Robert Hall. If he had added Mr. Benedict, or himself, then the list would have been complete. Is it not a little strange that a man who professes to go by the Bible alone, constantly insinuating that all other denominations go by some other authority, would resort to the opinions of men so frequently? All the refutation necessary in regard to such proof is to state that it is uninspired men giving testimony. If Mr. Howell thinks he can prove us all out of the true

church in this way, he will find himself mistaken.

Since Mr. Howell cannot get proof from the Bible to sustain the affirmative, we will try if we cannot prove something on the other side. The first Supper was administered to the twelve by the Master himself. Ten of these, we insist, never were baptized in any way except by the Holy Ghost. Two of them had been the disciples of John previously, (John i. 35, 37,) and it is fair to conclude that they had been baptized by him. These two are the only ones of the twelve that we have the least evidence of their baptism. The mentioning of these two as being John's disciples proves that the others were not. If so, John never baptized them. If he did not, who did? The only inducting ceremony to which the ten had submitted was that of circumcision. If their circumcision did not supply their want of baptism, then is it certain that nothing of that sort is necessary, since the ten were not baptized. That baptism seems to have usually gone before the Supper I freely admit, but, so far as the proof goes, the ten form an exception. Were it not for this exception, I would be ready to conclude the general observance of that order was evidence of a law from the Master, although the law is not recorded. I need not concede



this ground, which is good against them, unless our Baptist friends will agree that baptism came in the place of circumcision. The very moment that is done, I must abandon it. Will they concede it?

It must, however, be admitted on all hands that the Bible does not require by any plain command that baptism should always precede the Supper.

As to the other part of their assumption,—that nothing is baptism but immersion,—we have elsewhere remarked, and need not repeat it here.

In this discussion the church has been considered one and indivisible under all dispensations and circumstances. What, then, we will be asked, about the different denominations? Is there no schism in their case? None at all. They are but so many captains' companies in the same great army. The division among them is sectarian, which is not inconsistent with the unity of the church. This will appear as soon as we examine what is necessary to constitute a sect. The church is composed of those who are united to Christ. Those who are mystically united to him by the baptism of the Spirit, which, and which alone, can do it, are members of the Catholic invisible church under all dispensations.

Those who are baptized with water are thereby made members of the Catholic church visible under the Christian dispensation. The same was accomplished by circumcision under the old covenant.

A sect, though in the church, is a very different thing from it. While the church is united in the *essentials of religion*, a sect, as such, is only united in *matters of opinion*.

Hence, a man may be a member of a sect and not be a member of the body of Christ: so may he be a member of the church without being united to a sect.

It will be asked whether the author of these essays considers sectarian division an evil in the church? To which he replies promptly, he does not. By the existence of different sects, intrigues with the church becomes much more difficult than it would otherwise. Men need watching. The existence of a party out of power, to watch those that are in, prevents much corruption in civil government. If all sectarian division were done away, it would not be so specially the interest of any one to prevent corrupt political intrigues,—such intrigues as politicians are usually ready to make. As it is, as soon as one denomination could get rightly under way, others would sound the alarm. Let there be but one denomination in

the United States, and very soon the people will find themselves *paying tithes*.

Christ manages the affairs of his own kingdom. I am no convert to the idea that our blessed Lord planted a church in the world and then abandoned it to its own management. "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

---

## CONCLUSION.

IN the preceding pages we have seen that, according to the Bible, Jesus alone has a right to give laws to his people. Hence, all human laws are null and void, and of no force. Under this head we have marked as human laws the requiring of members to join the church by experience. We have seen that it is of very mischievous tendency and without any countenance in God's word. We have endeavored to show the nature and use of circumcision, the right of infant baptism, and of a free communion at the Lord's Supper. With all these we have endeavored to disprove the necessity of immersion in the ordinance of the baptism. I have now to request that my readers receive

no more of these essays than shall be found in accordance with God's word.

Believing the doctrines herein set forth, the author rejoices in the prospect of the final triumph of the truth. He rejoices in the belief that the Bible will finally be followed by all.

June 11, 1846.

**THE END.**

at least of the ...  
edit ...  
last ...  
year ...

11/20/1911



