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THE

GOSPEL CHURCH,

VINDICATED BY THE SCRIPTURES.

BY DANIEL MERRILL, A. M.

Pastor of the Church of Christ, in Nottingham-West, N. H.

FROM THE SEVERE ACCUSATIONS; THE INGENIOUS,
BUT VERY MISCHIEVOUS, SOPHISTRY,

OF

NATHANIEL S. PRIME,

Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, in Cambridge, N. Y.

CONCORD, N. H.

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LETTERS RECORDED AND INDEXED
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ing controversy might soon slumber in peace. But it is the life of error to clip, or counterfeit, the king's coin. To compel the Scriptures to say more, or less, than they do. You find, that God in his word, hath exprest himself in a clear, distinct, manner, in a way easy to be understood. Truth is pleased with this plain and simple dress. But error is always for show and mystery. She persuades the multitude, that the things of revealed religion are so wrapt in a cloud, as not to be understood, but by those who are adepts at discovery. This generally believed, the work of error is more than half accomplished; and the most adroit deceiver may lead off the largest company.

This being the most prolific source of separating controversies, which have long disturbed and distressed the people of God, a short illustration of it may prove profitable to many. One preacher, or writer, proclaims what he knows, and then proceeds to asserting, imagining, supposing, or guessing. A second and a third, to an hundred, do the same. This occasions a very general observation, and question; "One tells us one thing, another a different thing. Whom shall we believe?" You, Brethren, know, that it is the practice of both preachers and writers to publish what they know not. There may be exceptions, but this is a very general thing, with those who set up for leaders in religion. This has occasioned the whole mystery of iniquity. This is the only thing which prevents you, and your Brethren among the Baptists from running together in the things of the kingdom of God. Let your preachers and writers say and publish but what they know, and let the Baptists do the same, there could be no divisions, for truth hath not fallen out with itself. It is, therefore, impossible, if ten, or ten thousand, should speak the truth concerning the things of the kingdom of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, that there should be any discord amongst them. It is hence evident, that all the controversies which rend the people of God and alienate them from each other, arise from the incorrect assertions, daring imaginations, bold suppositions, or pre-

sumptuous guessings, of those who would be thought leaders of God's people.

You may be ready with a very anxious question, What can we, hearers and readers, do, to put a stop to these never sufficiently to be deplored controversies? The answer is equally ready. Be honest toward God and yourselves, willingly become fools for Christ and the gospel's sake, and the work is more than half done. For God by Isaiah, speaking of gospel times, says,* "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness: the *unclean* shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men *though fools* shall not err therein." The fair exposition appears to be, that, in *gospel times*, the way of gospel practice, shall be so plain, that common Christians, or those who are willingly considered fools, for Christ's sake, may understand it, and that the unclean, the impenitent, have no portion in it. But you may reply, have not the greatest, the wisest and the best of men been always on the side of the Pædobaptists, and against the Baptists? In the judgment of the world, it hath been thus; and they were equally against Christ and his Apostles. This argument is a very principal one with the Papists and pagans, and it is also a favorite one with the Protestant Pædobaptists at the present day. But, it is an argument which very illy becomes a christian, and on which none can rely with safety. All, who put confidence in it, trust to an arm of flesh, and have not yet *ceased from man*. You know this is quite a flourishing argument with Mr. P. He, speaking of the Pædobaptists, says, "They are the very Churches, which, as in every past age, are at the present time doing a *hundred fold more to promote the cause of Christianity*, than all their revilers (the Baptists) have done. I am bold to affirm, (says he) that the writings of *one individual* of the Pædobaptists, the first President Edwards, are of tenfold more worth, than all the writings of your denomination in this country, from its first settlement to the present day."†

It may be, that, as we pass along, we shall be obliged

* Isaiah 35. 8.

† p. 245, 246.

to see, and notice, some *incorrect assertions, daring imaginations, bold suppositions, or presumptuous guessings* of Mr. P. Should he have employed no such weaknesses, but have told us the plain Bible-truth, then will his book grow in our esteem, as we pass along. At least, he may be perfectly at ease, whilst it shall pass in review: for, if it be truth, it will, like pure gold, sustain no loss by passing the crucible.

It has been an axiom with the Baptists, and a somewhat general opinion with the Protestant Pædobaptists, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are a sufficient rule of faith and practice. This is still the theory of many Protestants, but the practice of none. Mr. Prime avows this sentiment, but denies it in the next sentence.* “Forms of worship or religious rites, says he, are positive institutions; and are, therefore, obligatory no further than they are *explicitly revealed*.” This is very correct. But what is his following sentence? “That the mode of baptism is so distinctly revealed, as to prove that immersion is essential to its due performance, we most unequivocally deny: and I pledge myself to establish the position.” How he has performed his pledge, we may see in its proper place. It is proper here to remark, that, if immersion be not revealed as essential to baptism, we have not discovered, nor has he told us, where we may find the application of water in any other way, essential to the due administration of the ordinance. It thus appears, if Mr. P. be correct, that what is essential to the due performance of baptism is not explicitly revealed, and, the inevitable consequence, from his position, is, we are not obliged to the performance of it. Mr. P. will discern his mistake, and that but one way is open for his safety, and that is, to join with the multitude of his Pædobaptist brethren in saying, that immersion is explicitly revealed, and nothing else, as the mode, or matter, of baptism. Whilst Pædobaptists generally confess the above, but practice differently, they claim the privilege of changing modes and forms to suit their own convenience; but Mr. P.

* p. 252.

has committed himself, by confessing the truth, that "Forms of worship or religious rites, are *positive institutions* : and are therefore, *obligatory no further*, than they are *explicitly revealed*." To be entitled to self-consistency, Mr. P. must conclude, that immersion is essential to a due performance of baptism, or that the administration of the ordinance is not obligatory.

Whilst Mr. P.'s errors will have no quarter, his person will be treated with respect. It is, however, not a very easy task so entirely to separate the man from his appendages, as to treat the latter with severity, and the feelings of the former be in perfect quiet. Mr. P. is, doubtless, a gentleman in character, and is certainly a man of considerable talent, and has deserved well of his Brethren, provided zeal and labour, in such a service, demand praise. He certainly has managed his cause with more adroitness than many, and is second to but few, if inferior to any, especially in positive declarations. It could not have been expected, that he would have embellished his pages with many new ideas. All the sources of argument, for Pædobaptism, have been so repeatedly explored, and with exquisite diligence culled, that nothing new was to be expected. However, the principal artillery of his Brethren he hath placed, and worked to the best advantage. If, therefore, it can be shown, that his ground is not tenable under these advantages, it affords, at least, a doubt, whether the Pædobaptists would not do well to relinquish their system.

In one thing Mr. P. is deficient, not to say, faulty. He has seldom, if ever, named page, or volume, where his quotations from the ancients, or moderns, might be found; this may leave a doubt, in the minds of some, whether the quotations have not come through various hands, and lost the truth in their passage. For instance, "I have proved, (says Mr. P.) that the whole Church was Pædobaptist for 1500 years. Dr. Gill admits that there is no evidence to the contrary during 700 years."* No page, nor book is mentioned, where Dr. Gill has made the like statement. Now those, who are ac-

acquainted with Dr. Gill, will imagine, that Mr. P. has quoted from some spurious production. Especially when they shall read what the Dr. has said upon this very subject. Says the Dr. in his brief Illustrations, &c. Chapter ii. con. 4. "Christ has nowhere promised, that his doctrine and ordinances should not be perverted; but, on the contrary has given clear and strong intimations, that there should be a great falling away, and departure from the truth and ordinances of the gospel, to make way for the revelation of Antichrist; and though it will be allowed, that during this period infant baptism prevailed, yet it *did NOT universally obtain*. There were witnesses for adult baptism in every age: and Christ had a CHURCH in the *wilderness*, in obscurity, at this time, namely, in the vallies of Piedmont; who were, from the *beginning of the Apostacy*, and witnessed against it, and bore their *testimony against infant baptism*." When gentlemen write for the instruction of the public, and suffer themselves to be so far misled as to quote Authors not merely incorrectly, but completely opposite from what they have written, they should very carefully mention page and volume, otherwise their own veracity may be questioned. Especially, when such instances occur frequently, as we shall be obliged to notice as we pass along.

It may be displeasing to some of you, my Brethren, that it has fallen to my lot to enter the list of controversy with Mr. P. and it may be unpleasant to more that I have address my thoughts to you. Why should this give offence? Was I not for many years, what you now are? Do I not know your doubts and difficulties more than many? Am not I acquainted with the means by which you are prevented from looking at the subject with impartiality? Do I not know what it takes, to make a real Baptist, even the power of God, and that, sometimes, he uses means to effect it? If he have been pleased to make me one, and I have found the truth to have made me free; then is it not a duty which I owe to my God and you, to endeavour, that what I now am, you soon may be? You know, that I have hazarded a

thousand hard, and evil things, to be said against me, for venturing to address you, on the present subject, and in this way. Even before you took these letters into hand, it may be, that you heard many bitter things against them, and their Author. But, Brethren, I beseech you remember that to be disciples of Jesus will cost the forsaking of all you have, and your prejudices will be a part. I beseech you to remember one thing more: you are not absolutely sure that the Baptist system is wrong. They surely appear to have one symptom of being right. They have *all manner of evil said against them falsely*. Of which you may be more fully sensible, before the close of the present discussion. Perhaps, by this time, the reader has made up his mind to proceed no farther. Well, sir, you will have many to join you. "For he, that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither will come to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

Brethren, I have one more request. I beseech you, deny me not. It is, that you honestly and devoutly pray the Father of your spirits to keep you, on the one hand, from *embracing error*, and on the other, from *rejecting the truth*. *Truth is strong and will prevail*. I know that with you is a mighty host, a potent arm of flesh. But, it may be, that, with the Baptists, is the Lord their God to help them. He may have heard the scoffs and the bitter words which have been pronounced against them.

It is much to be lamented, that the present controversy should have so divided the people of God. They ought to be united, and all rally, for the common defence, round one standard, the standard of truth. God commands this, and says to his people, who are in that community, which is spiritually called Egypt and Sodom, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."*

Whether the Baptist Churches, or the Pædobaptist compose this community, the people of God there found, should come out. Then would the people of God be as

*Revelations xviii. 4.

an army with banners, and cease to wound each other to the destruction of the wicked, as it is feared, they now do. There is but one way, which presents hope, by which this greatly to be desired object may be obtained. That way is, let each one, and the whole, *cease from man*, and hearken to the *Lord*, as *dear children*. Then shall they be of one mind and of one judgment, all speaking the same things, and no divisions among them. Supposing this to be our present disposition, then am I ready to grasp the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, and, by it, to attempt, in the name of Zion's God and King, to wrest, from my opponents, the armour in which they trust. This attempt may occupy our whole attention in the following letter. For which may God prepare us, for Jesus' sake.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

The question before us, for discussion, is big with momentous consequences. It is more weighty, than all mortal crowns and kingdoms. The mighty object sought is, whether the Pædobaptist Churches comprise the visible Church of Christ, the kingdom of heaven, or of God on the earth; or whether the Baptist Churches make up this community. If one does, the other does not. For, as Mr. P. says, "If one is right the other *must* be wrong, and all attempts to unite them, *must* be as unsuccessful, as the attempt to weld iron and clay."

You know, that the Pædobaptists challenge as the

foundation, and *Constitution* of their Churches, what they term the *Abrahamic Covenant*. The business now to be endeavoured is to lay the axe at the root of their pretensions, and, by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to show, that the gospel Church cannot be built upon the principles which they assume, as the basis of their Churches.

Since the Pædobaptists claim as the *Constitution* of their Church, the *Covenant of Circumcision*, which they name the *Abrahamic Covenant*, we cannot be too careful, that we understand correctly the covenant of Circumcision, which was made with Abraham and the Covenants of promise, which were revealed unto Abraham.

That you may possess every help, which the Lord has given, by which to understand these covenants, I may here set down all, which the God of Israel said to Abraham, relative to them, and what explanations the Spirit hath revealed in the Old Testament. These great things are thus related, Genesis xii. 1, 2, 3, 7. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him."

Genesis xiii. 14—17. "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee."

Chapter xv. 5, 6, 7, and 14, 15, 16, 18. "And he

brought him forth abroad and said, look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, so shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and *He counted it to him for righteousness.* And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”

Gen. xvii. 1—8. “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will *make my covenant* between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, as for me, behold *my covenant* is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. 9 to 14. And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. *This is my covenant*, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; *every man-child among you shall be circumcised.* And ye shall circumcise the flesh of

your foreskin; and *it* shall be a *token* of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and *my* covenant shall be in *your* *flesh* for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant. Verses 15, 16, 19, 21. And God said unto Abraham, as for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish *my* covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his seed after him.—But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. 23. And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him."

Chap. xviii. 17, 18, 19. "And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and *all the nations* of the *earth* shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Chap. xxii. 15, 16, 17, 18. "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, by myself have I *sworn*, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless

thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies : And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Chap. xxiv. 7. "The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that *sware* unto me, saying, unto thy seed will I give this land ; and he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence."

Here is the text, the Bible, the sum of God's word, relative to the great transactions of God with Abraham. Great they are. The present, and interesting, enquiry is, What are they ? The answer appears plain. In the *four first* passages, or paragraphs, there are COVENANTS of COMMAND and PROMISE. In the *fifth paragraph*, there is what, in Acts vii. 8, is called the *covenant of circumcision*, which was instituted and appointed to be a *token* of the preceding and inestimable *covenant*, or *covenants*, of promise, made by the Lord to Abraham. This covenant of circumcision is in its nature and design, as distinct from the preceding, of which it was appointed to be the *token*, as was the rainbow, or God's *bow* in the cloud, which he appointed to be a commemorative *token* of his covenant with Noah and all flesh, that he would no more envelope the earth with a general deluge. Gen. ix. 8 to 17. It is very preposterous to consider this covenant to be the *covenant of promise*, for *this* is in Christ and ordered in all things and sure, but *that* is broken by omitting to circumcise a man-child. The *covenants of promise* God bound himself by his *word* and *oath* to keep. The covenant of circumcision he commanded Abraham to keep. This covenant is not styled the *Abrahamic covenant*. But repeatedly does God pronounce it to be *his covenant*. It was this covenant and this only, which, in the first instance, gave *visible distinction*, external and constitutional shape to Abraham and his household, from all the other families and tribes of the earth. The other covenants gave no more distinctive visibility to Abraham and his family, than did the covenants of

promise made in the garden of Eden and to Noah after the flood, give distinctive visibility to Adam's family and to Noah's. Hence, on the covenant of circumcision and the observance of it, in distinction from the covenants of promise, rests the visibility of the church and polity of Israel, as does the visibility of the gospel church upon the observance of the ordinances of Christ, and, in the first instance, upon that of baptism. Hence, also, all, which Dr. Reed, Mr. Prime and their brethren have said of the covenant of circumcision being the covenant of grace, and containing all the precious promises made to the Israelites and to the gospel church, is no more than their presumptuous guessing: for it contains no promise, more than it shall be a token of the covenant of promise. It is therefore this covenant of circumcision, and this only, which, in the first instance, gave to Abraham and his family visible distinction from all other nations and tribes of the earth: and it is this covenant and can be no other, of which Mr. P. says, (page 22.) "The covenant made with Abraham is the CONSTITUTION of the church—that compact which forms the basis, or gives existence to the community." For the preceding covenants of promise contained no *express constitution*, compact, or basis, which gave visible existence to any *new community*. Nor was there any such community in existence, or covenant revealed, by which to form it, till more than twenty years after the covenant of promise was confirmed of God in Christ. Hence all the credit and authority, which Mr. P. claims, from the beginning to the end of his book, for the *church-membership* of Jewish, or Christian infants, on account of the covenants of promise, or any covenant, which existed prior to the covenant of circumcision, are merely imaginary. When this covenant existed, it gave, (and we freely own it,) visible form and comeliness to a new and distinct community. But this covenant has nothing to do in giving form, or visible existence, to the gospel church. When Mr. P. and his brethren shall understand this, it is hoped, that they will ingenuously confess it, and also willingly know, that it is the *institutions of Jesus Christ*, and not the covenant of circumcision,

which comprise the constitution and give visible existence to the gospel church. It likewise hence appears, that Mr. Prime committed a mistake when he accused (in page 27) the Baptist teachers of being *grossly ignorant*, or *basely dishonest*, for making a distinction between the covenant of circumcision and that of promise, and he does not appear to advantage in attempting to ridicule them for placing one, (just where the Lord does,) as the *token* of the other. That is, God appointed the covenant which Abraham was to keep, for a TOKEN of the covenant which he himself would perform. Hence also appears the extreme indiscreetness of the multitude of the Pædobaptist writers, in so frequently and so abundantly asserting that circumcision is a SEAL of the covenant of grace. This is in them boldness to be reprovèd. This is not merely guessing what the Bible nowhere intimates, but asserting what is totally contrary from truth and the nature of the thing. What! shall God make the work of Abraham, a covenant which he was commanded to keep, the seal of the everlasting covenant and promise of Jehovah; the eternal purpose and oath of God, rather than the covenant of circumcision, are this seal.

If the covenant of circumcision be the covenant of grace, or of promise, and circumcision the seal of this covenant, then the covenant has been broken hundreds and thousands of times, and thus the seal violated. But as all this parade, which the Pædobaptist preachers make about the covenant of circumcision *being the covenant of grace*, and circumcision the SEAL of the everlasting covenant, takes its rise and life from their incorrect assertions and bold suppositions, we might just contradict them; and suffer them to pass without further notice, were it not for the very mischievous use which they make of it. For after having palmed this egregious mistake upon the common people, it is easy for them to transmute circumcision into baptism, and make that also the *seal* of the covenant, and also make the people to believe that Abraham sealed his children in the covenant of grace by circumcising them, so parents now should have their children sealed by baptism. A more gross

superstition, probably, was never imposed upon civilized men. If you ask them, Who told you that circumcision is a seal of the covenant of grace, or of any other covenant; or that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, and is to be applied to similar subjects; or that Abraham put the seal of the covenant upon his children by circumcision, and that now ours should be sealed by baptism?—they have no correct answer to give you.

In the *five last paragraphs* which we selected from the scriptures of truth, and which relate to Abraham, and comprise, together with the preceding, the sum of all the great and precious promises which God made to him and to the world, through his seed which is Christ. But in none of these promises or covenants, do we find that *God promised, through Abraham's fidelity in keeping covenant, an interest in the covenant of grace, to his children after the flesh.* In these paragraphs, some of the former covenants are rehearsed with additions. But in none of them, nor in any other part of the Bible, is there a word of promise that our faithfulness shall secure the beloved children of our bodies an interest in the covenant of grace, or shall secure the salvation of their precious immortal souls. This sentiment does indeed appear a *near kinsman to the Papistical doctrine* of supererogation. The passage to which they would attach such a sentiment is in Gen. xviii. 19. For I know him (Abraham) that he *will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon ABRAHAM that which he hath spoken of HIM.* Here the Lord tells us, 1st, what he knew Abraham would do; 2d, what he himself promised to do; and 3dly, for what he would do it. "Abraham would command his children and his household after him." The Lord promised saying, "They shall keep the way of the Lord to justice and judgment." The thing to be accomplished is, "That the Lord may bring upon *Abraham* that which he hath spoken of him." Here is no covenant made with Abraham or proposed to him or conditional promise, that *upon his faithfulness* his children should be interested in any covenant, much less that they should be in-

terested in the covenant of promise of eternal life. We by no means say but what God hath commanded parents to teach their children the great things of God and their duty; speaking to them of those things when they rise up and when they lie down; when they go out and when they come in; giving them line upon line and precept upon precept. Nor do we say but what God has encouraged us to hope that our faithful endeavors may be attended with his power and grace to the salvation of our households, in the same sense in which he encourages all his faithful ministers to hope that a blessing may attend their labors. But what we say is, that God did not make any covenant of promise to Abraham, nor has he in the volume of Revelation mentioned the like to any other mere man, that upon his faithfulness to his household, they should all partake of the great salvation. Nor has he any where intimated, that their salvation was suspended upon their being circumcised or baptized. Hence, if all the promises which were made to Abraham and all the covenants which were made with him, were equally made to and with all pious parents since, even then, what many very incorrectly assert would not be true, that God hath suspended the salvation of the children after the flesh upon the faithfulness of the parents.

Having viewed as carefully as our abilities permitted all the *promises* and covenants, which were revealed and made by the Lord to, and with, Abraham, this appears a fair, unequivocal, and irresistible conclusion, from the Old Testament, That provided the *covenant* of circumcision be the foundation of the Pædobaptist Church, as their most learned and strenuous preachers and writers earnestly contend, then their Church at best can be no more than a *token* of the true, regular and gospel Church. For we have found on indubitable evidence, that the covenant of circumcision was but a *token* of that covenant of promise, which includes Christ who is the foundation of the gospel Church, and his word, in the New Testament, the constitution. This evidence is doubly guarded—on the one hand, the covenant of circumcision was not made till Abraham was ninety years

old and new, whereas the exceedingly great and precious promise, which is the foundation or *chief corner stone* of the gospel Church, was made to Abraham when he was seventy-five; on the other hand, God hath pronounced the covenant of circumcision to be a token of the other.

However, as the covenant of circumcision is the basis, or constitution, upon which Pædobaptist Churches must stand, or else crumble to the dust, like the baseless fabric of a dream, we shall carefully inquire what explanations the spirit of truth hath revealed in the New Testament. For we believe equally in the New Testament as we do in the Old, and if there be any thing in either which will help them, we cordially wish them help. We are willing to go down, if they can go up upon the principles of the truth of God. Both cannot go up. One must go down. To examine the pretensions of our opponents a little further, we turn to the New Testament, where we find the following passages to have some bearing on the subject.

Acts iii. 25. "Ye are the *children* of the prophets, and of the *covenant* which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

Acts vii. 8. "And he gave him the covenant of circumcision."

Romans iii. 1, 2. "What profit is there of *circumcision*? Much every way; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

Chap. iv. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. "We say that faith was reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision? or in uncircumcision? Not in *circumcision*, but in *uncircumcision*. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. And the father of circumcision, to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircum-

aised. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

Chap. ix. 6, 7, 8. "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the SEED of Abraham are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Gal. iii. 6, 7, 13, 14, 16, 17, 26, 27, 28, 29. "Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith the same are the children of Abraham. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written. Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.—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.—For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for they are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Chap. iv. 28, 29, 30, 31. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the scriptures? Cast out the bond woman and her son, for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond woman, but of the free."

Chap. v. 2, 11. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be *circumcised*, Christ shall profit you nothing.—And I, brethren, if I yet preach *circumcision*, why do I yet suffer *persecution*? then is the *offence of the cross ceased*."

Chap. vi. 12. "As many as desire to make a *fair shew in the flesh*, they *constrain* you to be *circumcised*, only lest they should suffer *persecution for the cross of Christ*."

Eph. ii. 12. "Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the *covenants of promise*."

Heb. vi. 12, 13, 14, 15, 17. "Be not slothful, but followers of them who through *faith and patience inherit the promises*. For when God made *promise* to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he *swore* by *himself*, saying, surely blessing I will *bless thee*, and multiplying I will *multiply thee*. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the *promise*.—Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the *heirs of promise* the *immutability of his counsel*, *confirmed* it by an *oath*."

In these passages is contained the sum of what is said in the New Testament relative to the covenant of circumcision, and of the covenants of promise. It is apprehended, that your ministers will concede that, if the constitution of their Church be not found in the passages selected, it is not to be found in the New Testament. It is not, indeed, to be supposed, that they would look into the New Testament for the constitution of their Church since they do not for the members or subjects of which it is composed. On this point, says Mr. P. "an explicit revelation (in the New Testament) would be altogether needless."* If all their writers harmonize with him, the enquiry might be here suspended upon the principle of their concession, that the constitution of their Church is not explicitly recognized in the New Testament. But a short consideration of these passages may not be unprofitable for you, nor without advantage to those, whose Church hath received her constitution from Jesus Christ and her visibility from the observance of *his* ordinances.

* Page 21.

In these scriptures quoted, the covenant of circumcision appears a distinct thing from the covenant of promise, though having a relation with it. It also appears that the principal advantage of circumcision was, that the *oracles* of God were committed to the circumcised: yet faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness before he was circumcised; that the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not made to him, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith: and that he received the *sign of circumcision*, a *seal of the righteousness* of this faith, which he had before he was circumcised. It is also evident, that even Abraham's children had no just pretension, on *account of being his*, to claim a right to the promise; for "They who are the *children of the flesh*, *these are not the children of God*; but the *children of promise* are counted for the *seed*." It is further manifest, that we Gentiles have no fair claim to be Abraham's children, unless we be of faith, and that the blessing of Abraham *must come on us* through *Jesus Christ*, that we may receive the *promise of the spirit* through faith. For the promises, which were made to Abraham, were essentially made to Christ, and confirmed of God in Christ 430 years before the Sinai law was given; and that we must be Christ's through faith in him, as all those profess to be, who are baptized into him, or we cannot be Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Those, who are of the above descriptions, are, as Isaac was, the children of promise, and, for the present, will be persecuted by those, who are born after the flesh, because they make a distinction between the *bond woman* and the *free* and between *their children*. It is still further evident, that those who hold the covenant of circumcision as the basis, or constitution of their church, have no material profit from Christ's appearing in the flesh, but are in the situation of the ancient Israelites as to church state, and have the veil yet upon their mind, and thus escape persecution, because, in such a practice, the offence of the *cross* ceaseth: and in this way they obtain their object, they make a *fair shew* in the world, and suffer no *persecution* for the *cross* of Christ.

The following conclusions appear to flow naturally from what we have passed over :

1. That the constitution, basis or visible existence of the Pædobaptist church cannot be that covenant of promise, which was confirmed of God in Christ 430 years before the law, for in that there are found no rules, statutes, or ordinances, by which to constitute any distinct, visible society.

2. That as it was the covenant of circumcision, which constituted Abraham's family into a distinctive form ; so it is a predilection in favor of that in practice, so far as circumstances permit, which now gives visible distinction to the Pædobaptists.

3. That, though we may be Abraham's children and heirs according to the promise, yet no evidence appears, that our children can be Abraham's grand children, so as to entitle them to the same promise.

4. That the very popular idea, that circumcision is a *seal* of the covenant of grace, is a mere forgery, having no countenance from either the Old Testament or from the New. The idea of *infant baptism* or *sprinkling* being a *SEAL* is, if possible, still more absurd.

5. That circumcision was the *seal* of the *righteousness* of Abraham's faith, and of no other person's, and thus was he distinguished by the Lord, as an example, or father, of the faithful.

6. That the Pædobaptist church is very similar to the ancient Jewish church, a mere image of it, with a few things dissimilar. I do not say that their practice is like to that of the Jews ; but I might say, that their leaders have a similarity, at least in some particulars. "They reject the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized with the baptism of John, which is the *only* ordinance of baptism which hath the honour of being from heaven."* Also, in that "They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men ; taking away the key of knowledge ; for they neither go in themselves, neither do they suffer them that are entering, to go in."

* Luke vii. 29, 30—Matthew xxi. 25.

† Matthew xxiii. 13—Luke xi. 52.

In our next, we may begin to hear Mr. P. express his sentiments with emphasis, and the nature of his evidence. May the spirit of the Lord guide me in writing, and you in reading.

Affectionately yours.

LETTER IV.

DEAR BRETHREN,

The controversy now on hand, and which may open as we proceed, is not merely a controversy between men, between the people of God, but, on the side of the Baptist, or Pædobaptist; it is also against the counsel, word and kingdom of God. If the Pædobaptists, in church building, are at an agreement with the revealed will of that great Prophet, of whom Moses in the law did write, then am I found, at least, ignorantly fighting against God and his Christ. May the God of truth and grace prosper his own cause, and all who willingly defend it.

Mr. P. on page 18, causes his Lebbeus to say, "I perceived from the method you pursued in the discussion of the subject yesterday, that the *sameness* of the *Jewish* and *Christian churches* is regarded as the *foundation* of their *whole system*." To which, on the next page, he thus replies, "*We do, indeed, consider the sameness of the church as the foundation of our scheme*; and, if this point is established, it is impossible to avoid the consequences. Your ministers are fully sensible of this, and hence their constant endeavours, by sophistry and ridicule, by dogmatical assertions and empty declamations,

to make their people reject the sentiment.—The same sovereign act, that removed the one (church) established the other in its place, and on the same foundation.”

Though we are not altogether pleased with Mr. P.'s manner of expression, yet we are with his explicitness. If he can make his position good, we can easily dispense with his manner. But his declaration, that “*The same sovereign act that removed the one, established the other in its place, and on the same foundation,*” must be numbered among his incorrect assertions; it is, at best, but a bold guess; for we have no such account in the *Bible*.

To prepare the way to prove the sameness of the two churches, Mr. P. tells us, “*Infant membership was instituted in the ancient church 430 years before that law (the ceremonial) had existence.*” This is another of his incorrect assertions, for, as we have before proved, there was, at that time, no covenant revealed, which instituted membership in any church for infants, or adults. To gain upon his readers is, doubtless, his object; and another remarkable passage to the same point, is in pages 28, 29, where he makes the Baptist ministers express, by the mouth of Lebbeus, a wish, that the Pædobaptist would not so frequently use the word *seal* in reference to gospel ordinances, “*as it sounds Jewish, or rather popish in the ears of Baptists.*” To which he thus replies, “*If they had said, it sounds too evangelical, or apostolical for their scheme, they would have come much nearer the truth: I am sure there is nothing Jewish in it, for the word was never used under that dispensation with reference to religion. It is a term of pure gospel origin, and the apostle declares that it was applicable to circumcision, for he calls it a SEAL of the righteousness of faith. And as to its being popish, I shall only observe, that if that church had derived all its doctrines and precepts and maxims, and terms from the gospel, as directly as this term, it had never been the scourge and reproach of the christian world. I can assure you, my friend, we shall never lay aside gospel terms in condescension to the prejudices of the Baptist.*”

Mr. P. should, most certainly, be very sparing of his accusations of sophistry. He here insinuates, that the word *seal*, as applied to *gospel ordinances* is *evangelical, apostolical, and a term of pure gospel origin*, whereas it is *neither*, for it is never once used in reference to any religious ordinance, Christian or Jewish. Nor does the apostle use it in the general sense, which Mr. P. alleges, calling it a "SEAL of the righteousness of faith." He applies it in a restricted sense, as a "*seal of the righteousness of the faith*," which Abraham had *before he was circumcised*. Besides, what he says of the Papists, is very incorrect; for it was their perverting the plain sense and meaning of words, as Mr. P. has here done, which was the very thing, which has made them the *reproach and scourge of christianity*.

Mr. P. advances with apparent caution to his great object, the sameness of the Christian and Jewish churches, and endeavors to gain, beforehand, his readers into the belief, that infant membership was instituted by the original covenant of promise, made with Abraham or to him. Speaking of this covenant, he says, "This covenant, like every other, consists of two parts. *Abraham promises obedience. On this condition the Lord graciously promises to reward him.*"* Again, he says, "The covenant which Paul declares was not annulled by the ceremonial law, is the original covenant made with Abraham. With this, and with no other, the 430 years correspond. Hence *infant membership* which was instituted 430 years before the law was ordained, certainly cannot be affected by the repeal of that law."† Here are some *truths*, and some things merely imaginary. That Abraham promised *obedience*, and that a *reward* was *promised* on that *condition*, is imagination, or mere guessing; and that *all covenants* are of this description, *do and live*, is an erroneous supposition. Was the covenant which God established with Noah and with his seed, and with every living creature upon the earth, that there should no more be a general deluge, of this description?‡ Is the new covenant of this description?

* Page 31.—† Pages 38, 39.—‡ Gen. ix.

No. Nor was the original covenant made with Abraham. But Mr. P. is correct in saying, that the original covenant made with Abraham was not annulled by the ceremonial law, and also, that with this, and with *no other*, the 430 years correspond. But in his *inference* he greatly errs, for that covenant says nothing relative to church membership, much less, if less than nothing can be, does it *institute infant membership*.

Mr. P. presents, after having prepared the way, five set arguments, upon the strength of which, he rests the cause. To these arguments due attention should be paid, and full weight given. He thus states the

First. "The first argument which I adduced in support of that sentiment, (the sameness of the Jewish and Christian Churches) was drawn from the sameness of the covenant which the Lord made with Abraham and his seed, and that upon which the Christian Church is founded. *I will make of thee a great nation, and make thy name great: and thou shall be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee; and curse him that curseth thee.* Gen. xii. 2, 3. Of this covenant, *circumcision*, as I have already shown, was, in due time appointed the *seal*."*

This argument, upon which Mr. P. has spent much labour, and time, will occasion, unless it be in the drapey, but very little controversy between him and us. For we, at once concede, that the promise contained in the passage quoted, comprises the SEED of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head, and so comprises the grand foundation of all our hopes; for all the treasures of God are laid up in Christ, and all the promises are in HIM, yea, and in HIM, *Amen*, to the glory of God the Father. But, that this covenant contained the constitution of either the Jewish, or Christian Church, or so much as mentions aught relative to infant membership in either, is what we cannot acknowledge without evidence. He has well proved what we have no wish to deny; but that, which alone could make any thing for the sameness of the Jewish and Christian Churches, he has not proved at all. What he has proved has no more

* Pages 29, 40.

apparent bearing upon his grand object, than it has upon Abel, Enoch and Noah's belonging to the Jewish or gospel Church. They were saved by that *seed* of the woman which was born of the Virgin Mary, and she was of the seed of Abraham. That same seed was included in the covenant of promise, made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3, and particularly mentioned by Paul, Gal. iii. 16, and by which all that believe are saved, whether they belong to the Jewish Church, or the gospel Church, or to neither.

What Mr. P. tells us at the close of the statement of his argument, that *circumcision* was appointed the seal of this covenant, requires no other reply, than it is to be added to the number of his presumptuous guessings. For he neither has shown us, nor can show us, any such thing.

Mr. P.'s very perplexing difficulty, and that of his Brethren, is in having never known, or in always forgetting, when they write upon the subject, that neither the *Jewish*, nor *Christian Church* is built, or constituted as to its visibility upon the covenant of promise, or what some term the covenant of grace. This covenant might have been, and multitudes saved, and yet no Church ever built, had this been the will of God. But it pleased God to have it otherwise; he therefore chose after he had several times revealed the covenant or covenants of promise more and more distinctly to Abraham to manifest his pleasure, that Abraham and his household and descendants should be a community *visibly distinct* from the nations round about them. To effect this, God gave unto Abraham the covenant of circumcision. So it pleased God, in the beginning of the gospel dispensation, not only to manifest the same covenant of promise still more clearly, than what he had done to Abraham; but to add distinguishing ordinances, by the observance of which the community of visible Christians might be *visibly distinct* from all the world besides. We, therefore, with all readiness agree, that the Jewish Church is built, as to its visibility, as much upon the covenant of promise, as is the Christian Church, and that is, just none at all. The distinctiveness, visibility, or perfect line of

demarkation of the one, takes its rise from the covenant of circumcision, and is wholly dependant upon it. On the other hand, the distinctiveness, the visibility, or line of demarkation, of the other, takes its rise from the Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and is wholly dependant upon that. The Lord, who gave the covenant of circumcision, which is a covenant of commandment, named, with perfect distinctness, who should compose the community, which should be separated by it. The same Lord instituted the gospel ordinance of baptism, and as distinctly pointed out the persons, who might compose the community, which should be separated by that ordinance. Let Mr. Prime and his Brethren understand this *plain subject and be obedient*, and it will save them a world of very perplexing study. It will indeed cut the Gordian knot, and give joy on earth and in heaven too. This my beloved Brethren, would cause you and the despised Baptists, who are yet every where spoken against, to run together, not only into the name of the Lord Jesus, but also into his ordinances, with exceeding joy.

You will by no means understand me to say, either that the ancient saints, or later Christians are not built on Christ, as their rock and everlasting refuge. Nor that the Jewish Church, or gospel Church, was not built upon the word of Christ, as revealed to his servants. For they were both thus built and each according to the distinctly prescribed form revealed for each.

Had Mr. Prime understood this matter, before he wrote the lengthy detail of his first argument, he would not have told us, that "The children of believers are now born into the covenant,"* and that "being born within the pale of the covenant, constitutes membership in the fold of Christ. And whenever a child is born to a believing parent, the moment, that it becomes a member of his family, it becomes connected with the Church, and is to be recognized as soon, as it may be done by receiving the appropriate seal of the covenant." And then adds, "This is precisely the light in

* Page 48.

which circumcision was regarded under the former dispensation."* Yes, we know this to be Jewish, and it was right then; it was the thing commanded. But it is not Christian, nor right now; because under another dispensation, and not commanded.

Nothing farther appears necessary, in reply to his first argument, yet a few words, relative to an important subject, which he dwells upon in the detail, may not be out of season. He strongly urges parental duty and parental faithfulness. Had he placed his persuasions wholly, as he has in part, upon the command of God, and upon the great and many encouragements given both in the Old and New Testament, that such fidelity may be crowned with success, they would have been very weighty, and highly deserving the attention of pious parents; and calculated to administer solemn conviction to the callous hearts of ungodly parents. However, the good should not be cast away, on account of its being founded upon a wrong principle. To be sure, this encouragement to parental fidelity does not appear to be any part of the *covenant of promise*, or to grow, unless indirectly, out of it. For in that, there is no doubt expressed, or human conditionality involved. In that, there is no *if, provided, if so be*, Abraham shall walk before me and be perfect, *then will I bless him*, and all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed in *him*, that is in his seed, which in Christ. But God *commands* Abraham to be thus, and says, I know *him*, that he will command his children and his household after him, and *they shall*, &c.

Mr. P. before he closed, gave some symptoms, that he began to think in the same way, for in page 85, he illustrated the encouragement given to parental faithfulness, by the expectations which may be indulged by a faithful minister of Christ. Here is the principle upon which the Bible manifestly places it. Here would we meet Mr. P. and encourage him to reprove his own denomination, and ours also, with a degree of severity.

Mr. P.'s next argument is now to pass in review. "My

* Page 65.

second argument, says he, is, that *the same principles of holiness and obedience, were required of the Jewish, that are required of the Christian church.*"*

This argument, as here stated, has never, to my knowledge, been denied, nor can it be, by any, who are suitably acquainted with revealed truth. But then, it has no more bearing upon the point in controversy, and no more proves the sameness of the Jewish and Christian churches, than it proves that the families of Adam, Seth and Noah were each the same family. Of this, Mr. P. appears not insensible, for he himself, by the mouth of his fictitious opponent, Lebbeus, directly replies, "This argument proves nothing to your purpose, unless you can make it appear, *that these principles of holiness and obedience were made the TERMS OF ADMISSION, or condition of a standing in that community.*"

To which Mr. P. personally, thus replies, "This is precisely what I calculate to do." But in this he has failed; utterly failed. But he has proved, abundantly proved, what we have no disposition to deny, that the Israelites were commanded to be holy, and that they were under moral obligations to be devout, and not hypocritical, when they offered sacrifices, and performed other religious duties, which were enjoined by the ceremonial law. After turning the question into several shapes, if by any means he might work out an affirmative answer, he confesses, not in just so many words, but clearly enough for all to understand, that a *profession of holiness* is not necessary to a standing in the Jewish church, or to constitute membership in it. His words are "They were *born into the church,*" page, 122. Also in page 65, he expresses himself a little more fully "It is," says he, "*the being born within the pale of the covenant, that constitutes membership.*" This is exactly the truth, or, at least, within eight days of it. For the Jewish children, when born, or when circumcised at eight days old, were as absolutely members of that community which was encircled by the covenant of circumcision, as they were at any after period of life.

* Page 86.

Indeed, Mr. P. contends, that it is not the ordinance which constitutes membership, but "*by which membership is recognized.*" A person must become a member of any society before he can receive the badge or mark of membership."* You may indeed be a little surprised, that a person of Mr. P.'s good sense, should confess all this, and a great deal more, similar to it, and after all contend, "that a personal profession of godliness, or that *principles of holiness and obedience were required, or made the terms of admission, or condition of a standing in that community.*"† You ought not to fault Mr. P. for not having argued, or done better; he has done as well as any man could. No man can do more, than make a contradiction look plausibly. He has done this: and had not his neighbour come to search him out, many might have deemed his system defensible. We perfectly knew, and he might, in the outset, had he not possessed a predilection in favor of a system, which he too incautiously adopted, yet it must be a fruitless labour to endeavour to prove, that *principles of holiness and obedience were terms of admission, or condition of standing in a society, into which were received, in its first formation, and according to its original and unalterable constitution, and by the command of God, the whole family, yes, all the subjects, of one of the most potent princes of that day. The constitution required that every male, not under eight days old, should be circumcised, whether born in the house or bought with money. "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him."*‡ This community, thus constituted and thus commenced, was more highly favoured by heaven, than any other portion of the great family of man; for many generations, as is abundantly witnessed by the writings of Moses and other prophets. No other nation had God so nigh unto them, nor statutes so just, nor laws so pure; and besides, Je-

* Page 65.—† Page 86.—‡ Gen. 17.

sus Christ, the only Saviour, was by types and shadows, revealed to them, as the efficacious sacrifice, who would come, and, by the sacrifice of himself, take away sin. Not only so, but they were explicitly told, that in Abraham's seed all the kindreds of the earth should be blessed.

To the renowned Abraham, and to this community as it grew into the Hebrew nation, God made many great, and very precious promises, and they are handed down to our day, for the instruction and comfort of all that love the Lord God of Abraham.

Here we might close our answer to his second argument, were it not, that he appears to bear rather hard upon the Baptists, for considering the Jewish Church to be in several respects typical of the Christian. In his 88th page it is thus exprest. "Now I ask you, where is there any thing in the Baptist Church, to answer to the *type* of infant membership in the Jewish Church? Such a distinguishing feature in the type, must be expected to have a corresponding feature in the antitype. But where is there a *shade of likeness—the least degree of similarity?* I defy *Argus* himself to discover the *resemblance*. There is nothing corresponding in the antitype; that is, provided the Baptist Church is the true gospel Church,"

Were I to meet Mr. P. I might just observe to him, I have but two eyes, whilst poetic fiction attributes to *Argus* an hundred, yet I *seem* to discover some *resemblance*. Abraham's seed after the flesh were to receive, at eight days old, the "badge, or mark of membership in the Jewish community," and were entitled, by God's direction, to receive much instruction. In like manner, his seed after the common faith of God's elect, are to receive, whilst babes in Christ, the badge or mark of membership in the Christian community, and are entitled, by the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be fed with the sincere milk of the word, and thus nourished up, by the word of faith and good doctrine, unto eternal life. I might enquire, if there did not appear a *shade of likeness*, some small degree of resemblance? I am inclined to believe, Mr. P. would admit the fact. Indeed, I am inclined to believe, that had he no greater objection against the Baptists, than the want of the above re-

semblance, he would be able to discover a considerable *likeness* between the type and the antitype, and would, himself, acknowledge, that the Baptist church had more favourable symptoms of being the gospel church, than his book seems to allow. We shall endeavour to remove his difficulties out of the way, one after another, as they may occur in prosecuting the present labours.

In page, 126. "A third argument, says Mr. P. in favour of the sameness of the church, is derived from the application of the same figures to express the relation, between God and the church under both dispensations."

To give this argument the best possible bearing upon the important subject in debate, he takes a number of the most kind and endearing epithets used in the Old Testament, by the Lord, towards ancient Israel, and *some predictions*, which have an *appropriate* application to the *gospel church*, and contrasts them with expressions and epithets, which are used in the New Testament, to express the relation which the Lord bears to the New Testament church, and the kindness which he hath towards her.

We have no disposition to gain-say the very tender and interesting relation, which God bore to ancient Israel, his chosen people, his peculiar people, which he redeemed for himself, and bare as on eagles' wings, to whom he was an husband and a God. Instead of denying this, we are filled with wonder, at his exceeding kindness and long-suffering towards Israel, seeing she so often and so treacherously departed from the Lord, who was married unto her. But the time, at last, came, when he *put her away*, and gave her a *bill of divorcement*,* and said, "She is *not my wife, neither am I her husband.*"†

All, which appears necessary, in order to show the inapplicableness of this third argument, is, to observe that, if a man have had two wives, and the first, by reason of her having treacherously departed from her husband, have received a *bill of divorce*, the tender expressions which he used, and the loving and lovely compar-

* Jeremiah iii. 8.—† Hosea ii. 2.

isons, which he made with relation to her, while she continued his chaste and loving wife, have no aptitude to show, that the one put away for her treachery, is the same with the second, whom he now has; and who is, in fact, chaste and lovely; and of whom the husband now says the same things, as of the first, with many additions. The truth is, Mr. P. has undertaken to prove too much, and therefore it is, that he labours in vain for arguments; for none can reach the subject.

Who would have thought, that a person of his knowledge in things civil and religious, would have undertaken to prove, that a chaste and loving wife, which any person now has, is the *same* with a repudiated, divorced wife, who was put away for her treachery; and that the *present one* is but the *old one continued*? What husband would believe the thing to be true, merely from his having spoken very affectionately of the first, both in direct and figurative language, in the day of her espousal, and during her chastity; and having, since her divorcement, made use of much the same language, with relation to the second: and suppose the husband should be told, that on account of the similarity of his expressions towards each, it was evident, that in his estimation, the two women were but one and the same, or that the second was but the first continued; would he admit the position? Yet says Mr. P. "*From the facts it is evident, that in God's estimation, the church has been the same in every age.*"* It is rather pleasing, that Mr. P. should make use of such arguments; because it assures us, that he had no good ones at command.

Were this the place for it, we would show, that the Lord's estimation is very different from Mr. P.'s supposition. We would mention what the Lord saith, Isaiah liv. 13—lx. 21; Jeremiah xxxi. 31, 32, 33, 34; Daniel ii. 44—vii. 27; Ephesians ii. 15, &c. But instead of attending to this, Mr. P.'s next argument calls for our consideration.

"I now proceed," says he, "to a fourth argument in support of the sameness of the Jewish and Christian

* Page 132.

churches, which is founded on the nature and design of the special ordinances of the two dispensations.”*

Because there is a likeness between the special ordinances of the two dispensations, it no more follows, that the Jewish church is the same with the Christian church, than it does, because there is a likeness between some special things in my family, and some special things belonging to my neighbour's, that, therefore, his family and mine are the same. But I apprehend, that Mr. P. would have the force of this argument to rest in the *nature* and *design* of these ordinances. If so, then we reply, as to their *nature*, there is a very great dissimilarity. As to the first, one is passing under the knife in the Jewish dispensation; the other, under water in the Christian. As to the second, it was, with the Jews, the eating of a lamb roasted with bitter herbs and bread unleavened; with Christians, the eating of bread and drinking of wine. But the *design* of these institutions is of higher import. That of circumcision was to mark the difference between Abraham's family, and all other families of the earth. That of baptism to mark the distinction between Christ's family and all others. That of the passover to bring to remembrance God's special mercy in sparing Israel, whilst Egypt was destroyed. That of the supper to bring to remembrance our *Great High Priest* and *sacrifice*. Many more, and important things, may be designed, by these very great and interesting institutions. But no one such design, nor all put together, show the different communities practising these different institutions to be one and the same.

No more would appear necessary upon Mr. P.'s fourth argument, were it not, in the detail of it, he hath dropped some things which may mislead his readers. “Circumcision,” says he, “was an external sign of internal grace;—this is not circumcision which is outward in the flesh. Baptism is called the *circumcision* of Christ. The place which they (baptism and circumcision) occupy, is precisely the same. The latter was the *first seal* of the covenant. This, I have shown you, was the *cove-*

* Page 132.

nant of grace. Baptism is *now* the *first seal* of the covenant (of grace,) by which membership in the Christian church is recognized, and *without which*, no person can be properly admitted to the Lord's table.* In this short quotation, Mr. P. has the following incorrect assertions. 1st. "Circumcision was an *external* sign of *internal* grace." If so, it must have been, for ought he knows, almost uniformly a *false sign*; for there is no direct evidence, that more than one of the circumcised, appertaining to Abraham's household possess internal grace; nor is there any evidence that many of the millions of Israelitish infants, to whom circumcision was applied, had *internal* grace. Besides, 2d. It is a contradiction to common sense, to say "that *circumcision* is an *external* sign," and yet "that *circumcision*, which is *outward* in the *flesh*, is not circumcision." 3d. "Baptism (says he) is called the circumcision of Christ." It is not so called in the Bible. 4th. That "the place, which they (baptism and circumcision) occupy, is precisely the same." 5th. "That circumcision was the first seal of the covenant of grace anciently." 6th. "That baptism is *now* the first seal of the same covenant;" and 7th. "That by baptism membership in the church of Christ is recognized." Now this is all guessing; not a word of it, in the connexion, or sense, in which Mr. P. asserts it, is found within the covers of his bible. I would not so much blame Mr. P. for asserting and guessing (for I know the poverty of his system as to argument,) were it not that his thus asserting and guessing may do injury; leading and strengthening the erroneous to persist in error. But to assert or guess seven times within the compass of about one page, and prove nothing, is rather a heavy tax upon our patience.

"I will," says he, "only add here. that if baptism were not appointed by our Lord *in the room of* *circumcision*, and so understood by the Apostles, then that rite *was never abrogated* by Jesus Christ.† If the command to baptise did not supersede circumcision, then our Saviour did not abrogate that rite at all; and the Apostles acted without authority, in discontinuing it."‡

* Pages 134, 135.—† Page 136.—‡ Pages 136, 139.

Then circumcision is, in fact, not abrogated, if we may believe the principles which Mr. P. has laid down, pages 20, 21. "It requires," says he, "the same authority to repeal a law, that it did to enact it.—When the Lord has once delivered a precept, not limited in its nature, we know, that it must be *obligatory* until he *explicitly repeals it.*" The rite of circumcision was not limited in its nature; at least, not limited to begin or expire with the law as Mr. P. earnestly contends, and as we admit. Therefore, if the Lord Jesus did not abrogate it by constituting the ordinance of baptism, it was never abrogated by him. He certainly did not then abrogate it, because, as Mr. P. says, "it must be obligatory until he *explicitly repeals it.*" It cannot have been repealed by any other person, because, as Mr. P. says, "it takes the same authority to repeal a law, that it did to enact it." Hence, if we may believe Mr. P.'s reasoning, and we are not disposed to contradict it, for it gives us pleasure to agree with him when we can, the rite of circumcision is not abrogated. This does, indeed, appear to be the fact; and to it, manifestly agree the reasonings and the judgment of the Elders and Apostles, at Jerusalem: Acts, 15th and 21st chapters. To be sure, the rite, if not abrogated, and so of necessity in force, had no bearing upon the Christian church; for it seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to the Elders and Apostles, that the Gentiles should not be required to be circumcised after the manner of Moses. Nor indeed to observe baptism, or any other rite in its room, for, say the Apostles, Acts xxi. 25, "*As touching the Gentiles who believe, we have written and concluded, that they observe NO SUCH THING.*" At the same time, many thousands of Jews, who believed, were zealous of the law, at least, of the law of circumcision. Hence, Mr. P. and the scriptures, appear to bring us to the following conclusions.

1. That the rite of circumcision is not abrogated.
2. That, as circumcision was not ordained for the Gentiles, Gentile believers should not observe it.
3. That if *infant baptism came in the room of circumcision*, yet Gentile believers have nothing to do with it, for they were to *observe no such thing.*
4. That Jewish believers were for a considerable

time indulged in the practice, though not obligated to the observance, of circumcision.

5. That unbelieving Jews are yet bound by the law of circumcision. This is probably the truth. For otherwise how would the predictions, which relate to Judah and Israel, have a known accomplishment. Circumcision had no dependance upon the ceremonial law for its origin, it appears not to be dependant upon that law for its continuance. Circumcision was necessary before that law, it appears necessary since.

6. That the Jewish Church, though divorced from the Lord, and her house left desolate, yet appears to retain her visibility, and upon the principle, or constitution, which first gave her visibility.

7. That professing Christians, who say, they are Jews, or the Jewish Church continued, *are not*, but must lie. Rev. ii. 9.—iii. 9.

8. That the only plausible plea for infant Baptism is come to nothing, and worse.

Mr. P. has but one more set argument to present in favor of the Jewish and Christian Churches being one and the same, and that he says "*is drawn from the express declarations of scripture.*"*

To this argument we wish to pay due attention, for we know, that by the scriptures, all our professions and actions must be weighed. The texts, which he sets down as *express declarations* of the unity of the two Churches, are

1. Matthew, xxi. 43. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

"The kingdom of God, he says, cannot here mean the gospel church, for that was not yet organized: and even admitting that it had been, *these unbelievers did not possess a standing in it*, and therefore it could not be taken from them."†

Here he has two things very contrary from scripture; and one very much against himself; unless he means to tell us that the gospel church was never taken from the Jewish nation. For he here pronounces, that it could

not be taken from them, unless they had a standing in it. He elsewhere declares, that the Jewish nation was excommunicated before the gospel church was organized, and therefore they could never have any standing in it, and hence according to Mr. P. the gospel church could never be taken from them. Surely the Jewish church state does not appear, either to be taken from them, or given to any other nation. For they are as much a visible people, and as much in a church state, according to Mr. P.'s definition of a church, (being called out and separated from others) as they were before the law was given; and perhaps as much as they were in the seventy years' captivity. Hence, his text is nothing to his purpose.

Mr. P. ought to have known, before he entered the deep waters of church controversy, that the Jewish church, or nation, is never called the kingdom of God, or the gospel church, or by any other name, which characterizes it as the *peculiar people* of that Prophet, which Moses in the law* did say should come. Had he known either the old Testament or the New, with relation to the gospel church, he would not have told us, that the gospel church could not be taken from the Jews, unless they had a standing in it. For both Moses and the Prophets informs us, that they were to have no part in it, but to be excluded from it, unless they were righteous, taught of God and heard Jesus Christ.† In telling us, that the kingdom of God, the gospel church, was not yet organized, he errs, not knowing the scriptures. For a considerable time before this, John the Baptist, who was certainly equal to Abraham, had come and made ready a people prepared for the Lord.‡ If Abraham, by the command of God, could circumcise his household, and constitute them into a church; could not John, by administering the *counsel of God*, the Baptism from heaven, to the penitent, the Lord's spiritual household, constitute them into the gospel church? If he, of whom Christ testifies, that among them, that are born of women, there hath not risen a *greater prophet* than John the

* Deut. xviii. 15, 19.—† Deut. xviii. 15, 19.—Isaiah, liv. 13.—lx. 21—John, vi. 45.—‡ Luke, i. 17.

Baptist, could not organize the gospel church; yet did not Jesus Christ perform this, when he called together his disciples, whom he would, and of them chose, and ordained twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. Whenever, and by whomsoever the gospel church, or the visible kingdom of heaven was organized, one thing is certain, it was set up before it was threatened to be taken from the Jews. For Christ saith, Mat. xi. 12. "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;" and in Luke xvi. 16. "The law and the prophets were until John: since that *time* the kingdom of God is preached and every man *presseth into it*." Also, When he was asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he replied, that it was within them, that is, it was then amongst them; or in Judea though they knew it not. Thus perfectly plain is it from the word of the Lord, that the kingdom of heaven, the gospel church, was then organized, yet the blind Pharisees could not believe it, nor submit to it; for, whilst all the people who hearkened to Christ, and the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John, the chief priests and elders of the people could not tell whether John's baptism was from heaven or of men, they therefore, with the Lawyers, the Doctors of Divinity, rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized of him.* To these scribes, Pharisees and chief priests Jesus said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Upon these cavilling leaders and priests, for their ignorant perversions of the scripture, and deceptions imposed upon the people, with respect to John's Baptism and the kingdom of God, Christ pronounced heavy woes, saying, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye *shut up* the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves; neither *suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.*"† To the Lawyers, the teaching priests, who had so deceived the people, as to John's Baptism, and the subjects of it, that they

* Luke vii. 29, 30—Mat. xxi. 23, 25.—† Mat. xxiii. 13.

knew not what to believe and do, Jesus said, "Woe unto you Lawyers! (for ye have taken away the key of knowledge) ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."* It is easy to discover why such cavilling priests should be unacquainted with the kingdom of God, and why publicans and harlots might be expected to enter it before them.†

It need hardly to be mentioned to you, that the kingdom of God and of heaven, the gospel Church, must of necessity have been set up when Christ says, "It was suffering violence, (from Herod and the Scribes, Pharisees and chief priests,) men were pressing into it; it was in the midst of them; and the priests were engaged to keep the people in ignorance of it, and from entering into it. Nor was it otherwise, than what might have been expected, that God would remove the gospel church from among such hardened opposers; and send upon them judicial blindness. May God open the eyes of Mr. P. and his Brethren, before a similarly awful curse shall be pronounced against them, and upon our guilty land for their sakes. It is perfectly obvious, that his great design is to take away the *key of knowledge*, and to prevent men from entering into the kingdom of heaven, the visible gospel church; he no doubt thinks himself to be doing God service, whilst he perverts every text, which comes in his way, which relates to the kingdom of God; and manifestly seeks occasion to revile and to say all manner of evil against the people of the kingdom; and we may be obliged to take some occasions to show that he doeth it falsely.

You will recollect, that we are come, to what our author terms *express declarations* of scripture, in favour of the unity of the church. The

2d. Is, Acts ii. 39. "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."

Who would have thought of finding in such a text as this, an express declaration of scripture in favour of the gospel church and the Jewish nation being one and the same thing? Nothing but a mistaking imagination could have suggested a thought so foreign. For,

* Luke xi. 52.—† Mat. xxi. 31.

1. The *promise*, which is here exprest, is the gift of the Holy Ghost, as is stated in the immediate connexion of the text, and which had been the subject of Peter's discourse, which he had now scarcely ended.

2. The *promise* is here proclaimed for such, and for such only, as repent, and are bapitized in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins.

3. The promise is limited in the text to *as many as the Lord our God shall call*.

4. It was the very Jewish Church, or nation, or to such, as among them were pricked in their heart, to whom this promise was, at the time, more particularly made, and that upon this express principle, that they *should repent* and be bapitized; in short, the promise appears to be made expressly, and exclusively to the Baptists, or to those who should become what we now call Baptists. Whether they were Jews then living, or to be found amongst their descendants, or amongst the gentiles; even to as many as the Lord our God should call; upon their repenting and being bapitized in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, the promise was, that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. "This text, (says Mr. P.) is an *explicit declaration* that, though a new dispensation had commenced, the original constitution of the church remained unaltered."* Into this mistake he seems to have been precipitated by misapprehending the text.

But whatever Mr. P. or others, may find *promised* in the text, one thing is evident, that the *promise* was made to none but the Baptists; or to them who should then, and afterwards, practice, as the Baptists now do. There appears no intimation in the connection of the text, that any person should be bapitized before he repented, nor of any promise being made to any, but upon their repenting and being bapitized. Should the Lord give Mr. P. to repent of his errors and to be bapitized, the promise would be to him. But were he sprinkled, or bapitized, in infancy, or manifest unbelief, and have since repented, yet the peculiar promise in the text does not appear to attach to him.

*Page 151.

Mr. P.'s 3d express declaration of scripture in favour of the unity of the Jewish and christian churches is in Gal. iv. 24 to 31. This text, instead of being an express declaration in favor of the unity of the churches, appears to contain indubitable evidence, that the gospel church is a very different thing from what the Jewish church ever was. Here we are told of three important particulars. First. Of what the Jewish, or Israelitish Church, or community, was composed; of visible saints and visible sinners, of those who were born after the flesh, and such as were by promise. For example; of a mocking Ishmael and a pious Isaac, as in verses 22, 23, 24, 25. Secondly. Of what the gospel Church is composed, namely; of the children of the Jerusalem which is above, of the children of promise, of them that are born after the spirit, and visibly of none others, verses 26, 28, 31. Thirdly. Of the purpose of God that these two should not dwell together, but that the former should be cast out and not be heir with the latter, verse 30. This is the allegory explained. This appears in perfect accordance with other parts of scripture. Says Paul to the Romans,* "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called; *that is, they that are children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are accounted for the seed.*" Again he saith to the gospel church,† "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ:—And, if ye be Christ's, then are ye *Abraham's seed*, and heirs according to the promise." You see, Brethren, how Mr. P.'s express declarations of scripture not merely declare, that the Jewish and gospel Churches are distinct communities; but also, that his sentiment, that God haib. *by promise*, suspended the salvation of children upon parental faithfulness, is likewise unscriptural. Even Abraham's children after the flesh were not thus entitled. It appears a mere Arminian, or Popish delusion. The sentiment is no more found in the Bible, than is infant sprink-

*Romans ix. 7, 8.—†Gal. iii. 26—29.

ling. How expressly does the Lord by Malachi and Paul contradict this most fruitful source of Arminian superstition, and that too with respect to the children of the devout and beloved Isaac. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good, or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, NOT of WORKS, but of HIM that calleth.—As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."*

Mr. P.'s 4th passage, which he would have us believe to be an *express declaration* of scripture in favor of the unity of the two churches, is in Rom. xi. 15 to 25. This passage contains a mystery, but a revealed one, and one which the spirit of God is able to open and to make plain to the humble and prudent. After Paul had, as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, written this passage with some additions, he breaks out into the following wondering sentence: "O the *depth* of the *riches* both of the wisdom and *knowledge* of God; how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out." My desire of the Lord is, that I may open before you the deep and very interesting truths which are contained in this passage, and clearly explain them to you, that you may both see and know, not merely that they furnish no argument in favour of the Jewish and christian churches being one, but also, that this passage does of itself, evince that they are *not* one, but two very distinct communities.

In the preceding part of this chapter, Paul speaks of the Jewish nation, as being cast away as a body, of their having received of God a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear; of their stumbling and falling; of their fall being the riches of the world, and their diminishing the riches of the Gentiles; and much more their fulness, or conversion; also of the salvation of some of them; of there being at that present time a *remnant* according to the *election* of *grace*. After having stated these preliminary truths, he comes more fully to the great subject; and says, Romans, xi. 15, "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be

* Mal. i. 12—Rom. ix. 11, 13.

but life from the dead? 16. For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. 17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree. 18. Boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear. 21. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. 22. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God, on them which fell severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in again. 24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree? 25. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

In verse 15th, the casting away of the Jews is stated to be, or to occasion, the reconciling of the Gentiles; and that, when they should be received, it would be as life from the dead to the Gentile nations. In this verse, they are brought to view, as though all were cast away, the *saved remnant* is not named. But in verse 16, The *election*, which had attained to the saving knowledge of Christ, is distinctly noticed, as the first fruit of the gospel. This first fruit of the gospel, and which was among the Jews, and which was the *remnant* according to the election of grace, was holy. If the first fruit were holy, if the election, the few Jews who believed in Christ and composed the first gospel church were holy, so would be the lump, the body of the Jewish nation, when their blindness and spiritual captivity should be turned

away and they turned to their Lord Christ. If the root, this mother church, the mother of all the churches, the root, whence disseminated the glad tidings of the gospel, by the ordained disciples and Apostles, if the root be holy, so are the branches. None but such as hear that Prophet, of whom Moses,* in the law did write, are of right, entitled to the privileges of branches of this root, or are worthy a name in the gospel church. Whilst the Jewish church as an old, and dry tree, was cast away, there were found a few living branches, the *remnant*, the *election*, these were broken off; and as Paul says, verses 17, 18, "If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, (the Gentile additions to the gospel church,) being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the gospel church; boast not against the branches, because they sprang, and were broken off from the Jewish stock, which was, at that time, a subjugated and depressed nation, and beginning to be a curse and a by-word amongst all nations. But if thou, the Roman gospel church, boast against these Jewish branches, which composed the first church of Christ; yet thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. This honor hath God put upon the remnant of the seed of Abraham, which he foreknew, as his people, according to the election of grace, and this honor none can take from them. Thou wilt say then, verse 19, The holy branches of the degraded and repudiated Jewish church were broken off, that I might be grafted in amongst these reserved and chosen ones. The reply is, verse 20, *Well*:* It is true, you were grafted in amongst the branches which were preserved from the general flood of infidelity, and prepared by the power of the Spirit of the Lord God of Elijah, and made ready, by the Elias which was to come, for Jesus to receive and to acknowledge as the little flock, the kingdom of God begun. But it was *because* of the stubborn and relentless unbelief of the Jewish Church, that these branches were finally broken off from it. For had they received their Messiah, when he came to his own, his own kindred and brethren according to the flesh; and had not

* Deut. xviii. 15, 19.

their Scribes, Pharisees and influential priests cavilled at the baptism of John, deceitfully saying, that they knew not whether it was from heaven, or of men; and had they have confessed, that the baptism of John, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, was the COUNSEL of God, and submitted to it, rulers and ruled, priests and people; they, as a people, would not have been cast away, but would have been received into the kingdom of God, which was set up amongst them, but soon taken from them, from among them, because of their infidelity, and *thou* the Gentile branch, or branches of the gospel church, standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear; for, (verse 21,) if God spared not the *natural branches* of Abraham, or of the Jewish tree, and of which, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, but cast them away as a filthy garment, and divorced the Jews, or the Jewish church, who had been for so many ages his covenant people; and took none but the apparent children of promise, the spiritual seed of Abraham, those who are the children of God by faith of Jesus Christ, with which to constitute the gospel church; take heed to the doctrine of grace, the baptism which is from heaven, and to the heavenly precepts of the Lord, lest thou become defiled with the mystery of iniquity which doth already work, and so he also spare not thee. Verse 22. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God, on them that fell, on the Jewish church, or nation, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness—if thou guard the purity of the church by intentionally admitting none into it, but the elect of God, the children of God, rejecting every plea for admission into the Christian community, save the plea which arises from repentance manifested; and if thou reject not the counsel of God against thyself, and so refuse to be baptized with the baptism of John; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off, and indeed this Roman church, and others, have been cut off, according as Paul preached, as the Jews have been, according to the prediction of Moses.* Verse 23. And they also, the

* Deut. xviii. 15, 19—Acts iii. 22, 23.

Jewish nation, or church, or as they are called, in verse 16, "the lump," if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in, among the first fruits, the holy branches, which were broken off, when the nation of the Jews, stumbled at that stumbling stone which was Christ, and they, as the people of God, or church, were cast away; for God is able to graft them in again; not into the apostate, divorced, Jewish church, but into that **NEW MAN*** composed of those who are Christ's, and so Abraham's seed, whether Jews or Gentiles, and thus heirs according to the promise of eternal life. The phrase, "For God is able to graft them in again," appears the same manner of expression, as is used by Peter, Acts iii. 23. "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be *destroyed* from *among* the people." Not that they ever had a standing among the people of that prophet, *but* that they *never* should: so, in the present instance, not that they had been grafted in before, but that they should be. God's ability to do thus, Paul argues, verse 24, thus, For if *thou* wert cut out of the olive tree, the Gentile, heathen world, which is wild by nature, and wert *grafted*, *contrary to nature*, a wild branch into a good olive tree; amongst the holy branches, so as to partake of the fatness of the holy root, and to derive nourishment from Christ, and with his Jewish disciples to bear fruit unto holiness; how much more shall these which be the natural branches, brethren, according to the flesh, of those, who were the first fruits of the gospel, and of whom the first gospel church was composed, be grafted into their own olive tree? Seeing that both root and branches of this good olive tree were of their nation, and first constituted into a church among them. Seeing also, that it was first sent to them, and the great Husbandman was one who had been, in a very peculiar sense, their God, and the great owner and disposer of the whole, was, as man, their kin of blood, and of their royal line, and was born to be king, and had made a great feast amongst them, and shown the greatest friendship towards them, and strong-

* Eph. ii. 15.

ly urged their attention. How much more shall these, though now out-cast Jews, which be thus, the natural branches, be grafted into the olive tree, which is, in the above sense, their own? Surely they shall be grafted into their own olive tree, the kingdom of God, the gospel church, which Jesus planted by the ministration of John, not by Moses, though he wrote of it. Then shall they no more reject the *counsel* of God, which is the baptism of John, against themselves. They will then no longer pretend ignorance of the origin of John's baptism, nor claim a privilege in it from their being Abraham's children; but they will then know, that the Bible reveals but one baptism, as a Christian ordinance, and that no person has a right to it, but those who are Christians, or who are the children of God, by faith in Christ. Then will they gladly be a constituent part of the good olive tree, which was, at the first, composed of the baptized, believing Jews in the land of Judea, but which has since spread and become great, like the mustard tree, and then shall they thankfully partake, with the fulness of the Gentile nations, of the root and fatness of the olive tree, the gospel church, or, it may be more correctly, of the gospel itself.

It is indeed a wonderful thing, that such an olive tree should be planted in our world, make its first stand in Judea, be so long and so obstinately rejected by the Jews, and that they, at last, should be brought to embrace it with exceeding joy. With respect to this very matter, Paul says, verse 25, I would not brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Nor, brethren, would I have you ignorant of this wonderful and precious passage, which, if God may give you justly to apprehend it, will not only settle the controversy about the unity of the ancient Jewish and the later gospel church, but will also show you what the gospel church is, and that you should speedily join it, regardless of the reproach.

Have we not reason to believe, that blindness in part hath happened to Mr. P. and his brethren, whilst they

can produce such a passage as this, suggesting that it is an *express declaration of scripture* of the unity of the Jewish and Christian churches; and that there is no material difference between that community, or church, which was composed in Abraham's family, when he circumcised himself, his son Ishmael, and every male who was bought with his money, or born in his house; and that which was constituted in Christ's family, and composed of those who were bought by his blood, born of his spirit, and baptized with the baptism from heaven, in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins?

It has appeared unnecessary to follow Mr. P. in his various remarks and mistakes, relative to the 11th of Romans. It was sufficient for our purpose to exhibit the truth: that, when seen, will put down error. However, a few of his unguarded, or erring, expressions may be noticed for his good, for we sincerely wish him one of the richest blessings, the purchase of the truth, at the expence of his errors. He does not appear so wilfully erroneous, as he is mistakingly so. He has seen, through a misguiding medium, many things, which we have passed over, and many which we may yet notice. We may here just remark the following mistakes.

1. Says he, page 159, "The good olive tree, with its holy root, was planted in the calling of Abraham, and his posterity are the natural branches." If Paul had been of the same mind, he could not have told us, "If the root be holy, so are ~~the~~ branches." For we not only read of a mocking Ishmael, and a profane Esau, but have unquestionable reason to believe, that these *natural branches of Abraham* were generally unholy, and that manifestly so, and therefore were not of the good olive tree, with its holy root. The fact is, Mr. P. with many others, merely *guess* at this matter, for the scriptures no where thus speak.

2. He tells us, page 161, and no doubt, through mere mistake, that, "It is expressly declared, that when the Jews are reclaimed from their infidelity, they are to be grafted into the original stock from which they were broken off." Perhaps nothing can be more incorrect, or farther from the truth, than is the above expression. We read of the unbelieving Jews stumbling, falling and be-

ing cast away, but not of their being broken off. We read of some elect branches, which were once incorporated with the corrupt, and cast away Jewish tree, or church, being broken off, and of these branches being the first fruit; and of Gentiles being grafted in amongst these holy branches; which Paul terms the good olive tree; into which the infidel Jews, when converted, shall be grafted. It may be said to be their *own olive tree*, because when first a tree, it was not only found in Judea, but wholly composed of their brethren. Could Mr. P. and those of his brethren, who are holy branches of the root Christ, understand this important truth, they would cease their present controversy, and, knowing that the gospel church is not the Jewish church continued, but constituted out of the *remnant*, the *election*,* the *holy branches*, which were *broken off* from that corrupt and divorced church, would joyfully embrace the good olive tree, the gospel church. We are no where told, in the Bible, that the Gentiles are grafted into the Jewish tree, or church, nor that the Jews shall ever be grafted into that church; but that the Gentiles were, and that the Jews shall be, grafted into a very different community, among a people, who are taught of God, all righteous, at least all professedly so.†

3. "There is, (in this passage, says Mr. P.) a number of verses about the sameness of the Jewish and Christian churches, which establish most conclusively, the propriety of infant membership under the present dispensation. This is all the evidence we wish to derive from the passage; and this is so plain, that all the sophistry of your denomination cannot obscure it from those who think for themselves, and understand what is, and what is not, logical reasoning." Here our author affords us nearly as many mistakes as lines. He tells us, first, that there is, (in Romans xi. 15 to 25,) a number of verses about the sameness of the Jewish and Christian churches. Secondly, that they establish, most conclusively, the propriety of infant membership under the present dispensation. Thirdly, that this is so plain, &c.

* Romans xi. 5, 7.—† Isaiah liv. 13—lx. 21.

Surely there is no need of sophistry to show, that Mr. P. is very wide in his calculation. For the very first verse of the passage assures us, that the Jewish church was *cast away*. The second verse, taken in its connection, tells us, that the gospel church was composed of the first fruits of the gospel among the Jews, such as were converted to the Lord, or made holy. The third verse informs us, that this remnant, this elect few, who heard of Jesus Christ, were excommunicated by the envious Jews, or otherwise broken off from them. It also appears to be equally hostile to infant membership, as to the unity of the two churches. For it informs us, that the gospel church, in the *first fruit*, or in its *small origin*, in its fullness, in its *root and branches*, is holy, or made up of the manifest children of God: the plain, logical reasoning is, that infant membership, comprising our children who are born of the flesh only, is of necessity excluded. May the Lord give you, my brethren, and your teachers, to understand this passage better before they write again.

Mr. P. from adopting a number of false premises, appears very naturally and manifestly to be led to adopt a multitude of false conclusions. The following false premises have impelled him into many of his erroneous notions, and serve to fasten him and his brethren in their anti-gospel scheme.

1. That the Jewish church was excommunicated, and that too from itself: which is an absurdity.* For they had before agreed to put out all believers,† from their synagogue or church.

2. That the same sovereign act which removed the Jewish church sat up the gospel church.‡ Whereas the gospel church, the kingdom of God, was set up within the Jewish church,§ persecuted by the Jewish church, and taken from the Jewish church,¶ whilst that church remained entire, and as distinct from the gospel church, as now does the woman, who sits upon many waters, remain entire and distinct from the woman who was driven into the wilderness.

* Page 139.—† John ix. 22.—Mat. xxiii. 13.—Luke xi. 52.—
‡ Page 139.—§ Luke xvii. 21.—¶ Mat. xxi. 43.

3. "That the lump of the Jewish nation, or church, was broken off from the Jewish church." Whereas, it was the few *holy branches*, which were found in her, that were broken off from her. He says, "That the apostle declares, that the *unbelieving Jews* are broken off from their own olive tree, and were broken off from that into which the Gentiles were grafted:" and that it is expressly declared, that they are to be grafted into the *original stock* from which they were broken off.* Now all this, which our Author so roundly asserts, and no doubt believes, is all mere guessing. The Apostle says no such thing. The unbelieving Jews were not broken off from that into which the Gentiles were grafted; but the *believing Jews* were broken off from the Jewish church, and the Gentiles were grafted in among these believing, these holy branches, after they had been broken off from the Jewish tree, or church, and formed or constituted, into the good olive tree, the first gospel church. Into this good olive tree, in which the infidel Jews never were, and from which they were never broken off, are they to be grafted in, when God's set time for their conversion shall come.

Mr. P. has presented us with but one more, of what he terms express declarations of scripture in favor of the unity of the Jewish and the gospel churches. This is in Ephesians, ii. 11 to 22. In treating upon this passage, Mr. P. does little more than repeat some of the same mistakes into which his erroneous system hurried him whilst considering the preceding passage, and which we have already detected. Little therefore need be added, and perhaps nothing would have been necessary, were it not for three things. First, Mr. P. says, "that he has shown by several express texts of scripture, that the Jewish and christian church is essentially the same: and that *some* of these *express texts* all the ingenuity of the baptist church have not been able to explain away."† Second, "That if human language can express the unity of the Jewish and christian church, it is here expressed." Third, There appears a very express and

* Pages 164, 166, 168, 161.—† Page 174.

palpable untruth between Mr. P. and the Apostle Paul.

As to the first, we readily concede, that *all* the *ingenuity* of the baptist church is not equal to the task; but we say that the *spirit* of the Lord Jesus is *ABLE* to *discover to a child* that no one of all his express declarations of scripture expresses any such thing as he has, with much labor, endeavored to compel them to testify.

As to the second, this passage says nothing about the *unity* of the *Jewish* and *christian church*. Paul tells the holy brethren of Ephesus, verse 12, That they, were, in time past, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants, (not covenant* as Mr. P. expresses it) of promise; but (verse 19;) are now fellow citizens with the saints, (that is with the holy branches which were broken off) and of the household of God: that is, of the gospel church, or of the good olive tree, into the which they were grafted; as were also the Roman converts.

As to the third, Mr. P. says, "If *human* language can express the *unity* of the Jewish and Christian church, it is here exprest by Paul." Paul says, verse 15, that "Christ abolished in his death the *enmity*, even the law of *commandments*, contained in *ordinances*, for to make in himself of *TWAIN ONE NEW MAN*, so making peace." Now Paul had before explained, in Romans xi. 17, how this *one new man* had been made of *twain*: how that *some* of the holy branches, (not all, for some were *then* disciples *secretly*, as well as now) were broken off from the cast away Jewish tree, or church, and with them Gentile converts were grafted in, and with them did partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Here the matter, as exprest by Paul, is so plain, that common travelers in the gospel road need not err. Of *TWAIN*, of converted Jews, and converted gentiles, Christ has made in himself *one NEW man*. Mr. P. says it is the *OLD man*, with some external alterations. The Apostle says it is a *NEW man*.

May the Lord soon take away the *veil*; then this controversy between Mr. P. and the Apostle of the Gentiles,

*Page 174.—†Rom. xi. 17.

and between the professed Jewish church *continued*, and the gospel church, will speedily terminate.

“I shall only add here, says, Mr. P. that the *idea* of a *two fold*, but *essentially the same church*, runs through the Apocalypse.”* I confess it strange, that such an idea should run through the Evangelists, Epistles and the Apocalypse, and yet no one place to be found which, when examined, appears to contain any such idea, but directly the opposite. The truth is, our author’s labor, zeal and diligence are worthy of a better cause. He has done what he could; but, as yet, appears to have proved nothing.

Beloved brethren, examine for yourselves, examine for the truth’s sake; for God, not for a party. For the truth of God, and the honour of Jesus of Nazareth, are deeply interested in this controversy. Either I am pleading against God, and perverting his word, or you have been taught, by your erring prophets, to believe very erroneously.

In the Apocalypse, or Revelations, there is not merely an *idea* of a two-fold church, but emphatically, two churches or communities. Both claiming to be the gospel church. One is avowedly built upon the very principles for which Mr. P. and many of your learned priests very zealously contend, upon the covenant of circumcision. “She sits upon a scarlet coloured beast, and upon many waters, ruling over the kings of the earth, and says of herself, *I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.*” She claims to be the universal church. The other has ever been a little flock, hated by the world; has been in the wilderness most of the time since Jesus ascended to heaven; been little known in the world, but despised, reviled, and persecuted by the great, powerful, and learned advocates of that church, which professes to be the Jewish church continued. For this little, abused church I plead; for the other Mr. P. pleads. God be gracious and prosper the right.

* Page 171.

If you have read Mr. P.'s book, you have seen some of the reproaches and hard censures, which he has unsparingly cast upon the baptized church of the Lord Jesus. We have past over numbers of them in silence. But in that part of his book, which is to occupy our next attention, there is such a quantity of false accusations and unprovoked abuse, that we shall need much grace and patience not to cast back the imputations where they justly belong. Had he lived in a day and in a country, where truth was proscribed, and its advocate, by law a criminal, his book would be very much, what might have been expected. May you and I examine carefully, reprove with meekness; and buy the truth at the expense of our errors.

In the mean time, I am
Your willing servant,
for the truth's sake.

LETTER V.

BELoved BRETHREN,

YOU are born of God, and beloved by him. There are seasons in which the honour and truth of God are the joy of your heart. Could the gospel highway of Christian duty be opened plainly before you, whilst your heart should be glowing with divine love, you would be constrained to cast away every traditionary garment and come to Christ, and with joy follow him through evil as well as good report. Our united prayer should be, that these letters may come to hand whilst your minds may be *light in the Lord*. So shall you know how to choose the good and refuse the evil. I know the unpleasantness of doubting the correctness of our chosen system, and the pain and reproach of changing. But, if your system

be not of heavenly origin, you have travelled too long in it, and the sooner relinquished the better. My request is, that you be heartily willing, and devoutly careful, to *buy the truth*, and that you sell it not.

You must judge for yourselves, whether all Mr. P.'s arguments, which we have noticed, have been shown to be illy founded, whether they be all built upon error, and contain nothing but appearance, no reality. If he have one text of scripture in favour of his scheme, there can be none against it. For the word of God is not *yea* and *noy*. It would be infinitely derogatory to the Lord to have his word found *for* and *against* the same thing. Many of the Pædobaptists acknowledge too much, either for the honour of God, or for their own. Mr. P. is more correct, he says of the two systems, "if one be *right*, the other must be *wrong*." If there be one word of the Bible for sprinkling, or for baptizing, visible unbelievers, upon the faith of others, for the gospel ordinance of baptism, the whole is for it. You should therefore no more say, "The Bible appears as much for the Baptists, as for us," for the bible is not deceitful in its appearances. If it be any for the Baptists, relative to the subjects in debate, it is all for them. Nor should you any more say, with relation to the gospel Baptism, "One drop of water is as good as the ocean." This is trifling with the ordinance, and with him who appointed it. If he hath *commanded* a *drop*, it is greatly erring to use a fountain. If he hath *commanded immersion*, it is solemn trifling to use a *drop* or to sprinkle.

If we mistake not, we have met every argument upon which Mr. P. has appeared to put confidence, and shown that they were not founded either in scripture or reason. We have in no instance, avoided any of his arguments, through fear; nor have we knowingly treated any one of them with prevarication, or sophistry. We shall now proceed to meet other of his assertions and arguments. May the Lord prepare both you and me to give them all the weight which they merit, and to be deceived by none! Whilst we may find Mr. P. very positive and severe, if he have the *truth* with him, he may be justified in the one, and we have no occasion to com-

plain of the ether. But should we find that he has missed the truth in every instance, his condition will not be enviable. He has, as he no doubt imagined, shut us out of the Bible, allowing us no place there; his object now is, to allow us no place in the Christian world, and to prevent us from receiving any countenance from ancient history.

In page 175, he tells Lebbeus, "That his precise meaning (by what he has observed) is, that there were no Baptist Churches in the *Christian world* previous to Zuinglius and Calvin." There is probably more truth in this saying than even Mr. P. himself will readily admit. Let it be a little varied, and we admit it true. Let it be varied thus, "There were no Baptist Churches in (what is called) the *Christian world*, previous to Zuinglius and Calvin, nor have there been any, in the same Christian world, since, even to the present day." Let it stand thus, and we have no objection to it; we fully believe and admit the fact. We know that the Baptist Churches were, from their origin, not of the world, but chosen out of it, and hated by it. We also know from the ecclesiastic history of what is termed the Christian world, as well as from the Bible, that when the world became Christian by the VOTE OR MANDATE of the Roman Court, that the Church of Christ was persecuted by the beast which was, and is not, and yet is. That is, Roman pagan, which used to persecute the Christians, was put down, and so was not the pagan power, or beast; but yet this same power or beast, under a new name, existed; and now under the very specious name of the Christian world, pursued the same business of killing the saints of God, not because they *were* Christians, but because they would not be *so good Christians* as the Christian world, so called, had commanded all men, at least all professors, to be. Hence arose the *anathemas*, the curses, against all those who were such vile Christians as not to have their *Children baptized* within the time prescribed, or before they were one year old. By this *fierce persecution* against the Baptists, or against those who held that the gospel ordinances were for those, and those only, who manifestly possessed gospel hearts, were the saints of God driven

into the wilderness, into the place which God had provided for them. Thus did the Christian world drive from her presence those who would not join her, and of whom she was not worthy. With these Baptists, of whom very many evil and bitter things were said then, as well as now, the Christian world was but little plagued even for 1260 years. Yet, at times, their sentiments spread in various parts of Europe, but by burning, hanging, drowning or massacreing such as were, or supposed to be infected with them, the Christian world prevented a general or very extensive spread of these hated sentiments, till the time of Luther. Then, as Mosheim informs us, the Baptists arose (or appeared) in various countries of Europe, at the same point of time. But their origin, or whence they came, he knew not. Indeed, "Their origin, says he, lies in the *remote depths of antiquity*."* These were so severely opposed, and so roughly handled by the furious and unrelenting opposition of the Christian world, composed of Roman Catholics and reformers, that they, in measure, disappeared; and it is, but within a few years, that they have gained any considerable standing in society: and even now the mouth of slander is widely opened against them. These two, the Pædobaptist church or christian world, and the Baptists, have ever been distinct and separate communities, since the existence of both commenced. Mr. P. is therefore more correct, than, at first view, we might have considered him to be. Whatever might have been his intention; the fault, which we lay to his charge, is, in not going far enough. He should have said, "There were never any Baptist churches incorporated with, or belonging to the christian world."

One solemn consequence appears irresistibly to follow, from the above observations, and from what Mr. P. and his brethren universally profess to believe; namely, If the Pædobaptist church, or what is otherwise called the Christian world, be the church of Christ, *then the scriptures cannot be true*. For she has never been driven into

* Mosheim, vol. 4, Chapt. 3.

the wilderness, &c. as the church of Christ was to have been, but has risen triumphantly over all opposition, and reigned over the kings and nations of the earth. She has, in fact, been nighly the opposite from what the scriptures predicted the church of Christ should be; and has in her character and conduct appeared very similar to the Mother of Harlots and her daughters. It belongs to Mr. P. and his Brethren to do away this consequence if they be able, otherwise they may find themselves in not the best company.

But we will hear Mr. P. again, for he has yet many accusations to allege against the Baptists.

In pages 175, 176, he roundly asserts, "That there is not a word of truth in it; that the Baptist church had existed by a regular and uninterrupted succession from John the baptist.—Instead of going to the land of Judea, for the origin of your church, you need go no further than the city of Münster. And instead of regarding John the Baptist as your patron, John Bockhold, if not Thomas Munzer, is the legitimate founder (if the term legitimate may be applied to a lawless fanatic) of your sect. Your Church is not as old as the Christian Church by almost 1500 years.—These facts are derived from any authentic history of the Church;—the Baptist Church is a mere mushroom, that vegetates in the night, without seed or root; and languishes and dies beneath the rays of the sun."

As to the first part of this heavy account, "that the Baptist Church had *not* a regular and uninterrupted succession from John the Baptist," we are not very solicitous to answer, further than to say, and from the authority of the Bible, and by the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it, Luke, xvi. 16; and again Jesus saith, Matthew, xi. 12, From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." I may add one text more, being spoken by Luke, vii. 29, "All the people that heard him, and the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John."

From these texts, the following things are certain.

1. That the kingdom of God, called also the kingdom of heaven, was set up, constituted, or had actual existence, before, or about the time, in which John was beheaded. For, from or since that time, Jesus saith, this kingdom was, by one party, persecuted, suffered violence from them, even so that they took it by force; whilst others were fleeing from the wrath to come, and pressing into it.

2. That those, who were constituted into the kingdom of heaven, or joined it, were precisely what we now call Baptists; for they were baptized *in the river of Jordan confessing their sins.*

3. That the Pædobaptist church, or what Mr. P. terms the Christian world, cannot be the kingdom of God, or of heaven, (unless he be very incorrect in the time and circumstances of its institution,) for he says, that the church to which he and his brethren belong, was commenced just before Christ suffered, or not till that time. Whereas the kingdom of heaven, the gospel church was set up, not far from the commencement of Christ's ministry. It will not do for Mr. P. to alter his dates, for that would spoil the succession of his Church from the Jewish, or destroy their *unity.* If he do not alter the origin of his Church, it cannot be the same with the gospel Church, because their origin, and circumstances will be very different. He is therefore reduced to this dilemma, either relinquish the notion of his Church and the Jewish being the same; or no more claim to be the gospel Church. This will also cast him into another dilemma. If he give up the unity of the two Churches, his infant membership goes by the board. If he do not, both he and his infants, are members of a Church, but of a foreign one, not the Church of Christ. This reduces him to a very narrow place, in which he must become what is now called a Baptist, or have no fair claim to membership in the visible kingdom of heaven.

The next thing charged to our account is, "Instead of going to Judea, for the origin of your Church, you need (says he) go no farther than the city of Munster, And instead of regarding John the Baptist as your pat-

ron, John Bockhold, if not Thomas Munzer, is the legitimate founder of your sect." This accusation, which he dwells upon, and spends many pages turning of it over, that he may blacken the character of the Baptists by associating them with the mad-men of Munster, suggests to my mind the wickedness of Nero, who sat fire to the city of Rome, and charged it upon the Christians, that he might set the common people in a rage against them.

Mr. P. ought to have known somewhat more of the tragic Munster scene, or to have said less. "It was not the Baptists who began that insurrection, but a Pædobaptist minister, of the Lutheran persuasion, whose name was Barnard Rotman, or Rothman, and the fanatical scene was carried on by him and other Pædobaptists, for sometime before any Baptist appeared to have any hand in it."* After the horrid scene had been commenced, and, for some time, been progressing, some, who were, at least, nominally Baptists, very indiscreetly joined their Pædobaptist brethren. As the affair, which appears to have been a political one, succeeded not, the reproach must fall somewhere. At first, it was charged where it manifestly belongs, to the Lutherans, or to the Reformers; but after being considerably bandied about, it appears to be, by general consent, laid to the account of the Baptists: with just as much propriety and for the same reason, for which the Christians were charged with setting fire to Rome; because they are hated by the world, whether pagan, or, falsely named, Christian.

This has not been mentioned that the reproach of that day might attach to Mr. P. or to his brethren. For the truth is, no person, now living, ought to bear reproach for the disastrous scene which transpired nearly three hundred years since. If Mr. P. have very injudiciously brought this affair to public view, and should be somewhat mortified at having the truth disclosed, it may augment his future prudence.

His third assertion, that the Baptist church is not so old by one thousand five hundred years as is the Christian church, we have already seen to be his mistake, for

* Cres. His. Eng. Bapt. prof. p. 25.

we have proved it to be of the same age, and the same thing; and to be, at least, two years older, than the Pædobaptist church. This difference in age is founded upon Mr. P.'s calculation relative to his own church. Were the subject examined upon principles of facts, his church might be found more than two hundred years younger, than the gospel church. But two years, or two hundred equally destroy the sameness. He and his brethren are invited to remove the charge, if they be able. It may yet make them serious and stop their railing.

His fourth mistaken assertion, relative to the modern date of the Baptist church, that the facts which prove it are derived from *any authentic history* of the church, would receive no attention, it being so notoriously incorrect, were it not, that some of the common people may half believe it. If Mr. P. believed it, he owed it to himself, and to the public, to have either quoted some passage from some authentic historian, or to have named one, that we might have possessed the facts, or known where to find them. He has named Dr. Wall, but Dr. Wall is not a church historian, but a disputant upon infant Baptism. He has named Dr. Gill, but quoted him as saying directly opposite from what I have shown, that he had said. Whether Dr. Gill had in his younger years made the concession, which Mr. P. lays to his account, I know not. It is sufficient for us, that he bore his testimony to the contrary, and gave his reasons. Mr. P. has mentioned one church historian and made from him a very lengthy quotation, but even the quotation condemns the assertion, and assures us that Mr. P. is very incorrect in supposing that Munster gave origin to the Baptists. Mosheim, after saying many evil and bitter things against those, whom he terms Anabaptists, and singling out one which he terms "the most pernicious faction of all," says, "It was this detestable faction, which in the year 1521 began their fanatical work," &c. To make the most of it, it was some Baptists of the baser sort, who joined, with some Pædobaptists, who might not be unlike them. But it no more proves, that *there* was the origin of the Baptists, than it proves, that there was the origin of the christian world. Besides, Mosheim had

before said, that the origin of this sect lay concealed in the remote depths of antiquity. We shall have occasion to take farther notice of this subject as we pass along.

As to the hard condemnatory sentence, "That the Baptist system is a mere *mushroom*, that vegetates in the night, without seed or root," &c. we choose to pass it over without note, or comment.

On page 178, Mr. P. gives another of his too bold assertions; says he, speaking of Tertullian, "He was the ONLY MAN in all antiquity, whose writings have come down to us, who has said any thing at all against the practice of baptizing infants. This (he adds) is the precise fact." This is so precisely contrary from the fact, and there is such a cloud of witnesses against what he has so imprudently asserted, and these witnesses so generally known, where the present subject is controverted, that it may be deemed almost useless to refute it. But lest some of you should by this and similar unfounded assertions be hindered from believing and obeying the truth, two or three witnesses against Mr. P. may be now heard; and the first shall be Mr. P. himself. To such a witness, when he is constrained to condemn himself, it is hoped, that both you and he will pay due attention. In page 180, his words are, "When the sentiment, that Baptism actually washed away all moral pollution, and that *sins committed after the reception of that ordinance*, were so heinous, as to be next to unpardonable, began to obtain,—it was no uncommon thing at that period, for those who were converted to the gospel faith to delay their baptism to the close of life." What could be more against infants being baptized, than this very sentiment. *That sin committed afterwards was next to unpardonable.* If this deterred converted parents from being themselves baptized, much more from having their young children. Besides, this practice, so far as it prevailed, precluded the baptizing of infants altogether. This speaks loudly against infant baptism. Therefore some of the ancients must have spoken against infant baptism besides Tertullian, or how came Mr. P. by the information, that it was no uncommon thing for even converted adults to be afraid to submit to it. It would in-

deed be cruel to compel infants to receive what their parents durst not.

Justin Martyr shall be our next evidence against Mr. P. and against infant baptism being a primitive practice. The quotation which I am about to set before you, is taken from the Apology, which Justin Martyr made before the Roman Emperor, in defence of the Christians, who were accused before the heathen Emperor, of vile practices, as *we are now*; his apology may therefore be considered as the general sentiment of the Christian Church in his day, as much as Dr. Reed's apology, or Mr. P.'s book, may be considered the sentiments of the Pædobaptists in the present day. It has therefore uncommon weight in it. "I shall now lay before you (says Justin to the Emperor) the manner of dedicating ourselves to God through Christ, upon our conversion; for, should I omit this, I might seem not to deal sincerely, in this account of the Christian religion. As *many* therefore, as are *persuaded* and *believe*, that the *things* taught and *said* by us are *true*, and moreover take upon them to live accordingly, are taught to *pray* and *ask* of God, with *fasting* the *forgiveness* of their *former sins*;—and *then* and *not till then*, they are brought to a place of water, and are WASHED in the name of God the Father, and Lord of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ.—The reason of this we have from the Apostles;—for having *nothing* to do in our *first birth*, but being *begotten* by *necessity*, or without *our own consent*.—The penitent, who now makes his *second birth*, (or his public putting on the Lord Jesus) an *act* of his *own choice*, has called over him the name of God the Father; &c."

This witness Mr. P. summoned on his side the question, as we may soon see. But, unless he can be prevailed upon to testify pro and con, he will do their side but little good. Here his testimony is a complete prohibition of infant baptism. His language is so particular and definite, that it cannot, without offering apparent violence to common sense, be misunderstood. He says, *As many* as believe, pray, ask God the forgiveness of their sins, &c. *THEN* and *not till then*, they are brought to a place of water, &c. Not only thus, but he explains it

still more definitely, by saying, *our first birth is of necessity, but our second, or baptism, is of our own choice.* The reason of this, says he, we have from the Apostles. "This is indeed true, for the writings of the Apostles perfectly harmonize with his statement."*

We shall here name but one more, and that is *Walafridus Strabo*, who lived in the 8th century, and says, "That in primitive times the grace of Baptism was wont to be given to *those only*, who were arrived to that *maturity of body and mind*, that they could *know and understand* what were the *benefits of Baptism.*"†

It might be here asked of Mr. P. If none but Tertullian spake against infant baptism for many centuries after Christ, how it came to pass, that Augustine and many others in the fourth and fifth centuries pronounced "curse against such as opposed it, and forbid those who practiced it, to suffer the Baptists, or those who rejected infant baptism to WHISPER *any such thing in their EAR?*" But another of his mistakes calls for our attention.

On page 181, He, speaking of Tertullian, says, "The Baptists never pretend to quote his words, but merely make this broad assertion, "That he is the first of the Fathers who speaks of infant baptism, and at the same time speaks against it," which carries great weight with those people, who are ignorant of what he does say. They consider it as overwhelming evidence against the Pædobaptists, and this is the manifest design of the assertion.—This, then, according to their own concession, is all the testimony, that the Baptists have to bring against infant baptism during the first 1100 years of the Christian era."

What could provoke Mr. P. to step so wide of the truth, and bear such false testimony against the Baptists, we are not obliged to show. However, it becomes us to show, that he must have been unacquainted with the merits of the present controversy, or he could not, very innocently, have thus expressed himself. This I have showed already from Justin Martyr and from Strabo.

* Booth's Pædobaptism, vol. 2, pages 110, 111.—† His. Eng. St. vol. 1, page 54.

Besides, we utterly deny making any such concession, that Tertullian's evidence is all which we have against infant baptism during the first 1100 years of the Christian era. We can produce 50, if not 500, of the most learned men of his own denomination, who bear their united testimony, that many, from century to century after the commencement of the third, did not, and would not, yea, that very many refused, at the risk of their lives, to adopt the rite of infant baptism. We have not time, even to mention their names, but we will mention where a host may be found. In Booth's *Pædobaptism*, 2 volumes; Crosby's *His. of the English Baptists*, 4 volumes. An example of their testimony may be given, in an instance or two.

Says Grotius, "Many of the Greeks, from the beginning to this day, observe the custom of *detaining* the Baptism of their children, until they are able to make confession of their own faith; and then concludes, by saying, he has not brought this to overthrow the baptism of infants, but to show the liberty, antiquity and difference of the custom."* Gregory Naziamzens of the fourth, mentions those who were not baptized by reason of *infancy*, and he himself, though a bishop's son, and educated a long time under the care of his father, was not baptized till he became a youth, as is related in his life.†

Curcellæus says, "Pædobaptism was not known in the world the two first ages after Christ. In the third and fourth it was approved by a few. At length in the fifth and following ages, it began to obtain in divers places. And therefore, we observe this RITE indeed, as an *ancient custom*, but not as an Apostolical tradition."‡

A volume of such testimony might be produced, from their own authors, in favour of the baptists, and in opposition to what Mr. Prime has asserted.

It is quite a mistake in him to say, "They, (the baptists) never pretend to quote his (Tertullian's) words." The Baptists have repeatedly quoted them, and we will quote

* *His. En. Bapt.* Vol. 1, Pref. page 51.—†*ibid.* page 50.—‡*Idem.* 55.

them again, though one would have thought that Mr. P. would not willingly have prompted us to it. His words are, "*Baptism is the seal of faith, which faith is begun and adorned by the faith of repentance. We are not, therefore, WASHED, that we may leave sinning, but because we have already done it, and are already purified in our hearts.*"*

Dr. Galè (upon these words of Tertullian) makes the following reflections: "Are these the words of a man, that thought baptism might be given to infants? Are infants already *purified in HEART*? Have they *left sinning*? and are they therefore washed? Have they any such faith as Tertullian here speaks of? and yet he says, *baptism is the seal of this sort of faith particularly*; and therefore, doubtless he thought the seal could not be regularly applied, where this faith was wanting." Pages 512, 513.

Again says Tertullian, "Jesus Christ saith indeed, hinder not little children from coming to me, but that they should come to him as soon as they are advanced in years, as *they have learnt their religion, when they may be taught whither they are going, when they become Christians, when they begin to be able to know Jesus Christ.*—Those who shall *duly consider the great weight and importance of this divine sacrament, will rather be afraid of making too much haste to receive it, than to defer it, for some time, so they may be the better capable of receiving it more worthily.*"†

From what Tertullian hath written, or is said to have written, two things are asserted beyond question. 1st, That he was a Baptist in sentiment. 2nd, That in his day, some were for bringing forward children, at an earlier age, than he judged expedient. Upon which Rigaltius, a Pædobaptist, makes the following remark: "From the age of the Apostles, says he, to the time of Tertullian, the matter continued in *ambigua*, doubtful, or various; and there were some, who, on account of our Lord's saying, *suffer little children to come unto me, though he gave no order to baptize them, did baptize even new-*

*Depenetentia, chap. 6. page 125.—† Booth's Pædobaptism, vol. 2, pages 92, 93.

born infants, and, as if they were transacting some SECULAR bargain with ALMIGHTY GOD, brought SPONSORS and BONDSMEN to be BOUND for them, that when THEY were grown up, they should NOT depart from the Christian faith; which custom Tertullian did not like.*

This practice of having *sponsors* and *bondsmen* for infants, when they are baptised, which is a somewhat general, if not a universal practice, is a standing testimony, that neither ancient, nor modern Pædobaptists, do in their consciences believe, that God requires the baptism of infants, or of any unbelievers; for if HE required the thing, bondsmen for their good behaviour would not be needed to procure their admission. Nor would *sponsors* be needed, if the rite of infant sprinkling were of God. But now, the sponsors, in perhaps nine tenths of the Pædobaptist Churches, are obliged, in the name of the unconscious infants, to declare, that they renounce the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil*; that they *stedfastly* believe God's holy words, and will obediently keep his commandments; and when the bondsman for the babe hath said, and promised in behalf of the child, as though the child did itself speak, "I forsake the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of this world, with all covetous desires of the same, the carnal desires of the flesh, so that I will not follow, nor be led by them." And also added, "I do stedfastly believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord," &c. Then says the priest, "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" Ans. "This is my desire."†

All this is an implicit confession that repentance and faith are required in baptism, and that infant baptism is a mere imposition. Such hypocrisy God requires not. This same *duplicity*, and *trifling* with God, is still practised, by the Pædobaptists generally, if not universally. You may find the same mummery, and solemn mockery in the Episcopalian Rubrick for Baptism. Much the same, though greatly disguised, is in the most refined Pædobaptist Churches, and accompanies the sprinkling of every child. Your ministers, before they sprinkle

* Eng. bap. page 52.—† Public baptism.

your children, require you to enter into bonds for them; and they would sprinkle the children of all sprinkled parents, were they not doubtful of their being sufficient bondsmen. But in refusing such bondsmen, they are inconsistent with themselves, and compel multitudes of very moral parents to violate the *law of baptism*; provided your ministers tell us the truth, when they say, as Mr. P. does, that *baptism came in the room of circumcision* and is to be administered to the same subjects. To be sure, this is all a mere delusion, yet Mr. P. labours very hard to prove it. To accomplish which, he not only wrests the scriptures, as we have already seen, but perverts the words of the ancient writers, and denies what they have said, and compels them to say what they never said. An instance of this is now before me, in his 182d page. His words are, "Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the Apostolic age, says, *'We have not received the carnal, but spiritual circumcision, by baptism; and it is enjoined on all persons to receive it in the same manner.'*" "Here, says Mr. P. *baptism is distinctly recognized as coming in the place of circumcision, and as applicable to the same subjects.'*" This is the way he treats the ancients, and that too, with much assurance, as though you would unquestionably believe him, in opposition to your sense and reason. Had he not afforded us the short quotation, he might have had a higher claim upon our credulity. Justin says, *'We have not received the carnal circumcision by baptism.'*" But by baptism we have received the spiritual circumcision, or, by that, have manifested our repentance and faith, as he says in a quotation, which has been already set before you, where he speaks of persons professing repentance and faith visibly in exercise, and "THEN, and not till THEN, are they brought to the water, &c. and it is enjoined on all persons to receive it, baptism, in the same manner, confessing their sins," &c. This must be his meaning, if we allow him to explain himself. But whatever be his meaning, one thing is certain, he says not a word of the ordinance of baptism coming in the place of the carnal, or fleshly, rite, ordinance, or covenant of circumcision: nor of its being applica-

ble to any persons, but of its being enjoined upon all; just as Peter says, "*Repent and be baptized EVERY ONE of you.*"

In his next page, he treats Irenæus with little less rudeness, than he had just been dealing out to Justin Martyr, and he might have, with nighly as good a grace brought in Paul, to complete his triumvirate. He introduces Irenæus as saying, "He (that is Christ) *came to save all persons, who by him are regenerated unto God. Infants, little ones, youths and elderly persons.*" Then to make Irenæus intend baptism by regeneration, he quotes again. "When Christ gave his Apostles command of regenerating unto God, he said, Go, and teach all nations baptizing them," &c. He then brings in Justin Martyr, as a side-way evidence, that Irenæus does mean baptism when he says regeneration. "In like manner (says he) Justin Martyr observes, "They are regenerated in the same way of regeneration, in which we have been regenerated; for they have been *washed with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"

To complete this business, the words of Paul to the Gal. iii. 26, 27. "For ye are all the *children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ,*" should be added.

Which of these three, Irenæus, Justin, or Paul, comes the nighest to saying, that baptism is regeneration, it might be difficult for a casuist to solve. One thing however is certain, neither of them mentions infant baptism, nor can mean any such thing, by what they say, unless they had drunk down, that notoriously papistical heresy, that baptism is regeneration. But Mr. P. is ready with his conclusion, and says, "The sense in which it is used is manifest, and therefore it is evident that these testimonies are decidedly in favour of infant Baptism."

Could it be proved, that that ERROR of ERRORS, which produced infant baptism, had become prevalent in the Church in the days of Irenæus and Justin Martyr, as it had in the times of Origen and Cyprian, Mr. P. would

have more to justify him, than it appears, for the present, reasonable to allow him. His fault appears to be in hurrying forward the mystery of iniquity, which did, indeed, begin to work in Paul's day; this ERRANT HERESY, that BAPTISM TAKES away our POLLUTION, and is to be given to infants for the remission of sins, we know, as well as does Mr. P. kept step by step, with infant baptism. We also know, that where this heresy prevails infant baptism will bear no control. This heresy is the legitimate progenitor of infant baptism and of the MAN of sin. That baptism secures salvation is the life of the MOTHER of harlots, and that it goes, in a greater, or less degree, to the salvation of infants, is the life of HER daughters. But that Irenæus was a rank papist, and so is to be understood, to intend, that Christ came to save all persons, who are baptized, infants, little ones, &c. when his words are, "He came to save all persons, who were by HIM regenerated to God," &c. is more, than I am ready to yield to Mr. P. Nor can I say, but what I think him rather fast, when he says, that, in Origen's time, which was the former part of the third century, it is incredible to suppose, that "*this sentiment was disputed by any part of the church.*" Nor does it appear certain, that this mother of the papistical heresy was considered to be universal in the church, even in the days of Cyprian and of the famed African council in which he presided. But, about this time, it appears, that the woman, the church of Christ, fled into the wilderness, disappeared, and was no more considered to be any better, than a mushroom, without seed, or root, and good for nothing, but to be devoured, or trodden under foot. Not far from Cyprian's time, the man of sin became somewhat triumphant, and the world, in the beginning of the next century became Christian in name. From this time and forward, those who held that repentance and faith should accompany baptism, were but smally known, they had fled from the presence of men, and where and when known, they were treated with as much rudeness, and more cruelty, than they are now. Their general place of residence appears to have been amongst the almost inaccessible Alps. There was also a retreat for a very considerable number of them, in Cal-

abria, now called Wales, till Austin came into England, at the close of the sixth century, and converted the English nobility, and of course the peasantry, from paganism to popery. When that section of God's hidden people were massacred, because they would not hearken to Austin, in *baptising* their children, and in observing two other papistical rites.*

It appears, so far as I have been able to discover from various histories, and from the dissonant testimonies relative to the two interesting sections of the great multitude which has claimed to be called Christian, that the section, which is denominated Pædobaptist, became the dominant, or ruling section about the year 257. At which time, it appears to have been, what Mr. P. contends took place at an earlier date, that professed Christians had, somewhat generally, fallen in with the sentiment, that baptism was regeneration, or that baptism washed away the pollution of nature. Those, who adopted this belief, were violent for the baptising of infants, and considered those, who did not, as guilty of great evil. Infant Baptism was the Shibboleth of those times. These parties may be thus defined.

One held, *that Baptism* takes away the pollution of nature. These baptized their children, without a profession of repentance. These are denominated Pædobaptists.

The other held that Baptism was inefficacious without repentance. These required, as a necessary prerequisite to Baptism, a profession of repentance, or a confession of faith in Christ. Of course, they refused to baptize unconscious babes. These are denominated Baptists.

We may now use these terms understandingly, having defined them according to their prime, or original import. It should not be understood, that all the Pædobaptists hold to the efficacy of infant baptism to the extent, to which the renowned fathers of that denomination did; but all that baptize their children hold, that there is efficacy in the ordinance, when there is, and can be, no expression of penitency in the subject. In

* His. En. Bt. vol. 2, p. 21.

general, its efficacy is still believed to reach to the salvation of the child. As is the case in the Church of England, as well as in the Church of Rome, accordingly, after the rite is performed, the Priest is directed to say, "*We thank THEE, most mighty GOD, that it hath pleased thee, to REGENERATE this child, to make IT a member of thy kingdom, and an HEIR of glory.*"

Notwithstanding about the year 257, as we have before mentioned, the Baptists appear to have, generally, fled from the presence of men, and to have entered into their hiding-place, yet there were very many individuals, who, though amongst the Pædobaptists, did not adopt their distinguishing sentiments. Not only so, but there were societies, from time to time, springing up, which renounced infant baptism, and were called by reproachful names, and had the worst of slanders uttered against them, and some of them were charged with most heinous crimes, and reviled with as little mercy, as is shown by Mr. P. to the Baptists in our day. The Pædobaptists then, or about that time claimed, the exclusive privilege of being the Church of Christ. They appear to have run this claim as high, if not higher, than what Mr. P. now does. He confesses himself unable to determine whether the Baptist Churches are churches of Christ, or not. He puts into the mouth of Lebbeus the following question. "*Do you regard our Churches, as Churches of Christ; and our Elders, as regularly authorized ministers of the gospel?*" To which he replies, "*I candidly acknowledge, that this question is the most difficult to answer of any you have proposed, since we commenced our discourse.*"* He makes many observations, which go to the making up of a negative answer, but has not the courage to avow it.

Now, Brethren, the principle being settled, that, after the Pædobaptists had risen to preeminence, they claimed to be the only Church of Christ, and drove the Baptists into the place which God had prepared for them, you can the more easily understand what Mr. P.'s *saints testify* and what credit to attach to their *testimony*. He,

with apparent triumph, informs us, "That ST. AMBROSE," who wrote in the fourth century, "expressly declares, that infant baptism was practised in his time, and in the time of the Apostles."

"ST. CRYSTOSTOM, who was born A. D. 355, observes that persons may be baptized either in their infancy, in middle age, or old age, and that infants were baptized, although *they had no sin,*" &c.

"ST. HICROME," of the fourth century, says, "If infants be not baptized, the *sin of omitting* their baptism is *laid to their parents' charge.*"

"St. Austin" (St. Augustin, who was a famous disputant against the Donatists, who rebaptized all who went over to them from other sects, is probably the person intended) "who was cotemporary with Hicrome, mentions infant Baptism as one of those practices which was *not instituted* by any council, but had always been in use." "He says," "The **WHOLE CHURCH** of Christ had always held that infants were baptized for the **FORGIVENESS OF SINS.**" "That he had never heard, or read, of any Christian, Catholic or sectary, who held otherwise.—If any one, says he, should ask for *divine authority* in this matter." He proceeds to give four reasons to evince the *divine authority* of infant baptism. 1. The whole Church practices it. 2. It was not instituted by councils. 3. It was ever in use, (and) may be believed, very reasonably, to be a thing delivered, or ordered, by the Apostles. 4. From "how much the sacrament of Baptism does *avail infants.*"*

Mr. P. has quoted too much from these canonized saints. No person, who suitably attends to their testimonies, will, or can, believe what they say, or what he says of them. One of them says, "*Infants had no sin.*" Another says "The *whole Church* of Christ, had *constantly held* that infants were baptized for the *forgiveness of sin.*" The same one says, "That he had never heard of any Christian, Catholic or sectary, who held otherwise." Yet, within two lines afterwards, brings forward an objection, proposing the unanswerable difficul-

*Pages 186, 187.

ty, where is your *divine authority*? and proceeds to silence the objector, with, no doubt, the best arguments, which he had at hand. It appears a very unreasonable supposition, that Augustin, a man of no mean talents, should very seriously set himself into deep controversy with what is even less, than a man of straw; with what he had never either heard, or read of, as being adhered to by any, either good, or bad. The only reasonable solution of the absurdity is, that the capital declaration charged upon Austin, or Augustin, in a mere interpolation, a mere forgery. How Mr. P. could tell us, that these fathers of the Pædobaptists "are not found disputing the point with opponents, deducing arguments to justify it, or removing objections against it," when he, himself, introduces, at least one, in the very act, is left to his own consideration.

We are not, however, very careful to answer what Augustin, or Pelagius, said, or are reported to have said, in the fourth or fifth centuries: for by this time, the Pædobaptists appear to have possessed themselves of the Roman empire very generally, and to esteem themselves to be, as they were called, the CHRISTIAN WORLD. By some accounts, however, they appear to have been, yet more vexed with the Baptists and their sentiments, than what Mr. P. seems willing to allow. Were it not, that there are unquestionable authorities, that there was at this time existing some remains of the hard controversy between the Baptists and Pædobaptists, we should have no reluctance in admitting, that the former had all escaped from the fury of their persecutors, and hidden themselves in the pavilion which God had spread for them. Then, it might be true, that many learned men, as learned as were Augustin and Pelagius, had not heard of the Baptists, or at most not heard, that they were of the Christian Church, or so much as a sectarian part, or limb of it. For more attention to Mr. P.'s ancient authors, you probably will not require, nor he wish.

Our next attention is deservedly turned to Mr. P. himself, who, after bringing forward the ever to be lamented frenzy, and deplorable fanaticism, which pos-

essed the multitude at Munster, and which terminated in a tremendous slaughter, says, "We do not charge your denomination, with all the extravagancies of those fanatics. Shortly after their association, they were greatly reformed and reduced to a considerable degree of order by *Menno*, a popish Priest, who went over to them, and became the Apostle of the sect. *But in them you behold the true origin of the Baptist Church: and from them you derive the distinctive principles of your denomination.*"*

It seems next to impossible to restrain an honest indignation against a man, who has such unequalled effrontery as to palm such a notorious falsehood upon the unsuspecting credulity of his brethren. May God forgive the man, whilst it is my duty to expose his wickedness. We attach but little fault to the first sentence of the above quotation, for in it he concedes more, than some of his brethren have done, "that all the extravagancies of these fanatics are *not* to be charged to the Baptists;" well might he accede thus much, for, as I have before proved, it was the Pædobaptists, who began and for some time, continued those tumults, at Munster, before any Baptists were known to join them. His second sentence, that they were shortly after greatly reformed and reduced to a considerable degree of order by *Menno*, a popish priest, who went over to them, and became the apostle of the sect, is doubtful. If his meaning is, that that misguided section of the Baptists, who, leaving their brethren, went over and joined, that misguided section of the Pædobaptists, who were prosecuting the insurrection at Munster; if his meaning be, that these were greatly reformed by *Menno*, and that he became an apostle to them, and to many others in that region, he may not be far from the truth. But if he would be understood, that *Menno* was the first, who introduced order amongst the Baptists, generally, he is very incorrect. One would be inclined to believe, that he could not purpose to reproach the Baptists, on account of a Popish priest going over to them, and helping

them. For it would seem, that he could not have forgotten, that all that section of the Pædobaptist Church, called Protestant, as well those, who began the tumults at Munster, as those who were the most evangelical, came out from, or began to come out from the Popish Church about that time. But his last sentence contains one of the most atrocious slanders, and flagitious falsehoods, which I have ever seen committed to paper. There is not a semblance of truth in it. If here be not a premeditated and malicious slander, the author of it is less criminal, than what he may appear. Speaking of the extravagancies of the Munster fanatics, he says, "*In them you behold the true origin of the Baptist Church: and from them, are derived the distinctive principles of your denomination.*" The extravagance and baseness of this unfounded calumny would appear more pardonable, and capable of some palliation, had it not been that the author of it had before him, at the time, Mosheim's testimony to the contrary. Mosheim was no friend to the Baptists. At the time he wrote these very harsh and severe criminations, which Mr. Prime has extracted in his very long note, his imagination was very fruitful and his mind apparently much heated against the Baptists. Yet he was not so buried in opposition, but what he could discriminate between the Baptists generally, and that *faction* to which he attributes the tumults of Munster: and he did thus discriminate, and Mr. P. has, perhaps without observing it, quoted this discriminating passage, beginning in the 22d line of his first lengthy extract from Mosheim. Where he says, "*the most pernicious faction of all those who composed this motley multitude, was that which pretended that the founders of the new and perfect Church, already mentioned, were under the direction of a divine impulse, and were armed against all opposition by the power of working miracles.*" It was this *detestable faction*, says Mosheim, that in the year 1521, began their fanatical work, under the guidance of Munzer," &c. "In them (in the madmen of Munster) you behold, says Mr. P. the true origin of the Baptist Church: and from them are derived the distinctive principles of your denomination." With as

much truth, and with equal propriety might it be said to the good people of Massachusetts, "In Shay's insurrection, you behold the true origin of your State: and from their insurgent reveries are derived the distinctive principles of your government."

In his note, which follows on the same 196th page and continued to the 197th, there is a string of mean and grovelling slander, accompanied with many very unfounded assertions. I will not say, that he has embraced that doctrine, "That lying is justifiable in supporting a good cause," but thus far it may be safely said, that he is, manifestly, not an enemy to that doctrine. I will just notice one sentence in this note, and, perhaps, taken in its connection, the mildest sentence in it. "Now, says he, observe, that *the* Old Testament is all done away,—that Jehovah was *merely* a king or temporal governor to Israel—that the Jewish religion was a carnal religion, well adapted to please the carnally minded, and did not require real holiness, are well known to be the fundamental sentiments of the Baptist scheme." This, at least, is all mistake. The following is thought a sufficient reply. 1. Though I have been a Baptist nighly fourteen years, and am acquainted with more or less of the Baptists in each of the New-England States, and with some in different parts of New-York, yet have I never known any Baptist, to believe any one of the articles which he here lays to their account. The Baptists know, and so does Mr. P. that whilst real holiness was required of all the Israelites, who were able to understand moral obligation, that neither *real* holiness, nor a profession of it, was indispensable to a standing in the community, or Church of Israel. To be born in the house, or bought with the money of Abraham was, sufficient in his day, and if the law has not been since changed, it is sufficient still. 2. Provided every Baptist believed, what it is presumed not one does, even all which he charges to their account, yet his allegation would be equally unfounded, for not one of the things named is any more a fundamental sentiment of the Baptist scheme, than it is of a Turk or Papist. 3. Mr. P. ought to ac-

quaint himself with the fundamental sentiments of the Baptist scheme before he ventures upon any more assertions thus rude and extravagant. It is laying a heavy tax upon our charity, to require a belief, that he know no better, when he thus wrote. 4. I may just mention one fundamental sentiment of the Baptist scheme, and it is this, That a person should give *evidence of repentance* towards God, before he be baptized; and *not* be baptized upon the *responsibility* of bondsmen, that he should repent *afterwards*.

Brethren, it is painful, that good men should be so wedded to a system; which cannot be defended by the truth. Could Mr. P. have defended his principles upon fair gospel ground, he would not have descended to such prevarication and unfounded assertion, as you have seen him practising. You must judge for yourselves, whether Mr. P. has produced for the support of Pædobaptism any thing more, than incorrect assertions, unfounded suppositions and imaginary arguments, or mere sophistry.—Has not the word of God failed him in every instance, in which he hath attempted to press it into his service: and even should we now grant, that he has proved from the fathers of the Pædobaptist Church, that infant baptism was, in some instances, practised in the second century, upon the parents procuring *bondsmen*, that their children should, when of age, renounce the world, the flesh and the devil; and that in the third, the sentiment was embraced by very many; and that by the fourth, or fifth century it overspread the cities and fair provinces of the Roman empire, so that the Baptists were unknown; and that the Pædobaptists had from that time to this made up what is called the Christian world; and also, that they had all along considered themselves to have been the Jewish Church continued, and that they indeed had been thus, as far as times and circumstances could permit. Would you, who are the people of God, be gratified with the concession? Would you find it safe, or prudent, to continue your connection with such a church? For then, the Pædobaptist Church must have been that *WOMAN which sits upon many waters, and hath ruled over the kings of the earth.* Thus by granting to Mr. P. all

which he hath any fair claim to, he hath, with much labor and zeal, proved, what would probably have given no small offence, had any one undertaken to have proved it for him. For if the Pædobaptist Church be what he has proved her to be, or has indeed appeared to prove, (leaving out that part which he attempted to prove, but could not,) she answers, most minutely, to that woman, who had written upon her forehead, MYSTERY, BABYLON the GREAT, the MOTHER of HARLOTS, and ABOMINATIONS of the earth. I leave it with you and him to review his arguments, for I confess myself to be more than half convinced, that his arguments are invincible, and that there is no avoiding the conclusion, that the Pædobaptist Church is the very woman, who saith, "*I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.*"

If Mr. P. or any of his brethren can fairly extricate me from this awful conclusion, to which his arguments have irresistably impelled me, I should consider it an invaluable kindness.

In the mean time, I am,
 Dear Brethren,
 your willing servant,
 for Jesus' sake.

LETTER, VI.

BELoved BRETHREN,

You are weary of this controversy, and would gladly have it terminate; so would I. Were it not for the magnitude and importance of it, I would not have detained you so long. A fair decision of the subject involves the glory of God, and the interest of his kingdom upon the earth. Every judicious and reflecting mind grants, and must

grant, after the subject is duly canvassed, that the Pædobaptist Church is, and beyond all controversy must be, characterized by one of the two figurative women, who characterize two communities of professing christians. One of these is the Church of God, the other is a pretender, and intoxicates the nations by her fornications. You will find an account of these women, in the Revelations. Particularly in the 12th and 17th chapters. Your Church, which considers her children, who are born after the flesh, to be children of promise, and counted for the seed, is one of these women, and the Baptist Church is the other. For there are but two manners, or ways of Church building, and so there can be but two generic, or kind, of Churches. One way is, to admit none but upon a *personal profession* of friendship to God, made by the *individual person admitted*. The other way is, to *admit* professing parents and masters, with their *unbelieving* children, servants, or slaves. These are the only two ways, which the nature of the case admits, of Church building. One is the Baptist way, the other is the Pædobaptist way. By one of these ways is the *gospel Church* built up, by the other, the *Mother of harlots*. These are simple facts; they are mere axioms. It is presumed, that none of your prophets or priests, will seriously controvert them. They may, and no doubt will earnestly desire, that the Pædobaptist Church may be considered the woman mentioned in the 12th chapter. They may earnestly contend, that this is the case. But will they contend, that the Baptist Church answers to the woman in the 17th chapter? They must do both, or their contention is fruitless; for these two women are found in the *two* communities, for there is not a *third* amongst all that observe Christian ordinances. Once solve this interesting problem, "Which answers to the chaste bride of Christ, the Baptist Church, or the Pædobaptist?" and the present controversy, Michael and his angels fighting with the dragon, and his, may close.

To assist in solving this infinitely solemn and weighty problem, the following things may be here noted.

1. Jesus saith, "the *kingdom of heaven* shall be likened unto ten virgins."*

2. Which community appears most like virgins; that which comes as individuals, each one confessing her own sins, and receiving Christ for herself; or that which comes, each one bringing a family of children with her.

3. Jesus told his Church, that she should be hated of *all men* for his name's sake, be *persecuted*, have her name cast out as evil, be *driven* into the *wilderness*, and yet preserved; that she should abide in the wilderness 1260 years.†

4. Which Church answers to the above predictions, *that* against which Mr. P. says various kinds of evil *falsely*, and which has been despised, persecuted and tormented by the Pagans first, and then by the CHRISTIAN WORLD, or is that *Christian world itself, this church?*

5. The Pædobaptist Church has, for more than 1400 years, been in great renown, governing the governors of the world, possessing (as they have boasted,) all the learning, talents, wealth and piety in the world. She has emphatically said, *I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.* But some may reply, the above is applicable to the Roman Catholic Church. True, and what are all Pædobaptist churches in the world? Are they not, in fact, all the same generic Church? Where were the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, &c. three hundred years ago? Either no where, or in the bosom of the Papistical church. What are they now? A part of that church reformed. What specific, or distinctive, name have they assumed? That of the *reformed church.* Not a new church, but a section of the old amended, or reformed. Your divines have no other way to show, that they have any claim to a standing in the regular, perpetuated church of Christ, than to allow the Roman catholics to have been, that church: Tho' some of your ministers consider her to have been the Mother of harlots. If she be the Mother of harlots, then your

* Matt. xxv. 1.—† Matt. x. 22—xxiv. 9—v. 11—Luke vi. 22—Rev. xii. 6, 14.

churches are her daughters. If she be not thus, then she is the true church, and your churches are parts of the same.

This matter, brethren, belongs to your ministers to discuss. If you are the *gospel church*, then we are that woman, who sits upon many waters, ruling over multitudes, and nations, and peoples, and languages; and have made the inhabitants of the earth drunk with our vicious conduct.

6. If you, or your teachers, can ascertain, which church, whether the Baptist or Pædobaptist, have been accustomed to having children, and *not* by the Lord—then it would be easy to determine which church is to be considered the Bride, the Lamb's wife. The *chaste* wife has no children but by her husband. It is otherwise with an harlot. A mother of harlots may have been still more extravagant. Suppose the Lord, the husband of the church, should this day visit the church in Rome, assembled with his horrid Majesty the Pope at her head, and all her baptized children about her, and should ask, What Church is this? Whose are these children? By whom did you have them? Would not the answer be, 1. The most holy church of Christ, over which his holiness the Pope presides. 2. The children of the church. 3. Our ministers regenerated them unto God by baptizing them. Let the same questions be proposed to the Episcopalian Church of England, would not the answers be very similar? But say you of the Presbyterian, or Congregational Church, we are more reformed, than is the British church. Grant it, and what would be your answers? Would they not be, 1. We are a branch of the *reformed church* of the Lord Jesus. 2. These are children of the church, lambs of the spiritual flock of God. 3.—Would not confusion prevent an answer? What could you say? It will not answer to reply as did your Mother and your eldest sister, for you do not believe, in *ministerial regeneration* by baptism. You would, probably, be fairly put down; for by the 3d question it is implied, that the Lord acknowledges them *not* as his. Your priests may tell you, that this subject is too delicate to discuss; yes, and did you ever know an harlot, who thought it not indelicate to address her by

her proper epithet? This subject is of too high importance to be winked out of sight. It infinitely concerns one of the two churches. For one is infinitely guilty of the most *atrocious whoredoms*, or the other is guilty for not calling her children after the flesh, the children of God, when Paul says they are not.*

Mr. P. has spared no labor to prove your church in the right. To him we must turn again, lest what is yet behind should serve to retain you in error. As it has been my object to notice every sentence, in which Mr. P. has appeared to place considerable confidence, so we now being upon a part of his book, in which his confidence seems to rest, we shall transcribe several passages, which are in the neighborhood of each other.

1. "We prove, says he, that when the Lord *first* organized his church into a regular community, it was composed of *professing believers* and their *households*; and that the existing *seal* of the covenant was, by divine direction, applied to both."

2. "Now we say, and we have an *undoubted right* to say, to our opponents; *The laboring oar is yours*:—prove that the *original constitution* of the church is altered;—prove that the infant seed of believers have *ever* been *excluded* from the covenant. Produce the passage from the word of God, in which this evidence is contained, and we will surrender the point."

3. "Conscious of the correctness of this demand, and of their utter inability to comply with it, your people have been driven to the direful necessity of vilifying the ancient church, reducing it to a *mere shadow*, and degrading the ALMIGHTY GOD of ISRAEL to the ignoble station of a *temporal king*. This is the very *foundation* of your *whole scheme*; and a *rotten one it is in very deed*."

4. "They (the Baptists) say, "The gospel requires a profession of repentance, or faith, as a qualification for baptism." We admit it without hesitation, for the same did the Lord require of old."

5. "We are as strenuous advocates for believers' baptism, as you are."

*Rom. ix. 8.

6. "We never administer the ordinance but on a credible profession of faith. We do not pretend to baptize infants without it."

7. "We mark the children as set apart for the Lord, because their parents are the Lord's. Thus we produce direct and positive evidence in support of our practice, and you can furnish nothing but negative evidence against it."*

One would be ready to conclude, from the multitude of mistakes which have escaped our author's pen, that he wrote his book to be believed, not examined. But it is a part of duty, which I owe to you, and to others, to examine it, and to remove the more dangerous stumbling blocks out of the way of God's people. In the above quotation, No. 1, contains three mistakes. First. When our Lord first organized his church into a regular community it was not composed of *believing parents* and their households. Not a word is said of *believing households* being received into the church, or belonging to it for more than twenty years, after it was organized into a regular community: unless it be our *Lord's household* of faith. He at a certain time *called together his disciples, whom he would, and of them he chose and ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.* The kingdom of heaven, the gospel church was set up about the time, in which John the Baptist was beheaded. For from that time the kingdom of heaven was preached, and, as our Lord says, some pressed into it, whilst it *suffered violence* from others.† It could not be thus joined and thus persecuted before it was a community; and it must have been organized regularly, because it was the work of the great Master Builder, who inspected and regulated every particular. Between this date and the first believing household, which is on record, as being admitted into the Church of Christ, is more than twenty years; and we have not, to this day as Mr. P. knows, any account, which he can show, of any unbelieving household being admitted

* Pages 200, 201, 202.—† Mat. xi. 12.—Luke xvi: 16.

into Christ's Church, upon the faith of either parents, or masters.

Secondly. The existing SEAL of the covenant has NEVER been applied to parents or children by men. If aught may be termed the seal of the covenant, it is the *Holy Spirit*. The bible knows, nor mentions, any other. It is a gross imposition upon the community, for Mr. P. and others to fill their books and mouths with so many untruths, about circumcision and baptism being the SEAL of the covenant. Neither is ever so called, nor once intimated in all the bible, as a seal of any covenant. They appear disposed to crowd down the imposition by a continued repetition.

Thirdly. No seal of the covenant, could, of course, have been applied by *divine direction*. Nor is there any *divine direction*, as Mr. P. well knows, for the application of baptism to any households on account of the faith of either parents, or masters.

In the quotation, No. 2, he requires us to do three things, upon complying, he promises to surrender the point. We wish to take him at his word, and that he may not violate it.

First. "Prove that the *original constitution* of the church is *altered*." His requirement is unquestionably this, "Prove that the constitution of the Christian Church is now a different thing, from what the constitution of the church in Abraham's family was, when they were distinguished as a church or community by the religious rite of circumcision." This we conceive to be no very difficult labour. For first, the constitution of the church in Abraham's family was the covenant of circumcision. It could not be the covenant of promise, in Gen. xii. 2, 3, for that was revealed to him 24 years before Abraham's family had any more the particular shape of a church, than had Noah's family; or than had Lot's; and had no other covenant been revealed, his family would have continued to this day, without any revealed, ritual, constitution. The *covenant of circumcision* is therefore, without controversy, the *constitution of the church in*

Abraham's family : and, according to divine command, it, or what it enjoined, was to be applied to all the males in his house, whether his own sons, or others born in his house, or bought with his money. The *constitution* of the gospel church is the *ordinance of baptism*. These, both the covenant of circumcision and the ordinance of baptism, were appointed by the Lord, *they differ the one from the other*. The *original* constitution of the church is therefore *altered*.

Secondly. Says he, "Prove that the infant seed of believers have ever been excluded from the covenant." Here he must, to have any self-consistency, intended by *covenant*, the covenant of promise. For he appears, through his book, to make the burden of his evidence in favour of *children* to be, their having a title, through their parents, to the covenant of promise. It is now our part to show, that the seed of believers have been excluded from such a covenant. We will begin with Abraham's family. Says Paul, Romans ix. 7, 8. "Neither because they are the SEED of Abraham, are they *all children* ; but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the *children of the flesh*, those are not the children of God : but the *children of the promise* are counted for the *seed*." We have selected, as a second evidence in point, the family of Isaac. Of which Paul says, Romans, ix. 10, 11, 12 and 13. "And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac. (For the *children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the *purpose of God according to election* might stand, not of *works*, but of *him that calleth*,) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Here it appears that all Abraham's children, Isaac only excepted, were excluded from the covenant, and half of Isaac's. Our next evidence is contained in the words of the Saviour, Mat. xiii. 24, 25. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man who sowed *good seed* in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed *tares* among the *wheat*, and went his way."—I purpose to name but one evidence more, out of the multitude, which might be mentioned,

and that is in Mat. xxv. 1. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." Now, if the kingdom of heaven be *likened* unto a man who sowed *good seed* in his *field*, and likened unto *ten virgins*; the children after the flesh only, like Ishmael and Esau are excluded, of course, according to the *constitution* of the kingdom of heaven, the church of God. I ask Mr. P. can the kingdom of heaven be likened unto a *man* who sowed *GOOD SEED* in his *field*, if the constitution of the church not only permits, but requires, believing parents to bring with them into the church their seed according to the flesh, which is corrupt? I ask again, "Can the kingdom of heaven be likened unto *ten virgins*," if the constitution requires that households of unconverted children should be brought with believing parents, who are themselves, spiritually virgins? but if their children are to be brought with them, and to be styled, whilst impenitent, the children of the church, would the church any longer be likened unto virgins? would they not have more the appearance of harlots, having children, but not by their husband? It now seems incumbent upon Mr. P. either to show, that we have not complied with his request, or to surrender the point. But should Mr. P. refuse to surrender the point, and still allege "that the place, which infant circumcision and infant baptism occupy, is precisely the same, and that the latter has come in the place of the former, and occupies the very same place,"* and should he yet say to the Baptists, as he does page 201, "It is your business to furnish the *precept*, or *example* against it;" we would just observe to him, that all Pædobaptists, who are not of the Jewish nation, and that are believers in Christ, are forbidden to circumcise their children; or baptize them, or to sprinkle them, or to administer unto them any other thing, which is considered to come in the place of circumcision. This principle, this important subject, which the Holy Spirit knew would greatly agitate the minds of men in after ages, was settled by a council of Elders, at Jerusalem, in the year 60, and re-

corded in Acts xxi. 25, for the comfort and confirmation of such as keep the ordinances, as Christ delivered them to his people, and in these words, "As touching the GENTILES *which believe*, we have WRITTEN and CONCLUDED, THAT THEY OBSERVE NO SUCH THING." This needs neither note, nor comment, it is precisely in point.

From what we have just passed over, it appears, that all Mr. P. and the multitude of the Pædobaptist prophets have said about the infant seed, or adult seed, of believer's being included in the covenant of grace, or the covenants of promise, or the covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ, or any other covenant, which secures their salvation upon parental faithfulness, is a mere Arminian, or popish delusion of supererogation. If any were included in such a promise, we might have expected to have found an instance of it in the family of either Abraham, or Isaac. But we have found the reverse in both.

Number third of the quotation contains a cluster of mistakes. "Conscious," says he, "of the correctness of this demand, and of their *utter inability* to comply with it, your people have been *driven* to the *direful necessity* of *vilifying* the ancient church, reducing it to a *mere shadow*, and *degrading* the Almighty God of Israel to the *ignoble station* of a *temporary king*. This is the very *foundation* of your *whole scheme*; and a *rotten one* it is, in very deed." Here his mistakes are, First, In charging us of being conscious of the correctness of his demand; for we consider it, as belonging to him, to prove his practice right, and not demand of us to prove it wrong. Secondly, In telling the public, that we are conscious of our utter inability to comply with his demand; for we have readily complied with it, in our answer to No. 2, and have never, to my knowledge, manifested any conscious inability in the case. Thirdly, In proclaiming that we have been driven to the *direful necessity* of *vilifying* the ancient church. We feel no such necessity; nor are we pleased, that he feels such a necessity of vilifying us. Fourthly, In accusing us of *reducing* the ancient church to a *mere shadow*. The accusation we consider unsupported. Fifthly,

In laying to our account the *degrading* of the *Almighty* God of Israel, to the ignoble station of a temporary king. Where have we done this thing? I confess I am rather at a loss, as to what has provoked him to lay this thing to our reproach. I confess that it is my impression, that whilst the Almighty God of Israel is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and King in time, as well as in eternity, he was and is still, in a special sense King of the Israelites. As saith the prophet Isaiah xxxiii. 22. The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us. Sixthly. As he comes towards the close of this sentence of very incorrect assertions, he grows rather warm, and says: "This is the *very foundation* of your *whole scheme*; and *a rotten one it is, in very deed.*" Now, the good man, had he afforded to himself one minute's sober reflection, might have known, and his own good sense would, probably, have admonished him, that there could not have been a word of truth in his assertion, even were the Baptists guilty of the charges which he had, very inconsiderately and very unjustly, been placing to their account. For such things have nothing to do with the foundation of the Baptist scheme. At most, they can be no more, than excrescences, or bad fruit, growing out of their scheme. Could he have maintained this to be the case, he would have proved, that their scheme was imperfect; but, as it is, he has performed little more, than to exhibit himself to view as an imperfect judge.

In number fourth, of the passages quoted, he has given us two truths, and one non-descript, or indescribable something. The two truths are, one, "The Baptists say, the gospel requires a *profession of repentance or faith*, as a *qualification for baptism.*" The other, "for the same did the Lord require." His non-descript is, "we admit it, says he, without hesitation." He labors to explain the business, by setting off the repentance, or faith of the parent to the score of the child, or children. But if faith or repentance, be required as a qualification for baptism, did not the parent, or parents, stand in need of

what they possessed to constitute their own *qualification* for *baptism*? Or will it do to divide it and subdivide it, so that one man's faith will answer for ten, or for an hundred. Mr. P. may reply, children are baptized after the parents have been baptized and received into the church, it may be years after. So that their children are not baptized upon that *particular faith*, which was the *qualification* of the parent, or parents, at *their baptism*. But suppose it should so fall out, that the parent or master of the house should be baptized, at the same time with his household, as was the case with the jailor; how would he fritter up one man's faith to answer for so many at the same time. Indeed, this is, manifestly a mere make-belief. Repentance and faith are not articles of barter and traffic. This looks, as tho' it proceeded from the *vatican*, it certainly is not named in the Bible. To what straits men are driven, to keep up some slimy appearances of conformity with the gospel! If our Author had said, to be a child of a believer is the requisite qualification for baptism, he would have been consistent with his own errors. But to say that faith is a required qualification for baptism, and that a child may be qualified without possessing it is a solecism. Did ever any person before hear, that qualifications for stations, offices, or employments were transferable? I may receive favors on account of another's qualifications, but by what means qualifications may be transferred from one to another, I have yet to learn. I should say such management bespeaks a difficult cause.

In No. 5 he says, "we are as strenuous advocates for believers, baptism, as you are." This is an imposing assertion, which it is presumed no person, in the world, believes. It, therefore need not possess our further attention.

In No. 6 he says, "We never administer the ordinance, but on a credible profession of faith. We do not pretend to baptize infants without it."

If he means, by we, the Presbyterian Church, in Cambridge, N. Y. where he is minister, my reply would be short, being unacquainted with his actual practices. If by we, he intends the Pædobaptist Church generally, he

is incorrect in extreme. If he would be understood to include the Reformed Church merely, he would still be very wide of the truth. If he would comprise the Presbyterians and Congregationalists only, he would even then be incorrect. I apprehend, that he intends the same thing, by administering the ordinance, and baptizing children, though he seems to make a distinction, when he says "We never administer the ordinance, but upon a credible profession of faith," and then immediately adds, "We do not *pretend* to baptize infants without it." If he intends a difference, it is a new device, and we shall consider that he meant none. We shall also take it for granted, that what he has affirmed he would have to be understood of the purest part of the reformed Pædobaptist Church. For he, doubtless, knows that the great body of the Pædobaptists, not only the Papists, but the Episcopalians also, make as farcical a mockery in the christening of their children, as ever the Philistines did in the worship of Dagon. Having their godfathers and godmothers, their sponsors, promisers and bondsmen, as though they were ready to indemnify the Lord, should any of the sprinkled children prove refractory, and not renounce the world, the flesh and the devil, with all the pomp and vanities of this world, as their bondsmen, in the manner of ventriloquists, promise for them. Now Mr. P. not only knows, that this is the practice of the great body of his denomination, but also, that this is manifestly playing tricks with the Almighty. Yet he will plead for the foundation of the practice, with his full strength; and also practice the same thing in essence though under a *reformed garb*. Could he find like iniquity amongst the Baptists, he would not merit censure, though he should expose the truth, which would be saying the worst he could. But he manifestly thinketh, that he doeth God service, whilst he is fulfilling the scriptures in saying all manner of evil against the Baptists without cause. We hope God will not lay this sin to his charge. But we must expose his mistaken assertions, that we may not suffer sin upon him and his brethren. We have concluded, that in the declaration, "We never administer the

ordinance, but upon a credible profession of faith," he intentionally includes none but the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, which are unquestionably the most reformed sections of the reformed Church. (The Baptists are not included in the reformed Church, for they were never subject to the Pontiffs of Rome, and of course could never come out of that Church; for what was never in, cannot be taken out.) Even of these, of the most reformed portions of what is styled the Reformed Church; it is very incorrect to say, "They never administer the ordinance; but upon a credible profession of faith." It has been, if it be not now, very much the reverse. It is a singular fact, if it be one, that Mr. P. never heard, or in some book read, that there was for many years, a very general agreement with the ministers and Churches in our land to do otherwise. They feared, that the ark of God would fall, or their Churches become extinct, unless they sprinkled the children of moralists, who made no profession of having either repentance, or faith. They therefore formed an unhallowed Covenant, (and none is hallowed, which includes bondsmen, who, whilst bankrupts themselves, undertake to be bound to God for the fidelity of others) by which parents were encouraged to deal deceitfully with God, that they might ingratiate their children into his favour. I have long detested the practice, yet repeatedly seen it in operation.

I may give you a sample of what I have seen to be practised by a Presbyterian, or by a Congregational minister, and I have seen not very dissimilar things performed by both. The last time, save one, in which I was present, when the rite of sprinkling a child was performed, was, say ten years since, when by stress of weather, the vessel, in which I was a passenger, was driven into Cape-Harbour. When I could be landed with safety, I visited Provincetown and Mr. Parker, who was the clergyman of the place. From whom I received many expressions of the most unaffected hospitality. We were, manifestly, mutually pleased with the interview. His house appeared to be filled with plenty, and his heart with urbanity. His domestics had

participated liberally of the same philanthropic spirit. By his particular solicitation I consented to lead in the public exercises of the day. The forenoon being past and the interim commenced, a young sea-captain, of very pleasant deportment, entered the habitation of my very friendly host. He soon communicated his important errand, by observing, "Mr. Parker, I wish to have my child sprinkled." Mr. Parker replied, "You must take the covenant." "Yes, said the young captain, I expect to; but if I do, I shall not keep it." Well, said the very civil parson, you must take it upon you. I then broke silence, and requested of the frank, and apparently very honest young man, why he wished for the sprinkling of his child. He promptly answered, it is the *custom*. I then asked him, if the Lord required it of him? or whether it were not a *mere* custom, or traditionary business? He appeared not ready with his answer. I turned to Mr. Parker, and asked by what authority he did such things? He as readily replied, "I don't know. It is customary. I have always practised thus, and my predecessors before me." The young captain exclaimed with a degree of astonishment, "Mr. Parker, this is a strange thing!" His meaning appeared to be, "this is a strange thing that the minister did not know why his child should be sprinkled." He thought, there must be an important reason for it; though for himself, he knew not what that reason could be. I then asked him, "would it not be well to postpone the matter of sprinkling the child, till you have searched the Bible upon the subject? Then if God requires you to bring your child, you can do it because it is commanded; if it be a mere custom, or tradition of men, you can omit it. He consented, that it might be prudent to put the matter by for the present. I then turned to Mr. Parker with a query, whether it would not be as well to put the business by for the present, till he should know by what authority he practised such things. His reply was, I do not know but it will, and added, we will have a Church meeting and enquire into the matter. Upon both agreeing thus to wrap it up, I retired.

to meditate upon the subject of discourse for the afternoon. After I went out, Mr. Parker bethought himself that matters had gone rather too far to end just there, and says to the young man, the Deacon has carried the basin of water into the Meeting-House, the people will expect a child to be sprinkled, or baptized; it may cause considerable conversation, or wonder, if the matter be omitted. The complaisant young man consented to have it, just as Mr. Parker thought best. Thus they unwrapped the matter, as Mrs. Merrill, who was present, informed me afterwards. I returned to the room, and we immediately proceeded to the place of public worship. I knew nothing of the change, till after the close of the discourse, at which time I beckoned to Mr. Parker to lead in the closing prayer. He arose, called forward the young man, and propounded to him the covenant, in which were many promises to be made, but with respect to them the covenanter had, no doubt, a mental reservation, for he had previously informed the minister, that he should not keep them. But when he had bowed assent, and prayer had been offered, the rite was performed, and the priest returned to the pulpit, motioning a request, that I would close by prayer. I manifested my dissent, intimating, that I had nothing to do with such things. Whilst retiring from the Meeting-House I observed to Mr. Parker, that upon my mind was a certain text, which was this. *Without faith it is impossible to please Him, that is God.* With relation to this business just transacted, you had no faith in it, as you conceded, before the meeting opened. The young man had none, as he also informed us. Unless the child had, there was none in the parties concerned; and for myself, I doubt its being pleasing to God. The pleasant man shook his head, saying, I don't know that it was. After we entered his dwelling, I mentioned, that another text struck my mind, and that it was, *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* I farther observed, as the sprinkling of the child was not of faith, I had a serious query, whether it were not a piece of abomination. He, again shaking his head, seriously replied, "I dont know but it is."

I have related the above, that I might show you from real life, or actual service, that Mr. P. is incorrect in saying, "We never administer the ordinance; but on a credible profession of faith." He is not merely incorrect, but the reverse of what he has said, is, taking the whole Pædobaptist Church into the account, almost infinitely nearer the truth. For I should say, not one to fifty of those who practise infant Baptism, or sprinkling, require any profession of experimental religion. There are a considerable number of Churches in England, and comparatively more in our own nation, who require a profession of repentance to accompany an admission to the Lord's supper, and also to the baptizing of their children. These persons have not courage enough to renounce the traditions of their fathers, and obey the Lord and be baptized, and so join the Baptists; and they have too much light to follow the multitude of their brethren in their more gross hypocrisy. They, therefore, pursue, a kind of middle course, and are greatly inconsistent with their own scheme, and will not agree with the Lord's. What Priest in Israel ever thought of requiring a personal profession of experimental religion of a circumcised Israelite, as a qualification for the circumcising of his son. No such right was ever conferred on a priest in Israel; nor has any Pædobaptist minister a right to require it now. If they be right in their principle, let them pursue it; if wrong, let them renounce it. Their principle is, that Baptism has taken the place of circumcision, and to be administered to similar subjects. If so, it is sufficient, that I have been baptized, and not cut off for some flagrant wickedness, to constitute my perfect right to have my children baptized. Not only so, but no priest may upon the pretence of God's displeasure, forbid my child being baptized, for he is not only accessory to my child's breaking the covenant, and being cut off from God's people, but forces him to it. Let Mr. P. or any of his conscientious brethren extricate themselves from this sin, if they be able. Let the godly among the Pædobaptists understand their own system, and they must either return to their mother, the Church of Rome, or repent of

their error and be baptized confessing their sins, each one for himself. There is no half way in this business. It is mere mockery to say as Mr. P. does. We do not *pretend* to baptize children without a credible profession of faith. This is halving matters between Christ and the Mother of harlots. Either Austin was correct, in baptizing by proxy the British subjects, ten thousand in a day, upon the faith of the British King and court;* or the Baptists are correct in demanding that every one should be baptised upon his own faith. Austin went upon the Pædobaptist principle brought into full operation. The other is the Baptist principle. There is no compromise between the two. One is right, and the other must be wrong. Consider, take advice and speak your minds. God abhors this half-way business, steering between God and the world to please both.

Once more, in No. 7, says Mr. P. "We mark the children as set apart for the Lord, because their parents are the Lord's. Thus, we produce *direct* and *positive evidence*, in support of our practice, and you can furnish nothing but negative evidence against it." Here is still nothing but assertion, no evidence, either direct, or positive. I appeal to Mr. P. himself, whether he did not thus express himself, because he had nothing else to say, or because he despaired of producing aught of more weight than bare assertion. He is a man of sense, and knows, that there is no weight in his argument, or rather that he employed none. He asserted a number of things, and then said, "Hence we mark the children as set apart for the Lord, because their parents are the Lord's," and then adds, "Thus we produce *direct* and *positive evidence*," &c.

Brethren, you must answer for yourselves, and you have a right to think for yourselves; but you have no right to think contrary from the truth, when the light is before you. Cease from man, then may you follow God. He that will save his life shall lose it.

I am as ever

your willing servant

for the gospel's sake.

*His. British Bap. Vol. 2 p. 18, Pref.

LETTER VII.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

NOTWITHSTANDING the Lord promised, that in gospel times there should be an highway of holiness; which should be for the clean, and that the unclean should not pass over it; and that it should be so plain, that the honest traveller should not err in it, or miss his way:* yet you see that either the Baptists, or the Pædobaptists, have missed this way. In each of these communities, it is believed, are found many travellers. In one or the other, the travellers are not honest, not willing to be counted fools, for Christ's sake and the gospel's, or the promise appears to fail. The Baptists say, that this gospel highway of holiness is for the clean, for those whose hearts are purified by faith, whose repentance is manifested by their fruit, and that the unclean have no right to walk in it. The Pædobaptists contend, that this highway of holiness is nothing more, than the ancient Jewish way, a little differently staked out; and that, where the father, mother, or master, is clean, this confers a right to the unclean, unconverted, household of children and servants, to travel on this highway. The Baptists say, "If this be correct, there must be some express precept, or unquestionable example in the New Testament to justify the practice." Mr. P. replies, "With the greatest propriety, we deny this.†" You have seen, in the last letter, how he progressed in showing, that the Pædobaptists needed neither precept, nor example, from the New Testament, to support their practice. In this, you will perceive his labor to gain, out of the New Testament, some encouragement for his scheme. If the Pædobaptists be correct, and are indeed the visible Church of Christ, it is to be sure a surprising providence, that they are compelled to such a variety of dark, and

*Isaiah, xxxv. 8.—†Page 200.

dubious arguments, to give to their scheme any plausible attitude. Whilst the Baptist scheme is minutely detailed by Christ and his Apostles: as I hope to show you by and bye. But for the present, we must attend to Mr. P. who says, "Seeing that our Saviour and his Apostles acknowledged the Abrahamic covenant as the constitution of the Church, as I have *abundantly shown*, there is just as much evidence of infant membership in the New Testament, as we should expect to find; and that is a *distinct recognition* of the fact. Thus our Saviour declares "*Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.*" See Mat. xix. 14—Mark, x. 14—Luke, xviii. 16.

In this quotation he manifestly treats Christ and his Apostles rather rudely; in bringing them forward as abettors of a cause, of which they appear never to have approved, nor ever to have spoken a word in its favor; and then says, he has *abundantly shown* that they have. He next proceeds to inform us, that there is evidence of infant membership in the New Testament, and as much as we should expect to find; and that is, a *distinct acknowledgement* of the fact. † If there be such acknowledgment, he was bound to tell us where. He has named three texts, and quoted one, and the other two are, no doubt, the same thing, related by the other Evangelists. But what is this text to his purpose? I appeal, with a degree of confidence, to Mr. P. that the text, being elliptical, would, with the elipsis supplied, read thus. Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such as come to me is the kingdom of heaven. Now if the above be the plain literal reading of the text, the figure being removed; then two things are obvious, one, that these children, who come to Christ, are such as are mentioned in the next chapter but one, 15th and 16th ver. "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: they were *sore displeased*, and said unto him, hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, yea; have ye never read, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise? Or they are such believing little children, as,

are mentioned in the preceding chapter, which is the xviii. 6. The other obvious thing is, that the kingdom of heaven is composed of believing little children, and of such as are like unto them: or still more obviously, just as our Lord expresses the matter, in the very following verse to the one which Mr. P. quoted, Mark, x. 15, "*Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*" One thing more appears equally obvious, and that is, that this text hath nothing to do with Mr. Prime's scheme, unless it be to demolish it. For it informs us, that no one can enter into the kingdom of heaven, or hath any right to it, unless he come to Christ, or be converted and become as a little child, or receive the kingdom of God with a childlike meekness. Hence it is manifest, that parents and masters cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, the gospel church, bringing a number of impenitent infants and servants with them. Of such is the Pædobaptist Church; but of such is not the kingdom of heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ the King, being judge. Is it not surprising, that Mr. P. could tell us, that such a text was a distinct recognition of infant membership? In the remarks which he makes upon the text, the following one is worthy of a moment's attention. "If the phrase, (the kingdom of God) says he, be applied to the gospel Church, which indeed is by far the most frequent application, it is *explicit warrant*, (for infant membership) a positive declaration that the gospel Church, like the ancient, is in a great measure composed of infants. *But this is more than I ask*, and more, than Baptists will admit, as long as any method of torture for a text of scripture remains."* It is not exactly manifest, what should constrain him to express himself, just as he has. For we not only are ready to admit, that the kingdom of God, or of heaven, in this text, and in the collateral texts, intends the gospel Church, but also that we know of no other sense, in which they should be understood. We also not only admit, but earnestly contend, that the kingdom of heaven, the gospel Church, is composed, not

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merely in a great measure, but altogether of such as were the little children of whom Christ spake, and except Mr. P. be converted from his hard opposition, *we can never enter into it.* We do not believe, that the kingdom of heaven, the gospel Church, is composed of unconscious infants, nor does the text intimate any such thing; for then the parents would be, implicitly, excluded, for of *such*, says the text, of *such* little ones as *come to me*, is the kingdom of heaven. If this intends unconscious babes, the parents cannot become *such*, but if the meaning be, the little ones who believe in Christ, then all the humble in heart may enter.

The next text which he perverts is Mat. xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, &c. He observes, "that the word, teach, signifies disciple, or make disciples of—and that, "it plainly declares, that they are to be made disciples before they are baptized." In the next paragraph he says, "They (the Apostles) were to make disciples of all nations by requiring a *credible profession of faith* of all adult persons, and *then acknowledging their infant seed as disciples*, (or scholars) to be trained up in the school of Christ for the Lord's service." Who instructed him to make disciples in this expeditious manner? One thing is certain, there is nothing in the original, nor in the translation, which has a shade of likeness to his exposition. Mr. P.'s pen appears like a leprous person, it defiles every thing it touches. That he has defiled this text, nothing more is necessary to show it, than to transcribe the parallel text in Mark, xvi. 15, 16, Go ye into all the world, and *preach the gospel to every creature.* He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved.

What he says upon the jailor and his household does not seem to require any considerable attention, for he concedes, "That common readers of the bible are apt to suppose, the conversion of the whole family is asserted in Acts xvi. 34," and as this appears the simple truth, and as he produceth nothing against it, save his own declaration, and that, in opposition to a venerable company of learned divines of his own denomination who translated it, nothing more need be added. In a similar way we

might dispose of what he says of Lidia's household, were it not, that he too boldly asserts, "We are distinctly informed that the Lord opened her heart, but not a shadow of evidence is there, that any more of her household were converted."* Exactly the reverse of what he hath erroneously asserted, is contained in the last verse of the same chapter, which is, "And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lidia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed." There is also a shadow of evidence that more, or less, of Lidia's household were converted, from the circumstance of their being with her at a prayer-meeting, where Paul found them, verse 13.

The next text which he introduces in this connexion is, 1 Cor. vii. 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." This text of itself, destroys Mr. P.'s whole scheme. For such a thing was never legalized in the Jewish Church, that a believing Jew, should sanctify a correlative, who was an unbelieving Gentile. The Jews were forbidden to intermarry with the Gentile nations, in, and about, Canaan. Deut. vii. 3. Those who had done this were compelled to put away their wives and the children born of them, Ezra, chap. x. and Nehemiah xiii. 23. But in this 7th chapter of 1 Cor. those who, in the gospel Church, had such correlatives, were forbidden to put them away, nor were their children to be repudiated, but as such marriage, or matrimonial companions are sanctioned by the gospel, so are the children holy, or reputable, as originating within the covenant of lawful marriages. This text no more proves infant membership, or infant Baptism, than it proves infidel membership, and infidel Baptism. For the unbelieving husband and wife are pronounced as holy as are the children. This Mr. P. might have easily known, had he paid proper attention to the text, and then would have known that it was nothing to his purpose; but directly against

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his scheme of the sameness of the Jewish and christian Churches.

Mr. P. spends several pages, professedly in discussing the answer to this question: "What good can it do to baptize infants?" In his observations, he tells us, "That God has *commanded it*," "That Paul has anticipated our objections against it," "That they, (the circumcised) had *the oracles of God*, by virtue of which their children enjoyed a religious education, which, according to the divine constitution, was the appointed means of their salvation.—*The very same advantages result from infant Baptism.*" It is a felicity that truth is consistent with itself, and requires nothing but truth to defend it; and that truth forbids, that one fair argument should lend its aid to error. Hence it is, that Mr. P. has as many mistakes as he presents semblances of argument, as every unprejudiced person may discover, who reads his book with understanding. In the present instance, his three assertions are totally destitute of truth. God has never commanded infant Baptism. Of course Paul could not anticipate any objection, which the Baptists might make against it. His other mistake is very reprehensible, not merely because it contains an untruth, but because it contains a very great and mischievous one. Many people, for want of thinking, may be induced to believe it. No serious Christian who thinks for himself, will believe, that *our being favoured with the oracles of God*, and the *salvation of our children*, are among the advantages, which *result from infant Baptism*. This superstition is more aggravated, than that of the Hindoos, who, to save their children, cast them into the Ganges.

His next labour is, to deal out reproaches against the Baptists, in his region, for not finding *explicit warrant* for domestic devotion; or for what he considers their consequent practice, also for not catechising their children, when there are not *more than two or three answers* which *interfere with their system*; and also for not preventing their children from intimating, that the catechism is the *work of man* and not to be received, (implicitly) "as

the truth of Jehovah." But to the question, What good can it do to baptize infants? he has said more, than we have found to be correct; for as there is no command for it, so there is no profit in it. There is much profit, or advantage, in having the oracles of God: in bringing up our children in the knowledge and fear of the Lord and his word; in asking them questions upon the great things of revealed truth, and teaching them proper answers, or in catechising them: and the fault of this omission amongst the Baptists in that part of the country round Mr. P. is manifestly to be charged upon him and his brethren. For by his own concession there are *two or three answers* which *interfere* with the *Baptist system*. He does not occupy the most pleasant station, whilst reproaching the Baptists, for not teaching their children the traditions and commandments of men, which pervert the right ways of the Lord. But, says he, there are not more than *two or three*. Yes, but does he not know, that one leak will sink a ship; and one gospel ordinance prostituted draws the dividing line between the two Apocalyptic women. It is presumed, that one of these *two or three answers* is following the question, "To whom is baptism to be administered?" An answer more completely confused, more filled with truth and error, nicely mixt, was, perhaps, never invented. An. "BAPTISM IS NOT TO BE ADMINISTERED TO ANY *that are out of the visible Church*, TILL THEY PROFESS THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST AND OBEDIENCE TO HIM: *but the infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptized.*" Take that part, which is in small capitals, and nothing is more true; whilst the part in italics is equally untrue, being no where read in the scriptures of truth. Taken together it looks like one of Satan's temptations, truth and falsehood intermixt. To make the best of it, it is but a tradition of man's invention. What makes him and his brethren so angry is because the Baptists do not choose to believe what he cannot prove, and what they know to be but a mere superstition. Let them expunge from their catechism what God gave them no liberty to put in, and then if the Baptists will not join them, reproach will be justly theirs. But till this be done, the reproach

ests deservedly upon their revilers. Brethren, this may seem rather severe, but is it incorrect?

What he says, whilst labouring to fix distinctly the standing which your children have in the Church, how they attained to it, and how they may have it changed, is not a subject requiring much attention for the present. We know, that if your scheme be correct, that your children belong to the Church, and that whilst your Church, for eight hundred years, brought them to the communion, and nurses chewed a little bread and fed them, and gave them a little of the wine, they were unquestionably more correct, with their own theory, than at present. But as the Pædobaptists have been always changing in relation to their means and methods with the infant part of their Church, so Mr. P. is at a loss what to do with them. However, he hath undertaken to decide in a novel way, not harmonizing with either law or gospel, but contrary from both. "When children, says he, cease to be members of the parent's family and set up an independent interest for themselves, *in that same instant*, their connection with the Church ceases, if they have not previously made a voluntary surrender of themselves to God."* This is not mentioned as a fault of his, for there is no question, but he has as justifiable a claim to introduce alterations with relation to the standing of believers' children, as his forefathers had, to introduce them in the first instance. If a daughter, at fifteen, should marry, and marry a brother in the Church, too, she is unchurched, in the very act, unless she has previously complied with some device, which some man or body of men, has invented for her, for the Lord hath never provided any such instrument. I mention it, as rather an hard case, having no precedent in either law or gospel. However, he fancies it would be of great service to have this well understood, and faithfully attended to. The same kind of benevolent fancy produced the whole system of infant membership, infant baptism, infant sprinkling, infant communion, with all the race of godfathers, godmothers, sponsors and bondsmen;

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and now with equal, if not with overbearing, benevolence, he is bringing forward a sweeping infant excommunication. This is to do more wonders of goodness, than all the other schemes which either popes or conclaves have ever invented till now. "No consideration, says he, could be better calculated to impress the youthful mind. They would tremble at the thought of taking the awful step, that must sever them from the Church of God, and from the blessings of the covenant. In the faithful use of the appointed means we might generally expect our children to experience saving blessings, before they leave the family altar."*

You may have noticed, that his lengthy notes have generally received little or no attention. My reasons are 1. Because they breathe such an unhallowed spirit. 2. Because they are so replete with raillery and false accusations. 3. Because I did not desire to rebuke him with that sharpness, which they would naturally demand. 4. Because I judged it sufficient to show, that his text was one continued error, not containing so much as a single truth, from either law, or gospel, to support his Jewish scheme, in gospel times. If he has seemed to take pleasure in reviling the Baptists, they consider the best return in their power is to pray for him, to expose his errors, and exhibit the truth; and they would be much pleased might he bear it like a christian.

Brethren, if you have had patience to hear me thus far, you probably begin to have your minds made up, that the Pædobaptist scheme is capable of support, or that it will not bear the light.

We have now passed over that part of Mr. P.'s book in which he professes to have acted on the defensive. You are not prepared, as we hope you will be, to decide which system, whether the Baptist or the Pædobaptist, is the plain, unequivocal, gospel system; for we have not presented before you, but in detached parts, the system, which Jesus hath committed unto his servants. This we purpose, if the Lord will, to open before you,

*Page, 223.

ere we close the Letters now writing. But what we request of you is, that you, in the meekness of wisdom, without partiality, and without guile, prepossession, or prejudice, decide, whether there be left, for Mr. P. one inch of gospel ground, on which the Pædobaptist Church can be placed? Whether there be one text, either in the Old Testament, or in the New, which speaks of the gospel Church, and, at the same time, speaks of infant membership, in it; or infant Baptism, or unbelievers' Baptism of any kind, on the faith of father, mother, or master, or on the faith of any second person whatever? Whether there be in any part of the Bible so much as one passage, which speaks of the kingdom of God, the gospel Church, as being the Jewish Church continued, or that Church new-modled; or so much as gives countenance to such an idea? On the contrary, whether all passages, which he has adduced, have not fairly forsaken him, and come over to our help, so far as they related to the point on hand? Especially, whether the 11th of Romans, on which he and his brethren have put very principal confidence, have not utterly failed them, and established beyond all reasonable contradiction, that the gospel Church cannot be the Jewish Church continued, but that the gospel Church was constituted out of the first fruits of the gospel amongst that people, and that, whilst the Jewish tree, or Church, was cast away, the gospel Church, was constituted of the few living, holy, branches, which were broken off from that degenerate tree, and with these branches the Gentiles were grafted in amongst them, and so were never united with the Jewish Church? I would ask you to consider and decide farther, could I be assured, that you were in readiness to buy the truth, whatever error it might cost you. If you be prepared to receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, then proceed with me, if not, close the book, and listen not now, whilst I ask, Can the Pædobaptist Church have been the holy city, which was to be trodden under foot forty-and-two months? Can she have been the two witnesses, which were to prophecy 1260 days clothed in sackcloth? These are

the two olive trees. Can it be, that the Pædobaptist Church, which hath rioted in honor, power and luxury for fifteen hundred years, hath, at the same time, been driven into the wilderness, been persecuted, afflicted, tormented? To which hath she emphatically answered, to the woman who had given to her two wings, as of a great eagle, that she might flee into the wilderness, into the place, which God had prepared for her; or to the woman, which sat upon many waters?

I am, with much respect,
and more good will, yours.

LETTER VIII.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

MR. P. professes to have been hitherto upon the defensive; but now proposes entering our camp, and showing you the abominations with which his bold assertions, and misguided pen have laboured to fill it. If he believes what he hath affirmed, he is certainly to be pitied, for his want of information relative to the Baptists and their system. If he does not, he is still more to be pitied, for speaking so very incorrectly, from motives not the kindest. He surely is greatly unacquainted with ecclesiastic history, or his displeasure against the Baptists has made him to forget himself. He so often asserts things, which every person, who is acquainted with the Baptists, and with ancient story, knows to be unfounded, it originates a query whether he has not generally gathered his unchristian accusations, at second hand defamation. Many, who would be thought something, whilst they are nothing, will be pleased and hardened by the obloquy which he has cast upon the Baptists.

There is a likeness, which is worthy to be noticed, between the accusations which he alleges against the Baptists now, and those which were laid to their charge in the first age of christianity; and the spirit, in which they are fraught, appears not dissimilar. These accusations are as justly chargeable now against those who adhere to the Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as they were against the primitive Christians who believed and practised the same baptism. Indeed the *Baptism of repentance* is what occasions the offence, and is the principal line of offensive separation between the Baptists, and what is termed the Christian world. Mr. P. and his brethren in the 3d of Matt. hold to the baptizing of the children of good men, and he, probably, is as much displeas'd with opposition, as they were. There can be no compromise between these two companies, because there is no half way between the *Baptism of repentance*, and the baptizing of the manifestly impenitent. The first controversy, recorded in the New Testament, upon a religious subject, was occasioned by the Baptism of repentance. From that time, and forward, even to the present day, those, who hold to it, are reviled, and have various kinds of evil spoken of them. The four principal accusations, which were laid to their charge, in the days of Christ and his apostles, are revived by Mr. P. and charged, with a degree of violence, against those who now hold to the baptism of repentance. These four are, *deceit, breach of the Sabbath, forsaking Moses, and ignorance*. These charges were false then, and not true now.

Some of the criminal allegations brought, by the old Jewish Church, against Christ, or his disciples, or both, are,

1. Deceit. John vii. 12. "There was much murmuring among the people, concerning him: for some said; He is a good man; others said, Nay; but he *deceiveth the people.*" 46, 47th verses. The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the pharisees. Are ye also *deceived?* Matt. xxvii. 62, 63. The *chief priests* and pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that *that deceiver* said,

while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

2. *Breach of the Sabbath.* John ix. 16. Therefore said some of the *pharisees*, This man is not of God, because he *keepeth not the Sabbath-day.* Matt. xii. 2. But when the *pharisees* saw it, they said unto him, Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the *sabbath-day.*

3. Speaking against Moses. Acts, vi. 14. For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and *shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.* Acts xxi. 20, 21, 25. Thou seest, brother, how many thousand of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law: and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, *that they observe NO SUCH THING.*

4. Ignorance. John vii. 49. But this people, *who knoweth not the law,* are cursed.

The same accusations, Mr. P. brings up against the Baptist Brethren at the present day. The

1st and 2d he brings forward in company. "Hitherto, says he, I have acted on the defensive. You will now permit me to enter the lines of your camp, and point out a few of the deformities of your own system: some of which are usually kept *concealed from the vulgar eye.* In the first place, your system leads you to reject the divine authority of the Christian sabbath. This is one of the *secrets* of your scheme, with which the *common people* are not entrusted. I doubt not, but the great body of your people suppose, that the sabbath is of divine authority; and your *knowing ones* find it for their *interest* to keep them *in ignorance* of your sentiments on this point." Again says he, "You demand explicit warrant for all you believe and practice; but there is no *explicit* warrant for the change of the sabbath. This and *infant* Baptism stand upon the very same

ground, as to mode of proof. The same mode of reasoning that establishes the Christian sabbath, gives the same claims to infant Baptism. So your people, to get rid of one which they hate with perfect hatred, and the same time be self consistent, reject both. Hence you perceive that the rejection of the sabbath is a necessary part of your system."*

What should have provoked him to lay such unfounded and base accusations against the Baptists, when he cannot prove them, and when his own character may labour under the suspicion of many, that he did not believe them himself? Who told him, or gave him liberty to say, that the Baptist system leads them to reject the divine authority of the Christian sabbath? The Baptist system teaches them to believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament, what Mr. P. has said to the contrary notwithstanding. The Baptists believe, that the Jewish sabbath was before the law, as they are informed, Exodus xvi. 23. They believe that one, and the great occasion of its being appointed was the work of creation being finished on the preceding day. At the same time, the seventh day sabbath was made, or appointed, for man's benefit, as well as to perpetuate the glorious work of God. The Baptists believe, that there is another day spoken of in the Old Testament, and a day of rest too; and though this may be, in a general sense, the day of the gospel, yet they find, that this looks like something more particular, and appears to have a special reference to a particular day, as it is expressed in the Heb. iv. 8, 9, 10, in connection with the Lord Jesus and his work of salvation. Says the apostle, "If Jesus (that is Joshua the son of Nun) had given them rest, (that is what rest was to be expected in the present world) then would he (the Spirit of God) not have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest, (a day of rest) to the people of God; (in gospel times.) For he, (the Lord Jesus Christ) that is entered into his rest; he also hath ceased from HIS OWN WORKS, as GOD DID from his." The Baptists believe, that as the

* Pages 229, 230, 233, 234.

seventh day sabbath was a commemorative day set apart, at the close of the work of creation, so the first day sabbath is likewise a day of remembrance, to bring to mind, that on that day the Saviour rested from more than creation work, having the preceding evening, or night, ceased from *his own works, of redeeming man, as God from his, of making him.* Jesus, our Lord, not only rose, triumphantly, and rested from *his own works,* on the first day of the week, but repeatedly showed himself to his disciples on the same day of the week, and shed forth the Spirit on that day. In addition to this, we have apostolic example, that on the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread, or to the communion, and Paul preached to them. Acts xx. 7. This was also a day for manifestation of Christian liberality, in alms giving.* To crown the whole, this is manifestly, and emphatically, called the LORD'S DAY.† This we consider to furnish *divine authority* for the *Christian sabbath.* We never had a thought enter our heart, to conceal this, as Mr. P. says, *from the vulgar eye.* Nor is it, as he too boldly asserts, one of the SECRETS of the Baptist scheme to reject the divine authority of the Christian sabbath, and yet conceal the thing from the vulgar eye. It is a very rude thing, not to say a very base one, for him to publish to the world, the illiberal and unfounded charge, "that the *knowing ones* among the Baptists find it for their interest to keep the common people in ignorance of their sentiments on this point." Whilst he has charged the grossest duplicity upon the Baptist ministers, and told them that a rejection of the sabbath was a necessary part of their system; he appears himself to be verily guilty of the enormous sin, which he falsely laid to their account, or palmed upon their system. He boldly asserts "that there is no *explicit warrant* for the change of the sabbath." We do not say, that there is an *explicit command,* but we hold there is *explicit example,* and this the Baptists consider *explicit warrant.* We are warranted to do that for which we have the example of either Christ,

* 1st Cor. xvi. 2.—† R. 1st. 10.

or his apostles. In the present case, we have the example of both. But he not only asserts, that there is no explicit warrant for the change, but virtually tells us, that there is no warrant, or evidence of any kind, for observing the Lord's day, as the Christian sabbath: for he says, "*this and infant Baptism stand upon the very same ground, as to mode of proof.*" He and his brethren may have made this very incorrect assertion so many times, that some of the Baptists in his region may have believed it; and of necessary consequence denied that there was divine authority for the Christian sabbath. He appears determined to crowd down infant Baptism, or the belief of it, though it be at the expense of the Christian sabbath. He knows, or ought to know, that one does not stand upon the same ground with the other, as to mode of proof. Is there *another* ordinance for infants spoken of in the Old and New Testament, as there is *another* day for Christians, or the people of God? Is there an account of Christ's attending the Baptism of infants once and again, as there is of his attending once and again a meeting with his disciples upon the first day of the week? Have we information, that the disciples convened for the baptizing of infants, as we have of their convening for celebrating the first day of the week? Have we any example, that the apostles gave direction for the preparation of infants for baptism, as we have of their instructions to Christians for laying up alms, &c. for the first day of the week? In short, have we, in the Bible an ordinance called infant baptism, as we have a day, called the Lord's day? It is a little surprising, that he should have the assurance to lay it, as a reproach to the Baptists, that they reject the divine authority of the Christian sabbath, when he, almost at the same breath, tells us, that there is no explicit warrant for it; and in the next, couples it, as to evidence, with infant Baptism, for which there is not a shadow of evidence, either in the Old or New Testament.

But what may seem the most surprising of all, is, that he should charge the leaders of the Baptists of du-

plicity, and of deceiving the common people, when his whole book, so far as we have yet examined it, is little less, than one continued imposition upon the common sense of mankind. If he has given us so much as one individual, fair, logical, or scripture, argument in favour of one of his principal topics, which he has so abundantly laboured, I have not been able to discover it. He has verbally triumphed over the Baptists, and spoken of their logic, and produced his own. I find no fault with the form of his syllogisms, but the defect which I allege is, that either in his major, minor, or conclusion, there is perpetually the want of one very important article, and that is *truth*. He is not so much to be blamed for this, as he is for embarking in so bad a cause; undertaking to defend what is indefensible, and laboring to prove what is not capable of proof. In this way he may cast a mist before many a pious mind, and shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; and whilst he will not go in himself he may hinder some who are entering in. Mat. xxiii. 13. You, brethren, will judge for yourselves, whose system leads to the rejection of the Christian sabbath.

Another deformity which he announces, as having found in our camp is,

3. That the Baptists forsake Moses; yes, all the Old Testament. "I now remark, (says he,) another awful result of your system. It leads you to reject the whole of the Old Testament, as being any part of the revealed will of heaven to the Christian Church. If any reference is made to it to prove a Christian duty, your *only answer* is, "That is all done away,—it is no rule for the faith, or practice of Christians."* Now, brethren, you know, and every understanding, pious, Pædobaptist, who is acquainted with the Baptists, knows, that there is not a word of truth in what he here asserts; but the contrary is the truth. The Baptist system teaches men to esteem every word of God to be precious, and his statutes concerning all things to be right. But what pro-

* Page 241.

vokes Mr. P. almost to madness is, that the Baptists will not believe in infant sprinkling, implicitly, but require evidence, either out of the Old Testament, or out of the New. This he is unable to produce. The Baptists are still obstinate, and refuse to yield assent till evidence shall be afforded. He rails severely: but this produces no conviction. Let him, or any other person, bring forward one sentence out of the Old or New Testament which so much as mentions, that it ever came into the heart of God to command infant sprinkling, or infant baptism, then would he be justified in reproving us were we found disobedient. But he appears disposed to supply the deficiency of his arguments by the roughness of his address. Another deformity which he charges as being an inhabitant of our camp is,

4. Ignorance. "I am bold to affirm, (says he) that the writings of one individual of the Pædobaptists, the first President Edwards, are of *tenfold* more worth, than all the writings of your denomination, in this country, from its first settlement to the present day." He has ventured no argument in support of his bold affirmation, and we shall propose none in refutation. The next abomination which he charges upon the contents of our camp is,

5. Close Communion. "Again, (says he,) your system virtually excommunicates the great body of the real disciples of Christ. You reject communion with the whole Pædobaptist Church, which, some of your denomination are arrogant enough to say is not a church of Christ. If so, pray how long was Jesus Christ without a church on earth! I have proved, that the whole church was Pædobaptist for 1500 years. Dr. Gill admits, that there is no evidence to the contrary for 700 years.

"Close Communion, I must confess, has a frightful aspect; not, however, to the uninformed, and less conscientious part of the Christian world: but to the intelligent and conscientious Christian."*

* Pages 241, 242.

In the above quotation he has asserted four things which are incorrect ; and stands self-condemned.

1. "That the Baptist system *virtually* excommunicates the great body of the real disciples of Christ."

This is a heavy charge, and as devoid of truth, as it is of candour. The truths, which the Baptists are obliged to believe and practise, are sufficiently disgusting to carnal minds, and prejudiced saints, without the addition of falsehood to set their opponents in a rage.

The Baptists say,

1. That the Lord Jesus Christ did, whilst upon earth, set up a kingdom, according to the scriptures. Dan. ii. 44.—Mat. xi. 12—xxiii. 13.—Luke xvi. 16.

2. That, with relation to the things of this kingdom, we were to hear Jesus Christ, rather than Moses. The Lord, by Moses, commanded us thus to do. Deut. xviii. 15, 19.

3. That none but visible saints are entitled to admission. Deut. xviii. 9.—Dan. vii. 27.—Acts iii. 22, 23.—Mat. 3d chapter.

4. That the only prescribed manner of admission into this kingdom is by being buried and raised again, with Christ, in baptism Mark i. 5, 9.—Acts ii. 41, 42.—Rom. vi. 2 to 5.—Col. ii 12.

5. That such as have not been admitted into the kingdom, do not belong to it. Mark x. 15.—Luke xi. 52.

6. That those, who do not belong to this kingdom, have no *expressed liberty* to partake of the communion of the body and blood of Christ. And therefore,

7. That what is termed close communion is gospel communion, and what none can depart from, without transgressing the laws of Christ.

This is the Baptist system, relative to certain outlines of the visible kingdom of God, the church of Christ, or of its constituent parts. But this excommunicates none of the real, or pretended disciples of Christ, who belong to the Pædobaptists. But treats them as being just where they are, obstinately rejecting the *counsel of God*, the baptism of repentance, against themselves, not being baptized with the only christian baptism, which John was sent to introduce. For

preaching and practising these plain truths, which none of our adversaries are able to gainsay, they take liberty to speak all manner of evil against us, falsely. What causes our opponents to be so angry at our refusing to receive them, is, their inability to prove their right to come. Mr. P. and his Presbyterian brethren are infinitely more angry at the Baptists, for refusing to admit their plea, the baptism, or sprinkling of impenitence, for a qualification of communion, than they are at a large majority of their Pædobaptist brethren, who have, in fact, excommunicated them, and denounced them as being out of the pale of salvation. Their mother Church hath denounced, not the Presbyterian merely, but all the Protestant Churches as being in a state of condemnation, and in the high road to damnation. Yet Mr. P. tells us, that this their mother, the Papistical Church, is a true and regular Church of Christ.* His words are, "If the *constitution* of the Church still includes the infants of believers, which has been proved, then those Churches, which have adopted that *constitution*, must be the *true and regular gospel Churches*." The Papistical Churches have as fully adopted that constitution, as has the Presbyterian Church at Cambridge, or in any other place. Hence the Popish Churches are as true and regular gospel Churches, as are Mr. P.'s and other Presbyterian Churches. But the Popish Church and hierarchy have issued their thundering excommunications against all the Protestants, yet Mr. P. appears as mild as a lamb towards them. But because we tell him the truth, therefore his anger is stirred. We excommunicate none of them. We plainly tell them, that the King hath not *expressed* his pleasure, that they should approach. We ask for their *token*. They produce none bearing the *royal* stamp. We therefore receive them not. They are angry. At whom? At the servants; because they dare not accuse the Master. We say to them, embrace the *baptism of repentance*, for the remission of your sins, and no longer reject this *counsel of God* against yourselves; and we willingly receive

* Page 248.

you.* Mr. P. replies, "The bigotry, the arrogance, and the uncharitableness, of your system, sicken my very soul."† A Jewish high priest would have hardly expressed himself more roundly; yet this is the man who is so desirous of communing with the Baptists at the table of the Lord Jesus. Whilst, nighly at the same breath, he pronounces, "That there can be no compromise between the two systems. If one is right the other must be wrong, and all attempts to unite them must be as unsuccessful, as the attempt to weld iron and clay."‡

2. Says he, "I have proved, that the whole church was Pædobaptist for 1500 years." This is not merely contrary from fact, but so universally known to be so, by all who are versed in ecclesiastical history, that it might pass unnoticed, were it not, that some of his readers might be deceived by the overbearing assertion. Mr. P. has proved no such thing. An hundred witnesses, of his own denomination, men renowned for talents and literature, might be named, who will testify, that Mr. P. has in this instance, gone very wide of the truth.

3. He has the assurance to tell us, "That Dr. Gill admits, that there is no evidence to the contrary for 700 years." We ask where, or when, in what page, or in what book, did Dr. Gill admit such a notorious falsehood! Was it in conversation, at the time, in which Mr. P. heard one Baptist minister, and another, speak not with due respect of the Christian sabbath? We do not accuse Mr. P. of saying things which he believed not. But he certainly said very many things, which he knew not: and which are known by others, to be very incorrect. Should he write again, it might make for the honour of his cause, to accompany his assertions, accusations and sentences of condemnation, with a little evidence of his correctness, and of our guilt. He has laid many and grievous things to the charge of the Baptists, which he is not only unable to prove, but for the publishing of which he will find occasion to mourn.

* Luke iii. 3—vii. 29, 30.—† Page 246.—‡ Page 246.

He ought to inform us, where his witnesses, or their testimony may be found; he ought not so to presume upon the credulity of the public, as to assert, that a variety of witnesses testify thus and thus, and yet produce no evidence of the facts but his own declarations. Let him name the book, chapter, or page.

4. "Close Communion has a frightful aspect, says he, to the intelligent and conscientious Christian."

Here Mr. P. appears at great odds with himself, totally inconsistent, and condemns his whole performance, as being a mere forgery. He here affords weighty evidence, that he does not, in heart, believe what he has written. "Is the Baptist system a mere mushroom, which vegetates in the *night*, without seed, or root, and languishes and dies beneath the rays of the sun?"* Are the "Baptist principles distinctively derived from the fanatics of the Munster insurrection" † Is their "system so perverse, that there can be no accommodation, no compromise with it:" "that it cannot unite with the Pædobaptist system any more, than iron with clay ‡" Do the Baptists deny the constitution of the church of Christ, renounce all the Old Testament, deny the sabbath, or the divine authority of it? In short, are they the filth and off-scouring of the world, &c. &c. so that Mr. P. cannot determine whether their Churches can be allowed so much as the lowest place in the Christian Church, or their ministers to be reckoned with the lowest of the Pædobaptist clergy?§

Have the present sentiments of Baptists been derived down to them, through the medium of the vilest fanatics and heretics, which have ever been a vexatious and tormenting scourge to the Papists, who were the *true* and *regular* gospel Church, till the 16th century, and did these sentiments then, by being digested into the Munster fanatical, tumultuous insurrection, produce some form and system, so that their adherents were wrought up into a Baptist Church, and the first, that was ever in the world? So that "In them you behold the *true ori-*

* Page 176.—† Pages 194, 195.—‡ Page 246.—§ Pages 195, 196, 197, &c.

gin of the Baptist Church: and from them, are derived the distinctive principles of the Baptist denomination.”* Is all this true, and much more, of the Baptists, and yet is it a frightful thing to the Pædobaptists, that these Baptists refuse to commune with them? If so it must be to that part of the Pædobaptists, who are uninformed and have made shipwreck of faith and conscience too. No, says Mr. P. “Close Communion, *I must confess*, has a frightful aspect, not, however, to the *uninformed*, and less conscientious part of the Christian world; but to the *intelligent and conscientious Christian*.” Impossible! What! To the *intelligent and conscientious Christian*, does it present a *frightful aspect*, that these same Baptists will not commune with the Pædobaptists, with those who hold, that sprinkling the impenitent, the natural seed of believers, will seal them in the covenant of grace? Yes, brethren, this frightful aspect, this noise, and bustle, which your prophets make, professedly against the Baptists, because they will not sanction their errors, by communing with them, present the evidence of a thousand arguments; yes, evidence irresistible, that they themselves do not believe the unhal- lowed reproaches and false accusations which they utter and industriously circulate among the people, that they may not understand the things of the kingdom of God on earth. Thus they shut up the kingdom of God against men: they will not go in themselves; and them that were entering in, they hinder.† Such imposition, brethren, as is palmed upon you, is insufferable. God will soon reprove it in vengeance. Your ministers, specially, the prophets, or public writers, amongst them, are in an evil case, in a trying dilemma. Are the Baptists what they represent them to be, then not an intelligent, conscientious man would commune with them. Are they not? Then those who thus represent them, are deceived, or deceitful, slanderers. But whether the Baptists be, or be not, such a fanatical tribe, as their accusers portray them to be, there is an indisci- ble baseness in the manner in which they are treated.

* Page 195, and the note, 248.—† Mat. xxiii. 13.

In the first place, your priests describe them, as though they were not worthy to be set with the dogs of their flocks, and then tread them down, as the mire of the street, because they refuse to commune with their calumniators, at the Lord's table. Such deceivableness of unrighteousness will not long continue unrebuked. May God open your eyes, and the eyes of your priests, that you and they may behold the things of the kingdom of God, and enter it. Thus prays

Your willing servant,
for the truth's sake.

LETTER IX.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WHILST the prudent foresee the evil and hide themselves, the wicked pass on and are punished. You have heard some of the innumerable revilings, contemptuous railings, and false accusations with which Mr. P. has loaded the Baptists, their sentiments and system. It is not our wish to answer him according to his folly, nor do we possess a disposition to revile, or provoke him. It does not belong to us to avenge ourselves. God will, in his set time, avenge his own quarrel. We wish to repel the attacks, which are made upon the truth, and when implicated ourselves, to show our innocency. It is our desire, not merely to exhibit the weakness of Mr. P.'s arguments, but also their dangerous tendency. It is not enough, that his boasted artillery do not annoy us; it is partly our care, that it recoil not upon him and his brethren to their perpetual wounding. At least, it is a part of our solicitude, that you may foresee the evil, and prudently hide yourselves.

You have seen how Mr. P. whilst he has been plying the Baptists with his keenest shafts of wit and satire, has stretched out his fraternal hand, and embraced the Jesuits, Monks and Friars with all the Papistical hierarchy and laity, as being safely inclosed among the *true* and regular gospel churches. Even the holy fathers of the infernal inquisition are not excluded his charity. "Those churches, (says he,) which have adopted that constitution, which includes the infants of believers, must be the *true* and *regular* gospel churches." But because the Baptists hold, that none but those, who receive the word of the Lord Jesus gladly, have a gospel right to be baptized into him, there is nothing too base, or degrading to be laid to their charge. When he had nighly exhausted his stores of obloquy, he would expose the weakness and wickedness of his own system, rather than forego the irresistible temptation to speak evil of those, who were to be hated of all nations for Christ's sake. An instance of this was presented in the last letter, where he accused the Baptists of denying the divine authority of the Christian sabbath. Whilst he falsely, not to say, maliciously, lays this to the reproach of the Baptist system, he dares, and that with a manifest expectation of being believed, to say, that there is no explicit warrant for the change of the sabbath.* Not only so, but upon his *principle*, he does, page 252, sap the foundation of the Christian sabbath. "Forms of worship, or religious rites, says he, are positive institutions; and are therefore, *obligatory* no farther, than they are *explicitly revealed*." This is correct; but what has he in his zeal against the Baptists, told us, "That there is no *explicit* warrant for the Christian sabbath." If no *explicit* warrant for the day, then no obligation to observe it. Thus is he fallen into the pit, which he very unadvisedly dug for the Baptists.

Into another pit not less unchristian has he also fallen, and dragged his whole system into papistical disgrace and ruin. Into this hath he plunged himself and his brethren, whilst endeavoring to take away the key of

* Pages 233, 248.

knowledge, by scouting from the Christian code, the counsel of God, the baptism which is from heaven, and which was introduced by John. After labouring with his full strength to prove, that John's baptism, which he confesses was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, was not Christian baptism; and having in his erroneous imagination accomplished his object, he triumphs over immersion, as being put down with it; and then finding, that no other baptism is recorded in the bible, is obliged to say, with the papists, "*This is left to the DISCRETION of the CHURCH.*" Thus, my beloved brethren, you see that Christian baptism with the Christian sabbath are gone down together; not by the Baptist system, but by that which your leaders and priests have been obliged to adopt in their unhallowed opposition against that people, who keep the ordinances as revealed in the Bible. Thus do they make void the law of Christ by their traditions. There is no way of retreat for Mr. P. but to avow the sentiment of the mother of harlots, that she hath a right to enact modes, rites and ceremonies for the observance of the church of God. For he has correctly said, that "*FORMS of worship, or religious rites, are positive institutions; and are therefore obligatory no farther than they are explicitly revealed*"; and his erring system has compelled him to say, as to what baptism is, "*This is left to the discretion of the church.*"* It therefore cannot be obligatory upon any. It would be a mean subterfuge, for him to reply, that baptism is commanded, but the form, or thing to be done, is not. This would be charging God foolishly. It would be charging upon his legislative inaccuracy the foundation of the present controversy. This is degrading the Christian Legislator, even below what he unjustly alleges against the Baptists, "*That they have reduced the Almighty God of Israel to the ignoble station of a temporal king.*" But was there ever a temporal king, who regarded either his own honour, or his subjects' tranquillity, who would command a new thing, about which nothing could be

*Page 295.

known, but by his own prescriptions, and yet, not prescribe how that thing was to be performed, and even in the law itself, make use of an equivocal word, so that the most loyal subject should not be able to know the will of his beloved prince. This folly and gross imposition Mr. P. lays to the reproach of Jesus Christ. But "THIS (says he) is left to the discretion of the church." To what church? To the church of Rome? or to the Presbyterian church? For he utterly refuses this liberty to the Baptist church. He has neither informed us with what church *this discretionary power* is lodged, nor furnished any clue by which it may be ascertained. This, brethren, is an imposition of the grossest stamp. This is what all your ministers wink at, and practice upon, if they do not unite their active zeal in fastening the deception upon you. Mr. Prime has laboured excessively to convince you, that you know nothing, that he knows nothing, and that the churches know nothing, what is to be performed, when a person is baptized: but the church must guess at something, and when the church has guessed, you must be obedient. Every church, except the Baptist, has this privilege of guessing; and they have full liberty to guess any thing but the truth: and when they have guessed, all, within the atmosphere of any particular church, must abide the *guess*, which has been discretionarily concluded upon.

To chain you in ignorance, and to secure you from believing what he implicitly acknowledges was the matter of John's Baptism, he pledges himself, "To establish, that the mode of baptism is not so *distinctly revealed*, as to *prove* that *immersion* is essential to its due performance."* After labouring through more than 40 pages, to do away that baptism, which neither the ancient, nor modern Scribes and Pharisees have known what to do with, he comes to the conclusion, that it is left to the discretion of the Church, whether to *immerse, sprinkle, pour*, or authorize something else, for the something to be done in the ordinance of baptism. Thus he leaves his brethren in profound ignorance. But, brethren, the

*Page 252.

Bible has no such confusion in it. This the Baptists know, and wish you to know it too. The Baptists know that there is one baptism, and that the Bible speaks of but one, as a Christian ordinance, and that this *baptism* was from *heaven*, and that it was the *counsel* of God; and that whilst it was *rejected* by the Pharisees and lawyers, many of the common people, and the publicans *justified* God, being baptized with the baptism of John.* This baptism, Mr. P. vainly imagines, he has done away, as to the matter of it, and has left you, at your own discretion, to find another, if you be able. However, he has, very inadvertently, left you a clue, by which you may gather what baptism is, yet even this he has endeavoured to take away, but found himself unequal to the task. He has, therefore, dismissed it as a citadel too strong to be demolished, that baptism when administered by John, was immersion. If baptism, when administered by John, is immersion, what is it when administered by Peter? If baptism, yesterday, was immersion, what is it to-day?

It appears a waste of time to follow Mr. P. through all his inconclusive arguments against immersion for Baptism, and against John's baptism being the Christian. For he has left them all at *our own discretion*, whether we will attach weight to them, or not. For not one of them touches the point in either case. But we might seem not to do justice to him, or to ourselves, unless we selected, and exposed, the weakness of those arguments, which, if any, had the appearance of plausibility. Did we know the arguments, in which he places the most confidence, those we would select.

Mr. P. observes to Lebbeus, "All the arguments that your denomination use in favor of immersion may be reduced to two general heads, viz.

1. The import of the original word. And,
2. The circumstances attending the administration of the ordinance, as expressed in the sacred record."† "In regard to the first, the Baptists assert, that the Greek word, *baptize*, always implies immersion." He is here not far from correct. For the Baptists have said, and

*Mat. xxi. 25.—Mark, xi. 30.—Luke, vii. 29, 30.—† P. 202.

still say, that the word baptizo, is never used in the scriptures, nor, to their knowledge, in any other Greek writings, for *sprinkling*, *pouring*, or for any other similar application of water; but that its appropriate and undeviating sense, in which it is used in the holy scriptures, is immersion, burying, overwhelming and the like. We have called upon our opponents to show us, if they can, that the word is ever used, by Greek authors, in writings, sacred or profane, in a sense different from what we allege. The most, which they have done, and the most, which we believe them able to do, is to bring forward some figurative instances, in which they apprehend, the word might have been differently employed, but they have no certain evidence, that it was. All their opposition, and the whole of their sprinkling system, resting upon such conjectural evidence, we are not appalled by the one, nor disposed to embrace the other.

Mr. P. has well said "That our arguments in favor of immersion may be reduced to two general heads." "The import of the original word, and the circumstances attending the administration of the ordinance, as they are set down in the sacred record." We ask, what humble Christian, in order to obedience, would require more, than to know, the meaning of the *word of command*, and the circumstances, which Jesus, his Lord, has left on record, to designate the steps of obedience?

It is, indeed, a thing to be wondered at, that any gentleman of talents and erudition should ever, seriously, have attempted to put down *immersion*, and to have run up *sprinkling* or *pouring*, or to put them upon a level, as the thing commanded, in the ordinance of Christian baptism. It is presumed, that Mr. P. will not pretend, that there was, for the first thirteen hundred years of the Christian era, so much as a single society of any description, which professedly believed, that any thing short of immersion was commanded by Christ, or that practised, for the ordinance of baptism, either sprinkling, pouring, or any other application of water, short of the entire immersion of the body in water; save, when they considered necessity compelled them; that they might save

the souls of the sick, by pouring a quantity of water upon their bodies. Those, who changed the gospel subjects of Baptism, by substituting their own children, instead of the Lord's; yet did not put away the ordinance itself, till a late period. Dr. Wall, a noted Pædobaptist, not an infant sprinkler, considers John Calvin, the first, who laboured to defend *pouring*, for baptism, which, says Dr. Wall, scandalized many, but sprinkling he reproaches as being the most scandalous thing, which is termed baptism. Calvin, though he wrote in defence of pouring, yet says, "It is certain, that the ancient practice was immersion."

J. B. Pomeranius, who was a companion of Luther, in a book, which he published in the German tongue, A. D. 1542, says, "That he was desirous to be a witness of a Baptism at Hamburg, in the year 1529. That when he had seen the minister only sprinkle the infant on the top of the head, he was amazed; because he neither heard, nor saw any such thing, nor yet read in any history, except in cases of necessity, in bed-ridden persons. In a general assembly therefore of all the ministers of the word, that was convened, he did ask a certain minister, Fritz by name, who was, sometime, minister of Lubec, how the sacrament of baptism was administered at Lubec? Who, for his piety and candour, did answer gravely, that infants were baptized naked at Lubec, after the same fashion, altogether, as in Germany. But from whence, and how, that peculiar manner of baptising had crept into Hamburg, he was ignorant. At length they did agree among themselves, that the judgment of Luther, and the divines of Wirtemberg, should be demanded about this point: Which being done, Luther did write back to Hamburg, that *this sprinkling* was an *abuse*, which they *ought to remove*. Thus plunging was restored at Hamburg."*

But says Mr. P. "The question is, what is the import of the word *baptizo*, as it is used in the scriptures? Does it there always signify immersion? If so, then we yield the point. But if there is a *single exception*, our oppo-

*His. Eng. Bt. vol. I. pref. p. 22, 23.

nents are down.”* To Mr. P. and his brethren, we reply, that, till they can produce an *exception*, they ought to be silent. Says he, “To the law and the testimony, therefore, we make the appeal.”

“Permit me then to refer you to Mark, vii. 4, where it is said of the Pharisees, When they came from the market except they wash (in the original it is *baptize*) they eat not. And many other things which they have received to hold, as the washing [baptizing] of cups, and pots, and of brazen vessels and of tables.”†

Had Mr. P. been as well acquainted with the tradition and practices of the Jews, as he is with those of that vast community, self-styled the Jewish Church continued; or had he understood the text itself, he would never have prest it into such a foreign service, unless it were merely as an imposition upon the community. I ask, did not Mr. P. know, that the traditions of the Elders required of the Jews, that, when they had been to the market, where there might be Gentiles, and, perhaps, some unclean meats, and where their clothes might, and, perchance some part or parts of their bodies too, might touch some Gentile, or some unclean meat, or person, or thing, they should bathe themselves in water? Did he not also know, that the same tradition commanded all Jews, when they had been in any promiscuous assembly of Jews and Gentiles, or in any assembly, where there might be some unclean persons, that they should bathe themselves *in* water, before they ate? Did he not also know that the same vain traditionary law obliged the superstitious Jews to put their cups and pots, their brazen vessels and tables, under water, when they were suspected of being ceremonially unclean? Did he not know, that he directly contradicted the Bible, whilst labouring to bring Lebbeus into the belief of his erroneous application of this text. When he said to him, “If learned writers have clearly shown, what, by the way the Bible does not, but directly the contrary (Exo. xxx. Lev. viii. Num. xix.) that ceremonial washings were performed by *putting all over under water*: can any learned, or unlearned men tell how they *baptized*

their couches, or beds." Did, or did he not, know, that instead of quoting the above passages, he ought to have quoted Levit. xi. 32, which might have prevented him from contradicting the scriptures, and Lebbeus from being deceived. This would have informed him, and all who might have read it, how couches, beds, brazen vessels and tables, under certain ceremonial defilements, were to be cleaned, and how the Pharisees would cleanse from any other defilement, which, by their oral law, they had added to the one there mentioned. The text is, "And upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean: whether it be vessel of wood, or *raiment*, or *skin*, or *sack*, whatsoever vessel it be wherein any work is done, it *must be put INTO WATER*, and it shall be unclean until the even: so it shall be cleansed."

If he did *not* know these things, he is comparatively innocent. But if he did, he is chargeable with a known and gross imposition upon the common people.

Besides, had he understood the text, he would have known, that it was, like every other text, nothing to his purpose. Let any unprejudiced person, of common discernment, read the 3d and 4th verses in connection, and it would be difficult not to see, that there was a striking and intended difference made between the Pharisaical superstition practised in the 3d verse and that in the 4th. They were, though at home from one meal to another, not to eat, without washing their *hands oft*, or *with exactness*: But, as in the 4th verse, *when they came from the MARKET*, where they had been exposed to various kinds of defilement, and knew not on what part of their bodies, or clothes, such defilement might rest, they were not, according to their superstition, to eat, except they baptized, or immersed, themselves.

This text, instead of intimating any such thing, as Mr. P. pretends, shows us, that the word, baptizo, when not used with relation to the ordinance of Baptism, has the same import. The above remarks, will also do away the mistaken gloss, which he hath given another text, Luke xi. 38, where it is said, "The Pharisees marvelled that he (Jesus) had not first washed, (baptized)

before dinner." "Will any man, in his senses, says Mr. P. believe that the Jews, never ate a meal without immersing themselves?"* We answer, no. But, according to the oral law, or traditions of the elders, no man might eat, after having been in a public assembly, as was the present case with our Lord, without having first immersed himself. We ask Mr. P. to deny this. He ought to do one of three things, either deny it; or confess he is unacquainted with the vain traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees; or that he intended an unusually flagrant imposition upon the community.

His third perverted fragment of a text is found Heb. ix. 10. Meats and drinks and divers washings. He wholly omitted, "*and carnal ordinances,*" to which alone his remarks, and the Apostle's observations, relative to "*the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean,*" can have any particular bearing. It is hard to accuse Mr. P. of design, but it looks too much like it.

The next passage to which he adverts is, 1. Cor. x. 2, with which we will transcribe the 1st verse. They are, "Moreover, brethren, I would not, that ye should be 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.*" Upon the last verse, Mr. P. says, "*I believe that the Israelites were sprinkled by the spray of the sea, and a shower of rain from the clouds passing over them.*" Yes, and had the Apostle *believed* so too, it would have extricated Mr. P. and his brethren from their perplexing difficulty. But Paul says, they passed *under the cloud, and through the sea, and were baptized in both.* Here I might leave Mr. P. to his own reflections upon this text, were it not he subjoined a presumptuous untruth. He says to Lebbeus, "The interpretation which I have adopted is not so vain a fancy as your author supposes; for there is a *thus saith the Lord* for it." He then quotes Psalms, lxxvii. 15, 17, "The clouds poured out water." Very true; but where and for what? Does the Lord say, that the clouds poured out water, at the Red sea, and upon

* Page 257.

the Israelites, and *for baptism*? In the same verse, it is added, "The skies sent out a sound; thine arrows went abroad." The next verse is, "the voice of thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook." If the clouds poured out the rain at the Red sea, and during the transit, it looks as though it was upon the Egyptians, seeing it was accompanied with *lightnings, thunders* and *arrows* of the Almighty. Not a word is said of its being poured upon Israel, much less of its being their baptism. There is not a word of its being thus, either in the Old Testament or in the New. It is but one of Mr. P.'s imaginary notions; and to which he had no authority to allege the divine sanction.

In speaking upon Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, Mr. P. says, "But the Baptist interpretation of this passage, by uniting *death* and the *resurrection* in the act of Baptism, destroys the whole force of the Apostle's reasoning; and makes immersion all in all, the whole sum of the Christian profession and practice."* Here he makes several mistakes. First. Where he says the Baptist interpretation destroys the force of the Apostle's reasoning, when it only destroys the force of his own. Second. In saying "by uniting *death* and the *resurrection* in the act of baptism," destroys the whole force of the Apostle's reasoning, whereas this is the identical reasoning of the Apostle, and it contains more force, than Mr. P. is able to meet. The very words of the text are, "*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also we are risen with him.*" Third. In alleging, that this makes immersion all in all, the whole sum of the Christian profession and practice. Whereas, it makes immersion, or the act of baptism, but a miniature exhibition of what the subject professes to be, dead unto sin; and of what he wishes to *practice*, a new life of obedience to him who died for him. This appears the essence of the Apostle's argument, and which he employs in urging his brethren to walk in newness of life. We know that this, rightly understood, would demolish Mr. P.'s system of unbelievers' baptism. It therefore concerns him to do it away, or to renounce his

* Page 267.

system. His bold, but unsuccessful attempt may excite some of his friends to read with carefulness, and so with profit, the 6th of Romans.

In his next paragraph, he puts into the mouth of his Lebbeus an unusual slander, with the manifest design of fixing a notorious falsehood upon the Baptists. "It has been said by those, who have carefully consulted linguists, that no word can be found in the Greek language to express immersion but the word now in debate." To which Mr. P. replies, "that is notoriously false." It is presumed no learned Baptist ever made the expression. If Mr. P. invented it for the purpose of slander, he may think differently of it another day. He cannot honorably say, that his purpose was not to lay it to the reproach of the Baptists: for he put it into the mouth of a fictitious one, for whose conviction he had been long laboring. We know that it is not the only word which may be used, when immersion is intended, but we know of no other word, in the Greek language, which so exactly purports a *momentary immersion*, such as takes place at the administration of the ordinance of baptism, as does the word *baptizo*. Nor has he named any.

If we mistake not, we have noticed, though contrary from our intention, every objection which Mr. P. has laid against *baptizo's* never purporting any thing short of immersion, except what he says of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the baptism by suffering. With respect to the one, every Greek scholar, who has attended to the subject, knows that it might be more literally rendered "baptized in the Holy Ghost," than *with*. With relation to the other, he observes, "We sometimes say a man is *overwhelmed* in sorrow, to express the idea of extreme agony." These instances are, therefore, like all the others which he produced, not certainly to his point; and if not certainly to his point, not at all: he is at most just where he was when he began; he believes that *baptizo* does, sometimes, signify something short of immersion, but cannot prove it. This he ought to have known, and he was obligated, both to God and men, to have known, before he published his bold assertions and presumptive guessings. Then would he not, in the way he now

has, have encouraged the erroneous, hardened the wicked, and made the hearts of many of God's people sad.

His next attempt is to do away the other argument in favour of immersion, which is founded upon the *circumstances* attending the administration of the ordinance, as they are expressed in the sacred record. Here he makes his first attack upon the Greek prepositions. "Great stress, says he, is laid upon the expression, *They went down INTO the water, and came up out of the water.* Every person, says he, who is the least acquainted with the Greek language, knows that here, they (the Greek prepositions) might have been rendered *to* and *from*, with as much propriety as *into* and *out of*."* We do not accuse him, in this instance, of a wilful mistake, but of a great one. He here takes for granted, the very thing which should be proved; and asserts what neither he nor any of his brethren knows to be true. Prepositions in Greek, as well as in English, are used to show the relation which one word bears to another. When they are translated from the Greek into the English language, they are used to express the same relation between the English words, as they express whilst showing the relation between Greek words. It is therefore not a very literary declaration for any one to assert that Greek prepositions which occupy a particular station, and express a particular relation, in a Greek sentence, may when the sentence is translated, be themselves translated into one English preposition as well as into another. Mr. P. has, at least, very inadvertently, made the above anti-literary assertion. The same has been declared by many of his brethren. If they have thus transgressed, merely through want of thinking, and not with a purpose to darken counsel by words without knowledge, that thus they might establish their error, their fault is comparatively small. But if they have knowingly palmed this imposition upon the public, their sin is aggravated.

We have never, to my knowledge, appeared to consider prepositions to be our first or second line of either

* Page 267.

offence or defence; but even these voluntarily enlist themselves on the side of truth. We say to Mr. P. to Dr. Reed and all others, who have vainly labored to remove the little, but plain, auxiliary assistance which prepositions afford to the Baptist cause; that the Greek prepositions *eis* and *ek*, could not, where they stand connected with the ordinance of baptism, as in Acts viii. 38 and 39 and elsewhere, have been translated *to* and *from*, without doing violence to the language. Of this the translators of the Bible, who were all Pædobaptists, appear to have been fully convinced. They, therefore, uniformly translated it as it should be. The method, which Mr. P. and his brethren have too successfully adopted with the unlearned part of the community, is worthy of the cause for which they employ it, but it is a pitiful and mean stratagem, unworthy of men professing either talents or literature. They put into the mouths of the common people questions like the following. Do you suppose, that when it is said, Christ went into the mountain, he went into the earth? They spread before the unlettered, by their myriads of publications, a variety of sentences, out of the Greek, in which *eis* and *ek* are translated *to* and *from*, and in some of which it would make a very awkward appearance to render them *into* and *out of*. All this we know, and we also know the base imposition which such management is calculated to produce amongst the common people. Such covering may serve a purpose whilst men are sleeping; but should they awake, and they will awake, not mere contempt will be poured upon their deceivers.

His next attack upon the circumstances attending the ordinance of baptism relates to the places where John was baptizing—which were the river Jordan and Enon, because there was *much water there*. Yes, says Mr. P. but the literal translation of the *much water* is many waters. Very well, and does he not know, that *hudata pol-la*, many waters, are put for seas? We just ask Mr. P. one question. Why was it not said that John was *preaching* in Jordan and in Enon, because there was much water there? provided these waters were mentioned only

to inform us that the people with their beasts had plenty of water?

As he has allowed us no other circumstance as recorded in the Bible, favorable to immersion, he has attacked no more. But, beloved brethren, for your consideration I here set down a few circumstances which are recorded in the sacred volume; together with the practice of the Baptists, leaving one blank column for you to fill up, showing that your belief and practice also agree with the Bible. The first column is left for you. The second is the Bible, which we and you claim as our only sure *rule* of faith and practice. The last exhibits the faith and practice of the Baptists.

| PÆDOBAPTISTS. | BIBLE. | BAPTISTS. |
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| Texts for infants being subjects of baptism. | The subjects of baptism. | Subjects of baptism as held by the baptists. |
| | Those who bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Matt. iii. ch. He that believeth. Mark xvi. 16. If thou believest with all thine heart. Acts viii. | Those who afford evidence that they are penitent. Matt. iii. |
| | The penitent.— Those were pricked in their heart. Acts ii. | Those who manifest a broken heart for sin. Acts ii. |
| | Those who gladly received Peter's gospel word. Acts iii. | Those who appear to have believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. Mark xvi. 16. Acts viii. |
| | | Those who gladly receive the gospel of the grace of God. Acts iii. |
| The practice of the Pædobaptists in administering the ordinance. | The Bible for the ordinance of baptism. The circumstances are, 1. They went down into the wa- | The practice of the Baptists relative to the ordinance of baptism. 1. The minister and the candidate go |

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| ter. Acts viii. | down into the water. |
| 2. The penitent, &c. were baptized in the water or riv- er. Mark i. 5. | 2. The professed penitent is baptized in the water. |
| 3. As to the thing performed, they were buried <i>by bap- tism</i> , and in bap- tism. Rom. vi. 4.— Col. ii. 17. | 3. As to the act of baptizing. The per- son is buried <i>by bap- tism</i> and <i>in</i> bap- tism, in the very transac- tion. |
| 4. They were raised in baptism. Col. ii. 12. | 4. Before the or- dinance is consider- ed to be completed, the person is raised again <i>in</i> baptism. And then, |
| 5. They came up <i>straightway out of</i> the water. Mat. iii. 16. They came up <i>out of</i> the water. Acts viii. | 5. An attending circumstance is, they come up out of the water, the minister & the baptized per- son. |

In the short sample which has just been exhibited, you cannot but see that the scriptures are *very plain* both with respect to the gospel subjects of baptism, and what baptism is; and also that the Baptists believe and practice this *plain way*. You will probably inquire, Do not the scriptures also point out some other and different way? If they do, that other and different way is doubtless for you, and your blank column is waiting to receive it. One thing you are bound to shun, that is, *forgery*. Better have your column stand forever blank, than thus filled. Your priests may propose filling it for you. But remember, brethren, your priests cannot answer for you. God hath given you his holy word, and the things of the kingdom of God, and those which concern the Lord Jesus Christ are plain, so that he that runs may read, and God expects you to read it. He expects you to understand, that no farther than you forsake all that you have,

can you be Christ's disciples. He requires you, by Moses and the prophets, by Christ and his apostles, to hear that great prophet who was to come into the world, and who has come and taught, as never man taught. With relation to the subject now before us, he has taught enough for the Baptists, even all that they believe and practice; but not enough for you. Is he deficient? or do you require too much? You may be told, that you agree with the Baptists so far as they go, but that they do not proceed far enough. Very well. For this very reason, we have left the blank column for you to fill up with the passages, where Moses, or the prophets, or Christ, or his apostles, have directed you to go farther; or that infants and households of unbelievers should be baptized by proxy, or by having bondsmen for their good behaviour procured for them: and also where sprinkling or pouring is defined to be the matter of gospel baptism. We know that you and your preachers feel straightened in this particular. We also know the why they are straightened. It is because your oral law, or traditions, are not justified by the written word. Could they find your system in the written word of God, as they find it in Mr. P.'s written traditions, they would not be obliged to say so many bitter, cruel, base and false things to put the Baptists out of countenance, and to keep up your own. You must, brethren, think it a very hard case that the word of the Lord should have been so expressed that the Baptists, who are a sect of ignorant, bigoted, mischievous heretics, should seem to be justified by it; whilst you, who are the true and regular gospel churches, are left, to say the least, too much in the dark relative to gospel practice. Having to recur to Moses to explain what Christ did not reveal with sufficient clearness, and to the 17th of Genésis to establish infant gospel membership, and even not there set down, so plainly as could be wished. This must have been by design, or through forgetfulness. It could not have been through ignorance, for the Lord knew how to express his mind, and will with clearness and fulness. It seems a very hard case to suppose, that he did, through design, leave his word so incomplete, that the Baptists,

who reject God's everlasting covenant of grace, together with the whole of the Old Testament, deny the divine authority of the christian sabbath, virtually excommunicate nighly all the real children of God, and whose system of religion is a mere mushroom, without seed or root, should yet appear justified, both in system and practice, by that same word; and yet, at the same time, the true and regular gospel Churches with their ministers should be obliged to suppose, guess and assert a thousand things, because they cannot prove them, even to keep up a plausible appearance. To say, it was thro' forgetfulness that infant membership, infant baptism and infant sprinkling, &c. were not put down as parts of the will of God, and of the Gospel system, seems to be treating God too much as Elijah treated the god, Baal. There appears but one other way by which this deficiency can be accounted for, and that is, through negligence, as Mr. Fuller observes, "that St. John saith, chap. xxi. 25. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which are not written;" "amongst which, for aught that appears to the contrary, the *baptizing of infants* might be one of them."* Even upon this supposition, there is yet left an insolvable difficulty: for it appears to be charging unkindness upon the Lord, for having neglected or entirely left out such an essential article of the Christian religion, when he could not but know to what infinite trouble it would put his people, whilst laboring to prove it without evidence. But what seems beyond measure surprizing is, that the Baptists, who had, unless Mr. P. and very many more are chargeable with the basest deception and falsehood, the origin of their church from the insurrection at Munster, and derived their distinctive principles from those mad and deluded fanatics, should notwithstanding all this, find both their faith and practice expressly and clearly delineated in the word of God; whilst their learned and bitter opposers are left to gather straw where they can find it. You will, breth-

* His. Eng. Bt. p. 15, vol. iii.

men, labor for the solution of these mysteries. May God give you to know and practice the truth.

Desirous of serving you in the kingdom
and gospel of the Son of God,

I remain yours.

LETTER X.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

IN this I expect to fill up what is yet behind, of my address to you. You will not do me justice should you consider it to be my object to make your cause, system and church to appear in their worst attitude—unless you be convinced that the worst attitude in which they can appear, is in their true one. No, brethren—I have no interest in detracting from your merits or in heaping scandal upon you. My highest and first desire respecting you is, that you may know, love and obey the truth. With relation to the highly interesting subjects of the present controversy, there is no occasion for the balancing of truths that you might ascertain on which side it preponderates; for truth hath not become at variance with itself, and so imparted a portion to opposite sides, that neither might be wholly run down. If there be one word of God in favor of the Gospel Church being but the old Jewish Church continued; there can be none against it. If there be one word of God which justifies the baptizing of an unbelieving household on account of the faith of a parent or master, there can be none which contradicts it. If there be one word of God which proves sprinkling to be the thing to be done in the ordinance of baptism, there can be nothing in the Bible opposing it; nor can there be aught for any other thing:

for, as there is but one Lord, and one faith, so there is but *one baptism*. If there be one word of God, which teaches us that believers may partake of the Lord's supper before they have received the *one baptism*, there can be nothing in the scriptures prohibiting it. If Mr. P. have produced so much as *one word* of God in support of the above particulars, then certainly believe him; but if he have performed the part of an ingenious attorney, making the best of a bad cause, believe him not. If we bring things equally plausible, yet produce not the fair testimony of God's word, believe *us* not. All that we ask of you is, *believe God*, not us. Be honest towards God and towards yourselves. Be willing to *carry the cross*, and you shall be *brought to the crown*. The subject of the present letter is to vindicate from contempt the counsel of God, the baptism which is from heaven, and which was introduced by the man who was sent from God, whose name was John.*

Mr. P. and many others have found it expedient in supporting their own system to do away John's baptism. This baptism was not John's any more than it is mine, otherwise than he was sent from heaven to introduce it. When Jesus the Saviour asked the chief priests and elders in Israel, Whence is the baptism of John? from heaven, or of men? They did not choose to give their judgment. When the pharisees and Jewish divines refused to submit to the baptism of John, Christ says they rejected the counsel of God against themselves. The Pædobaptist divines are less consistent than were the Jewish. The latter rejected the counsel of God, and made no pretensions to a substitute. The former reject the counsel of God to make room for a substitute. One very principal objection which they have against the baptism from heaven is, that it hath attached to it so many circumstances which bespeak it to be immersion. Another very principal objection which they have against allowing the baptism from heaven to be Christian baptism, is because baptism then would not seem to come in the place of circumcision, being introduced so

* Matt. xxi. 25.—Luke vii. 29, 30.—John i. 6.

long before they can, plausibly, discontinue circumcision. One very principal thing which we have against their doing away the baptism which was from heaven, is because we read of the institution, or introduction, of no other; and if they take this away, we have none. Nor have they any, save a pretended one, which they have devised out of their own heart. However, whatever objections they may have against it, or however desirous we may be to retain it; if they can do it away by the word of God, we must submit. We wish to give their arguments their full weight.

That you may be suitably prepared to give an unprejudiced attention, when we come to the doing away of Mr. P.'s arguments against John's baptism being the Christian baptism; it may be here expedient to mention three things. First. Provided Mr. P. or any other person can show us that Jesus did introduce the gospel baptism at any other time than that in which he sent John to preach and to administer the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; or that he introduced the gospel or christian baptism, by any other of his servants; then the baptists have nothing to lose; nor do those who hold that unbelievers are the subjects, and the ordinance to be sprinkling, gain any countenance by it. Unless they consider the word of the Lord to be more or less obligatory, in proportion to the number of commands and examples which are given in favor of a particular subject. For, Secondly. The *command* still is to baptize disciples, believers, penitents.* The example still is for the baptizing of believers, the penitent, and all who receive the word gladly.† The circumstances which attended the ordinance of baptism, after our Lord ascended to heaven, were the same, or equally clear and easy to be understood, as when John was the administrator, or when Christ made and baptized more disciples than John. After Christ ascended up where he was before, the circumstances attending the ordinance of baptism, or the particular acts performed, were, 1. The minister

* Matt. xxviii. 19.—Mark xvi. 16.—Acts ii. 38.

† Acts ii. 38, 41.—xviii. 8.

and the subject came to a certain water. 2. They both went down *into the water*. Acts viii. 38. 3. The subject was *buried by baptism, planted in baptism, buried in baptism*. Rom. vi. 4, 5. Col. ii. 12. 4. The subject was *raised in baptism*. Col. ii. 12. Then 5. They both came up out of the water. Acts viii. 39. All this we have minutely set down, relative to the ordinance of baptism, and this too, even after your preachers will allow it to have become christian. Here is every part and particular of the Baptist practice. No Baptist minister could set down his own practice with more exactness. Therefore, Thirdly. We have no necessity of retaining John's baptism, as being christian; for the reason which your ministers allege. Nor have they any occasion to boast; even could they justify themselves, whilst they treat the baptism of John, with but little more respect than they do the Baptists. Their avowed object in doing away John's baptism, or in removing from it the honor of its being christian, is, that with it, they might put down immersion from being the thing commanded in baptism. When Mr. P. had arrived at the point in which he concluded, that all claims in favor of John's baptism being christian, were silenced, he introduced an objector, saying, "If it is true that John's baptism is done away,—it is no proof at all for the baptism of infants. Very true, says Mr. P. we do not argue it for that purpose. But it *wrests out of the mouths of our opponents all the circumstantial evidence in favor of immersion*. It leaves no ground of declamation about *rivers and ponds, or lakes, and the people going down into the water, and coming up out of the water*. All these are swept away at a dash."* You know, brethren, that what he here thus says, is but a mere flourish, that there is no truth in it. He did not expect to be believed, by the reflecting part of the community; unless he judged them to be more easily imposed upon than can be reasonably expected. In the circumstances which attend baptism, whilst John was administering, there is one which favors immersion

* Page 287.

which is not expressly named whilst the Apostles were baptizing ; but then there are three circumstances which were named after Christ's resurrection, and which favor immersion, and which were not expressly mentioned whilst John was baptizing. If any one is desirous of ascertaining the circumstantial evidence in favor of immersion both before and after the Saviour's resurrection, the following schedule may furnish the means.

BEFORE.

AFTER.

And were all baptized of him *in the river* of Jordan. *They went down into the water.* Acts viii. 38.

Mark i. 5. Buried with him by baptism. Rom. vi. 4. Planted

Jesus was baptized of John *in Jordan.* Mark i. 9. *in the likeness of his death.*

Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway *—v. 5.*

out of the water. Mark iii. 16. Buried with him *in baptism,* wherein also ye are

risen with him. Cor. ii. 12.

They came up out of the water. Acts viii. 39.

The circumstantial evidence for immersion, before the resurrection is, they were baptized *in the river,* and they came up straightway *out of the water.*

The same kind of evidence for immersion afterwards, is, they went *down into the water,* they were

buried in baptism, planted in the likeness of Christ's

death, (not in the likeness of his dying) *buried* and *raised*

again *in baptism,* and came up *out of the water.*

We, indeed, claim the evidence on each side, and we have a right to it, for it appertains to baptism ; but,

would they allow us either, it would ruin their superstitious rite of sprinkling. But, specially, would they,

after rejecting the baptism from heaven, which was introduced by John, allow us the baptism as practised by

the apostles, and the evidence which they afford us, as to what it is ; *immersion,* for the act performed in the

ordinance of baptism, would rest in safety, till they should be able to furnish, at least, one instance of a person being

buried and raised in baptism by sprinkling. You may

think me to be nighly trifling with your sprinkling substitute for baptism. No, brethren, it is no trifling matter; that your priests have trifled away the Lord's ordinance of baptism, and cheated you out of the knowledge of it. Though immersion, or the ordinance of baptism be not particularly in danger, by the rudeness with which many have treated John and the counsel of God, which he was sent to unfold, yet the kingdom which Jesus came to set up in our apostate world, is in danger. The word and promise of God are also in danger; and it is either ignorance of the Lord Jesus Christ and of his kingdom, or hatred towards both, which have prompted them to the measure, as we hope to show. We may now take their arguments into consideration.

"I will (says Mr. P.) now proceed to establish the position, that John's baptism was *not* Christian baptism. 1. This is evident from the object of John's administration. He was sent in compliance with an *ancient prophecy*, for the *exclusive purpose* of preparing the way of the Lord. When interrogated as to his character and the object of his mission, *He confessed and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ. But I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. John i. 19, 23.* Here then (says Mr. P.) was the object, the exclusive object of John's embassy."*

Were it not for swelling my book more, than I wish, I would gladly quote every word which he here says of John and his mission. If I mistake not, I have inserted every word, which could afford you a hint, for what purpose John was sent: I apprehend, however, that it would be impossible for any person to gather, from what he has said, any consistent idea of John's embassy. Those who read Mr. P. and believe him, must of necessity be deceived. He not only withholds the larger part of the truth, but perverts what he exhibits. I may not be able to set before you the exclusive object of John's mission, but I may set before you some important realities comprised in it.

* Page 273.

Instead of his being sent in compliance with an *ancient prophecy* specially, he was sent in agreement with many, and specially in agreement with the last which the Old Testament contains, and in it, not his mission only, but his work is assigned him. "Behold I will send you *Elijah the prophet* before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."*

The angel, that appeared to Zacharias, and announced that he should be the joyful father of a son, whose name should be John, thus spake he of him. "*Many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine, nor strong drink: and he shall be filled with the HOLY GHOST, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*"† His father, Zacharias, being filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied and said thus, with relation to John the Baptist: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath *visited and redeemed his people; and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began. And thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways: To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins. To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*"‡

John began his ministry by saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and proceeded to reprove sharply the *hypocritical Pharisees*, and the unbelieving *Saducees*, when they came wishing to pervert

* Malachi iv. 5, 6.

† Luke i. 13 to 17.

‡ Luke i. 67 to 69.

his baptism, and said unto them, "O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore FRUITS meet for repentance, and think NOT to say within yourselves, We have ABRAHAM to our father. The axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."* "He went into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the REMISSION of SINS."†

Of this man, Mr. P. speaks with the coldness of a Stoic, and says, "His ministry was no part of the Christian dispensation: consequently his baptism was not Christian baptism," If Mr. P. knows no better, he is to be pitied; if he does, he is to be detested. Is the preaching of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, accompanied by the power of God in turning the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, no part of the gospel dispensation: Is it no part of the gospel, to turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, by going as the herald of Jesus, before him, in the spirit and power of Elias, turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and thus make ready a people for the Lord Jesus to receive as the Gospel Church or constitute into the Gospel Church? Is it no part of the gospel dispensation "To give knowledge of salvation unto the people by the remission of their sins, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace? Is it no part of the gospel dispensation to go from place to place, preaching the baptism of repentance for the REMISSION of SINS? In short, is it no part of the gospel dispensation, to make Christ manifest unto the people, and to proclaim peace, pardon and salvation through his name?‡ Is all this no part of the gospel dispensation? And therefore, must the baptism from heaven, which was published, and the prac-

* Matt. iii.

† Luke iii. 3.

‡ John i. 31.

tice of it introduced by a man, specially sent from God for the purpose, be set aside, as of little value, having been introduced, no person knows for what? Christ Jesus thought very differently of John from what Mr. P. does. "Elias truly shall first come, said the Lord, and restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached and every man presseth into it."* Mark tells us, that John's ministry and baptism were "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."† Here Mark testifies that the ministry and baptism of John were the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Mr. P. says, "His ministry was no part of the Christian dispensation: consequently, his baptism was not Christian baptism." Christ saith "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached." Mr. P. says, the law and the prophets were until Christ was crucified, and John's "ministry was no part of the Christian dispensation." Peter justifies John's baptism, and preaches, in nighly the same words, as did John. "Repent, says Peter, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."‡

These passages of scripture and observations have not been here set down to do away Mr. P.'s first argument, but to show you what John's ministry and bap-

* Mat. xvii. 11, 12. Luke xvi. 16.

† Mark i. 1 to 5.

‡ Acts ii. 33.

tism were. That you might, of yourselves, know, that Mr. P. understood neither, but had perverted both. He has been compelled to a perpetual round of error and darkness, from rejecting, or not understanding what, the kingdom of heaven is, by whom set up, and when; of what it was composed, and what the introductory ordinance is. This blindness of his has led him to reject, from John's embassy, the great work for which he was sent, **TO MAKE READY A PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THE LORD.** Mr. P. found no use for this work, nor for such a people in *building such a Church as he has chosen to constitute, and name it, "The true and regular gospel Church."* He has, if we may thus speak, caused Christ to set an example of disorder and confusion, when he first organized the gospel Church, constituting it of unbaptized persons, and then breaking bread, or administering the Lord's supper, to them, whilst they were unbaptized: whilst, in his book, Mr. P. has seen fit to put matters into better order, and tells us, "That baptism is an *essential prerequisite to communion*, and without which no person can be properly admitted to the Lord's supper. †

His second argument is, "The *object and import* of John's baptism were essentially different from Christian baptism.—Christian baptism is a token of the covenant of grace—an external sign of internal grace—a *seal* of the righteousness of faith—the mark of membership in the Christian church. In all these particulars it differed from the rite which John administered."—"The conviction demanded in the two cases was totally distinct.—The profession demanded in the baptism of John, was nothing more, than a recognition of that great article of the Jewish faith, the appearance of the Messiah, accompanied with this additional circumstance, that it was nigh at hand. The faith required by the apostles included a persuasion of all the miraculous facts, which they attested, comprehending the preternatural conception, the Deity, the incarnation and atonement, the miracles, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Hence, as the import of these two rites is

† Pages 135, 136.

essentially different, they must be entirely distinct: consequently John's baptism was not christian baptism."

Here you have his second argument and his management of it; which are now to be examined. "The *object* and *import* of John's baptism, says he, were essentially different from christian baptism." The object and import of John's baptism, as well as his ministry, were to "*make ready a people prepared for the Lord,*" as saith the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Zacharias. Paul, by the same spirit saith, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus."* This, instead of being essentially different from the christian baptism, is essentially the same. This was the baptizing of the penitent, teaching them that they should believe on Christ Jesus. The christian baptism is baptizing the penitent, teaching them to believe on Christ Jesus, observing all things whatsoever he hath commanded. We readily grant that John's baptism is essentially different from the sprinkling of infants and unbelieving households, *teaching them nothing*; and the christian baptism is equally essentially different from such a corrupt and anti-christian superstition. Hence Mr. P.'s argument is, in its position, false. But we will hear its illustration. "Christian baptism, says he, is a *token* of the *covenant* of *grace*." If thus, was not John's baptism equally so, when the penitent were baptized in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins, and received the ordinances as the Lord's token of the remission of them? But, says he, christian baptism is an *external sign* of *internal grace*. Then Mr. P. and all his brethren do, upon principle, violate it; and would universally reject it, could they bring their infant baptism into full operation. Says he, again, *It is a seal of the righteousness of faith*. Who told him this? Suppose it to be so. Who told him to apply a seal of the righteousness of faith to those who have none? But says he, once more, "It is the mark of membership in the christian church." This is rather an instance of his

* Luke i. 17.—Acts xix. 4.

guessing. The Bible appears to speak of it, as being an introductory ordinance, rather than a mark of previous membership.* Here, in four instances, he has professedly defined christian baptism. "In all these particulars, he says, it differed from the rite which John administered." We should say, that it agrees with each of his particulars, so far as his particulars correspond with christian baptism; and infinitely more than do his particulars, or christian baptism, with infant sprinkling. But he may reply, "What I intentionally proved was, that John's baptism was, in *object* and *import*, essentially different from the *sprinkling* of *unbelieving households*." To this we cordially agree. So is every instance of christian baptism recorded in the Bible equally hostile to his impenitent, sprinkling, substitutes, as he has abundantly proved to us, by his extensive and ineffectual labors to prove the contrary. He has not only produced no scripture example for his practice, but, if his definitions of christian baptism be correct, that it is "an *external sign of internal grace*, and a *seal* of the righteousness of faith," his infant and household baptism is a gross perversion of the christian baptism, and must be an abomination in the sight of God, and will soon be an abhorrence to all flesh. As to the different faith which he says was demanded of the subjects of John's baptism, from what was demanded when the apostles baptized, and which he informs us that Mr. Hall stated, we are not very careful to answer, otherwise than merely to state that provided his definition of both be correct, neither surpasses the faith of devils, between which we have no anxiety to choose. Hence, as this faith hath indeed nothing to do with John's baptism, it cannot make it unchristian.

His third argument is, "Christian baptism was originally, as at the present time, administered in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and this form is essential to the administration of that holy ordinance." This is what logicians term begging the ques-

* Acts ii.

tion. He takes for granted the thing to be proved. At the same time he destroys his last and principal argument, which he builds upon the supposition that John's disciples were re-baptized, and in support of it quotes Acts xix. In this chapter we find no mention of Mr. P.'s christian baptism. We do, at most, find that certain disciples were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. The fact is, we have no account in the Bible, that the repeating of the sacred name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was always, if ever, essential to the Christian baptism. At the most, it appears to have been an appendage, which Jesus added, when he extended the mission of his Apostles to the Gentiles. Nor does it certainly appear, that the renewed and extended commission comprised any thing more, than that the ordinance should be performed in the name of the Lord Jesus, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. Peter manifestly understood it in this sense, when he addressed the broken hearted Jews, on the day of Pentecost, thus: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." As this third argument has no weight in it, and if it had, it would spoil another which he values at a higher rate, we dismiss it, and turn to his

Fourth argument. "Those, says he, who identify John's baptism with christian baptism, involve themselves in a monstrous absurdity." Instead of making Christ the founder of the christian church, they ascribe this honour to John; and reduce the GREAT KING and HEAD of the Church to the capacity of one of John's disciples." Every person can see, that there is no truth in this. When Christ gave the law, by the ministration of angels, did he lose the honor of being legislator to Israel? Or did he reduce himself to the capacity of one of those angels? Nor is he any the less the founder of the christian church, by preparing and sending John to be the agent. Nor does it in any way, degree or manner reduce the Lord to the capacity of one of John's disciples. Mr. P. has, at his own expence, said, that "there are those, at the present day, who publickly advocate the sentiment that the great King and head of the

Church is reduced to the capacity of one of John's disciples." There was no necessity of uttering this unfounded assertion. Nor was it necessary for him to tell us, because Christ had no sins to confess, no occasion for faith, nor was baptized in his own name, therefore he was not baptized with John's baptism, nor with Christian baptism. Repentance, faith, and the name of the Lord Jesus, are appendages of baptism. When a sinner is baptized, repentance is required, and whilst John was the administrator, faith in a Saviour to be revealed; when Peter was the administrator, faith in a Saviour already made manifest. When a SAVIOUR was to be baptized, neither was required. But this changed not John's baptism into another thing. The subject was different, and so were the circumstances. *A voice from heaven proclaimed, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased. And the SPIRIT of GOD descended like a dove and lighted upon him.* If John were not sent to administer *two baptisms*, this was John's baptism; and if he was, this was *one of them*. One would think that this might *emphatically* be styled *Christian baptism*. When CHRIST was the *subject*, and the FATHER and SPIRIT attended.

Did Mr. P. believe himself, when he said, "*The modern Baptists are fond of believing, that Christ became one of his (John's) disciples?*" Did he believe it true, when he said, "*I do not hesitate to say, that it (Christ's baptism) was in compliance with that precept of the ceremonial law, which respected the consecration of the priests? Exodus xix. and Levit. viii.*" Would not Mr. P. have come nigher the truth, to have *hesitated* a little, and with humility said with the Apostle, "That there was need, that *another priest* should arise after the order of *Melchisedeck*, and NOT be called after the ORDER of *Aaron*? For the *priesthood being changed*, there is made of necessity a *change also of the law.*" Heb. vii. 11, 12. Again says our author, "It was at the age (thirty years) that Christ was baptized by John; washed in Jordan,—received the unction of the Holy Ghost.—And all this was done *in obedience to an EXISTING STATUTE*, and there-

fore was a *fulfilment* of righteousness."* This is *presumption* to be *reproved*. Where is the *existing statute*, which required the Holy Ghost to descend like a dove and light upon Christ? or where is the *statute* which required Christ to be baptized in Jordan, and that too when he was about thirty years of age? Let Mr. P. produce the *existing statute*, or let him confess to God, that in his zeal against the people of God, and being mad against them, he spake *falsely* in vindication of an egregious error. But says he again, "*At all events, he did not receive a baptism which any christian can imitate.*" This still adds to his imprudent assertions. There is nothing to hinder any christian from imitating Christ in his baptism, except it be a proud heart, or a misguided judgment; for he has left us a righteous example, that we should follow his steps; and we may consider this, as one part of his righteous example, which it became him to fulfil, or accomplish. We may thus consider it, till Mr. P. shall produce his *existing statute*, which he has too rashly announced, but is not able to shew. Christ may be imitated in his baptism, for aught that appears to the contrary, as easily as in any other part of his holy example. The circumstances which attended his baptism are another thing; and which are no part of the heavenly example, or the all-righteousness, which it became him to fulfil as a pattern for us.

We now turn to Mr. P.'s last argument against John's baptism being christian. How it may seem to others, I cannot exactly state; but, I confess, to me it is not very entertaining business seriously to reply to the pretended arguments of an opponent, when he does not present so much as a semblance of rational argumentation, supplying its place with bold suppositions and bolder assertions. But we must hear his last professed argument, which is,

"5. That John's baptism was not Christian baptism, is evident from the fact, that the Apostles, in their administration; paid no respect to the former, but administered the Christian rite to John's disciples in common with others." There is no reason in this nominal ar-

* Page 282.

gument, because there is no truth in the position. It is a bold and daring assumption. It is also an imposition upon the community for a gentleman, professedly acquainted with the scriptures, thus to assert a palpable untruth. Did the Apostles baptize the Church to which the three thousand were added, without distinction, or making none between them and the young converts? Did the Apostles baptize one of the more than five hundred brethren, who were together, and saw the Lord after his resurrection? Did the Apostles ever baptize one—yes, did they baptize so much as an individual, who was previously baptized by John? I do not say, that they did not; but if they did, it is not so recorded. The 19th of the Acts, which Mr. P. has pressed into his service, cannot prove the point, nor afford him countenance, but with those who carelessly attend to the circumstances. The place, where the disciples were, who are mentioned Acts xix. was hundreds of miles from Judea; and it was now nighly thirty years after John was beheaded; besides, they were manifestly young converts: and nothing appears in the connexion to show, that they had ever seen John. Further, it is doubtful, whether they were re-baptized; at least, the matter is not so plain, as to leave the subject indubitable. Calvin, one of the most learned men of your denomination, and who may be styled the father of the Presbyterians, was, perhaps, as confident, that they were not, as Mr. P. is, that they were. For myself, I have been rather inclined to think they were.

When Paul was at Ephesus, the preceding autumn, no mention is made of disciples. He preached in the synagogue of the Jews; probably some were awakened. Acts xviii. 19, 20. Apollos came and spent, perhaps, the principal part of the next winter; he appeared to know nothing of the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit, and there is no account of his having ever been authorized to administer ordinances; yet he was mighty in the scriptures, and some, to the number of a-

bout twelve, appear to have been brought into gospel liberty.* These young converts were, probably, erroneously baptized by the zealous Apollos; and, if so, were afterwards correctly baptized by some of Paul's company. This may, therefore, be considered a *scripture*, and so a *sufficient*, example for re-baptizing those, who have been baptized erroneously. There must have been some good reason. We are not obliged to assign it. Whatever the irregularity might be, this argues not, that the counsel of God, the baptism from heaven, which was rejected by the *ancient* Scribes and Pharisees, should be rejected by us; or that it is not Christian baptism. But it argues, that there have been circumstances, in which it was correct to *re-baptize*.

What these disciples intended, by saying, that they had been baptized unto John's baptism, probably was, that they had been baptized with, or in water, which baptism John was sent to introduce; they having not, as yet, heard of the baptism, with, or in, the Holy Ghost; which baptism was introduced by Christ. These persons, through the instrumentality of Paul, were then, as it appears, baptized with the Holy Ghost, for the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied. Whether these disciples were again baptized with water, is the question, and a question which still hangs in doubt. But, if they were, it seems still to leave Mr. P. in all his difficulty; for, according to the account, they were not baptized with his christian baptism. They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and Mr. P. says, in the name of the *sa-cred* THREE, is essential to Christian baptism.

In his remarks upon this, his last argument, he has told us many things, which are as foreign from the truth, as is the position which he, at first, asserted. Amongst other things, he tells us,

1. "That the great body of the Jewish nation received John's baptism." This he must have said, in his haste; one minute's reflection might have taught him differently. Jesus *made* and *baptized* more disciples, than John, (though Jesus baptized not, but his disci-

*Acts xviii. & xix. chap.

ples.)* If Jesus *made* and baptized more disciples than John; John could not have baptized the great body of the nation. Besides, there is great reason to believe, that there were but a few, compared with the whole, that were baptized at all.

2. That, "In the 19th of Acts, we have the fact explicitly declared, That the Apostles, in their administration, paid no respect to John's baptism, but administered the Christian rite to John's disciples in common with others." This is boldly treading upon forbidden ground—asserting what is not named either in the 19th of the Acts, or in any other passage of scripture. There is not a word of their being John's disciples; nor is there any apparent probability, that they had ever seen John. They had been baptized with water, and, perhaps, erroneously; and if so, were doubtless re-baptized.

3. Speaking of this 19th of Acts, he again says, "This plain statement of facts, in which some of John's disciples are declared to have received Christian baptism, has produced great trouble among the Baptists." We are indeed troubled, not at the facts, which are stated in the passage, but at the bold and daring perversion of God's word, by which the common people are shamefully imposed upon, having the key of knowledge very wickedly wrested from them. John's disciples are not here mentioned. Much less, that they received Christian baptism, after having been baptized of him.

Brethren, if there be any weight in Mr. P.'s arguments against John's baptism being Christian, we wish you to discover it; we confess, that we see none. They appear to us as light, as is his treatment of the Baptists, vain and indecorous. He is greatly, not to say wholly, unacquainted with the sentiments, system and strength of the Baptists, and of the kingdom to which they belong. He has considerable knowledge of the arguments, or pretended ones, which have, from one generation to another, been employed to hinder young converts from entering into the kingdom of heaven, and to retain older ones in the traditions, with which they have been

* John iv. 12.

bound. He has managed these arguments with as much subtlety, boldness and bitterness, as most of his brethren would have done ; yes, he has surpassed many who have travelled before him. Those who love darkness rather than light, will, no doubt, rejoice in his darkness. So far as the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch.

In the close of my address to you, the following observations may deserve a place, as growing out of the various subjects which we have passed in review.

1. That in doing away Mr. P.'s arguments, and in exhibiting the truth in the room of his mistakes, we have not resorted to the wisdom of words, but have adhered to that simplicity of style, which the unlearned may easily comprehend. Nor have we resorted to that wit and banter, which have been no ornament to the pages of our opponent. If the Pædobaptist system be the system of the church of Christ, it would be profaneness to ridicule it, or them for it. If it be not, their situation is sufficiently deplorable, without insult.

2. That the present controversy is one, in which both heaven and earth are deeply interested. You are therefore bound to attend to it. No small part of the duty which you owe to God and to man is involved in it. An humble, prayerful and obedient attention to this subject, you owe to your children, to your households, to your neighbours, to your country, to the human family, to God and to his Christ. The glory of God on earth is deeply interested in it. Your present usefulness and future crown are concerned in it. Your present peace, and joy, and those of your Baptist brethren, have an high interest in the solution of the subject of the present debate. If what we say be true, you are, probably, more interested, than you have hitherto imagined. If it be not, your security and justification require stronger support, than what Mr. P. has afforded. You must possess a thousand doubts, for your system of faith and practice is suspended upon a thousand suppositions ; not one of which has Mr. P. been able to substantiate. At least, we have not been able to discover so much as one fair argument brought to bear in favour of so much as

one sentiment, which is peculiar to your system. Thus obstinate is truth. It will not be found on both sides of a contradiction. We ask you, What point in your system has he proved? Has there not been a link of straw in every argument which he has advanced? He has asserted much and boldly, but what have been his evidences? He has proved to you, that either your system, or the Baptists, must be wrong. But has he proved, that your system is right? He has proved, that your church and the Jewish are similar; but has he proved that the *gospel church* and the Jewish possess this similarity? He has sufficiently shown us, that you sprinkle all your infants, because Abraham circumcised part of his; but has he shown, that the Lord hath ever commanded such a thing? He has afforded more proof than we required, that you practise the baptism of *impenitence*, but has he evinced, that it is from heaven? He has asserted, abundantly, that John's baptism is not Christian baptism; but his witnesses did not agree. He has told us, that the Lord commanded his apostles to baptize, and some to be baptized, and has asserted, that God has not told the one, what is to be done, nor the other, what is to be received, but has "*left it to the discretion of the church,*"* but has he proved, that such a deficiency is justly chargeable upon the word of God? If so, the claims of the Baptists and Pædobaptists may be equally balanced, and thus the present controversy be lasting as the world. He has told us, that infants and unbelieving households are members of the gospel church, and that "an explicit revelation (upon the subject) would be altogether needless,"† but has he exhibited evidence of either? He has repeatedly told you, that the covenant of circumcision was the covenant of promise, or of grace, but failed in his evidence. He has repeated, times without number, that circumcision was a *seal*, a *seal* of the covenant of grace, but where is his proof? He has said, that baptism was a *seal* of the same covenant; but where are his witnesses? In short, he has told you ev-

* Pages 294, 295.

† Page 21.

ery thing, but what you have need to know, and proved nothing: nothing which shows, that the Pædobaptist church and the gospel church are one and the same; but much to show that the Pædobaptist church is formed after the model of the Jewish, which we readily grant. Is not his whole performance one continued imposition upon the Bible, upon the church of the Lord Jesus, and especially upon you, to bind you in ignorance of what the gospel church is?

3. That your church cannot be the church of Christ, for it possesses none of the characteristics of that church. The Baptists are not blameable for this, they cannot help it. They did not hinder you from being so. They warn you of the fact. They labour to convince you of it. Some of your priests return railing for the kindness; but they are unable to show you, that the Pædobaptist church does so much as in one particular, answer to the description of the gospel church, as it is given either by Moses, or the prophets: by Christ, or his Apostles.

Moses tells you, that none should be entitled to membership in the gospel church, or among the people of the Prophet, Jesus Christ, but such as should hear him, or believe on him.*

Isaiah says, speaking of the gospel church, "They shall all be taught of God, be all righteous."†

Jeremiah says, "They shall all know the Lord, from the least to the greatest."‡

John tells us, that repentance is a pre-requisite to membership. Christ tells the same, and directed his disciples to give public information of it in their preaching.§ Paul tells us, that none have membership in the gospel church, but such as are the children of God by faith of Christ, or such as thus profess, or appear.¶ All the Bible is against you, as to your church building. Your system is corrupt from the foundation to the top-stone. Neither the Old Testament, nor the New, knows any thing of such a church as yours for a gospel church,

* Deut. xviii. 15, 19—Acts iii. 22, 23 —† Isaiah liv. 13—lx. 21.
—‡ Jere. xxxi. 31 to 33—Heb. viii. 8—x. 16. 17.—§ Mat. iii. 2—iv. 17.—¶ Mat. x. 7—Mark vi. 12—x. 15.—¶ Gal. iii. 26.

unless it be a spurious one. You have no precept, no example, no similitude, in any part of the Bible for such a church as yours, for a gospel church. Your churches have no more likeness to any of the New Testament churches, as gathered by the apostles, than lewd women have to virgins. Many of your Presbyterian and Congregational churches contain a goodly number of God's people; but they contain in their system the same seeds of corruption, which have produced the enormous apostasy of the church of Rome. Mr. P.'s book, to be sure, has a *show of humility* in will worship, but is filled with those identical principles, which will, when they may have their perfect work, bring you back to the mother of harlots, from whom you came out, when you took the specific name of Protestant. Your Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, will be very angry with me, for having told you so many plain truths, and even the pious individuals, who may be found amongst your clergy, will not be pleased, so long as the *veil of delusion*, which is inseparable from your system, shall make your light darkness.

Again, your church, as you may assure yourselves from indubitable and irresistible facts, cannot be the gospel church: for the gospel church was to be driven into the wilderness, into the place which God had prepared for her, there she was to prophesy in sackcloth, few in number, comparable to two witnesses, for 1260 years, and after this they were to be persecuted, overcome and killed, and their dead bodies were to lie in the street of the great city, for three days and an half and the inhabitants of the earth were to rejoice over them; but after this their enemies were to be confounded.* To all this the Baptist church has answered, but your church has not had a trait, or feature of it; but has been hating the gospel church, persecuting of it, and vainly railing against it, as Mr. P. has, (and as I hope) ignorantly, done. Your church has never had two wings, as of a great eagle, given to her, that she might go,

* Rev. xi. & xii. 6.

with speed, from the face of her enemies; but she has made the world to tremble before her.

Your church has had every appearance of being that great city, which ruleth over the kings of the earth, but as to her being the Church of Christ, she has not so much as one fair claim. You may reply, that you have a goodly number of godly ministers, and, sometimes, great revivals of religion, and thousands brought, manifestly, to the knowledge and love of God and their duty. This we have no disposition to deny: and had not these godly ministers been blinded by the traditions of the man of sin, and by such spurious, yet fallacious arguments as fill the productions of Peter Edwards, Mr. P. and many others, they would have taught the humble converts the things of the kingdom of God, and have led them to the Lord's ordinance of baptism, and not to sprinkling, man's substitute. But, instead of this, these very ministers, whose faithful labours God hath crowned with success, have joined with the multitude of the ungodly clergy to shut up the kingdom of heaven against these very converts, who, otherwise, would have obeyed the Lord and been baptized. These godly ministers do, at times, find that the place where they reside is too strait for them. They sensibly perceive a difficulty. They know there is not plain evidence for baptizing the manifestly impenitent; they also know that sprinkling is, at best, but a doubtful baptism. Yet such a flood of hard opposition, and many other trials, accompany the renouncing of the far spread traditions of men, that the people of God who are found among the clergy, and in many of their churches, too often shrink from the godlike action, the giving of truth a fair hearing. Hence many who are half convinced do through the fear of man worry through life leaving their names to be used in support of those errors which they had not the courage to renounce. Thus do they unintentionally strengthen the hands of the erroneous, and make the heart of God's people sad. Beloved brethren, we beseech you by the mercy showed you by the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the truth's sake, and for the kingdom of heaven's sake, that you cease from man, and dare to follow the

Lamb of God whithersoever he goeth: that you be not cheated out of your cross, or your crown, by the deceitful arguments, and cruel mockings of those, who lie in wait to deceive.

4. That it is worthy of your notice, brethren, into what absurdity and contempt, the Lord hath suffered Mr. P. to plunge himself, in his rude opposition to the gospel baptism. After having ignorantly, or wilfully, perverted a number of passages of scripture, with relation to the word baptizo, and asserted many things contrary from the truth, without having, in a single instance, proved, that baptizo is ever used for any thing short of immersion, he reduces himself to the following contemptible position. "For myself, then, *I do believe*, says he, that they were (on the day of Pentecost) baptized by sprinkling; and that probably *not one by one; but as many at a time as could conveniently approach the administrator.*"* In the next page he informs us, that the Lord has used such an equivocal word in relation to his ordinance of baptism, that there is no knowing what he means by it; we must therefore determine, among ourselves, as well as we can, what is best to be done. His words are, "It is certain that no particular mode is certified by that word: (baptizo.) *THIS is left to the DISCRETION of the CHURCH.*" To what Church? the Roman Catholic of course; for she, if any, has the fair claim, to be judge, being a large majority of the Pædobaptist Church. Brethren, if you will follow a man, who has, confessedly, plunged himself into profound ignorance, and who has treated the ordinance of Baptism more contemptuously, than the Mother of harlots has usually done, reducing it to the level of a popish priest's sprinkling his holy water, you will be deservedly ignorant. Mr. P. is not different from your other priests, who have written in defence of their superstitions, otherwise than he has exceeded them in boldness, and, as a consequence, has surpassed them in folly. We have intentionally omitted no part of his book, which has a shade of

*Page 292, 293.

plausibility ; and we have not merely found *Mene Tekel* written upon every part ; but we have found it replete with popish superstitions, perversions of scripture, and cruel defamation. With regard to his *covenant*, his *seal*, his church, his church membership, and his baptism, he hath but a lean preeminence over the Church of Rome. Indeed all Pædobaptist churches are generically *one*. They differ only in the quantity and filthiness of their fornications, their principle is illegitimacy ; having their children born into Christ's family, but not of his Spirit. This is the *mystery of iniquity*. This is the prolific sin of the Mother of harlots ; and it is the characteristic of all her daughters. She with all her daughters make up one enormous community, or apostate church, named in Revelations, xvii. 5. **BABYLON THE GREAT.** From such a church, my Brethren, God commands you to *come out*. His word to you is. Rev. xviii. 4. *Come out of HER MY PEOPLE, that ye be not PARTAKERS of HER SINS, and that ye RECEIVE NOT of HER PLAGUES.* The plagues of the Lord of hosts are already in store, or nighly to be poured upon her guilty head ; a few more volumes of reproach and contempt poured upon God's church and people, and *her sins* will be filled up ; and then, in one hour, will her judgment come, as is stated in Rev. xviii. chap. Then will that church, which is beloved of God ; but of which Mr. P. and myriads of others have presumptuously spoken with daring and lying contempt, rejoice, for her captivity will be ended. But, brethren, if you *will be* deceived, and will not be admonished by either God, or men. you will soon find, that your way to heaven lies through the plagues of Babylon. Now is your time to escape. Improve it speedily ; or you may soon be involved in death, and mourning and famine, having no door of escape, by which to flee to the mountains. Babylon's measure of blasphemy and cruelty is nighly full, and her cup of vengeance may be ready mixt ; "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities : and will soon reward her as she hath rewarded the *people of the saints, and double unto her double according to her works ; and will give her torment and sorrow enough.*" Of these plagues, brethren, you must

partake, if you still continue with that great multitude, which has been long reproaching and blaspheming the Church of the living God, and even God himself. For God will hear their reproaches, and he will not always keep silence; but will arise in awful vengeance, and will put down the lying vanities of your deluding prophets.

5. That your Church has a very confused notion of what they term the Abrahamic covenant; or rather, they appear to have no knowledge of it. They treat the subject as though the covenant of promise, and the special covenant of grace, which was confirmed of God in Christ, and the covenant of circumcision, were all one and the same thing: whilst the covenant of circumcision, which must be the Abrahamic covenant, if there be a covenant, which may be thus termed, is as distinct from the covenants of promise, as is the token given by any friend, or potentate, distinct from the thing, of which it is a remembrancer.

6. That notwithstanding all the promises are in Christ, yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God the Father; and notwithstanding God spake unto Moses, and by him, that he would raise up a prophet, whom Israel and the Gentiles were commanded to hear in all things; yet the Pædobaptists do manifestly adhere more to the covenant of circumcision, and depend more upon it, as to the subjects of their church, and the manner of building it, than they do to all the things which have been spoken by Jesus Christ the Lord. They indeed tell us, that it was unnecessary for Jesus Christ to trouble himself to reveal any special directions in the New Testament, relative to the subjects which should compose his kingdom. Says Mr. P. "An explicit revelation (with respect to this point, or infant-membership) would be altogether needless." Yet, in the same sentence, he observes, "I believe I can shew you, that the New Testament is not silent on this point." Though it would have been altogether needless to have had any thing expressly revealed in the New Testament on this point; yet he alleges, that there are, as he has abundantly labored to show us, some dark, dubious and almost plain revela-

tions, in the New Testament upon this very point. What a palpable self-contradiction is it, for him to tell us, that an explicit revelation on this subject, would be altogether needless; when, for the want of it, he and his brethren have been obliged to guess, suppose and assert a thousand things, which they cannot prove; and also when he himself has been laboring, page after page, to give his scheme some show of plausibility, urging one text after another to look favourably upon it, and all this for want of one sentence of explicit revelation to justify his scheme; and yet, says he, it would be altogether needless. A man, who will thus say and do, has no claim to be believed. He knew, that he could find no explicit revelation for his anti-christian scheme. He probably thought to make the best of it, by denying, that any was needed. But this was making the worst of it, to utter such a palpable falsehood, which no person in the sober exercise of common sense would believe. For if his scheme be true, such a revelation is infinitely needed. But to do thus, that he might prevent the community from discovering the truth, and that he might fasten them in the belief of a lie, is duplicity and wickedness to be detested. It is also treating the New Testament with great indecorum, to say, that it doth repeatedly reveal in a dubious and almost explicit manner what would be altogether needless to have plainly expressed. The fact is, your priests find very little use for the New Testament in their church building; hence they wish to believe, that it is nighly silent upon the subject. It is true, the New Testament contains no directions for building such a church as yours; but it contains all the information needed in erecting and conducting the New Testament church. Your church is a shadow of an Old Testament church in gospel times, just what God never required. It is an insult to God, a provocation to Christ, and what God will utterly destroy. Your priests have been zealously employed in taking from you the key of knowledge. They have spared no pains to envelope you, as in gross darkness. There is little hope of your rescue, unless you will resolutely hearken to the PROPHEET of prophets, the Lord Jesus

Christ, and cease from those whose carnal interest lies in deceiving you. This plain dealing may cause many of your priests, who make *long prayers*, and for a pretence of piety devour widow's houses, to deal out their reproaches; but such of your priests as fear God may observe the matter.

7. That so far as we can trace, from the ancient fathers, the baptizing of children, it grew out of, and was accompanied with, the superstitious error of its being regeneration, or that it was given for the remission of sins.

8. That the Pædobaptists ought to blush, whenever they would lay to the reproach of the Baptists, that they hold baptism to be a saving ordinance. For, first, the baptists universally hold, that no person hath a right to the ordinance, or is a fit subject of it, till he be in a saved state. Secondly, the Pædobaptists can trace their practice to no other origin; and they are inconsistent with themselves, and with the traditions of the fathers, in which they trust, to practise the one, without believing the other.

9. That neither Mr. P. nor his brethren appear to know any thing about the time when, or the manner how, the kingdom of heaven, the gospel church, was first set up; or whether it be yet set up. Some of them fix upon one time, some upon another. Some imagine one manner, some a very different one. Mr. P. has hit upon both time and manner differently, perhaps, from all, and equally foreign from the truth. He very boldly affirms, p. 19, "That the same sovereign act, that removed the one (dispensation) established the other in its place, and upon the same foundation." He informs us, that this took place, when our Lord entered Jerusalem, the last time, before he suffered; and that he then pronounced the sentence of excommunication upon the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation. Yet he seems to doubt his own correctness, for he finds that the hand writing of ordinances was not blotted out, till nailed to the cross; and therefore he says, "*Then, and not till then, the ceremonial law was completely abrogated.*"

One would be inclined to believe, that the gospel dispensation could not be established in the place, and upon the same foundation, of the ceremonial law, whilst that same law was but partially abrogated. He has therefore left us in as absolute uncertainty, when the gospel dispensation commenced, or whether it be yet introduced, as we were before.

Could Mr. P. and his brethren explain to us two texts of scripture, they would then know, and we should know, that they had never, in time past, understood what the kingdom of heaven, the gospel church, is, and of course they cannot understand its constitution, or when set up. These are, first, Mat. xxiii. 13, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." The other is, Luke xi. 52. "Woe unto you, Lawyers! (for ye have taken away the key of knowledge) ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

No person can be blamed for shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men, or for not entering it, or for hindering others, *till it be in existence*: nor can any take away the key of the knowledge of it, till there be a key to explain it. Let them understand their present labors against the *counsel of God*, the baptism from heaven, which was introduced by John, and against the church which practises it, and the above texts will, *then*, be easily explained. But should Mr. P. and his brethren still refuse to understand them, they may, before they are aware, begin to feel the Woes there denounced against those, who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; or take away the key of the knowledge of it, *which is the baptism of repentance*.

10. That the title to Mr. P.'s book was a sheer imposition upon the public. Not merely because he was unacquainted with the subject of which he wrote. Not merely because he implicitly confessed his deficiency of knowledge, and yet published what he knew not: nor merely because he gave us, in the issue, a very vain and merely fanciful account of what he imagined might be

the mode when christian baptism was first administered. But because, whilst he had no knowledge of what christian baptism is, and because, whilst he told us, in the body of his work, that nothing could be known about it; but for himself he believed differently from his own practice, and from every body's else, that the administrator took a quantity of water in some vessel, or engine, and cast it upon as many as he could; and because, whilst he informs us, that the infinitely wise God hath employed a term so infinitely equivocal, that no one, however devoted to the Lord, can understand what he means by it, but that the *matter is left to the discretion of the church*: because, whilst he explicitly, and by fair implication, proclaims all this, yet has the assurance to decoy the public attention by the following very misjudged and deceptive inscription on his title page, *A familiar illustration of Christian Baptism: in which the proper subjects of that ordinance, and the MODE of administering are ascertained from the WORD OF GOD, and the history of the Church, &c.* Such management is worthy the cause in which it is employed. Mr. P. has not been the subject of his multiplied blunders, and some of them of the first magnitude, because he is destitute of penetration, or has not a sufficient quantity of logical sense or acuteness of thinking to trace the line; but because he undertook to perform what is impossible to be done. That which is wanting cannot be numbered, and that which is false cannot be proved true. Both which he has strongly endeavored; but he has labored for the wind.

Brethren, you sensibly feel a difficulty. You cannot but know, your champion hath cast himself and all his brethren into the back ground. After great labor, deep research, abundant arguing and much contempt cast upon such as adhere to God's plain and pure word, he is brought to believe, what he would be ashamed to practice, and what probably every other person would be ashamed to believe, that Christian baptism was, in the first instance, a minister taking a vessel filled with water, besprinkles all around him, within the limits of his strength, by which

he produces the baptizing shower.* We do not wish to ridicule Mr. P. or his brethren, for their having reduced themselves and their christian baptism into such a contemptible position. We wish that you may soon behold, with detestation, your anti-christian superstition. God appears to have plunged Mr. P. in delusion, and given him to infatuation, as a just reward for his daring abuse and contempt of God's ordinances and people. We do not thus speak, because we possess ill will towards him. No—we pity him, we pray for him; we desire that God will not lay this sin to his charge. His confused and superstitious notions of baptism are not different in kind from those of his brethren; they are more extravagant, because he has been more bold and contemptuous against the truth than they; but their notions are of the same kind. For a priest to dip his fingers in water, and pass a few drops to a child's or parent's face, is equally a perversion of God's ordinance of baptism, as though he should take the bason and sprinkle half the assembly, by forcibly emptying it all at once.

Beloved brethren, my intention was to have set before you a more distinct and separate view of the things of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, than I have. However the sum of the matter has been set down, and I have already exceeded the limits which I prescribed to myself. All which I wished to set before you, may be found in the predictions of the prophets and in the sayings of Jesus Christ, and the writings of his apostles: to these you should give earnest heed. You have your choice whether you will hearken to these, or to the traditions and commandments of men, by which Mr. P. and many others have made void the commands of Jesus Christ our Lord. You must either cease from those who cause you to err, or you must go with them. If you love minister, father, mother, brother, or sister, or any other worldly good, more than you do Christ; you are yet not worthy of him. If you prefer a multitude in error, rather than Christ alone, you are not worthy of him. If you cannot bear reproach for him who bore the cross for

* Page 292.

you, you make an ungrateful return. But, peradventure you reply, How shall we know what is the gospel way? Are you willing to know? Then answer me one question. What is the *baptism of repentance*? This is the gospel definition of the gospel kingdom. There is no other. This shows you that the subjects, the proper subjects, are *penitents*, for it is the baptism of *repentance*; and it is for the remission of sins, or a token of it. This intimates that you should be *buried* with Christ in *baptism*, for as you are defiled all over, so you need to be washed, or cleansed, all over. Christian baptism is a *token*, NOT a *seal*, of the forgiveness of sins.* Besides, the plain and literal signification of the word is burying or immersion, and none of your priests, or scribes, have been able to prove to the contrary. Also, every place where any circumstance is mentioned looks thus, and not a single instance is named which has a sprinkling-circumstance attached to it. Besides, it is an infinite insult to Jehovah to say, that every circumstance looks like immersion, and yet sprinkling may be the thing which he intended. Your priests little consider what insult and reproach they offer to God, by their weak and fond arguments which they produce for their sprinkling substitute for the Lord's ordinance of baptism. Be deceived by them no longer. Be entreated to believe God rather than man. When the scripture appears against your present practice, be entreated to go and unbosom yourselves unto God, and not to the false expositions and glasses by which you may be again hardened against the truth. When the word of God convinces you of one duty, be entreated to make it still the man of your counsel, and be willing that it should convince you of another. Brethren, I intreat you to be thoroughly convinced; that truth, with all the trials attending it, is better than error. I beseech you by the legacy of truth which you would leave to your heirs, by the love which you bear to the suffering people of God, by the mercy of God towards you, by the allegiance which you owe to the Lord Jesus, and by the crown of glory which you hope to re-

* Acts xxii. 16,

ceive of him at the judgment day, and wear in his glorious presence forever, that you hearken to God and not unto men in this matter; that you readily learn of Jesus Christ, and that you willingly know and do the truth; then will you speedily repent of your hurtful traditions, obey the Lord, and be baptized.

With desire for the union of the people of God,
and for the conversion of the world,

I am,

Very affectionately,

Yours,

LETTER XI.

To the people of God, amongst the Pædobaptist Clergy:

BRETHREN IN THE LORD,

You and your pious brethren, have, for many hundred years, lamented the general want of real piety amongst the clergy. It is saying no more, than what has been believed, and lamented by, perhaps, every godly minister in what is called the Christian world, to state, that a majority, in every age, since the history of Pædobaptist preachers commenced, have, manifestly, not been born of God. Not merely this was believed by Luther and Calvin, and other Reformers, but much more; they considered the irreligion, the profligacy, and enormous wickedness of the clergy, in their day, to be beyond sufferance. They, therefore, at the hazard of their lives, lifted their voices against the flagitious practices and abandoned courses of the priesthood generally. This excess of vileness in the clergy, which consisted not merely in their simony, and effeminacy, but in their ignorance and extravagance, and in short, in almost eve-

ry kind of enormity, had no inconsiderable influence in occasioning the Reformation. You know, that the Pædobaptist clergy, in what are called the *dark ages*, were well nigh as ignorant as they were vicious; many of them not being able to write, or scarcely to read. By the great and persevering labours of Luther, Melancthon, Zuinglius, Calvin and other faithful men of God, your church, at least that part of it, which is styled the Reformed, is greatly changed. Yet, brethren, you have to lament a majority of those, in holy orders, as persons knowing not God. I have been lately informed, that the pious Pædobaptist ministers, who are numbered with the clergy of the church of England, have, not long since, made a general calculation, and, in a judgment of charity, they conclude, that amongst 20,000 clergymen, there are 2,000, of whom a comfortable hope may be entertained. Of the clergy in our own country, it is believed a better account might be given. However, unless a great alteration has taken place for the better, since my departure from them, it is deemed not uncharitable to say, that a majority of them are unacquainted with the spirit of the Religion of Christ. From these, I neither expect, nor ask favour. Nor, brethren, even of you, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, have I any particular favour to solicit on my own account? But for your own sake, and for Christ's sake, and for his kingdom's sake, I entreat you to review the principles upon which you, as Pædobaptists, stand. Bring them to the standard. If they be true, they will bear the light, they will stand the scrutiny; and when weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary will not be found wanting.

Would you be sure to be right, you must cease from man, and willingly be, as to reputation, as was your Lord and Master; you must willingly be in reproach, where he cannot be in honour. You must not be unwilling to examine first principles. You know that your system greatly rests upon what you term the Abrahamic covenant. You ought to know what you mean by this covenant, and whether the Spirit of inspiration intends the same. If you mean by it, the covenants of

promise, or the covenant which was confirmed of *God in Christ* or by *God with Christ*, you should think again, whether the scriptures say the same thing. If they say *in*, or *with Christ*, and you say *in*, or *with Abraham*, is not the mistake yours? Did the covenants of promise rest upon Abraham? Were these suspended upon Abraham? or upon the promise and oath of God? If you reply, "These are the covenants, which we intend by the Abrahamic covenant," I ask by what authority you apply such an epithet to God's covenants of promise? You find it not in the word of God.

If you say, by the Abrahamic covenant, you intend no more than the covenant of circumcision: then why do you term the Abrahamic covenant the covenant of grace? For by the covenant of grace, you as well as we intend the special covenant of promise, which was confirmed in Christ, not in Abraham. Again, by what authority do you call the covenant of circumcision a *seal* of the covenant of grace? The scriptures say not so; besides, it is inconsistent with all that we know of God, and of a well grounded hope of eternal life, that such should be the seal of God's everlasting covenant, which is confirmed *in Christ*. A seal which has been broken times without number. For what do you, or for what do your brethren, tell the common people that circumcision was a seal of the covenant of promise, or of grace; a seal which the Lord commanded Abraham to put upon his children; and that baptism is a seal of the same covenant, and that parents are now under solemn obligation to have the *seal* put upon their children? Do you thus, merely to deceive and impose upon the people, or do you know no better? With you it is the want of light and the sin of ignorance. You have been thus educated; and you have strong, very strong, inducements to continue in the fascinating prejudice. Your friends, your connections, your livings, are all deeply concerned in your adhering to the superstition. But higher claims command you to renounce it. You know, or should know, that there is nothing of this in the Bible. It is a mere popish charm, a priestly snare, by which to take in the ignorant and the unwary.

By what authority do you tell the common people that the Gospel church is the Jewish church continued? Such a sentiment is not from heaven. It is directly subversive of God's revealed will. His revealed will is, that in the days of certain kings he would set up a kingdom, (*not new model an old one*) Dan. ii. chap. Why do you believe, and inculcate upon the ignorant and unlearned, that the unbelieving children and households of professing christians should be baptized? Why do you believe and inculcate, that sprinkling is a way of administering gospel baptism? Why do you believe and inculcate, that persons, who have been sprinkled, that too in manifest unbelief, may take it upon themselves, as their baptism, and then are in full communion and prepared to approach the table of the Lord? Do you believe, that the Bible countenances such management? If so, it is highly expedient, that you recur to first principles, and that you bring your sentiments to the standard for adjustment.

By what authority do you print, preach and speak against John's baptism being christian? Is it not, that you discountenance the idea of being buried with Christ *in baptism*? When you have done thus, do you not know, that you have no Christian baptism left? Would you confess the truth, you would, like Mr. P. acknowledge that the Christian baptism was something, but that you knew not what. Into this blindness and ignorance your traditionary scheme leads you and retains you. You are of necessity unacquainted with the gospel baptism, so long as you willingly reject and disbelieve, the baptism which is from heaven, and which is honoured as being the *counsel of God*; for which you have substituted the *counsel of men*. You are in confusion relative to baptism; you know that you have no certain knowledge as to what it is. Sometimes you believe, and sometimes you doubt. If I ask you to place your finger upon the passage of holy writ, in which your practice is enjoined by the Lord, you hesitate; you are in manifest uncertainty. If with presuming boldness you reply. In the 17th chapter of Genesis; then, upon my requesting,

who told you thus, your difficulty returns. You know, that God hath not told you thus. You are ashamed to say, The Church has so decreed. After all your labor and anxiety with relation to baptism, as to what it is, and the subjects of it, you evidently know nothing about it. All this confusion, intermixed with much anxiety, hath happened to you, for rejecting, as the Jewish priests did, the counsel of God against yourselves, not submitting to the baptism from heaven.

By what authority do you state, that the gospel dispensation and the gospel church began at, or about, the time in which Jesus suffered? Some of you name one time, some another; and some, like Mr. P. hardly agree with themselves. The confusion originates from your having forsaken the word of God, that you might keep your own traditions. The word of God is plain, and as perfectly intelligible as to the commencement of the gospel dispensation and the gospel church, as it is when the Jewish dispensation and church commenced.

The Jewish dispensation commenced when Abraham circumcised the males in his household; this gave to his family their first distinctive visibility. Abraham instructed his household previously, but circumcision was the mark, or badge of distinction. In like manner the gospel dispensation began, when John administered the ordinance of Baptism. Baptism was the badge of distinction. When John had baptized *one*, the gospel dispensation was manifestly commenced, as was the Jewish, when Abraham had circumcised *one*. As both Abraham and John progressed in their work, so the dispensations advanced and the churches grew. Both were directed as to what was to be done, and to whom. Abraham was to circumcise his children and household. John was to baptize with the baptism of repentance, the Lord's children, which was his household. Wonderful things were to transpire with relation to each community. Abraham's family was to be in bondage four hundred years; afterwards to be delivered with great renown. The Lord's family was to be oppressed 1260 years; afterwards, to fill the whole earth. Many other noticeable things are recorded of both. But what has been

said is sufficient for our present purpose, which is to show *how* and *when* the gospel dispensation and the gospel church commenced: and with this the words of Christ appear perfectly to harmonize. Matt. xi. 12 to 15. *From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets, and the law prophesied UNTIL John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias who was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* Also, in Luke xvi. 16. *The law and the prophets were until John: since THAT TIME the KINGDOM of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.* Thus was the kingdom of God, the gospel church, commenced. We do not say, that it was officially organized, and constituted into a regular and organic community till Jesus called together his disciples, his prepared people, and of them chose and ordained *twelve* ministers, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.* Here, the kingdom of heaven is preached, set up in the midst of the Jewish nation,† *persecuted by some, pressed into by others*, twelve missionaries ordained; yet the Pharisees and priests could not see it, nor believe in it; but took away from the people the *key* of knowledge, by rejecting John's baptism; and thus they shut up the kingdom of God against men, they would not go in themselves, and them that were entering in they hindered. They by their example, and ignorant opposition, hindered men from entering into the kingdom of heaven, the gospel church begun. The same criminal blindness is upon all the Pædobaptist priests and churches to the present day. I was, for many years, thus blinded. Dear brethren, do you begin to see? if so, shut not your eyes. Dare to see the now despised, but precious flock of God. Dare to see the long oppressed, degraded, despised people and church of God. Dare to see and know that people that has been driven into the wilderness, but kept as in the hollow of God's hand. Dare to suffer reproach with that chosen people, which is hated and reproached by the

* Mark iii. 13, 14. John xv. 16.

† Luke xvii. 21.

world, but beloved of God and soon to be honored. You are now amongst that people which spiritually is called Egypt and Sodom; like Moses, choose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. You must either come out, or die in Egypt. Should you attempt to leave Egypt, Pharaoh and his court will oppose. Should you actually depart from Egypt, Pharaoh and his host may pursue you. The ungodly clergy, and specially those who have a show of godliness, who appear as whited sepulchres, beautiful without, whilst within they are full of hypocrisy and covetousness, will be violent in their opposition: from these, you need expect no favor. They follow Christ, or pretend to, for the loaves, and will deny him for the same. From such characters you may expect a torrent of abuse. They are enemies to the cross of Christ; and their zeal against the church of Christ, and for the sprinkling of the ungodly, is occasioned by their love of the praise of men, and fear of the reproach of Christ. I know, brethren, that you are, in measure, neuters in this controversy. You cannot oppose the truth, with that persevering virulence, with which the hypocrites among you do; and yet, being decoyed by the prejudices of education, and cunning craftiness of the subtle, you are cheated out of the truth, relative to the kingdom of God, and retained, though, at times, waveringly, in the belief of the traditionary abominations of the man of sin. You must come out soon, or die in Babylon. You must soon forsake the delusive commandments of men, or have no honour in the wars of Emmanuel. God will ere long send deliverance to his people. Our earnest desire is, that you may turn to be with them. So may you do exploits, and be, in a degree like so many Moseses, brought up at court. By your means Zion may arise. This would be glorious for you. Dare then look at truth. Be not terrified at the cost. The expence is merely the giving up of all you have. The relinquishment of your stolen goods, and the hearty delivery of yourselves, soul and body, for the Lord's service. Should you tarry where you are, men will praise you, but God will not. Should you

venture the wrath of the enemy, and turn to be with the true Israel, the honour, which cometh from God only, will be yours, and the reproaches of the enemy will brighten your crown of glory. But, if you do, altogether, hold your peace at such a time as this, then shall salvation come from another quarter, and you and your Mother's house shall be burnt up. Brethren, this subject will command your full attention, when a few more rolling suns shall have passed over you. Why not now seize the precious moments as they fly? Why not now lay your belief and practice along side of God's word, and resolutely rescind what with that will not agree? Would you make short work of this business; then bring your church, the Pædobaptist community, to the standard. Enquire, honestly enquire, fervently enquire, does the Pædobaptist church, which is styled the *Christian world*, does she now, has she ever answered to the gospel church, which John introduced, which Jesus organized, and which the world hath ever hated? When was this Christian world in the wilderness 1260 years? when did she for that length of time prophecy in sack-cloth?

May Jesus by his Spirit bring you up speedily to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Then shall you escape the plagues which are in near readiness for Babylon's destruction, and be yourselves crowned with glory, honor and peace.

Thus prays your willing servant
for Jesus' sake.

LETTER XII.

To whom it may concern, and when.

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

YOU may have often heard some of your pious brethren in the ministry observing, that they have possessed doubts, and, at times, been anxious relative to the subjects and ordinance of gospel baptism. These doubts and trials they usually conceal, till their minds are calm again; or, for some reason, very seldom concede, that they have difficulties for the present. With such instances I have been somewhat familiar. There is, perhaps, not an instance amongst the Pædobaptist preachers, where real piety is possessed, that these doubts have not occasionally occurred. Their scheme, their materials and their manner of Church building have so different an aspect from what was performed, as well as from what was professed and preached, by him who made ready a people prepared for the Lord, so different from what was said and done by him, who spake as never man spake, so different from what is recorded by the Apostles; in short, so different from what appears the plain import of the New Testament; that they are constrained to hesitate. Sometimes by one means, and sometimes by another, their doubts subside. Some have but little anxiety, others have it increasing upon them, and at times are greatly anxious. They are like persons caught in a snare, and are uncertain as to the means of escape. Said one, were I to begin my ministerial life again, I would be a Baptist. Said another, I was nighly a Baptist once, but (now) I think it not best to be a Baptist, if their scheme is right, it would make so much noise. Said a third, if I may but know what is the truth in this matter, I would obey, noise or not. With each of the above descriptions of persons I have had a personal and friendly acquaintance; that too before I was a Baptist myself. Since, I have had several Pædobap-

tist preachers, who were in no small difficulty, as to the order of Christ's house, call upon me, that conversation might be had upon the subject. Some of whom have joined the baptists; one or two, for want of light, or through a deficiency of courage to meet the torrent of opposition, and other attending trials, have, as yet, continued as they were; hoping, no doubt, to arrive at the kingdom above, though they look back, and thus prove, that they are not fit for the kingdom of heaven below. You, my dear brother, will not understand me to intimate, that it is needful for you to be freed from your doubts and join the baptists, that you may secure an interest in the everlasting favor of God; Jesus hath already done this for you. But I would strongly intimate to you, that the Lord hath need of you, that his host hath great need of you, and that you have great need of the honor which will attach to your turning, in the day of battle, to be with the true Hebrews, the *people of the saints*. There has been, in our world, but one people, who have the honor of being styled, the **PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS**. To this people is promised the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heavens. This people are not the Jewish church continued, but the kingdom which the God of heaven promised to set up within a given period.* This people were composed, in the first instance, of visible saints; of parents and children whose hearts were mutually turned by the power of the Lord, and under the preaching of John the Baptist, to each other, and to the Lord. None but visible saints have ever been added to this people, nor will any others be ever suffered to join them. This people have, all of them, been baptized with the baptism of repentance, a token, or badge, that *they are turned to a right understanding*. They have confessed their sins, and upon such confession been baptized. This people, and this only, have any gospel claim to the title of the kingdom of heaven, or the gospel church. This people have come out of their winter quarters, their 1260 years exile from the face of men. The hard com-

*Dan. ii. 44.—vii. 27.

bat between these and their persevering opposers, represented by Michael and his angels fighting with the dragon and his, is now apparently commenced, or commencing. The enemy, by Mr. P. Mr. Beacher, and others, are proclaiming their prowess, numbers and greatness, on the one hand; and on the other, defying the armies of the living God. The champions of the enemies of this people of the saints either have much courage, or they affect more, than they possess; and very many are those who follow them. Whilst but few of this people appear to be harnessed for the war. Even too many of their leaders seem not to be fully apprised, that the enemy are marshalling their hosts, and putting every thing into readiness for a general and vigorous attack. One great object of this letter is to cast within the purview of your judgment and heart, some auxiliary truths, whilst these hosts are engaged only in some few sharp skirmishings; that, if the will of God be so, you may speedily leave that host, which thinks, even again, to tread down the people of the saints of the Most High, as the mire of the street. If you shall not come out directly, be careful, that you turn to be with *the people of the saints*, when the battle shall be generally joined, otherwise you may die without honor.

Are you still doubting, still undetermined which the host of the Lord is, whether the baptists, or the pædobaptists, or whether there be so much difference as to render it imperiously your duty to forsake the latter, that you might join the former; then take into deep consideration the two hosts with their distinctive badges. The first, the baptists, are the only visible and known community, that has ever been in our world, which answers to the description, which is given by the Lord, of that people to whom the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens was to be given. They are the *only community*, which hath, upon principle, received *none into their number but saints*. Their badge is like their principle, the baptism of repentance, betokening that none but the penitent are to be admitted. The other host, the Pædobaptists, are, by principle, a mixed multitude, composed of some

saints and many sinners. The best that can be said of any part of their host, and at their best estate, is, that it consists of believing parents, or masters, with their impenitent households. Their badge is like their principle, the *baptism of impenitence*. If their badge could be brought perfectly to harmonize with their principle, another penitent would never be the subject of their religious rite, which they term baptism.

An objection may present. The Baptists are not all real saints, or have not been so. Grant it. There may be Judases, Simons and Alexanders now, as there were in the primitive times of this people. But now, as well as then, they are all professed saints; they never have, nor do now, receive any others.

Many other objections may offer themselves. But my wish is, that the command of God to come out, together with the need this people has of you, may, at once, decide your mind to come out, at every hazard. Would you, and your doubting, halting brethren, by the grace and spirit of the Captain of our host, like so many Samsons, break the cords and withes with which the Philistines have bound you, many a ten thousand might fall by your means, and many, very many, in the Lord's camp, who are now sleeping on, and taking their rest, might be roused to full action. It is hoped, and with confidence expected, that you and your doubting brethren, many of them, will turn to be with the true Israel; and that your turning will be, as life from the dead to the oppressed, despised and hated people of the saints. This people are already very highly favored of God, by his affording them such an equal and excellent government, and by giving them favor in the sight of the rulers, so that their enemies are greatly put down, and they have full liberty to stand for their lives.

Think not, I pray you, that I thus speak, because I conceive the little flock to be in absolute danger, should you lend them no help. No, my dear brother, if God should live, this people shall have the dominion, whether any instrumental honor shall be yours, or not. But my wish, the wish of my heart, is for your deliverance, and that the declarative glory of God may be ad-

vanced by your means. It is you I seek, and what would augment your endless joy. I know the trials which you have felt. I have endured the evils which you may expect; I desire for you the pleasures which have attended my pains, the joys which have sweetened my sorrows. I beseech you, resist not the light, trifle not with the conviction, which by the word and spirit of God do at times arrest your mind, lest the pride of your heart should provoke God to destine you, as Israel of old, to die in the wilderness. It is very dangerous to barter away God's word and God's ordinances for our convenience. To be faithfully for God, you must have much grace. He is able to afford it. To bear the reproaches of sinners and misguided saints, you will need much fortitude. God can give it. To sustain the trials within, and the numerous and nameless trials without, you must have the presence of him, who saith, *LO I AM WITH YOU*. Ask and it shall be given you, even all you need.

Perhaps you would not be displeased, should I mention a sketch of some of the trials through which the Lord hath led me. This I may do by subjoining some extracts of a letter, which, sometime since, I wrote to a Pædobaptist minister, who has since been baptized, whose mind was more anxious, than, perhaps, yours has ever been.

Previous to inserting the extracts, I may just observe, that the whole of this letter is for any and every godly Pædobaptist minister, or preacher, who is in *present anxiety* concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

Extracts of a letter to A. B.

"DEAR BROTHER, IN THE LORD,

"Your trials have often brought mine to remembrance. I have bemoaned your lingering condition, and have been waiting to see what the Lord would do. Frequently have I thought of directing a line for you. At one time it has been upon my mind just to propose the following question. "HOW CAN YE BELIEVE, WHO RECEIVE HONOUR ONE OF ANOTHER?" At another time I have

thought of relating, Why I am a Baptist. You may have seen several pamphlets with this motto : Why I am NOT a Baptist. Such as those written by Noah Webster and John Crane. When I think of such men and their works, I am filled, at times, with a mixed emotion, partaking of pity and disgust. They reason and write as blind men define colours. No one who can speak or write against the *baptism* of repentance for the *remission* of *sins*, which is the baptism from heaven, knows any more why he is not a Baptist, than does one possessed of a carnal mind, why he is not a penitent. Persons can reason but from what they know, and as no one, who is not a Baptist, knows what it takes to make one, so no man can tell exactly why he is not one.

But, dear sir, your case has often caused me to wonder why God left me not in the same. I greatly desired to find a resting place on this side Jordan. When I could no longer apply a little water to a manifest unbeliever, and consider it gospel baptism, my mind was strongly solicitous to discover something which might satisfy my disturbed and distressed soul, short of going over to that sect which is every where spoken against. I read, meditated, day and night, fasted and prayed, that the Lord would show me what was truth and duty, and made, that I am conscious of, but one exception ; and that was, That He would not show me that the Baptists were right. Whilst I was submitting my deplorable situation to the Lord without one verbal condition, and but one known in my heart, and that one condemned as being unchristian, it pleased Him to retain me, for days, for weeks, and for months, as in Egyptian darkness, relative to gospel ordinances, shutting me up to the faith, till I was willing to submit, without so much as a mental reservation. Then, through grace, boundless grace, I was prepared to hear and obey. From that day to this, I have been ready to declare both publicly, and privately, why I am a Baptist. It is because the Lord made me one. This is the great reason ; this is the sum of all the reasons, why I am a Baptist.

By nature I am like all other men ; by grace I am, what I am, like all the other children of God, a poor

sinner saved: I then was, whilst in the confused church, like all other preachers of righteousness there, unwilling to destroy the things which I had been long building, and meet the heavy trials, which might be calculated upon. This may be your present condition, or you may imagine, you have advanced farther, even to be willing to be a Baptist, if that is right. You may also fancy, that you have reasons to offer why you are not a Baptist. So has the impenitent and the infidel, but they are reasons, which when weighed, will be found wanting. I have been pained for you and am still, lest you provoke God to leave you, where I once should, very gladly, have been left myself, with such plausible reasons, as might have prevented my being a Baptist.

It will cost you much to be a Baptist, very much to be a consistent one: but like every other piece of denying one's self for Christ, it hath attached to it the promise of an hundred fold in the present time, and in the world to come, eternal life.

You probably consider me to be a kind of Sectarian, and a rigid one too; are not you considered the same with regard to the doctrine of grace? and why are you thus rigid? because you believe the honour of God requires it. For the same reason I labor to vindicate, not the doctrine of grace only, but the doctrine of the kingdom also. My wish is, instrumentally, to rescue you and your brethren from dishonouring God and flattering men to their hurt. Your former practice of sprinkling unbelievers, and, perhaps, by this time, you have returned to it again, has three great evils in it. It invokes the Trinity to sanction what never came into his heart to command, but what man invented, and what God abhors. It flatters carnal men, teaching them that they have some part and lot in the gospel, whilst they have none. Acts viii. 21. It deceives many of God's people, and procures for them, as well as for the impenitent, who are deceived by it, severe plagues, which will soon come, and not tarry. You, dear sir, and your brethren, little think what you are doing, when you commit the first-born sin of the Mother of harlots.

You may think that you are doing God service, when you profess to apply the gospel baptism, which is the *baptism of repentance*, to the manifestly impenitent; but, sir, the period will come when you shall know, that, by doing thus, you do service to the Prince of the Power of the air, the spirit which still worketh in the children of disobedience. You, sir, may not willingly admit, that there are but two generic classes of professing christians, that hold to external ordinances; that these two are characterized, the one by avowedly admitting persons to the ordinance of *Baptism without evidence of grace*; the other, by allowing *believers only to be baptized*. You may be still more unwilling to concede that these two classes, or churches, are represented by the two Apocalyptic women, one of which said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow; and the other was driven into the wilderness.

However unwillingly these things may be believed, yet the scriptures unequivocally thus represent them. Besides, these two churches have, from their beginning, hitherto answered to the account given of them by the Spirit of inspiration. One of these women is the Mother of Harlots (with her family of daughters;) the other, the Bride, the Lamb's wife. They are both known by their manner of having children. The former *professedly* receives into her bosom, to nourish, those who are born after the flesh only: the latter, those only, who are *begotten* of her *Husband*.

Suppose any branch of the family of Harlots to be collected (however elegant their attire, or shining their profession) and an angel from heaven should be delegated to propose the following questions. 1. Who is your husband? 2. Whose are all these children? 3. By whom did you have them?—What would be their answers? To the first, The Lord Jesus Christ. To the second, The children of the Church. To the third, —I leave it with you to answer. We may shut our eyes, we may stop our ears; but we cannot get where God will not see us, nor where truth will not find us.

Dear brother, wherever may be your residence, whatever may be your name, or estimation in society, you must forsake all for Christ, or follow him but partially. The honour which cometh from men, or from misguided Christians, is of short duration, and of small value. I bid thee a cordial adieu, saying in the words of the Prophet—"How long haltest thou between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him. But, if Baal, then follow him."

With sincere desire, that you may not refuse the cross, nor let another take thy crown, I am, with great good will, yours.

LETTER XIII.

To the People of the Saints of the Most High.

DEARLY BELOVED,

TO you, who have received a kingdom which can never be moved, it is given to suffer on the behalf of Christ. You are not of the world, but chosen out of the world, and hated by it. A part of the sufferings, which you were to sustain in the world, was, to be reviled, persecuted, and to have all manner of evil spoken against you falsely. You have made a good profession before many witnesses. You have confessed your sins against God; and professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and been buried with Christ *in* and *by* baptism; wherein also you have been risen with him. To this you have been brought by that faith which is of divine operation. You have been separated and set apart for God. You have given in your names to be for God. Of you it is expected, that you not only believe on Christ, but also that you willingly suffer for him. The

eye of God is upon you, the eye of the world is upon you, and the eye of misguided professors is upon you. More is expected of you, than is looked for in that community, which is termed the Christian world. More should be found in you. Whilst they are zealous in maintaining and extending their superstitions, be ye not less zealous in maintaining, in spreading, and practising the truths of God. To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to them that are without, parables are yet continued.

Your privileges are great, and many of them peculiar. Your system of faith and practice is so plainly revealed, that he who runs, may read. You have kept the ordinances as Christ delivered them to the saints. Ye have been buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also ye have been risen with him, through the faith, which God wrought in you, by the effectual working of his mighty power; and ye are *sealed* to the day of redemption, by that holy Spirit of promise. To defend the rectitude of your faith and practice, you have merely to understand and speak the truth, which is freely given to us of God: You have no occasion to resort to traditions, and commandments of men, and other lying vanities, to justify the practices enjoined upon the people of the saints. But the Pædobaptist prophets, as well as the heathen priests, have to resort to fable and fancy, and to arguments the most delusory and false, that they may retain the people in the belief of their debasing superstitions. Thus Mr. P. maintains the delusion amongst his own brethren, and says to them, "You have adopted a constitution, which, at once, involves an exalted privilege, and an immense responsibility. It is the same constitution, which the Lord established, when he organized his church."* By the constitution, he intends the covenant of circumcision, for by no other covenant was any church organized in Abraham's family. The Bible in Acts xxi. 25, directs us, Gentiles, not to observe this covenant, nor any other thing which might be like it, or presuming to come in the place of it. In

the same address to his brethren he says, "You are daily praying and labouring for the introduction of the latter day glory. Remember, one of the preludes of that blessed period is "the turning of the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers." "Until this event be realized, says he, you will look in vain for the revelation of that glorious day." What good effect does he suppose this can have in forwarding the millennial day? For this was the business upon which John the Baptist was sent, and which by his ministry he effected; but his *ministry*, says Mr. P. was no part of the gospel dispensation. But now, whilst addressing his brethren, and John the Baptist is, for the moment forgotten, he can tell them, that this is the cause, without which, they may, in vain, look for the introduction of that glorious day. How inconsistent is error!

In his address to pious parents, his words are: "Out of regard to you, the Lord has made gracious promises concerning your children. He has permitted them to be sealed with the seal of the covenant. Sprinkling a little water in the face, is a seal of special privileges."* You know, brethren, that no lie is of the truth. Were Mr. P's system of *the truth*, such management would be useless in its defence. Inconscient babes, and impenitent minors, *sealed with the seal of the covenant*, and sprinkling a little water in the face being a seal of special privileges: What popish impositions! Surely the prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and deluded must that people be, who love to have it so. It is shameful imposition!

To the sprinkled children he says, "Ye children of the covenant. How highly are you distinguished! The SEAL of Abraham's GOD has been impressed on your FOREHEADS. The Lord has marked you as his property, in a peculiar sense, and has provided special means for you to be trained up in his service." This is not merely destitute of truth, in every part, but appears to contain a species of high profanity. If the covenant of circumcision be not for believing Gentiles, then by being

sprinkled, they cannot be put into it, and their sprinkling being not of God, it can be no distinguishing favour: nor has the Lord thus marked them for his property, nor in this way provided any special favour for them. But what appears peculiarly profane is, his assertion, that "The seal of Abraham's God has been impressed on their foreheads, by a few drops of water sprinkled in their face." All this is authorized by the priests, and performed by their hands; and, to give it currency, Mr. P. has thus employed great swelling words of vanity. When the people shall discover the cheat, then will the overbearing impositions of the priests bring upon themselves that abhorrence which their works so abundantly merit. These are the Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, of our day, who are as graves, which appear not, and the men that walk over them, are not aware of them. For a priest to say, that sprinkling a few drops of water upon a child's face is *The seal of Abraham's God impressed on its forehead*, whilst it is nothing but a most deceitful device, invented by former priests to bring men into bondage by their superstitions, is highly censurable. The sentiment is as foreign from the Bible as darkness is from light. A more gross and anti-christian superstition is scarcely to be found in the annals of Popery.

Dear brethren, should priests succeed in deceiving the people of America, generally, into a full and fervent belief of their lying vanities, we shall probably have the infernal Inquisition, and it will be thought service done to God, to kill, slay, and cause to perish, all those who are such unfeeling infidels, as not to have their children sealed with the seal of the Almighty God of Abraham, by having it impressed upon their foreheads, by some priest sprinkling a few drops of water upon the face. No such thing, nor any thing resembling it, is found in the oracles of God. You ought, unquestionably, to bear your unequivocal testimony against such fanaticism. This sprinkling business is calculated to fix parents and children in the belief of a lie, and to produce a world of proud hypocrites. Could parents believe, that they, by the assistance of a priest,

were sufficient to seal their children with the seal of Abraham's God, and in this way have the Lord mark them as his property in a peculiar sense, and were children induced to the same belief, would not both imagine, that all was well, provided the seal was good, and the Lord should know his mark?

This superstition, infant sprinkling, is no small part of the leaven of the modern Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. A tradition more profoundly hypocritical is rarely, if ever, found. It teaches and exemplifies hypocrisy in a regular and systematic manner. It is, in its nature, calculated to make a world of hypocrites. Religious hypocrisy is believing, loving and practising showy superstitions, which make void the law and commands of God. Infant sprinkling is all this in the highest degree. Says Mr. P. It is a token of the covenant of grace—an external sign of *internal grace*—a seal of the righteousness of faith—a mark of membership in the christian church—a *seal* of the covenant—a seal of special privileges—a seal of Abraham's God, &c. &c. Now all this is mere showy superstition which makes void the law and commands of God our Saviour; and it lies at the foundation, and is the chief corner stone upon which mystical Babylon is built. This superstition the Pædos believe, love and practise. From this leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, as naturally flow an hypocritical church and a column of hypocritical clergy, as a stream does from a fountain. To spread, defend and urge the belief, love and practice of this hypocrisy, Mr. P. and many others have written volumes, filled with sophistry and falsehoods. This superstition inculcates upon children, and upon parents too, the necessity, importance and privileges of hypocrisy. The advocates of this superstition are so much the more zealous to defend it, as they are deficient in evidence. The low abuse, the fallacious slander, the unfounded arguments, and subtle sophistry, to which Mr. P. and his brethren stoop in defending their system and in opposing the Baptists, are so many swift arguments that their cause labors, and cannot be supported by honorable means. This is also evidence that their cause is superstition. Truth neither requires

nor will stoop to such management. But all this is needed to retain the multitude in the belief of their superstition, and in the practice of their hypocrisy. What can be more totally false, more profoundly superstitious, than the idea, that sprinkling a few drops of water upon a child's face, according to the device of subtle priests, *God having never mentioned the thing*, should seal the child in the covenant of grace, seal special privileges to the child; should seal the child in the forehead, as being God's peculiar property, seal it with the seal of Abraham's God! Such outrageous superstition and hypocrisy are no common sins. They are crying abominations, which should be reproved and testified against upon the house-tops.

Woe to the blind priests, who are the hypocritical retailers of such gross impositions; and woe to the community which is thus imposed upon by the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive; for the plagues prepared for Babylon will soon fall upon both the deceiver and upon the deceived. Woe also to such watchmen in Zion as behold these abominations, yet loving the praise of men more than the praise of God, would not have the people warned.

In his closing address, which is made to the children of unbelievers, he says to them, "It is indeed your unhappiness, that you were not born within the pale of the covenant. But, you have the Bible to read, and the day and means of grace to enjoy." Here is one of his deluding superstitions, together with a precious truth confessed, which destroys his principal argument in favor of the good arising from sprinkling children. The superstition is, *the unhappiness of not being born within the pale of the covenant*. This is like his *Jewish Church* continued, his seal of the covenant, his *infant membership*, his *extensive sprinklings*, by which the priest would baptize, say, 100, at every cast of the water, and the whole host of his anti-christian errors. The precious truth confessed is, that unbaptized children have the oracles of God. On page 213, he told us, that the principal, or chief blessing, which resulted from baptizing children, was their having the oracles of God commit-

ted to them. But now the unbaptized children have the same. There is therefore, according to his own concessions, but small advantage to be expected from sprinkling any more of them.

Brethren, whilst Mr. P.'s system and arguments have past in review, and we have found one to be of no value, and the other without strength; yet are all his re-proofs without occasion? Have we at all times, been sufficiently solicitous to regard with joy and sacred delight that honourable day, in the morning of which our Lord burst the bonds of death, and rose triumphant over death and the grave, having completed the great work of our redemption. Besides, have there not been too many instances, at times, and in some particular places, of a want of a suitable carefulness in family government, and in giving line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, for the admonition and christian instruction of our beloved little ones? Has not this remissness, where it has existed, been greatly occasioned by the very mischievous effects which our brethren have had the mournful occasion to witness, as being produced by the *two or three foundation superstitions*, which the most religious and orthodox of the Pædobaptists, have incorporated with the system of their otherwise very christian instruction. Seeing that the sprinkled children more strongly imbibe, and more tenaciously retain, the errors, than the truths, thus early inculcated; have not some of you, by this means, been induced to a reprobable negligence. This negligence, however, may not be so extensive as our opponents insinuate, and as they, through prejudice, are constrained to believe. Our children may not be so ready as theirs, with their answers to creeds and catechisms of clerical construction; but can they claim superiority when the scriptures, either of the Old or New Testament are the subjects of investigation? Our brethren have, perhaps, somewhat generally pursued the practice, which I have, long since, adopted in my own family. Whilst catechizing the children is not wholly omitted, the usual course is, after the public exercises, to let the children and house-

hold read from ten to twenty chapters, or more, of the precious book of God, accompanied with questions, and observations, which may inform the opening minds, assist the memory, and impress the heart. With this method, our opponents may not be pleased: but to me it is pleasant. For thus have my children opportunity to drink at the fountain's head. To receive the pure word, which is able to make them wise unto salvation. They may not be so prompt in rehearsing what men have written, but more ready to relate what God hath spoken.

But, brethren beloved, if the faults alleged against us by our opposers may be palliated, or found to be small; yet have we not faults of considerable magnitude, which we may justly charge against ourselves? For instance,

1st. Is it not a fault, which involves criminality, that we suffer a most heaven provoking sin upon our Pædo-baptist brethren, whilst instead of restraining them, we hardly reprove them. A more flagrant sin against the cause and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not found in the vocabulary of the Man of sin, than the sprinkling of impenitent households. Yet this sin, which exchanges the kingdom of God for a spiritual brothel, is so winked at, that it gives offence to some professing brethren to have its abominations exposed, save when some of God's people are to be publicly admitted into the society of the people of the saints; or when we are obliged to repel an attack. Whilst we know, that a day of unusual plagues, and of divine vengeance, is nearly breaking, for the utter destruction of what is falsely termed the christian world, can we be innocent, and not sound an alarm, so that the people of God amongst them may hear? Are we innocent, whilst we treat their characteristic sin, as though it were of the venal class, when it is the one for which vengeance is announced? Is it not criminal to be so fearful of their displeasure, that we will suffer them to be burned up, rather than inform them that their house is on fire? You may reply, "Should our Elders be bold and faithful like the first gospel herald, preaching the

baptism of repentance for the remission of sins through all the region; or like Jesus himself, going through every city and village, preaching and showing the *glad tidings of the kingdom of God*; or should they, like Paul, from morning till evening *expound* and testify the *kingdom of God*, persuading them concerning Jesus, the multitude of the Jewish Church continued would be ready to behead, crucify, or stone them. Besides, they would set the common people in a rage against our Elders." Suppose all this should be the result. Have not your Elders enlisted for soldiers in Emmanuel's host? Soldiers expect to die in combat, should the cause require it. Do you think that they are afraid to die for the name and cause of the Lord Jesus? You should rather encourage them, than dissuade them from preaching the distinguishing things of the kingdom of heaven. Yes, you may subjoin, "but this would produce much disturbance, and more good will probably be done by preserving peace." Had the Lord Jesus been of the same opinion, he would never have come to set fire upon the earth. Had John thought thus, he would not have lost his head. Had this been Paul's sentiment, he would not have been in stripes, imprisonments and deaths so oft. Another objection may present itself to the minds of some. "Times are greatly changed." Yes, brethren, and for this very reason, our fault is enlarged, if we venture not every thing, which must now be risked, in vindicating the things of the kingdom of God. The beast which was, and is not, and yet is, presents but few terrors in our land. The pagan civil power, influenced by the pagan priests, destroyed many of the people of the saints. After it was put down, and rose again to aid the ambitious superstitions of the priests of the christian world, its violence and its ravages were increased against those who kept the ordinances as Christ delivered them to the saints. But, in our land, and specially in our day, the civil power declines the office of a beast, that on it the priests of the christian world might trample down the people of the kingdom. We know, or have opportunity to know, by the hard and cruel falsehoods, and slanders, which are

poured upon us without mercy, what we might expect from the chief priests of the Jewish Church continued, were they furnished, according to their wish, with a suitable beast to ride upon. But whilst they are obliged to be on foot, though they may form many mischievous devices, yet they are not able to accomplish them.

Through the infinite kindness of God the civil power in our highly favored land cannot become a beast so long as our excellent constitution shall be defended. So long as our opponents, for want of a mystic beast, shall be obliged to walk, we need fear them not. They may put into full operation their engines of deception, falsehood and slander. Against which we should set up the truth, undisguised truth, the whole truth, relative to the things of our Lord Jesus Christ; and his kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, but shall break in pieces and consume all the combinations and communities of the enemy. Let the gospel banner be fully waving, and all the artillery of heaven, which is committed to our use, be in full operation; then, if God have not furnished us with sufficient weapons, and ordnance, for the holy war, and we fall in the hard contest, the defeat will not be charged upon our cowardice. Brethren, it is time to awake; to look well to your uniform, to dress by the christian standard, to ply your weapons which are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds. Let none be caught parleying with the enemy, proposing some inglorious truce. This is the part of a coward, or a traitor. Let it not be named in our camp that the enemy are Apakims, their cities walled up to heaven, and we unable to go over and take possession. As yet, not so many of the Lord's host, as composed Gideon's little army, have been fairly brought to action. Let three hundred, guided by Gideon's God, go forth and preach, as John did, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, or as Jesus did, the *glad tidings of the kingdom of God*: it would put into darkness that vain superstition, impenitent sprinkling, and loosen the joints of their harness, who now vaunt themselves against the church of God. Their strength and fortress, like the walls of Jericho, would be levelled with the ground.

Brethren, encourage your elders in this matter. Say to them, as Jonathan's armor-bearer said unto him, "Do all that is in your heart; turn ye; behold we are with you according to your heart." The enemy might think as lightly of such a company as Goliath did of David, and like Goliath they would melt before it. Something like this must take place. Blessed are they who shall offer themselves willingly to the help of the Lord.

2. Are we not faulty, for not having more fervently implored the special favour of God to be, and rest, upon our National and State governments? Our safety and prosperity, under God, exceedingly depend upon these not being seduced to become a mystic beast, upon which our enemies might sit to our very great annoyance. Very many in our country have thought, and probably still think, that the civil authority cannot be in better service, than to be employed as such a beast. Every thing which either artifice, flattery, favor, or partial threatening, can effect, will, no doubt, be yet essayed to bring about this object. It is of the abounding mercy of God, that they have not been able extensively to encompass their purpose. In some of the State governments they have smally prevailed. But with all their exertions, they appear, for the present, rather upon the losing hand. Yet their zeal and courage are scarcely abating. God hath already given us great liberty, compared to what was allowed to our forefathers. Yet, in New-England, we have not all we could wish, or as citizens have a right to. All that we wish is, that we may enjoy a perfect equality as citizens, and that the government would suffer no law, statute, act, or resolve, to exist, which interferes in matters of religion, for the truth needs no such thing, and error is not worthy of it. We may not have sufficiently understood the temptations to which our governments have been exposed, from the pressing solicitations of the clergy, nor those to which they may yet be exposed by similar applications. Nor have we been able fully to appreciate the infinite importance which it is to truth, that the government should be sternly fixed not to interfere in religious things otherwise than to remove the shackles which their an-

cestors may have imprudently forged. On both these accounts, ought we not more fervently and unitedly to beseech the God of heaven, that he would have the National and State governments in his holy keeping, that we might lead quiet and peaceable lives, in *all godliness and honesty*; having no dictator but God in matters of revealed religion, which are peculiarly between him and our immortal souls.

The present times are highly momentous. Our adversaries are much engaged to encompass our ruin. They could be scarcely more engaged, were their cause good, and their object attainable. There appears nothing but what they will rise or stoop to, that they may do us harm. Mr. P. has afforded a sample of some of the bold and base devices which they are practising against us. Dear brethren, those of you who were never Pædos. can have no adequate conception of their profound ignorance of the gospel church; nor can you duly conceive of the confused notions which they entertain of the kingdom of God, or rather how they have no notion, or idea, of it.

Whilst our adversaries, and many pious men amongst them, are exerting themselves surprizingly to bring forward an host of learned young men for the ministry, and many of them hopefully pious; they think to take the ground, and thus effectually to check the progress of the Baptists. Yes, whilst they are putting forth exertions worthy of the kingdom of heaven, they are speaking of, and treating, that very kingdom, as not deserving their attention; this they do, many of them, for want of being instructed more perfectly in the ways of God. If there be many pious, as is ardently hoped, amongst those who are now, by very uncommon liberality, assisted in the acquisition of needed literary information, there is reason to apprehend that the Lord hath need of more, or less, of them, in the gospel church, and will appoint them stations there, as he has already done with relation to a few.

Whilst it gives us pain to have a solitary instance, in which a Baptist Elder should prove himself to have so low-

ed this present world, as to sell Christ for thirty pieces of silver, or more; it affords pleasure to have the erroneous forsake their errors, and venture the reproach of men, and the loss of all things, for Christ and the gospel's sake. We may expect many of the pious youth now educating for the ministry, to be thus minded, provided two things be found in us. One is, fervently to ask it of God. The other is, to accompany our prayers with fidelity; faithfully exhibiting and vindicating the right ways of the Lord. Too many of us are yet ashamed of the cross of Christ. We are afraid of the reproach of men. We would leave them in ignorance, as most of the people in America still are, rather than risk their displeasure by telling them the truth. This is a great sin, but not an uncommon one. May the Lord our God give us repentance and reformation; then shall we behold many of the preachers and members of the Pædobaptist churches, forsaking their infant sprinkling and embracing the Lord's ordinance of baptism.

Brethren, permit me just to remind you of the high importance of living soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world; that, so far as duty towards God and men will permit, you live peaceably with all men; giving none occasion of offence to the Jewish church continued, nor to the people generally. Maintaining a godly conversation in the sight of all men. Thus shall your adversaries have no evil thing to say of you, unless falsely. Every thing is to be nobly won soon. It is high time for every christian to do his duty. The decree, not from Cyrus, Darius, or Artaxerxes, but from the God of heaven, will soon be in urgent operation; then shall our adversaries be compelled, willingly, or against their will, to serve in the various ways by which the gospel church may be profited. A little while more, and our warfare is ended, and our reproach wiped away. Encourage and animate each other to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, through a few more trying conflicts, and you are crowned with victory, with glory and honour.

Beloved brethren—by the desire of many of you who reside in the state of New-York, I entered, a few weeks

since, upon the important work, which appeared, by Providence, to be assigned me. By your urgent request, I hand it to you and the public sooner than I could have wished. Not having had it in my power, in so limited a space, to do that justice to such interesting subjects which their greatness deserves, and which, in a more leisurely period, I might have more acceptably performed. But through the kindness and mercy of God, I have done what I could. Now, brethren, I cheerfully commit it to you, as it is, and commend it to God; beseeching the God of Abraham, and of Isaac and of Jacob, that he will cause it to be, as a message from himself to his misguided children, to whom it is principally addressed; and that he will give them more fully to behold THAT SEED of Abraham, in whom the families of the earth are blessed, and more perfectly to hear and obey that Prophet of whom Moses in the law did write.

Dear Brethren,

I am, with concern for Zion's prosperity,
 your fellow servant in the kingdom
 of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

DANIEL MERRILL.

Nottingham-West, May 7, 1819.

ERRATA

- Page 7, line 7th from the bottom, for *that*, read *yet*.
4, 15th line, for *Lelbeus*, read *Lebbeus*.
18, 7th l. from bottom, for *o*, read *of*. And for *to justice*,
read *to do justice*.
22, 4th l. from bottom, for *Hence*, read *Here*.
37, 19th l. from top, for *yet*, read *that*.
44, 12th l. from top, for *Land*, read *Lord*.
45, 25th l. from top, for *prophet*, read *prophets*.
56, 28th l. from top, for *branches*, read *the branches*.
58, 9th l. from top, for *heard of*, read *heard*.
72, 17th l. from top, for *practiced*, read *practised*.
84, 20th l. from top, insert period after the word *Baptist*,
and begin the next word with a capital.
142, 16th l. from bottom, after *those* insert *who*.
152, 12th l. from top, dele *he*.
163, 14th l. from top, for *receive*, read *received*.











