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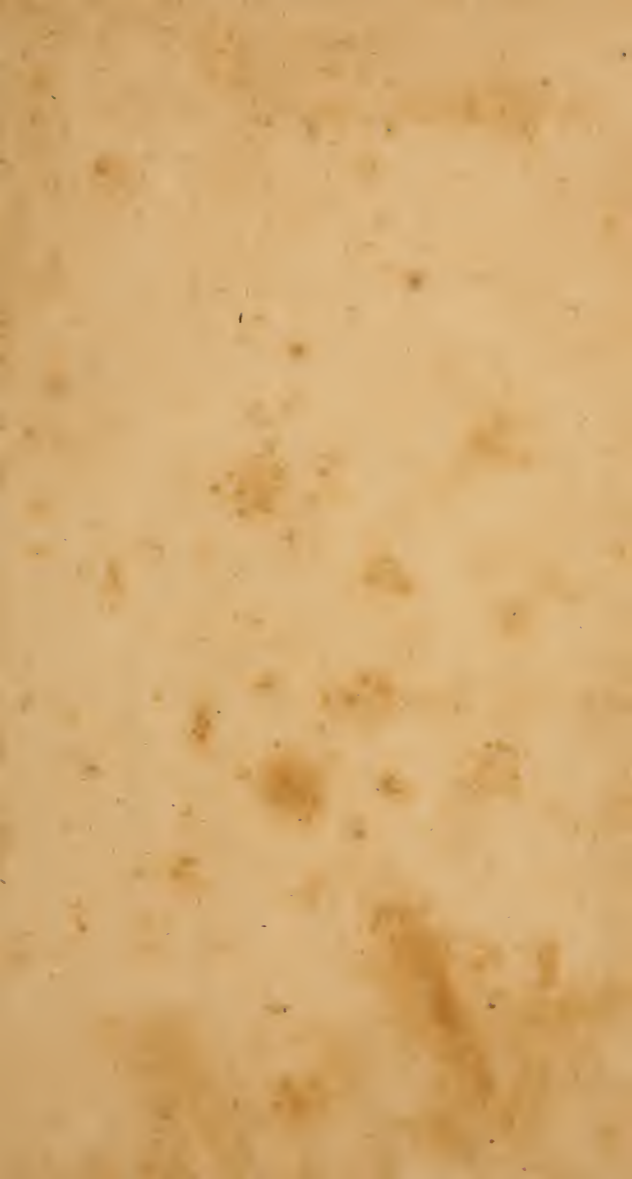
Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

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THE
LETTERS
OF
DAVID AND JOHN;
CONTAINING
ANIMADVERSIONS
UPON
THE LECTURES OF DR. WOODS
ON
INFANT BAPTISM.

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To the Editor of the Columbian Star.

Dear Brother—Soon after the Lectures of Dr. Woods on Infant Baptism appeared, an intimate christian friend who lives several miles from me, and myself, agreed that we would on reading, make animadversions upon the work, and communicate them to each other by letter. In pursuance of this agreement, we wrote much more than either of us had intended. Believing that some good might accrue from the publication of our animadversions, we have, by alterations and transpositions, brought them into the form of seven letters, which are now offered for insertion in the Columbian Star, if you deem them worthy of a place.

Yours, &c.



LETTER I.

My Dear Brother—According to our engagement, I send you some of my thoughts on the Lectures of Dr. Woods on Infant Baptism, hoping to be favoured in a short time with your's in return.

THE QUESTION.

Our Pædobaptist brethren are not agreed among themselves on the subject of Infant Baptism; some of them administering it to all infants, indiscriminately, and others restricting its use to the children of a believer. On this, as well as on other accounts, it might have been well, if the lectures had commenced with a formal enunciation of the question to be discussed.

The question between Dr. Woods and us, on the doctrine of Infant Baptism appears to be this; *Are the infant children of a believer proper subjects of baptism?* In this doctrinal question, there appear to be involved the following questions of duty: Is it the duty of every believing parent, to solicit baptism for his infant children from a christian minister, and in order to obtain it for them, to engage that he will bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Is it the duty of the minister, who may be applied to, if he is satisfied respecting the sincerity and piety of the parent, to administer the ordinance?

The questions stated in the preceding paragraph, do not cover the whole ground of dispute. We differ about believers' baptism, as well as about infant baptism. To the question, *Are believers proper subjects of baptism?* our Pædobaptist brethren answer affirmatively, as well as ourselves; and there appears, at first view, to be an entire agreement between us on this subject. But it will be seen we differ greatly if the following questions of duty be proposed.—Is it the duty of every believer to solicit baptism for himself from a christian

minister, and, in order to obtain it, to make a profession of his faith?—Is it the duty of the minister who may be applied to, if he is satisfied respecting the sincerity and piety of the candidate, to administer the ordinance? We answer both these questions in the affirmative, but *they* make an exception in all cases in which the believer was baptized in infancy. This difference is, in my estimation, much more important than that which respects infant baptism. I do not so much object to infant baptism, considered in itself, as to the use which is made of it, to set aside believers' baptism; if it should ever become universal on the present plan, believers' baptism will be banished from the Church.

Our Pædobaptist brethren practise *two* baptisms, which are distinct, and which might be practised without being suffered to oppose each other. Infant baptism is, they think, a parental duty; believers' baptism, a personal duty. These duties need not interfere with each other. When it is conceded to us that believers are proper subjects of baptism, we ought to hold fast the concession in the full extent of its meaning, and whatever may be proved respecting infants, we should still ask, why are believers prevented from performing the duty which is implied in this concession? We owe it to the cause of truth, to have the whole question fairly met, and to let it be distinctly understood, that we are contending for the privileges of believers, rather than against the privileges of their children.

DR. WOODS' METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE CONTROVERSY.

The *spirit*, with which these lectures are written, is excellent. I hope the time is coming when christians will be christians even in controversy. It would distress me much to see a reply to this publication, that should exhibit the acrimonious temper, which has been too much indulged by writers on both sides of the question. While the Dr. firmly opposes our sentiments, he has written scarcely a sentence, of which we can complain that it is calculated to excite prejudice against us. What he has said in lecture 8, p. 171, 172, may be an exception, but as there is, perhaps, too much reason for his remarks, we ought rather to profit by them than complain.

The *plan* of investigating the subject differs in appearance from that which Pædobaptist writers commonly pursue. Dr.

W. has made the commission the great hinge of the question; yet you will perceive, that arguments from the Abrahamic covenant, and the ancient dispensation, are the weights on which he relies to give the turn to the Pædobaptist side. To justify his interpretation of the commission, he argues that the covenant of which circumcision was appointed to be the seal, was spiritual, gracious, and immutable, p. 35, and that the authority, by which members are admitted to the privileges of the christian church, is contained in that covenant, or charter, perpetuated to the present time, with no other change than a modification of its outward form, p. 35.

THE KIND OF EVIDENCE.

The commission is the proper hinge of the question. In professing to hang the whole upon this, Dr. W. has made an important concession, in return for which, I would allow him in the interpretation, to avail himself of every advantage, which *inference*, in the sober use of it, can possibly afford. I am not of opinion that inferences, even concerning positive institutes, are to be discarded. The meaning of every word, in the commands on which such institutes are founded, must be determined by inference; and the meaning of the entire commands, must be ascertained by inference from the meaning of their several parts. Besides, if some duties are clearly expressed in a command, there may be others as clearly implied. If by the commission, we could, without the use of inference, demonstrate that it is the duty of a minister to baptize converts, we might infer, that it is the duty of the converts to be baptized, and the proof in the latter case would be just as satisfactory as in the former.

Dr. W. refers to *tradition* also as a source of evidence. Some things which he has said respecting tradition, are startling to a timid protestant. But we must concéde, that the will of God ought to be obeyed, however it is made known; and that a mind rightly disposed, will seek to know that will, without prescribing the method in which it shall be revealed. The methods which God has taken in the different ages of the world, have been sufficient for his purpose, and men have been required to obey only according to the revelation made. While tradition passed through but few hands, men were left to learn the will of God from it. Since the life of man has

been shortened, God has committed his will to writing, because this method of communication is less liable to corruption. We are sure, therefore, that God regards tradition as too uncertain in the present state of the world for the revelation of his will. If he has still left some truths to be seen by the light of reason and tradition, we are sure that he has judged wisely, what truths might be so left. A mind rightly disposed, will in every case, avail itself of the best light within its reach, and guided thereby, will follow on to know the Lord. He will never follow tradition, where he has scripture to guide him, and will avoid every approach toward the fault of those, who make void the written law through tradition, thereby rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, by judging that to be more certain, which God has judged to be less so.

I propose the following rules for the application of evidence from *inference* and *tradition*. The justness of them, cannot, I think, be questioned. 1. Never allow an inference which is direct and clear, to be set aside by one which is remote and obscure. 2. Never admit any proof from tradition, which will set aside what may be proved by scripture.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

Dr. W. thinks that we have the same kind of proof for infant baptism as for the christian Sabbath: and that we must resort for proof of either, to inference and tradition. Let us then receive from inference and tradition what light they can afford, bearing in mind the rules prescribed above for the application of evidence from these sources.

If the law of God is, *remember every Saturday to keep it holy*, then no tradition can authorize us to profane that holy day. If tradition should teach that the ancient christians consecrated Sunday to the Lord, though we might infer that Sunday ought to be observed, yet we ought rather to keep two Sabbaths than to exalt the authority of tradition and inference above the express command of the law. Either the fourth command must be erased from the decalogue, or it will forever require that we remember Saturday to keep it holy. whatever other days we may observe for sacred uses. In like manner, if the Lord Jesus has commanded every believer to be baptized, as an act of personal obedience, and has made

a clear revelation of his will in this particular in the written word, then, though we should be able to prove by tradition, and remote inference, that believers ought to have their children baptized, yet this tradition and inference, should not be allowed to set aside the clear command of scripture. Convince me that the law of God requires Saturday to be kept holy, and that tradition and fair inference sustain the claims of the christian Sabbath, and I will not make void the law through tradition, but will consecrate both days to the Lord.* Convince me that the Redeemer, by a clear revelation of his will in the written word, has commanded his disciples to be baptized, and that tradition and inference require parents to have their children baptized, then I will not make void the command by tradition and inference, nor will I despise the will of God when fairly discovered by these means, but I will practise both baptisms.

Although the case of the christian Sabbath, and that of infant baptism, may both be had in view, in fixing the rules of evidence, yet they ought to be decided independently of each other, according to the facts found in each respectively. If in our judgment respecting the christian Sabbath, we have allowed more weight to tradition and inference than to clear scripture testimony, we have judged wrong, and we ought rather to undo the wrong than establish it as a precedent.

Should it be urged that the two baptisms proposed to be practised together do necessarily conflict with each other, then I should reply, that the baptism which is sustained by the weaker evidence, must yield. But why do they necessarily conflict with each other? Many persons believe, that the Apostles re-baptized those, whom John had baptized, or whom they themselves had baptized during the Redeemer's personal ministry. They think it a sufficient reason for this repetition of baptism, that the two baptisms differed from each other. Why may not the same reason justify the administration of believers' baptism and infant baptism, to the same sub-

* If any one should say, the commandment requires six days of labour, as well as *one* of rest, it might be replied in the words of Scott: "It is plain that the words *Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work*, were merely an *allowance* and not an *injunction*: for the Lord forbade by other precepts all labour on some of these days." Notes Exod. 20. 8. 10. Further, the Apostles kept both days. Doddridge's Lectures, prop. 151. gr. 7.

ject? Moreover, they who were circumcised in infancy, were afterwards baptised upon becoming disciples of Christ. If infant baptism takes the place of infant circumcision, believers' baptism may, with as much propriety, follow the one as the other: and more especially, if the proselytes who were baptized on the day of pentecost had been previously baptized as well as circumcised, Acts ii. 10. 38. 41. It is no valid objection, that circumcision itself was not repeated. We may argue with Dr. W. what is suitable, p. 27. What is manifestly unsuitable in one case is not so in the other. Circumcision was a token of God's covenant, that needed not to be repeated, because it remained in the flesh; but it is far otherwise with baptism. Indeed, how a man can be said to have the seal of God's covenant upon him, who has it neither in his flesh, nor in his memory, I cannot understand. I suppose, the Israelites would have thought themselves authorized to circumcise themselves, just as often as they had no other proof of having been circumcised than the information of their parents.

The facts upon which our judgment respecting the christian Sabbath must rest, are not concerned in the present question. When that case shall come to be decided, the following things will be found among the number that deserve to be considered. 1. In the very nature of things, it is impossible that we should have the authority of scripture for the particular day which we observe. Should the scripture direct to keep Saturday, or Sunday, or both, we know these days from the other days of the week, only by the computation which is in common use, that is to say, only by the authority of tradition. 2. It is impossible from the figure of the earth, that any one day of the week should be observed in all places. As christianity spreads eastward and westward from any given place, its professors will meet each other in the opposite hemisphere of the earth with a difference of one day in their computation of time, and will be Sabbath breakers to each other, if nothing is left to expediency and Christian prudence, as to the time of keeping the Sabbath. "As it is impossible, says Dr. Doddridge, certainly to determine which is the *seventh* day from the creation, and as (in consequence of the spherical form of the earth, and the absurdity of the scheme which supposed it one great plain) the change of place will necessarily occasion some alteration in the time

of the beginning and ending of any day in question, it being always at the same time somewhere or other, sun-rising and sun-setting, noon and midnight; it seems very unreasonable to lay such a stress upon the particular day as some do. It seems abundantly sufficient, that there be *six* days of labour, and *one* of religious rest, which there will be upon the *christian* as well as the *Jewish* scheme." *Lectures* prop. 151. *schol.* 8. 3. The commandment of scripture does not fix a particular day. It is not, *Remember Saturday to keep it holy, but, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.* It does not require that we keep the seventh day of the week, but the seventh day that follows after six days of labour. This we do when we keep what is called the first day of the week, that is (John xx. 1.) *ἡ μία τῶν σαββάτων*, the first according to the reckoning of the Jewish Sabbaths: for the Sabbaths determine the reckoning of the week, and not the reckoning of the week the Sabbaths. 4. There is much evidence both from scripture and tradition, that the Apostles and primitive christians observed for christian worship the day following that on which the Jews kept their Sabbath.

In the case of infant baptism, we shall not find facts analogous to those stated in the preceding paragraph. 1. The nature of the case admits of scripture evidence, and the best evidence that the nature of the case admits, we should seek for as the ground of our decision. 2. The same character of persons may be, and ought to be admitted to baptism all the world over. 3. It is conceded that we have clear scripture authority for baptizing all believers, with the exception of such as have been baptized in infancy, and that the authority for excepting these is to be made out in some other way than by explicit scripture testimony. 4. It remains yet to be shown that there is evidence either from scripture or tradition, that the Apostles and primitive christians ever omitted to baptize any believers on the ground of their having been baptized in infancy; nay more, that they ever practised infant baptism.

THE COMMISSION.

Dr. W.'s rule for interpreting the commission is correct. The meaning of such language at the time it was used is that

by which we ought to abide. But we cannot affirm that what Jesus meant is what the Apostles understood, so properly, as that it is what they ought to have understood. He said, *Teach all nations*, yet, for a considerable time, they preached to Jews only. They allowed their Jewish prejudices to influence them too far. They should have interpreted the commission less by their previous Jewish notions, and more by their Master's words; and so, I think, ought Dr. Woods.

The meaning of the term μαθητευω, I suppose, is given correctly also, i. e. *to make disciples*, or *to disciple*, but a proselyte and a disciple are not the same thing. The Jews would not have said, *Thou art his proselyte, but we are Moses' proselytes*. John ix. 28. Had Dr. Woods confined himself to the term disciple, his reasoning would not have been so plausible. A disciple sustains a relation to a teacher, and it is this relation which constitutes him a disciple. John, and Jesus, and also the Pharisees, had disciples among the Jews, but when a Jew became *discipled* to any one of these teachers, he did not thereby become *proselyted from* the Jewish religion. It was well understood, that the relation which constituted him a disciple, was something new, and wholly distinct from that relation which constituted him a member of the commonwealth of Israel, neither destroying it, nor serving as a substitute for it. Hence it was that the Apostles every where claimed to be Jews, and entitled to all the privileges of Israelites, at the same time that they professed to be disciples of Christ. It is therefore incredible, that they should think of making disciples to Christ, just as if they were making proselytes to Judaism. They had heard their Master fix the terms of discipleship, *except a man deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple*. They had seen John *make and baptize disciples*, they had seen Jesus do the same, (John, iv. 1.) and they had for some years been the agents of their Master in this work. It is not probable that they had ever compassed sea or land to make a proselyte to Judaism, and if proselytes were baptized in those days, and the proselyte makers administered that baptism, (all which may be safely disputed,) still it is not likely that the Apostles had any concern in it. It is sufficiently clear that they had never seen either John, or Jesus, baptizing Jewish proselytes. They baptized not even native Jews, until they had first been made disciples. "Adult Jews," says Scott, "pro-

fessing repentance, and a disposition to become Messiah's subjects, were the *only persons*, as far as we can find, whom John admitted to baptism." Notes on Matt. iii. 5, 6. These baptisms to which they had been accustomed were their example, and the commission was their authority to proceed in like manner throughout all nations—*Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, &c.*

Occasionally, in the writings of Pædobaptists, when they are treating of Infant Baptism, we meet with intimations that infants may be the disciples of Christ. "He is placed in a *school* where he is to receive faithful instruction and *discipline*," p. 140. "The children of believers were to be considered and treated as placed in the *school* of Christ," p. 96. "If God is pleased to place our children in such a near relation to us, and if he requires us to consecrate them to him, and to put upon them the sign of consecration, the mark of *discipleship*, that is, the mark of their being placed as *young disciples* in the school of Christ," &c. p. 97. Nay, that Dr. W. will not contend for any authority in the commission to baptize infants, unless those infants are disciples, may be inferred from his so frequent mention of their baptism as the mark of discipleship, and from what he has said, p. 106. "The word he uses is *εμαδνητεσθησαν*, *they were proselyted, or made disciples*; the very word which Christ had used in his commission to his apostles, "Go ye, make disciples of all nations." The persons referred to, Justin says, were made disciples *εκ παιδων*, from their *early childhood*. The word is applied to the little children whom Christ took in his arms, and blessed. It is evident, therefore, that Justin understood the command of Christ, to make disciples and baptize, as applicable to little children." Now let the question be distinctly proposed, are infants baptized because they are disciples of Christ? Will our Pædobaptist brethren affirm that the infants they baptize are disciples in the scriptural sense and use of that term? The command, "Go make disciples, baptizing them," is scripture language, and to be interpreted accordingly. Dr. W. does not venture to call infants disciples without prefixing the epithet *young*, an epithet which, it is easy to perceive, has some effect in reconciling our feelings to the unscriptural use of the term. But neither Dr. W. nor any other Pædobaptist writer, whose mind is imbued with divine truth, and who has been habituated to scripture phraseology, will be likely to

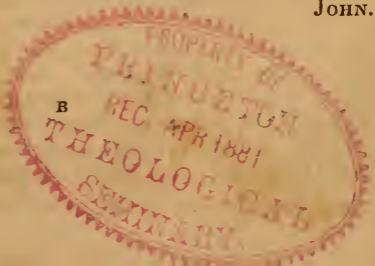
speak or write long, in consistence with the supposition, that infants are disciples. For proof of this, I refer you to p. 100, where you may read as follows, "Certain Judaizing Christians came from Judea to Antioch, and said to the brethren there, 'Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.' Why did they not express all they meant, and say, 'Except ye and your children be circumcised, ye cannot be saved?' And, afterwards, in v. 10. when Peter spoke in opposition to the Judaizing Christians, in regard to this same subject, and said, 'Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the disciples?' that is, why do ye require the disciples to be circumcised, why did he not in so many words object to laying this burdensome rite upon the disciples *and their children?* The answer to both questions is the same. There was no occasion for the mention of children, because it was perfectly understood by all, that children were to be included with their parents." Beyond all doubt, when these lines were written, the thought was not present to the writer's mind, that the infants were as truly disciples as their parents. On the contrary, the whole force of his argument is lost, if the term *disciples* be supposed to include, in the very meaning of the term itself, the children with their parents. His argument is, that in the *language*, the children are not included; for, though they were meant to be included, yet all was not *said* that was *meant*: that is, the children were not included in the meaning of the term *disciples*, but in the unexpressed intention of Peter. Now, whatever hesitation we may feel in following Dr. W. when he decides what the apostle meant beyond what is written; yet we may readily perceive that, so far as the meaning of the term *disciples* is concerned, he wrote according to those ideas of discipleship which he had learned, not from the baptismal controversy, but from the holy scriptures; and by allowing that infants, however they may be connected with their parents who are disciples, are not disciples themselves, and are not included in the term *disciples* in the Apostles' use of it, he has conceded a very important point. It appears that something more is necessary to constitute a disciple than to be the child of a believer. When that essential of discipleship is found even in very young persons, the ordinance of baptism is not to be denied. "Justin Martyr speaks of persons who were made disciples to Christ from their infancy,

ἐκ παιδῶν from their early childhood," p. 106, 107. So Paul declares concerning Timothy, that ἀπο βρεφους, *from infancy* he had known the holy scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 15. For a person however young, to be descended from christian parents, is one thing, to be made a disciple or to know the holy scriptures, quite a different thing. In page 107, Dr. W. says, "It is evident, therefore, that Justin understood the command of Christ, to make disciples, and baptize, as applicable to little children. And he wrote only about 100 years after Matthew, who records that command." Here again we have scriptural thought, and a scriptural mode of applying the commission. Neither Justin, nor for the present, Dr. W. speaks of the commission as applicable to any but disciples. It is for this application precisely that I would contend, and this is the plain and obvious meaning of the commission, "Go, make disciples of all nations baptizing them," αὐτοῖς, that is, the disciples.

It is a peculiar infelicity of error, that its ablest advocates are often unwarily its opponents. Let the following things in the Lectures be put together. 1. The great argument for infant baptism is suspended upon the proper interpretation and application of the commission, see p. 95. 2. The proper application of the commission *to baptize*, is explained to be to DISCIPLES, even when very young persons are in question, yea, such as the Saviour took into his arms, and blessed, p. 107.—3. It is argued that the apostle did not so understand and use the term disciples, as to include the children of believing parents, p. 100. Were it right to triumph over concessions unwarily made, we might here close the argument, and accept the concessions of Dr. W., as yielding to us all that we wish.

In my next letter, I shall undertake an examination of the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, and the Christian covenants or dispensations. In the mean time, I am very affectionately, yours,

JOHN.



LETTER II.

Dear Brother—I have received, and carefully perused your communication, containing remarks on Dr. Woods' Lectures on Infant Baptism. I would, in like manner, offer a few reflections for your consideration.

I have been somewhat disappointed, in not finding more *originality* in the work. True, the Dr. has given to his performance some appearance of novelty, by fixing on the Commission as the *hinge* of his argument, but many others have toiled hard to find Infant Baptism in the Commission before, and with as little success; for, of all the passages to which our brethren appeal in this controversy, this, I think, is the most likely to disappoint them.

THE COMMISSION.

To illustrate the manner in which the Apostles must have understood the commission, Dr. W. has recourse to the obsolete rite of circumcision. "The same rite was appointed for parents and their children," (male children only, I suppose, he means,) and why did he not add for servants also? There are, however, too many discrepancies, between circumcision and baptism, to admit, without a plain declaration to that effect, that the latter came in the room of the former; or that the Divine Legislator, had any reference to the one, when he instituted the other. To what purpose is it to insist on the excellency and spirituality of promises and requirements made in the Old Testament? That men were under moral government then, as well as now, is readily admitted; but was any thing more required in order to circumcision, than a proof of lineal descent from Abraham? Is not this, in effect, the argument from the covenant with the patriarch, "Abraham was commanded of God to circumcise himself, and his male children; and all that were born in his house and bought with his money; therefore, all Christian parents, without any com-

mand, ought to baptize, that is, *sprinkle with water*, all their children, both male and female, but not their servants?" I confess, that I perceive not the remotest connexion between the parts of this argument. The words *sign*, and *seal*, used by the Apostle, Rom. iv. 11, are thought to furnish some support to the position, that baptism has come in the room of circumcision, but, if Dr. Lightfoot's version of that passage be correct, it will, in a great measure, overturn the argument built upon it. "*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, WHICH SHOULD BE HEREAFTER, in uncircumcision.* Not what *had been* to Abraham, as yet uncircumcised; but which should be to his seed uncircumcised; that is, to Gentiles, that should *hereafter*. imitate the faith of Abraham." Bryant's abridgement of Booth's Pædobaptism examined, p. 199.

Dr. Woods seems to be very confident, that if a commission had been given to twelve Jews, to proselyte and circumcise all nations, or to proselyte, circumcise, and baptize all nations, they would have necessarily understood infants to be included; and that therefore, when the Apostles received a commission, to proselyte and baptize all nations, they so understood it, p. 44, 45. If circumcision was the same in all respects as baptism, and being proselyted to Judaism was the same as being made disciples to Christ, the conclusion would be just, but not otherwise. For as you observe, to proselyte and to make disciples in some cases are very different things, and between circumcision and baptism there are so many disparities, that they will not admit of comparison, much less of substitution.

From the manner in which Dr. W. speaks of the commission, one would think that it was delivered in very ambiguous language, and that it was of exceedingly difficult interpretation. "Our inquiry is, whether the language employed in Christ's commission to baptize, would naturally be understood by his Apostles as extending to the children of believers," p. 57.; and to the same purport in other places. Such an inquiry seems to me, however, to contain in it something like a reflection on the wisdom and benevolence of our Divine Master. Where shall we look for perspicuity of language and sense, if not in the commission? Let us then read it, and see. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be

saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned. Go teach all nations, baptizing them, &c. That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." *Of infants*, the commission saith nothing. If you inquire of their baptism, or even of their salvation, it remains equally silent, and you must ask elsewhere. But, says Dr. W., "As the Apostles were Jews, and had been accustomed to see parents and their children taken into the church, it was natural for them to suppose, that the commission included children." If I inferred any thing from the commission on this subject, it would be, that, as the gospel is to be preached to all nations; to every creature, then, the distinction between Jews and Gentiles is done away, and the peculiarities of the Abrahamic covenant and of the Mosaic economy, are abolished. The Apostles were not ignorant, I apprehend, of the doctrine which John the Baptist, a man who was sent from God, had inculcated on his baptismal occasions. "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father." Do not some of the arguments for Pædobaptism, savour of this very sentiment, which John the Baptist reprehends; and are they not calculated to foster the spirit which he sought to repress? Further, they knew that their Lord had represented his kingdom, as not being of this world, and that, in order to enter into it legitimately, a man must be born again of water and of the spirit.

PROSELYTE BAPTISM.

The remarks introduced, p. 47. &c., on Jewish proselyte baptism, seem to me entirely irrelevant, for several reasons.

1. There is no evidence that such a practice obtained among the Jews before the Christian era. To what is quoted from Knapp. p. 47., I would oppose the opinions of such men as Beza, and Dr. Owen, who, with many learned and pious Pædobaptists, unite in representing it as destitute of any support. No trace of it appears before *the second century*; and as to the improbability of the Jews having borrowed it from the Christians, it may be observed, that however inconsistent it may seem, though they despised and rejected Jesus of Nazareth, yet they thought highly of John the Baptist, and were willing for a season to rejoice in his light; and Josephus speaks respectfully of John, and of James the just.

When these things are considered, it will not, perhaps, seem an incredible thing, that the Jews should have borrowed from the Christians, or rather from John the Baptist, the practice of immersion. Knapp appeals to the testimony of all the Rabbies, and to the universality of the practice in the second century; but Jewish Rabbies, and usages of the second century are dubious evidence.

Dr. Gill, who was well qualified to judge on this subject, writes as follows: "Now since it appears there was no mention of any such rite or custom of admitting Jewish proselytes by baptism, or dipping, to the Jewish religion, in any writings and records before the times of John, Christ, and his Apostles; nor in any age after them, for the first three or four hundred years; or, however, before the writings of the Talmuds, it may be safely concluded there was no such custom, which had obtained in that interval of time." Elsewhere he writes thus, "If these several things can be made plain, it is indeed, the earliest testimony we have of this custom, and serves to confirm that this custom is a pure device of the Jewish doctors, and is merely *Rabbinical*, and besides, at most, it can only carry up this custom into the *fifth* century." (*Dissertation concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes.*) He does not agree with Dr. Owen, in thinking that it was adopted in imitation of John's baptism, but that it arose from a general notion of the uncleanness of the heathen, in their state of heathenism.

2. If we admit the existence of such a practice before the time of John and Christ, still it does not appear that their baptism could have been derived from it. The proselytes dipped themselves, which was not the case in the baptisms of the New Testament. Proselyte baptism must not be performed in the night, or on a feast day, or on the Sabbath, or when there were not three witnesses present, whereas the jailer was baptized in the night, the three thousand on the feast of Pentecost, and Lydia seems to have been baptized on the Sabbath, and it does not appear that there were any witnesses present at the baptism of Paul.

3. Suppose after all, that such a practice did exist among the Jews, either before or after the Christian era, and that the children of proselytes were baptized with their parents, it could be no more than a tradition of their own, as they had no direction or authority for it in the Old Testament. And

can we suppose, that our Lord had any regard to a mere human invention, when instituting one of the most sacred and significant rites of his kingdom? What! he who told the Jews to their faces, that they made void the law of God through their traditions, would he countenance those traditions by incorporating one of them into his sacred code? I must have some very strong evidence before I can believe this.

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM.

Dr. Woods, in common with many writers on his side of the controversy, is disposed to make much, very much, of the few household or family baptisms recorded in the New Testament. On this subject I offer three or four remarks.

1. Although we read in the New Testament of the baptism of many thousands of believers, yet we hear of but *three* household baptisms among them all. The household of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14, 15.; of the jailer, verse 33.; and of Stephanas, 1 Cor. i. 16. Do not our brethren forget themselves when they insist so much on household baptism? Strange indeed, if among the myriads whose baptisms the New Testament mentions or implies, there should not be found at least, three households. I am sorry that Dr. Woods, living as he does in the midst of Baptists, should think that the baptism of households is such an uncommon thing among us, p. 78, 79.; surely he ought to have acquainted himself with our history and practice, before he published his book. It is by no means so rare a thing as he would represent, for whole families to be baptized among us; but he will not on that account infer that we baptize infants. Our brethren, who communicate accounts of revivals and baptisms, frequently mention, among other things, the baptism of households, but we never suspect that they baptize infants. Many families, as Booth observes, consist only of the master, the mistress, and the servants; or if there are children, they may be all grown up. It seems to be altogether a *childish* thing, to insist that there must have been children in those families mentioned in connexion with baptism in the New Testament. It may be suggested, that in any given neighbourhood, nearly one half of the families will be found to have no mere infants in them. Dr. Hammond pronounces it an unreasonable thing, to infer infant baptism from household baptism. In general, we may apply to the arguments founded on these premises, what Je-

remy Taylor says of those drawn from the passage, "Suffer little children to come unto me, &c." "They prove nothing so much as the want of better arguments."

I have mentioned above that cases of household baptism often occurred in revivals, but no revivals of modern times can be compared with the powerful effects of the Holy Spirit which accompanied the preaching of the Apostles, when multitudes in an assembly were converted at once, and when all that were gathered together in a house received the Holy Ghost at the same moment, as was the case in the house of Cornelius, so that no man could forbid water for the baptism of any individual in the whole company. Dr. W., to illustrate what would probably occur in those days does not select times of revivals for his purpose. He does not even choose the common progress of religion in Christian lands, but refers to the slow introduction of it in heathen countries, by the painful efforts of ordinary and uninspired men. He asks, p. 79., "Should we not think it very singular to find accounts of *family baptisms* in a history of Baptist Missions." This is treating the subject with manifest injustice!

2. The argument from household baptisms if insisted on, will prove too much; it will require that not infants only, but wicked and impenitent children and servants also should be baptized, whenever the head of a family submits to that ordinance; for the hinge of the argument is the term *household*, and they are a part of the family as well as the infants who may be in it; and this consequence taken in connexion with the argument from circumcision cannot well be avoided. Some Pædobaptists, urged on by something like an idea of consistency, have admitted this, and have contended, in theory, at least, that all the household should be baptized; but I presume that there are not many who would be willing to go so far in practice.

The following incident will illustrate the difficulty into which this argument from household baptisms, brings our Pædobaptist brethren. During a revival of religion in the town of N.— in a neighbouring state, a plain man, who was a farmer, was, among others, hopefully converted, and felt it his duty to join some church. He himself was inclined to the Baptists, but his wife was a member with the Presbyterians. He thought it would be convenient on many accounts to go with his wife, and was desirous to be accommodating, but had

some scruples, especially about the children being baptized. He called one day on Dr. R., the Presbyterian minister, a friendly, pleasant man, when the following dialogue ensued.

Farmer. I have come to converse with you on the subject of making a profession of religion. As my wife is a Presbyterian, it would be very desirable that we should walk together; but, I have some difficulties on my mind: perhaps, you can remove them. I suppose, if I should join your church, it will be expected that I should bring forward my children for baptism.

Dr. R. Yes, we should expect it, as it is customary among us.

Farmer. I have one child four years old, can that be baptized on my faith?

Dr. R. O, yes.

Farmer. I have another seven years old, can that be admitted likewise?

Dr. R. Yes, it is often done; I see no difficulty.

Farmer. Well, I have one that is twelve years old, can that be baptized on my faith?

Dr. R. (With some hesitation,) Yes, we do sometimes; I see no difficulty.

Farmer. Well, but Dr., I have one that is *fourteen* years old, can that one be baptized on my faith?

Dr. R. (*With considerable embarrassment,*) Yes, I suppose so—yes, I see no difficulty.

The farmer, turning away somewhat abruptly, exclaimed, Ah! Dr., *I have not half enough faith for myself.*

3. The things which are spoken of the three households of whose baptism the New Testament furnishes information, forbid the conclusion, that there were any mere infants in them, in our sense of the term. Of the jailer it is said, "they spake to him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." Moreover, "he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." The household of Stephanas "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." There is not a particle of evidence that Lydia had either a husband, or children. She was of Thyatira, and Philippi does not appear to have been the place of her residence. Her household is understood by many to be afterwards called "brethren." There are three households mentioned in the New Testament, of whose faith and piety we can have no doubt. The family of the nobleman at

Capernaum, John iv. 53. The family of Cornelius at Cæsarea, Acts x. 2.; and the family of Crispus at Corinth; Acts xviii. 8. And is it not as credible that the three households baptized by the Apostles and their fellow labourers consisted of believers?

Our author is disposed to make much of the *silence* of scripture, p. 38, 39. I had thought that Protestants had given up arguing from this uncertain source ever since they left Rome; but it seems now that I was mistaken. Well, let us apply this rule to the subject of household baptisms. I would propose to prove by it, first; that Crispus' household, Acts xviii. 8., though they were believers were not baptized at all; while it is clear enough, that he himself was baptized by Paul; 1 Cor. i. 14. Again, I would prove that, although Stephanas' household was baptized, 1 Cor. i. 15., he himself never was; and, finally, I would prove, that the household of the jailer were not only baptized on his faith, but that they might be saved also on the same principle, for the Apostle said, "Believe (thou,) and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." It would be just as easy to prove, that this text contains a promise of salvation to all the household, when the head becomes a believer, as that any other text conveys to them the right of being baptized upon the same condition.

Dr. W. would have it understood that accounts of household baptisms occur in the New Testament in a cursory manner, as if they were very common things. It so happens, however, that in the narratives of those transactions several important hints and circumstances are so interwoven, that no unprejudiced inquirer need be at a loss as to the description of persons of which those households were composed.

Yours very affectionately,

DAVID.

LETTER III.

My Dear Brother—In the close of my last, I proposed to consider the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, and the Christian covenants. A clear and accurate conception of the nature of these covenants is indispensable, in order to a just appreciation of the arguments in favour of Infant Baptism. I shall devote the present letter to these subjects, and shall allow myself to profit in some degree by the labours of a former occasion, on which some essays that you may have seen were prepared for a religious periodical.

The scriptural meaning of the word covenant, Dr. Woods has given very satisfactorily, p. 121. *et seq.*; I have nothing to add to what he has said, or to take away. I am happy to find also, that I shall agree with him in believing that the Mosaic dispensation was that covenant, which is called the first covenant, in the epistle to the Hebrews, and distinguished from the new covenant, or gospel dispensation, p. 124.: and, that the divine transactions with Abraham are to be carefully distinguished from the Mosaic covenant, p. 34.; though, with respect to these transactions, he has, I conceive, fallen into some mistakes, which I shall hereafter attempt to point out.

THE MOSAIC COVENANT—THE CONGREGATION OF THE LORD.

Although, in the divine purpose, a sufficient sacrifice for sin had been provided from eternity, yet, it did not seem good to Infinite Wisdom that it should be immediately offered, when sin first entered into the world, Jehovah looked over four thousand years of ignorance and crime, to that period denominated “the fulness of time,” when it would best display the divine perfections, for the Redeemer to atone for transgression; and repentance, and remission of sins to be preached in his name, among all nations. As, in the exercises of an individual Christian, the discovery of salvation in Christ is withheld, until an anxiety is excited in his breast, that makes the discovery welcome; so in the history of the world, the Messiah makes not his appearance, until mankind

have felt the necessity of such a deliverer; then he comes, the desire of all nations. It pleased God that a full experiment should be made of man's power and skill, to find a remedy for his moral disease, before God's remedy for the healing of the nations should be revealed and applied. "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."

The experiment which, in the wisdom of God, opened the way for the Redeemer's entrance into the world, was of a two-fold nature; or, rather, there were two distinct experiments, demonstrating distinct truths. When the bolder enemies of God and religion make their appeal from the volume of inspiration to the volume of nature, and assert the sufficiency of the latter to enlighten and direct them in the search after God; we can refer to actual experiment, to ascertain how far fallen man, without the oracles of God, can advance toward the knowledge of the Divine character. With the light of nature, the bright beams of science, and the keen eye of natural genius, the wisest men of antiquity still *felt* in the dark, after the unknown God, Acts xvii. 27.

When the more insidious enemies of religion assert, that man has sufficient native virtue, if properly cultivated, to render him acceptable to God; that there are influences of the word, or spirit, common to all men, which are sufficient, without any additional special influence, to bring him to know, and enjoy the Most High; we have in the wisdom of God, another completed experiment, which decides against this doctrine, with as much certainty as is any where to be found within the limits of experimental philosophy. In the sacred record is the history of a people, who had the advantage over every other people much, every way. They were not left to read the volume of nature only; but to them were committed the oracles of God. They were not left with unmeaning forms, and unauthorized rites of religion; but they had ordinances of divine service, instituted on the authority of God. "To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." Nor were they without instructors in religion; but holy men were raised up among them, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Neither were they without motives to obedience; but a covenant was made with

them, containing every threat which might deter—every promise that might allure. The experiment was made fairly and completely. Jehovah himself said, “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done?” And what was the result? It was clearly demonstrated that man is totally depraved; that the best institutions, instructions, and motives, with all common influences of the Spirit, whatever such there may be, are altogether insufficient to restore his fallen nature; and that a direct, special influence upon his heart, by the effectual working of Divine power, is indispensably necessary, in order to make him delight in the law of God, and render acceptable obedience to its holy requirements. See Heb. viii. 8, 9, 10.

That society of persons which was the subject of the last mentioned experiment, is frequently denominated *the congregation of the Lord*. It appears to have been the only divinely instituted society, organized for religious worship that ever existed before the coming of Christ. That God designed by the Mosaic dispensation, of which this congregation was the subject to give a clear demonstration of man’s depravity, may be inferred from the end which has actually been accomplished, and from such declarations of scripture as the following: “The law was added because of transgression until the seed should come. The law entered that the offence might abound.” Since unto God all his works from the beginning are known, he well knew the imperfections of the Mosaic covenant, even from the time of its institution, and what would be the result of the experiment. He found fault with it long before its abrogation; and so prepared it at first, that it typified and foretold a better covenant that should succeed it, established upon better promises.

The first account that the scriptures give of the congregation of the Lord, we find in the twelfth chapter of Exodus. When a new order of things was introduced; when the year received a new beginning, and became, as it has been called, the ecclesiastical year; when God *took his people by the hand*, to lead them out of the land of Egypt; (Heb. viii. 9.) when that code of laws for the regulation of religious worship, which the Apostle means by the first covenant throughout his epistle to the Hebrews, began to be promulgated; and the pass-over, as one of the ordinances of divine service pertaining to the first covenant was instituted; then, first, are the Israelites

recognised as a worshipping congregation. Before this, the word of the Lord had come to individuals, and individuals had performed religious rites; but now, the word is sent to a whole congregation, and that congregation, by divine appointment, perform a rite of divine worship simultaneously. Before this, the Israelites had indeed been distinguished from the rest of mankind; but, not by the characteristics of a worshipping society. That there were persons among them who worshipped God, in sincerity and truth, will not be disputed. But where were their public altars? Where was their sanctuary? Where were their public ministers of religion? Where were their appointed sacrifices? Where their statute book, the laws of their worship, the rules of their society, &c.? A worshipping society, without forms, and rites, and rules of worship, God never constituted.

The seed of Abraham were destined to be the subjects of special dispensations, throughout all their generations. This appears no less in their history since the Christian era, and before their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, than in the intermediate time. But, during all this intermediate time, they were the subjects of that peculiar, experimental, preparatory dispensation, which we have been considering. They were constituted, and continued to be the Lord's peculiar people, his only worshipping congregation, 1 Chr. xxviii. 8. Mic. ii. 5. But while the ordinances of their worship were wisely contrived to be types and prophecies of Christ, at the same time that they afforded to the world that experiment, which appears to have been so important a part of their design; in like manner, an instructive intimation of the future exclusion of the Jews from gospel privileges, and of the admission of the Gentiles, appears to have been given, in the characters of those members who composed this sacred congregation. The great body of its constituents were the descendants of Abraham; but provision was made in its charter, that Israelites should be excluded, and that Gentiles might be admitted. Deut. xxiii. 1. 8. Exod. xii. 43. 47. Nothing like this can be found in the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, as recorded in the 17th chapter of Genesis. This covenant received into its arms every circumcised son of Jacob, (in whom the seed was ultimately called,) without any exception; and thrust from its embrace every Gentile, without any distinction. It was, indeed, one of its stipulations

that every Israelite should have all the males of his house circumcised; but there is no intimation that they were all thereby incorporated among the covenant seed, or that they had more right to the territory granted in the covenant, than had Ishmael, or the sons of Keturah. Jacob's servants were circumcised; but they did not become heads of tribes in Israel; which they must have been, had circumcision endowed them with the privileges of the covenant seed.

When the end for which any society was instituted has been accomplished, it is natural to expect its dissolution. The experiment for which the congregation of the Lord had been organized, was completely made, when the Redeemer appeared, in the end of the world, "to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The first covenant established upon conditional promises, was proved, upon due trial, to be faulty, weak, and unprofitable; and the necessity of a better covenant, whose better promises should be all yea and amen in Christ Jesus was clearly demonstrated: "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." When, "There was a disannulling of the commandment going before," in which was contained the charter of the congregation of the Lord, the society was dissolved. Deprived of the character of a worshipping congregation, it lost its existence. The wall that had enclosed it from the rest of mankind, was broken down, when its ordinances were nailed to the cross of Christ. Eph. ii. 14. 15.

Dr. W. admits, p. 129, that a very great change took place when the people of God passed from the Mosaic to the Christian economy. Whether the change was the *extension* of a charter, the Apostle decides. "For there is verily, a *disannulling* of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. If the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." Heb. vii. 18., viii. 7., x. 9. Between the disannulling and the extending of a charter, the difference is too obvious to be overlooked. But Dr. W. thinks, that there ran through the Mosaic dispensation, and was contained in it, a spiritual and unchangeable covenant, the same as that made with Abraham. Respecting this covenant we shall next inquire.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT—THE SEED OF ABRAHAM.

What is said by the Apostle in the third chapter of Galatians, is relied on for proof, that the Abrahamic covenant was distinct from the Mosaic, and that it was spiritual and unchangeable, p. 34. But, the covenant of which the Apostle there speaks, is not the covenant of circumcision. It was made 430 years before the giving of the Law. By computing this period backward from the giving of the law, we arrive at the time when Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, twenty-four years before the covenant of circumcision. But I would not rely so much on this computation of years, were it not that the promise to which the Apostle refers in verse 8, was made to Abraham precisely at this time. “*Διαθήκη, appointment, plan, establishment, is sometimes a will, or testament; sometimes a promise; sometimes a precept; sometimes a compact; and sometimes an economy, or method of acting.*” p. 121, 122. The *διαθήκη, covenant*, referred to in Gal. iii., is a *promise*. It is expressly called so in v. 17. The promise intended, and which is cited in v. 8, having been originally made 24 years before the covenant of circumcision, is mentioned again a short time after the making of that covenant. “All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.” Gen. xviii. 18. During all this time, Isaac, in whom the seed was to be called, was in the loins of his father Abraham. Several years after the birth of Isaac, this promise was renewed and confirmed by an oath. Gen. xxii. 16, 18. It is not now made as before, *to Abraham*, but *to his seed*, because of the circumstance that Isaac had been born. “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” It was afterwards repeated to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 4, and to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 14. This is the great promise which Peter called, “The covenant which God made with our fathers.” Acts iii. 25. Because of the spiritual import of this promise, Paul calls it *the gospel*, Gal. iii. 8., a name which he no where gives, either to circumcision, or to the covenant of circumcision. The circumstance that this gospel promise was made before the giving of the law, and before circumcision, is insisted on by the Apostle in this chapter, and in Rom. iv., as proof that gospel blessings belong not to those who are of the law or of circumcision, but to those who are

of faith. That there were persons under the covenant of circumcision before the time of Moses, and under the law afterwards, who obtained the inheritance of Abraham, namely, that gospel blessing which was his chief wealth, is abundantly clear; but then they obtained this blessing not by the law, nor by circumcision, but by that faith which distinguished the Patriarch at the time he received the promise. It is on this ground the Apostle argues, that Gentiles without the law and without circumcision, may by faith, obtain the gospel blessing as Abraham did. Their connexion is not with the circumcised, but with the uncircumcised Abraham, and the line of that connexion runs down aside, both from the law and from the covenant of circumcision. That the gospel promise ran also through the covenant of circumcision and through the law is not denied, but it perpetuated neither. Both the covenant of circumcision and the giving of the law, may be regarded as proofs of God's favour as promised to Abraham on the ground of his faith, but their being added long after the original promise, proves that they are not essential to it, and the promise may be made good to all who believe as did Abraham, though they be not circumcised, and keep not the law.

As that covenant which consisted in *promise* made to the believing, uncircumcised Abraham, differed from the covenant of circumcision and the law; so there are two seeds of Abraham, differing from each other; the one, the children of promise, Gal. iii. 18. 29. iv. 28.; the other, they who are the children of the flesh, Rom. ix. 7, 8. The former are the spiritual, the latter, the literal seed. That circumcision and the law are to be coupled together, in contrast to faith and the promise, is clear from Rom. iv. 9. 14.

Many persons err greatly in their interpretation of the sacred volume, by overlooking the plain, simple meaning of its language, and searching for mystical allusions, or spiritual meaning, in almost every text they read. There may be others who err on the opposite extreme, by refusing to receive that instruction which the Holy Ghost intended to convey in figures and types. But the most absurd interpreters are those who unite the mystical or spiritual, with the literal, and determine, by the dictates of an uninspired judgment, or of a depraved will, how much is simple truth, and how much is figure.

The seed of Abraham, in the strictly literal sense, are doubtless, his descendants by ordinary generation. His im-

mediate offspring, were Isaac, Ishmael, and the six sons by Keturah, named in Gen. xxv. 2. These last are not said to be the *seed* of Abraham; yet, without doubt, they were his seed in the sense in which Ishmael is so termed, in chap. xxi. 13. By a sovereign act of God, the covenant which secured the literal Canaan to the literal seed of Abraham was established with Isaac, to the exclusion of Abraham's other sons; and with Jacob to the exclusion of Esau. Instructive intimations were hereby given, of which the Apostle has spoken, Rom. ix.

The all wise God, who instituted, for the congregation of the Lord, such ceremonies of worship, as would serve for types of things to come, in his providence, so regulated the events of ancient times, that much of the Old Testament history also was typical. We learn from Paul's epistle to the Galatians, that the history of Abraham, and his two sons was an allegory. Isaac was the representative of all the spiritual sons of God: Ishmael, of those who are under the bondage of the law, and have only a natural relation to the great Father of all. To be as Isaac was, is to be heir of the promise of future glory. Isaac's birth was out of the course, and above the powers of nature, and was effected by Divine power, in fulfilment of a promise going before. In like manner the spiritual Isaacs are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; and according to his purpose and grace, given in Christ Jesus, before the world began. The circumcision of Isaac, the persecution which he suffered, and his right, by virtue of a divine covenant, to the land of Canaan; serve to represent the regeneration of the spiritual seed, the persecutions they endure, and their right to eternal life, founded on the promise of God that cannot lie. In the literal sense, Abraham's seed was called in Isaac, and the inheritance was made exclusively his. In the allegorical, Abraham's seed are those, and those only, who are the children of promise as Isaac was: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. 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, these are not the children of God: but the children of promise are counted for the seed. He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. He is a Jew which

is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Can any doctrine be proved from scripture, if these texts do not prove that Abraham's seed may be interpreted both literally and allegorically; and that in the allegorical sense, none are his seed but real Christians? If any doubt can remain on this last point, let it be removed by this text: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be *sure to all the seed.*"

There are other instances in scripture, of such figurative language, as that by which regenerated persons are called the seed or children of Abraham. As Jabal was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle: as Jubal was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ; Gen. iv. 20, 21; as Satan is the father of all who do his works; John viii. 44. 1 John iii. 10; so Abraham is the father of all who walk in the steps of his faith, and are justified by the same righteousness, Rom. iv. 11, 12. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the work of Abraham." John viii. 39.

Either to the literal descendants of Abraham, or to the spiritual seed, who are characterized as possessing genuine faith, and having the sure promise of eternal life; every text of scripture, it is presumed, refers, in which mention is made of the seed of Abraham. Though commentators find some difficulty in fixing the sense of Gal. iii. 16, yet, they agree, that, either Christ personal, as a literal descendant of Abraham, is meant; or Christ mystical, as including the spiritual seed just mentioned.

That the covenant of circumcision, made with Abraham respected his literal descendants, the instrument itself, and the fulfilment of its stipulations to the natural seed clearly prove. Men's minds have been confused by interpreting this covenant partly literally, and partly allegorically; and, in the obscurity which has arisen from this confusion, inferences have been deduced, that a consistent interpretation will by no means warrant. Who will affirm that no part of the covenant is to be understood literally? Who will maintain that the nations which were to be made of Abraham, were to be spiritual nations? that the kings which were to come out of him, were spiritual kings? that the circumcision which was enjoined upon him, to be performed upon himself and his

household was the circumcision of the heart? and that the territory granted in the covenant was the heavenly Canaan? It is, by no means, necessary to deny that such an allegorical interpretation may be made out, as will be both scriptural and full of important instruction. But it may be affirmed, if some parts must be understood literally, that either the whole is susceptible of a literal interpretation, or it admits of no interpretation that is consistent with itself.

A particular examination of the several parts of this covenant would be tedious, and for the present purpose, unnecessary. It may be well, however, to observe, that the promise, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee," secured special divine protection and favour to the Hebrew nation, without a necessary implication of spiritual blessing, to the individuals comprising that nation. The promise that Abraham should be the father of many nations, has been thought incapable of a literal interpretation, and has been supposed to mean, that Abraham was constituted the head of the church, throughout all nations and generations. He who will take the pains to read, Gen. xxv. 16. will learn that twelve nations sprang from one of Abraham's sons; and, if he will bear in mind that Abraham had seven other sons, he will be constrained to acknowledge that Abraham was the father of many nations, in a sense as literal as that in which Ishmael was the father of twelve. The Apostle, it is true, in Rom. iv. 17. interprets this clause allegorically; but to deny the literal interpretation of the words, because they are susceptible of an allegorical, is as absurd, as to deny that Abraham's natural seed had the promise of the earthly Canaan, because his spiritual seed are the heirs of eternal glory.

In the literal sense, in which Abraham's seed are his natural descendants, no others are included. Whoever may enjoy divine favour, and inherit exceedingly great and precious promises; no provision was made in this covenant, for the extension of its grant beyond the seed of Abraham. By the precept contained in the covenant, the children of Israel, throughout their generations were required to circumcise all the males of their household: but it does not appear that the promises of the covenant were inherited by any but the real seed. Abraham's other sons, and Esau, and all the male servants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were circumcised in obedience to this precept; but the blessings of the covenant were not

thereby secured to them. Surely the servants of Jacob's sons were not more highly privileged than the servants of these patriarchs themselves. Nay, it is expressly said, that these servants were not his seed, "Every man-child in your generation, which is *not* of thy seed, must needs be circumcised." Gen. xvii. 12, 13. When the congregation of the Lord was instituted, proselytes were admitted to *its* privileges; but the covenant with Abraham was unchanged. The congregation of the Lord has long been dissolved, but the seed of Abraham still exist, and will hereafter be gathered to their own Messiah.

The spiritual sense includes all regenerate persons, and no others. Some have thought that church membership, or professed faith, rather than regeneration, or real faith constitutes a child of Abraham; but hypocritical professors and counterfeit faith cannot be meant, in such texts as these; "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." Others have carried the unscriptural thought further, and have included with professing believers, all their infant children. But in what sense are these the seed of Abraham? In the literal, or spiritual? Not in the spiritual, unless they possess faith; not in the literal, if they are of Gentile extraction. If to become a church member were to become a child of Abraham; then believers' baptism is the doctrine to which the correct interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant would lead. Gentiles cannot be the seed of Abraham but by faith.

What a work of confusion does it make to begin with the allegorical interpretation, and demonstrate that believers are Abraham's seed; and then, having substituted professed faith for real, to introduce a detached fragment of the literal interpretation, and so incorporate it with the allegorical, as to include with these professed believers, their natural offspring; taking care, by a rule of one's own fancy and contrivance, to limit this literal seed, to the immediate and infant descendants! By this mixture of interpretations, the immediate, infant, *literal* offspring of those who ought to be according to their profession, the *spiritual* children of Abraham, are reckoned for the seed: but they are a seed, who, alas! inherit neither the literal, nor the spiritual promises of the patriarch. Surely a faith and practice, dependant on such interpretations of scripture as this, have a poor claim to divine authority.

Dr. W. says, "the covenant of which circumcision was appointed to be the seal, was spiritual, gracious, and immutable." We have seen that it was both *literal* and *spiritual*. In both senses it was *gracious*. Whether it was immutable in the literal sense, and whether it was immutable in the spiritual sense, are distinct questions. That a covenant may have a spiritual meaning which remains imperishable, when as to its literal meaning, it has been disannulled, the epistle to the Hebrews clearly decides; for a large part of that epistle was written to prove, that the Mosaic covenant was done away, as to its literal meaning, but perpetuated, as to its spiritual. The covenant of royalty with David seems to be another of this kind. That the covenant of circumcision, in its spiritual meaning, is unchangeable, will not be denied. Let it be remembered, however, that in this meaning it requires the spiritual circumcision: not that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, nor any other outward ordinance, which may be supposed to be a substitute for it; but "the circumcision of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." Whether the covenant of circumcision in its literal import, has, like the Mosaic covenant, been disannulled, is a question on which I would not speak decisively. If the children of Abraham have now a divine warrant to expect the future possession of their ancient land; whether their reliance upon the promise of God involves in it an obligation to perpetuate circumcision among them, or whether they also may look beyond the covenant of circumcision to the previous grant made and secured by covenant to their uncircumcised progenitor, I am not prepared to say. The covenant with Abraham, did not like the Mosaic, provide for the admission of Gentiles; and since the death of Christ, for a Gentile to receive circumcision, is a tacit acknowledgment, that the congregation of the Lord still exists, that its sacrifices still are necessary, and that Christ has died in vain. But it is not so easy to decide, that an Israelite may not retain circumcision as a token of his relation to Abraham, and of his interest in the blessings which the covenant of circumcision, in its literal import, secured to Abraham and to his seed in their generations; See Acts xxi. 21, 25.; but this appears clear, that a Jew, who felt himself obliged to perpetuate the token of the Abrahamic covenant, in hope that his children would in future, possess the land of

Canaan, would have no authority to substitute baptism for circumcision, and it appears equally clear, that the child of a Gentile cannot be incorporated by baptism among the seed of Abraham.

THE NEW, OR CHRISTIAN COVENANT—THE CHURCH.

“Now indeed was formed,” says Dr. Campbell, “a community of the disciples of Jesus, which was called his church, a word that signifies no more than society or assembly, and is sometimes used in the New Testament with evident analogy to the common use, to signify the whole community of Christians considered as one body, of whom Christ is the head, and sometimes only a particular congregation of Christians.” *Ecc. Hist. Lec. 2.* He insists, that more than these two applications of the term did not prevail in the primitive times, *Lec. 6. 8. 10.*, and, that the application of the term in the singular number to several congregations, or to rulers, or judicatories, as constituting the church representative, is a corruption in the use of the term.

Whether the term church, in its Catholic sense, includes any but *real Christians*, is an important question. An unbaptized believer appears to belong to the church which Christ loved and gave himself for; Eph. v. 26.; the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood; Acts xx. 28.; the church of the first born, who are written in heaven; Heb. xii. 23.; the church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail; Matt. xvi. 18.; the church which is the body of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 27, 28., with Eph. iv. 11, 12, 15, 16.; —i. 22, 23.;—v. 23, 29, 30.; and Col. i. 18, 24;—ii. 19.—but that a baptized unbeliever is a member of this church, I have never been able to discover. It was predicted of the persons whom the new covenant embraces, that they should all know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, and although, in allusion to the first covenant, they are styled Israel and Judah, they are persons who have the law in *their hearts and written on their minds.*

Although none but the Infinitely Wise can infallibly determine, who belong to the new covenant, yet, such a description of their character is given in the inspired word, as enables them, in general, to know each other, and such rules of

intercourse are prescribed, as tend to their spiritual intercourse, and the spread of true religion. Among these regulations there is one which establishes organized worshipping congregations, consisting of persons, who in the judgment of charity, are regarded by each other as belonging to the new covenant. Each of these congregations is denominated a church in the second scriptural use of the term.

Baptism, the Lord's supper, the church Catholic, and churches congregational, all belong to the new covenant. Concerning baptism, Dr. W. says, "When this Christian rite is applied to believers, it is a seal of the new dispensation towards them," p. 136, 137: Concerning the supper, p. 124, "This cup of wine represents my blood, by which the new dispensation, or the Christian covenant is confirmed." That the church catholic, or "the sanctified," belong to the new covenant, is plain from Heb. x. 14. 16. That congregational churches belong to the new covenant, or the new order of things established by Christ in the Gospel, I presume, none will dispute. It is evident that neither the Abrahamic, nor the Mosaic covenant, instituted such distinct worshipping assemblies.

Should any one urge, that there is a third sense of the term church, in which it means the great body of professors of the true religion, the visible church catholic; I would ask where is this body, and what constitutes it a whole? Has it a visible head? If it is an organized whole, what are its general organs? If it has a visible union, what is that union? If it has visible dimensions, what are their boundaries? Does it include Catholics, Universalists, Socinians, &c.? Does it include, or exclude, Quakers? If it requires omniscience to perceive its boundaries, and the connexion of its parts, why is it called a visible whole? But suppose there does exist a visible church catholic, when was it organized? The congregation of the Lord, as instituted by the Mosaic covenant, was dissolved when its charter expired, and a worshipping congregation was not instituted by the Abrahamic covenant.

The most plausible argument that I have met with in favour of the opinion, that there exists the same church organization, in the present as in the former dispensation, may be thus stated: *The writers of the New Testament used words in the sense in which they had been accustomed to read them in the scriptures of the Old Testament. The word εκκλησια, church, was not a new word, since it is the very word by which the LXX*

have rendered the Hebrew *קהל* congregation. That must have been meant and understood by this word which had been usually meant and understood. Therefore the New Testament church and the Old Testament congregation are the same thing. In reply to this argument, I would suggest the following considerations: 1. The identity of organized societies is not proved by the similarity, or even the perfect coincidence of their names. The names Assembly, Convention, Association, &c. are applied to bodies, which differ from each other. It is always unsafe to infer from the mere name of a society the principles of its organization. 2. There are two Hebrew words *קהל* and *עדה* which are used for the congregation of Israel; but *εκκλησια* is, by no means, the uniform rendering of either. They both occur in Exodus xii. 6. (the very chapter in which the *congregation* first appears,) where the LXX. render neither of them *εκκλησια*; but the former is rendered by *πληθος*, and the latter by *συναγωγη*. In Num. xvi. 3. both are rendered *συναγωγη*. 3. Because the Hebrew term for congregation is sometimes rendered by the LXX. *πληθος* or *συναγωγη*, it by no means follows that the New Testament writers, whenever they have used these terms, meant by them the congregation of the Lord. As the *συναγωγη* *synagogue* of the New Testament, differed from the *συναγωγη* *congregation* of the Septuagint, so the *εκκλησια* *church* of the one, differed from the *εκκλησια* *congregation* of the other. 4. The Israelites are often spoken of collectively in the New Testament: but, (with one exception which shall be noticed hereafter,) in no place whatever are they designated by the term *εκκλησια*. The house of Israel, the commonwealth of Israel, the seed of Abraham, &c. they were; but would we know that they were the *church*, the *church of God*, we shall search the sacred volume in vain for the information.

The exception alluded to above is Acts vii. 38. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness." On this passage Dr. Doddridge has the following note: "I follow Beza, Heinsius; and the Prussian translators, in rendering *εκκλησια* *assembly*, as our translators do, Acts xix. ult. because I am persuaded it refers not in the general to their being incorporated into one church in the appropriate sense of that word, but their being assembled round the mountain on the solemn day when the law was given. Ex. xix. 17. et seq." Dr. Doddridge's opinion is greatly confirmed by the manifest re-

ference in these words of Stephen to Deut. xviii. The 37th verse is a quotation from the 15th of that chapter; and the 38th, the verse in question, refers to the same event, which is alluded to in the 16th of that chapter, in which the very word *εκκλησια* is also found in the translation of the LXX., but in such a connexion as forbids its being taken in the *appropriate* sense. Who would think of rendering *τη ημερα της εκκλησιας*, (which are the words of the LXX., Deut. xviii. 16.) *in the day of the church*.

The use of the term in the New Testament, instead of favouring the opinion for which the preceding argument is urged, discountenances it. If I mistake not, it may be shown that in the sense in which this term was appropriated, to an organized religious body, it was totally incapable of being applied to the nation of Israel.

In Matt. xviii. 17., we have this direction of the Redeemer, “And if he neglect to hear them, tell it to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican.” Now if the term *εκκλησια* in its scriptural use, could possibly have meant the Jewish people, as an organized religious body, it was the meaning of Christ here. If it could possibly have been so understood by the disciples, they must have understood it so here. As yet, the hand writing of ordinances was not nailed to the cross; the middle wall of partition was not broken down, and the regularly organized New Testament churches did not exist to hear complaints, and to administer censures. The Master of the house was present; and they of the household needed not, and possessed not, such authority. There were fit materials for gospel churches, but they were not yet put together. Of what then did the Saviour speak, when he said, “tell it to the church?” Did he speak by way of anticipation? It is natural enough, on the supposition that no churches then existed, to understand the master of the house, as giving directions to his household, while he was yet with them, by which their conduct should be regulated after he had left them. But this interpretation ceases to be possible, the moment we suppose a church was then in existence, of which he might be understood to speak. No one, who means to be understood, ever uses, without explanation, the name of a thing that is now existing, and at hand, and known to his hearers, if he intends a thing that does not now exist, that his hearers never knew,

and that never did exist. What follows? Did the Lord Jesus direct his disciples to lay their grievances before the Jews, their most rancorous enemies; to abide by the decision, and to regulate their feelings and conduct by the judgment of persons who cast the disciples out of the synagogues, and nailed their Master to the cross? Impossible!—Yet, all this follows, if the term *εκκλησια* could possibly be used to signify the house of Israel.

Having thus, my dear brother, made it appear as I conceive, that the Mosaic covenant is disannulled, and the congregation of the Lord dissolved;—that the covenant of circumcision in its literal import respected the literal seed of Abraham, and that in the spiritual seed of Abraham none but believers are included;—and that the church of Christ is founded upon neither of these covenants, but belongs with the ordinances of Baptism and the Supper, to a new covenant distinct from both of the former—I shall here close this epistle.

Yours affectionately,

JOHN.



LETTER IV.

My Dear Brother—In my last letter I gave you my views of the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, and the Christian covenants: I propose in the present to inquire into the conclusiveness of that reasoning from one dispensation to another, by which, Infant Baptism is inferred from Infant Circumcision.

ARGUING FROM ONE DISPENSATION TO ANOTHER.

I have expressed my opinion, that the use of inference ought to be admitted, even with respect to positive institutes. It should be remembered, however, that inferences differ in their degree of clearness, and directness, and that those which are obscure and remote, have inferior claims to our consideration. Whether that kind of inference which consists in arguing from one dispensation to another, is admissible, with respect to positive institutes, is an important question.

To illustrate the principle laid down, that different kinds of inference are admissible in different degrees, it may be proper to enumerate a few, which have unequal claims, in this respect. 1. There are inferences purely philological, or which are used merely to ascertain the meaning of words and phrases. These are to be admitted freely in every part of the scriptures. No man in his senses, one might presume, will ever deny their use. It is by this kind of inference, that we determine whether the word *πορευομαι*, in the commission, means *go*, or *stay*; whether *μαθητευω* means *teach* or *disciple*; and, whether *βαπτισω* means *immerse* or *sprinkle*; and, whether the word *ανθρωπος*, 1 Cor. xi. 23. means a *male*, or a *human being* without regard to sex. A command is not the less positive, because this kind of inference is used to explain it. 2. There are inferences concerning necessarily implied duties. From the command, "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," may be inferred the duty of appointing times and places of religious meeting. 3. There are inferences concerning correlative duties. From the command given to ministers to baptize may be inferred the duty of converts to be baptized. 4. There are inferences concerning analogous duties. We may infer the duty of obeying instructors or masters, from the command honour thy father and thy mother.

In that kind of inference, which consists in arguing from one dispensation to another, there is considerable variety according to the nature of the subjects to which it is applied. 1. Moral duties under one dispensation may be freely inferred from moral duties under another: because the great duties of morality are independent of the peculiarities of any dispensation. Thus the Apostle argues from the precepts of the decalogue, that christians are under obligations to love their neighbours. Rom. xiii. 8. 10. 2. Moral duties in one dispensation, may be argued from positive institutes of another. Thus the Apostle argues the duty of supporting the ministers of the Gospel, from the precept of Moses, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. 1 Cor. ix. 1. 10. In like manner, moral truths may be argued from positive institutes, as in the epistle to the Hebrews, the spiritual things of the gospel are argued from the typical things of the law. 3. Whether a positive institute of one dispensation may in any case be inferred from a positive institute

of another, I cannot tell. I do not know, that there is in the scripture, any example of this kind of inference. I would much rather grant to an opponent the privilege of using it, than claim it for myself. Mr. Scott says; "John's baptism and Christian baptism were not exactly the same: and inferences from the one respecting the other, are inconclusive." Note on Matt. iii. 5, 6.

Whoever ventures to argue a positive institute of one dispensation, from a positive institute of another, ought at least to look well to it, that he has a *clear view* of those dispensations. Dr. W.'s views of the covenants, (I speak with deference,) do not seem to me to be clear. He says, p. 35. "the covenant, of which circumcision was appointed to be the seal, was spiritual, gracious, and immutable." Among other meanings, which he gives of the word covenant, he says, p. 122. that it means an *economy*: and he gives the same explanation, p. 124. where also, he uses the term *dispensation*. In p. 131. he says, "no reason against Infant Baptism can arise from the difference between the Christian and the Abrahamic *economy*;" and concerning the change, from one dispensation to the other, he says, "this change is admitted to be great and extensive." Now how is it, that a covenant is an economy, and yet, the Abrahamic covenant is unchangeable, and the Abrahamic economy has changed greatly and extensively; yea, so greatly and extensively, as to cease, and give place to another economy? I doubt not, but Dr. W. has some method of reconciling this apparent inconsistency, but he could scarcely have been betrayed into such apparent contradiction in his language, if in his thoughts there had been no obscurity. I have before noticed his appearing to have given up a main argument, respecting the application of the commission. Is it not remarkable that a controvertist of such ability should even *seem* to abandon the very strongest positions that he has assumed?

It is, I think, a further proof of darkness in Dr. W.'s view of the covenants, that a reader of the Lectures finds it so very difficult to perceive, what it was in the Abrahamic covenant, which being established by that covenant, is immutable, and which, in the midst of great and extensive changes has continued the same through the Christian dispensation. I have bestowed some labour in order to discover what that thing is, but have been able to find out nothing whatever, but the very

thing now in dispute; viz. that *the natural relation between parents and children*, then was, and now is, *marked by a religious rite*, p. 31. "The divine economy, though circumstantially different, is the same in substance now, as before the coming of Christ, the same most evidently, so FAR as relates to the connexion between parents and children, and the high interest which that connexion involves," p. 136. Neither the relation between parents and children, nor the moral obligations growing out of that relation originated in the Abrahamic covenant. 'The connexion between parents and children in the rite of circumcision did originate there, and, if that connexion between them is perpetuated in the rite of baptism, it is all, so far as I can see, that now exists, for which we are indebted to that covenant. We have, therefore, the whole *immutability* of the Abrahamic covenant reduced to the very point in dispute. Nay, even this point itself has not remained without change, for neither is the relation that is marked, the same, nor the religious rite by which it is marked, the same, nor the time and circumstances of applying the mark, the same. Where then is the *immutable* covenant? And, moreover, why is it called *spiritual*? To mark with an *external* mark, a connexion founded upon a *natural relation*, one would think, ought to be called a *natural* covenant, rather than a *spiritual*. It appears a like solecism, to say that children by *nature* have a right to the *kingdom of grace*: compare p. 59 and 66. The new covenant recognises no privileges founded on natural relations. It knows no man after the flesh.

Whoever ventures to argue a positive institute of one dispensation, from a positive institute of another, should also see to it, that his inference be *fairly drawn*. Because the relation between father and child was once marked by a religious rite, Dr. W. infers, that it ought still to be so, and that because this relation is founded in nature, the obligation to mark it by a religious rite must continue through every change of dispensation. But Abraham's remote descendants, as well as his immediate offspring, had their relation to him marked by circumcision, and the relation of an ancestor, to grandchildren, and great grandchildren, is as truly founded in nature, as his relation to his children. This argument, therefore, if it proves any thing, will prove that baptism ought to be perpetuated in the family of the believer to the remotest

generations, not by a right dependent on the moral character of intermediate parents, but by virtue of their natural relation to that ancestor, who first professed Christ.

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.

When the principle of inferring a positive institute of one dispensation from a positive institute of another is admitted, its application to the present case consists in inferring Infant Baptism from Infant Circumcision. To justify this inference, it is pleaded, that baptism comes in the place of circumcision. p. 118.

When it is said that baptism comes in the place of circumcision, it is meant, either that it occupies the same place in the same covenant, or the corresponding place in a similar covenant. If baptism comes in the place of circumcision in the former sense, it is an exact substitute and ought to be applied to the same subjects: if in the latter sense it is not an exact substitute; and, whether it ought to be applied to the same subjects or not, will depend upon the extent of agreement between the two covenants, if inference from one covenant to the other in such a case is admissible. Though it should be made to appear, that there is a general similarity between the Abrahamic and the Christian covenant; yet, a general similarity between them as wholes, by no means implies a perfect agreement between particular parts: and those parts which respect the relation of children to baptism and circumcision may be supposed to differ, until it be shown to be otherwise.

If baptism is an exact substitute for circumcision considered as the token of the Abrahamic covenant, then it should be administered to those persons, who were in that covenant required to be circumcised, namely, the literal male descendants of Abraham, at the age of eight days, in all their generations, together with all their servants born in their houses, or bought with their money. If baptism is an exact substitute for circumcision, considered as a prerequisite for the admission of Gentiles into the congregation of the Lord, then it should be administered to all the children and servants of every proselyte, and the congregation of the Lord should be allowed still to exist, with its wall of partition, its worn out covenant, and hand writing of ordinances; and we should

tremble at the language of Paul; "behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be *baptized*, Christ shall profit you nothing."

That baptism does not come in the room of circumcision, in any sense, which justifies arguments from one to the other to ascertain the proper subjects of either, may be inferred from the discussions at Jerusalem, recorded, Acts xv. respecting the obligation of Gentiles to be circumcised. Dr. Woods says, p. 102. "The unbelieving Jews, and even some, who professed to believe, were ready enough on all occasions, to complain of innovation, and of every thing in Christianity, which implied the giving up of what belonged to the Jewish religion. How earnestly did they object to giving up circumcision, although baptism was introduced as a mark of discipleship." How readily did it strike the mind of Dr. W. that the substitution of baptism for circumcision was a weighty argument for the disuse of the latter. Had he lived in the time of the Apostles and been a member of the council at Jerusalem, I am constrained to believe, that this would have been his main argument. Why did not the Apostles think of this argument? I can assign no reason for it, unless it be, that they did not think on this subject as he does.

Dr. W. does not contend for an exact substitution of baptism for circumcision. He only argues from one dispensation to the other, and maintains, that "there is a *general agreement* between these rites as to the object sought, or the end to be answered, how different soever they may be in other respects." This substitution is that of correspondence. Baptism, in the new dispensation, is supposed to occupy the place corresponding to that, which circumcision occupied in the old. Now until it be shown that these parts of the two different dispensations, not only correspond, but also exactly agree, the argument that deduces infant baptism from infant circumcision will be inconclusive. The necessity of this exact agreement, in order to justify such an inference, Dr. W. seems to admit when he says: the economies are "the *same, so far* as relates to the connexion between parents and children." That there is not a perfect agreement between these parts of the two different dispensations the following consideration, among many that might be adduced, sufficiently shows. Baptism, so far as we can learn from the Christian dispensation, was a personal duty. Circumcision in the

Abrahamic dispensation, was a parental duty, and became a personal duty only by an exception from the general rule.

To illustrate the nature of that substitution for which he contends, Dr. W. adduces instances, that he deems similar: namely, the substitution of Christian meeting houses for Jewish synagogues; of the Christian ministry for the Levitical priesthood, &c. p. 117, 118. From these instances I will select the one last quoted, and show from it the inconclusiveness of his reasoning. Between the Christian ministry and the ancient priesthood there is a general agreement. So great is this similarity in their office, as leaders in the divine worship, and instructors of the people, that the very name priest, is of easy application to a Christian minister. Let us now argue from one dispensation to the other. In the ancient priesthood there was a connexion between the parent and his children, so that "the infant children of the priests, were infant members of the priesthood." p. 145. Now as the Christian ministry comes in the place of the Levitical priesthood, as the connexion between parents and children is founded on a natural relation, which is not affected by the change of dispensation, and as a subsequent charter is not to be interpreted so as to abridge the privileges of the previous grant; beyond doubt, the infant children of a Christian minister are infant members of the Christian ministry. Will Dr. W. admit this consequence? Yet, it must be admitted, or his argument for infant baptism must be given up.

The inconclusiveness of the argument may be illustrated by an instance of a less sacred kind. A presidential inauguration is a substitute for a kingly coronation. Suppose the son of the chief magistrate of the United States, should publish the following address to his fellow citizens:—"My countrymen—The relation between parents and children, is one on which depend some of the dearest privileges and most valuable blessings that we enjoy. It is a relation which has not only been consecrated by the warmest affections of the human heart; but has been recognised in the laws and usages of the British realm, even from ancient times. Our happy revolution has, indeed, changed our circumstances in many respects, but it has not diminished the venerableness of this relation, nor abridged the privileges which it conveys. Under the British constitution, when the king ceases to reign, the

“ceremony of coronation is performed upon the son. Now, as our constitution is formed upon the model of the British constitution, and retains much of its spirit, under some modifications, as to outward form, and as a presidential inauguration comes in the room of kingly coronation, I must insist, that when my father’s term of service shall have expired, you will allow me the privilege and honour of the ceremony of inauguration just as they were enjoyed by my father. The fact that the king’s authority ends only with his life, and that the president’s authority ends with his appointed number of years, is a mere accidental circumstance, not at all affecting the relation between parents and children.” If he should here close his address, do you think, he would receive the honour, or the ridicule of his countrymen. Perhaps some might say, in compassion to his weakness, “If the ceremony will do him any good, let him have it; we know that mere ceremony will not constitute him president:” just as some Baptists would say, “If the sprinkling of children will do either them or their parents any good, let them be sprinkled.” But, if the claimant of presidential inauguration, should proceed in his address after this manner: “I must moreover insist, my countrymen, that you will never repeat the ceremony of inauguration, so as to invalidate that which shall have been performed upon myself. Such a repetition would be a political sacrilege, as execrable as the sin of anabaptism. It is true, our constitution speaks of the election of a president and prescribes the mode, but this is only to be understood of those cases in which an election is necessary, but no election is necessary so long as I shall live, having upon me the mark of official inauguration, as certain a seal of authority as the wearing of the crown, under the old constitution.” If he should thus proceed, think you, that it would be the ridicule or the indignation of his countrymen that would burst upon him? Would they not say, “How will this man swear to maintain the constitution of his country, when his very claim is at war with the plain language of that constitution?”—But I forbear to make the application. Though our brethren when they perform their baptism, which they consider to be a *sacrament*, or oath of allegiance to the new covenant, offer violence to the very terms of that sacred instrument: yet, it is not ours to

vent upon them either ridicule or indignation. It befits us, rather to confess our own sins; and, to pity our erring brethren, love them, and pray for them. That we may ever have grace to do so, is the desire of your brother,

JOHN.



LETTER V.

Dear Brother—There are two more topics in Dr. Woods' Lectures, on which I am inclined to offer a few remarks. The first is his argument from *Ecclesiastical History*; and the second, his observations on the mode of baptism.

TESTIMONY OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

In reference to Ecclesiastical History, Dr. W. informs us, that his intention is, to give citations enough to show the nature of the argument, referring to Wall, &c. for further information—p. 106. We may take for granted, I presume, that in the selection which he has made, he has summoned those witnesses, whose testimony he supposed was the most favourable to his own cause. I will not complain of this, but shall take the liberty to cross-examine these witnesses for a few moments, and to weigh carefully the import of their depositions.

The first citation is from *Justin Martyr*, who says, “There were many of both sexes, who were made disciples to Christ from their infancy.” “The word he uses is *εμαδητευθησαν*; the very word used by Christ in the commission. The persons referred to, Justin says, were made disciples to Christ, *εκ παιδων* from their *early childhood*. The word is applied to those little children whom Christ took in his arms and blessed.”—p. 106.

This last remark must, I presume, have been an oversight. The word used by the Evangelists for the children, which Jesus took up in his arms and blessed, is *παιδιον*: Mark x. 15. Mat. xix. 13, 14, and Luke xviii. 16: whereas *παιδων*, the word used by Justin is the genitive plural not of this

word, but of *παις*. Every Greek scholar knows, that there is a difference between these two words, the former being a diminutive of the latter; and although some diminutives are used merely to denote affection, this is not the case with *παιδιον*. "Some diminutives," says Dr. Campbell, "are intended to mark a distinction only in age or in size, as *δυγατριον, παιδιον, παιδαριον*. *Τεκνιον* appears, on the contrary, more expressive of affection than of size." Prelim. Diss. 12. p. 1. § 19. He makes a similar remark in his notes on John xiii. 33; "Diminutives answer a double purpose; they express either the *littleness* or *fewness* in respect of size or number of that to which they are applied, or the affection of the speaker. In Greek, when the first is only, or chiefly intended, the word answering to little children is *παιδια*, or *παιδαρια*, not *τεκνια*." Had Justin written *εκ παιδιων*, instead of *εκ παιδων*, still the argument of Dr. W. would not have been conclusive, that Justin meant mere infants, for even the diminutive *παιδιον* is used for a child twelve years old; Mark v. 39, 40, 42. The ancient Greeks and Romans used their terms which correspond to our *infant* and *child* with great latitude of meaning. Hence we read in history of infants, who contended for crowns and governed empires. Even the Greek word *νηπιος* which corresponds precisely to the Latin *infans*, and which, Parkhurst says, signifies "Properly, *an infant, a child not yet able to speak plain*," is used by the Apostle Paul for a minor, or one under age, Gal. iv. 1, 3; "whom," says Parkhurst, "our law likewise calls *an infant*." That the word *παις*, which Justin uses, does not of itself signify an infant, may be inferred from what Parkhurst further observes in the word *νηπιος*: "It is used by Homer as an adjective in the expressions *νηπιος υιος, νηπιος παις, an infant son: νηπιος παις* occurs also in the prose writers." If *παις* of itself denoted an infant there would be no necessity to join the word *νηπιος* with it. The meaning of the word *παις*, Parkhurst thus gives: "1. A *child*, whether a *young child*, an *infant*, as Mat. ii. 16: or a *child more advanced*, a boy or girl, Mat. xxi. 15. Luke ii. 43, viii. 31, 54. Acts xx. 12. Comp. v. 9. 2. A *child* in respect to his father without regard to age, a *son*, Acts iii. 13, 26. iv. 27, 30. Comp. Luke i. 54. 3. A *servant, attendant*, Mat. viii. 6." Let it be particularly observed that *παις*, in one instance denotes the young man Eutychus, who fell down from the third loft, while

Paul was preaching. In Robinson's Lexicon, published at the Seminary where Dr. W. teaches, we have the following given for the sense of *παις*: "A child, a boy, youth; a girl, maiden. It is spoken of all ages from infancy up to MANHOOD. Compare Mat. ii. 16, with Acts xx. 12. Coll. v. 9." The instance referred to by both these lexicographers in which this term is used for *an infant* is Mat. ii. 16. On this verse Dr. Campbell has a remarkable note: "The historian seems here purposely to have changed the term *παιδιον* which is used for *child*, no less than nine times in this chapter; as that word being neuter, and admitting only the neuter article, was not fit for marking the distinction of sexes; and to have adopted a term, which he no where else employs for infants, though frequently for men-servants, and once for youths or boys." It therefore appears, 1. That the term used by Justin Martyr, is not, as Dr. W. has stated,* the same which the evangelists used for the children that Christ took up in his arms and blessed. All the three Evangelists who mention these children use *παιδιον*; but not one of them *παις*. 2. Had Justin used the diminutive *παιδιον*, even that might mean, on the authority of the same evangelist, Mark, children twelve years old. 3. The word which Justin uses is spoken of any age up to manhood, and does not of itself denote infancy, but requires an adjective to be prefixed in order to confine it to this sense. So far from denoting infancy necessarily, it was used for infants only when the writer, by a peculiar circumstance, was limited in his choice of terms. Let these things be well considered, and further, that Justin was under no necessity to employ this term to denote infants or persons of a very tender age, since

* The word *παιδων*, quoted in Dr. W's book, is not a typographical error for *παιδιων*, as one is led by this statement to suspect; but is really the word used by Justin—*The London edition of his Works*, A. D. 1722, page 22, line 18. The Latin translation given in this edition, is "qui a pueris disciplinam Christi sunt assectati:" which literally rendered into English is, *who, FROM BOYS have attended upon the instruction of Christ.* The translations of Dr. W. 'from their *infancy*,'—'from their *early childhood*,' cannot be justified. Would he translate *παιδας infants*, where it first occurs in Justin, "Γυναικας μοιχευσαν, και παιδας διαφθειραν," p. 10?

ἄνευ, or ἠνωπιος, or even παιδιον, would have suited this purpose much better. I say, let these things be considered, and then let any candid man decide whether Justin Martyr gives testimony in favour of infant baptism. Persons even under the age of twelve have been baptized, upon a satisfactory profession of faith, in our days as well as in the days of Justin. Such pædobaptism we do not oppose.

The next witness is *Irenæus*. “Christ,” says this Father, “came to save all persons who by him are born again unto God, infants, and little ones, and children, and youth, and elder persons.” This testimony is claimed in favour of Pædobaptism, because we are told “Being born again,” in the writings of *Irenæus*, and his cotemporaries, means being baptized. Suppose that they did use the phrase sometimes in this sense, does it follow that they had no other idea of being born again? If so, surely they were miserable theologians. Besides, we might ask this venerable witness, whether any persons in his day, after they had been baptized, ever relapsed into their former habits of sin; and died in a state of apostasy; and if so, whether their baptism saved them in such a case? For that construction of this testimony, which is made to favour infant baptism, requires that it be so understood; for *Irenæus* says expressly, that Christ came to save all who are born again, &c. But if by “being born again,” he meant a change of heart, we have good sense, and correct doctrine, without any force being on the words of this witness. Again, can we suppose that *Irenæus* excluded all persons from salvation who had not been baptized with water?

Tertullian is brought forward as the next evidence in the case. Our author informs us, that this witness entertained some singular notions on the subject of baptism. To me, however, it appears plain, that in all which *Tertullian* says in reference to this matter, he has regard to minors and catechumens; and that there is not the most distant allusion to mere infants. The persons of whom he speaks could ask for baptism; for the advocates of their baptism urged in favour of the practice the words of Christ, *Give to him that asketh*: but *Tertullian* did not think that this was sufficient ground for baptizing them. “Let them come and learn, says he, and when they understand Christianity, let them profess themselves Christians.” This is a fine Baptist sentiment. Now it is evident from all this, that these young persons

had not been baptized in infancy; since they ask for baptism, and both Tertullian, and those whom he opposes, are willing to grant it to them. The only question being, whether it shall be administered now, or deferred until they have acquired a knowledge of Christianity. There is no ground, then, for the assertion, "That infant baptism was a common thing in those days."

"Origen," we are told, "is very explicit," If so, it is a rare thing. He has been called "an everlasting allegorizer." But it seems he could, nevertheless, be explicit for once. Our author does not inform us, whether he quotes from the genuine Greek fragments of Origen, or from Ruffinus' pretended translation of Origen's works. If from the former, we refer him back to Dr. Wall, who has shown that Origen meant babes in Christ, such as Peter speaks of, who "desire the sincere milk of the word," &c. If he quotes from Ruffinus, (and we may take it for granted he does so, seeing he gives it to us in Latin; *etiam parvulis dare baptismum*;) then, instead of its being of great weight, as he affirms, it is in fact of no weight at all; for it is well known that Ruffinus, in pretending to translate the works of Origen, interpolated and altered just where he pleased.

The agitation of the question in the famous Council, in the time of *Cyprian*, "whether children should be baptized on the second day after their birth, or whether it should be deferred till the eighth day," shows clearly, that the good Bishops found no directions in their Bibles on the subject. We acknowledge however, that infant baptism, (not sprinkling) began to be considerably current in Africa about this time, but it was many years after this, before it was patronized any where else. Many pernicious errors however, had been propagated long before the time of *Cyprian*.

Augustine who was born near the middle of the fourth century says, "The whole Church practice infant baptism. It was not instituted by councils but was always in use." He adds "That he does not remember to have heard of any persons, whether Catholic or Heretic, who maintained that baptism is to be denied to infants." This testimony might be disposed of lawfully, by the single remark, that it is by far too late to be of any importance. I have some curiosity however, to examine the paw of this dead lion. Either then, the above words are an interpolation, or *Augustine* con-

tradicts himself. "The whole Church," he says, "practice infant baptism." "Was he himself then baptized in infancy? Was Ambrose, who baptized him, baptized in infancy? Was his own natural son baptized in infancy? Was his Father Patricius baptized when an infant?" See Robinson's History of baptism, Benedict's ed. p. 202 & seq. "The parents of St. Austin," says Bishop Taylor, "and St. Hierom and St. Ambrose, though they were Christians, yet did not baptize their children till they were over 30 years of age; and St. Chrysostom, who was instituted and brought up in religion by the famous and beloved Bishop Meletius, who was yet not baptized until after he was twenty years of age; and Gregory of Nazianzum, though he was the son of a Bishop, yet he was not christened till he came to man's age." Again, Augustine says, that he "never heard of any one who maintained that baptism is to be denied to infants." "Had he, who pretended that he had been a Manichean, never heard that they did not baptize infants? Had all other heretics escaped his notice? Had he forgot himself when he taxed the Pelagians with denying infant baptism; and when he complained in another book of people who denied it?"

I cannot admit the testimony which is said to come from *Pelagius*. If the half that has been reported of him is true, his testimony, even if we had it directly from himself, is inadmissible. Besides he, like Augustine, is entirely too modern. We admit that in their day infant baptism prevailed; but this is nothing to the purpose of making it a divine institution.

It must be noticed that we have no writings of Pelagius extant, at least under his name, only some passages quoted by his adversaries, by which we can judge what were his sentiments about infant baptism. Moreover Augustine affirms that the Pelagians themselves did deny baptism to some infants, namely, to the infants of believers, and for this reason because they were holy, and that Pelagius' denial of this was a shift to which he resorted in his argument. This fact should lead us to suspect that there must be some mistake about the testimony of Pelagius. Dr. Gill in a Tract written in reply to the Dissenting Gentleman, has shown that Pelagius did not mean what Dr. W. says he declared, viz. "*that he never heard of any one, even the most impious heretic, who asserted that infants are not to be baptized.*" His words are "that he never heard, no not any impious heretic, that would say con-

cerning infants, what he proposed or mentioned." The phrase *what he proposed or mentioned*, Dr. G. shows does not mean *that infants are not to be baptized*.

In the Tract of Dr. Gill, alluded to above, various other rites, as well as infant baptism are shown to have the same authority for antiquity and Apostolic origin. Augustine affirms infant communion to be an Apostolic tradition. We have an instance of infant communion explicitly stated in the time of Cyprian: and there is no explicit mention of an instance of infant baptism so ancient. The sign of the cross in baptism, the form of renouncing the Devil and all his works, exorcisms, and exsufflations, trine immersions, the consecration of the water, anointing with oil, the giving of milk and honey were maintained by Augustine and others as rites to be used in baptism on the authority of ancient and Apostolic tradition. Baptism *with sponsors* was in use in the time of Tertullian, for he dissuaded from the baptism of very young persons on the ground that it was dangerous to their sponsors.

"Thus," says Dr. W. p. 109, "it appears that we have evidence as abundant, and specific, and certain, as history affords of almost any fact, that infant baptism universally prevailed from the days of the Apostles through four centuries." Whether this confident and triumphant assertion be correct, let the facts which I have adduced above determine. I cannot but regret that the Dr. should have suffered himself to pen the above sentence. I regret that he should have said any thing which may occasion the slightest suspicion of his candour, but this declaration, is made in direct contradiction to the most learned, pious, and candid writers of his own sentiments.

Dr. Doddridge has examined the very witnesses, which Dr. W. has brought forward, except the last two and thus reports their testimony. "*Justin Martyr* speaks of some, 'who had been made disciples from their infancy:' but this may only refer to their having been early instructed in the principles of the Christian religion."

"*Irenæus*" it is argued, "mentions *infants* among the *regenerate i. e.* the baptized, as the word generally signifies in his writings. ANSWER. We have only a *Latin* translation of this work, and some critics have supposed this passage spurious, or allowing it to be genuine, it will not be granted, that

to be regenerate always in his writings signifies *baptized*, nor is it certain, how far the fathers extended the period of infancy: but this last answer, (*he does not say so of the former,*) can be of no avail, as he distinguishes infants from *parvuli* and *pueri*."

"*Tertullian* is known to have declared against infant baptism, except in case of danger. *Gregory Nazianzen* [A. D. 381,] advises to defer it till three years old. *Basil* blames his auditors for delaying it, which implies that there were many unbaptized persons among them: but these might not *perhaps* have been the children of Christian parents."

"It is allowed there are many passages in *Origen*, that expressly refer to infant baptism: but they are chiefly to be found in those translations of his *Greek* works, which were done by *Ruffinus* and *Jerome*, who made some very bold alterations according to their own judgment and taste: but this is not applicable to all the passages brought from him." [Is it not applicable to those which are at all explicit?]

"*Cyprian* is allowed by all to speak expressly of infant baptism, as generally used in the church, but it is JUSTLY answered, that he speaks as expressly of infant communion in the *eucharist*: and consequently that the divine original of the *latter* may as well be argued from him as that of the *former*; yet almost all pædobaptists allow that to be an innovation."

"It is indeed surprising that nothing more express is to be met with in antiquity upon this subject; but it is here to be remembered, that when infant baptism is first apparently mentioned, we read of no remonstrance made against it as an *innovation*; and that as WE HAVE NO INSTANCE OF ANY PERSONS EXPRESSLY ASSERTED TO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED IN THEIR INFANCY, so neither of any children of *christian parents* baptized in years of discretion; for it is certain *Constantine's* father did not profess himself a Christian, till long after he was born." Dr. Doddridge says: "It is indeed surprising that nothing more express is to be met with in antiquity upon this subject." Dr. W. says: "We have evidence as abundant, and specific, and certain, as history affords of almost any fact, that infant baptism universally prevailed from the days of the Apostles through four centuries."

To these extracts from Dr. Doddridge may be added the

following from other Pædobaptist writers out of a number quoted by Mr. Booth.

Salmasius and Suicerus: "In the two first centuries no one was baptized, except, being instructed in the faith, and acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, he was able to profess himself a believer."

Curcellæus: "The baptism of infants, in the two first centuries after Christ, was altogether unknown; but in the third and fourth was allowed by some few. In the fifth and following ages it was generally received."

Episcopius, denies that any tradition can be produced for Pædobaptism, till a little before the Milevitan Council, A. D. 418; and maintains that it was not practised in Asia till near the time of that Council. Mr. Brandt speaks to the same effect.

Our author speaks, p. 114, of the zeal with which our writers have laboured to show, that infant baptism was not the universal practice of the early Christian Churches; and adds, "If they could produce one plain declaration, or even a suggestion, or a hint, from Origen, from Augustine, or from Pelagius, showing that infant baptism was not practised by the first Christian Churches, and that no order or tradition in favour of it was ever received from the Apostles, would they not consider this an unquestionable proof against infant baptism?" It would seem from this, my brother, that we are much put to it indeed for arguments in support of our cause, if a suggestion from such a man as Pelagius, would be considered as an unquestionable proof. As for the declarations &c. of the above named individuals, we are little solicitous, for reasons already given, whether they be for us or against us. It may be worth bearing in mind however, that we have proved that one of them, viz. Augustine, a child of christian parents, was not baptized, till he was able to act for himself. This is worth a thousand "hints, or suggestions" from him or any other person of his time. And we have seen he was by no means singular in this respect, as the list of honorable names, which I have given from Bishop Taylor plainly shows. How could Dr. W. then affirm, that we have sufficient evidence to conclude that infant baptism was *the uniform practice*? With respect to the zeal which our writers have shewn, to discover any thing in the history of the Church against infant baptism, I would observe, if they

have done so, it was altogether needless; for it should be enough for us, that we have neither precept nor example for it in the New Testament; no, nor yet any thing by which it may be fairly inferred. But if our Pædobaptist brethren, in the entire absence of any proof from scripture, will urge pretended arguments from the practice of the early christians, the Fathers &c., I trust we shall always have sufficient zeal to detect any misrepresentations which may be made, and this is all about which we have any cause to be concerned, for I have seen enough to convince me, that the writings of the Fathers, as they are called, of the first centuries will, on a candid examination, afford as little support to the cause of infant baptism as the New Testament itself. It may be regarded as proof of this that while the advocates of infant baptism resort for testimony to the interpolated translation of Origen's works, Dr. Gill found it easy to produce testimony from the Greek of Origen in favour of adult baptism to the exclusion of infant baptism, and manifestly against the latter. See his *Tract called Anti Pædobaptism, or infant baptism an innovation.*

Justin Martyr, who is the first of Dr. W's witnesses, has given testimony, (p. 88—96 of his works,) as satisfactory as can be demanded in proof of a negative, that infant baptism was not practised in his days. It is also a fact worthy to be remembered that so late as about the year 600, Augustine, the monk, who had been sent as a Missionary to the British Isles, desirous to bring the British Churches to conform to the practices of the Church of Rome, proposed among other things necessary to accomplish his object, that they should baptize their children; but they would not consent. See *Ivimey's History of the English Baptists, or Morgan's preface to his Welch Concordance.*

In dismissing the witnesses which Dr. W. has brought forward it strikes my mind to ask whether they have often been called upon before for testimony in this case. Upon inquiring I find, these writers out of all the ancient fathers, and precisely these passages of their writings, have been relied upon by Pædobaptist writers from the time of Dr. Wall down to the present time: and although Dr. Wall's mistakes respecting the interpretation, and application of this meagre testimony have been pointed out again and again, yet, regardless of all this, Dr. Wall's statements have been repeated

and repeated, sometimes with reference to him, and sometimes without any such acknowledgment, and the shout of triumph is heard on every side, that there is clear and unanswerable testimony from ecclesiastical history, that infant baptism was universally practised in the earliest ages of christianity!

What I may have to say on the *mode* of baptism, I reserve for another communication. Meanwhile I am your affectionate brother,

DAVID.



LETTER VI.

My Dear Brother—In the course of argument which I have pursued, I have attempted to show, that believer's baptism ought to be practised, even if the obligation of parents to have their children baptized could be made out from inference and tradition. I have also examined whether infant baptism may be made out by inference from the commission or from the covenant of circumcision. You have shown that it cannot be inferred from household baptism or learned from tradition. But may it be inferred from any instructions of Christ to his Apostles, previous to the final commission he gave them, or from any declarations in the writings of the Apostles? To one text under each of these heads Dr. W. refers; us namely Matt. xix. 13, 14. 1 Cor. vii. 14: these texts I shall now proceed to consider.

ON MATT. XIX. 13, 14—SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN, &c.

Dr. W. seems to have written on this text with much candour. I have admired how equally poised the scales appear to be after he has thrown into them the authorities and arguments on both sides; and have concluded, that there is good reason to say with Bishop Taylor, whom you quote, that to rely upon this text for proof of infant baptism “proves nothing so much as the want of better argument.”

Let the following things be taken into consideration respecting this text.

The phrase *τοιουτων παιδιων*, in the preceding chapter according to Dr. W's. own explanation, p. 64, means "a person of a child-like disposition:" and if *τοιουτων* [*παιδιων*] in this place means the same, (excepting the difference in number and case) then it is conceded that the whole argument for infant baptism as founded upon this text falls to the ground. That it does mean the same we have the judgment of a very large number even of Pædobaptist writers. Dr. W. says, p. 72 "the most respectable authors are divided." He mentions Rosenmuller and Kuinoel as authorities against himself: other names might easily be added. Dr. Doddridge considers the word *τοιουτων* as ambiguous, and declines to confine the sense by a translation, though he gives the following paraphrase; "For of such is the kingdom of God, persons of such a character are the true subjects of my kingdom and heirs of eternal glory," He says, *Lectures, Prop. 144*, it "may signify not those that are infants in *age*, but persons who in the temper and disposition of their minds resemble the simplicity and innocence of children, which the connexion seems to favour." Wakefield whose criticisms are valuable when his peculiar tenets are not concerned, actually translates thus; "Suffer these little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of those, who resembles them, is the kingdom of heaven." Dr. Macknight explains it thus; "The church of God on earth and the kingdom in heaven, is composed of persons who resemble little children in their dispositions," *Harmony*, §104.

If it could be determined, that the phrase does not mean the same in both chapters, we have still to pursue a long and uncertain course of reasoning before we can arrive at the conclusion, that the infant children of believing parents ought to be baptized. Let us suppose the word *such* to be changed to another which shall refer, with certainty, to the identical children that were then in the Saviour's presence, and let us read the passage according to W's method of translating it, thus: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for *theirs* is the kingdom of heaven," would it strike any plain and honest man, who should read it, that it meant the infant children of believing parents ought to be baptized? Would he not ask, if the disciples were in the habit of bap-

tizing children why did they reject these? If Jesus designed to teach that children ought to be baptized, why did he not teach it by a clearer precept? And why did he not set the example in the present case? If the phrase, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven," means they have a right to church membership in the visible church, why were they sent away without being admitted? If it should be said they had been admitted at the time of their circumcision, then, what need was there that Jesus should tell his disciples, that these children belong to the commonwealth of Israel? and why should he use a phrase to express this truth, which at other times, from his lips, had a meaning so very different? See Matt. v. 3, 10. If it be said, that the phrase "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" means that they have a right to church ordinances, then why are they not admitted to the supper as well as to baptism? Dr. W. quotes with an expression of pleasure p. 74, from Knapp's *Theology* the following remark concerning this very text: "But if children can and should have a share in the Christian church, and in ALL Christian privileges it cannot be improper to introduce them into the Christian church by this solemn rite of initiation." Have children a share in all Christian privileges while the communion of the supper is denied them? If the phrase means, that they have a right to the spiritual and eternal blessings of the kingdom, and of consequence are not to be denied inferior privileges, whether is this rite conditional or unconditional? If they shall obtain the spiritual and eternal blessings only on the condition, either that they die in infancy, or that they repent and believe after they shall have arrived at sufficient age, why do we infer that they have a right to the inferior privilege without either of these conditions, but on a condition of a very different nature, namely, that one of their parents is a believer? To say that these blessings belong to children *unconditionally*, involves the doctrine of universal salvation.

But to return to the meaning of the word *τοιοῦτων*, Dr. Woods having so accurately balanced the authorities and arguments determines at length in favour of that sense, which he supposes to be on the side of infant baptism. He adduces instances of its use, and finds but one, Matt. xviii. 5, in which it is supposed to have the other sense. Now I ask whether it is the part of true criticism to look at the number of the instances or at their similarity? Of all the instances re-

ferred to by the Dr. there is not one that can be called similar except that in the 13th of Matthew, and that is similar to a remarkable extent. In both cases a child or children were present. In both cases the Saviour taught the disciples should resemble little children, and that none but those who resemble little children can enter into the kingdom of heaven. In both cases *τοιουτος* is found in connexion with the same noun; for *παιδιων* is the noun understood after *τοιουτων* in Matt. xix. 14. Now the idea of resemblance in Matt. xviii. 5, is conveyed either by the adjective *τοιουτον* or by the use of the noun *παιδιον*, in connexion with a discourse in which a child is made an emblem of the moral qualities necessary in order to admission into the kingdom of heaven. In either way the phrase *τοιουτον παιδιον* means a person of a child-like disposition, and the same phrase used by the same speaker, and recorded by the same writer in circumstances so similar and in connexion with discourse so similar, ought to be interpreted the same way. There is a dissimilarity which the Dr. notices. In chap. xviii. the words “except ye be converted and become as little children,” come in the discourse *before* the words “whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, &c.,” whereas in the other discourse see Mark x. 14, 15. Luke xviii. 16, 17. the words, “whoso shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child shall in no wise enter therein,” come *after* the words “suffer little children to come unto me &c.,” but how long after do they come? They are in the very next verse, and are as though they had been uttered by the very same breath, for they precede the act of laying on hands. Moreover they were uttered with a manifest design to illustrate and enforce the preceding sentence. Would they have affected the phrase *τοιουτων παιδιων* differently, if they had stood in the verse preceding? If the mere circumstance of being uttered before hand is to have so much effect rather than the closeness of the connexion, let it be recollected, that the whole of the discourse recorded in Matt. xviii. preceded that in Matt. xix. and might have served to determine its meaning, even if all the evangelists had omitted the explanatory verse, as Matthew has done. On this circumstance, namely, that the explanatory verse is introduced “*after* he had shown his affection for the little children, who were brought to him, and had declared that the privileges of his kingdom belonged to them,” Dr. W. relies for the re-

moval of “the last and the greatest difficulty.” p. 68, 69. By this grain at last the scale is turned, which had been, with so much candour, so equally poised!

But, after all, does the meaning even of the discourse in the 18th chapter depend either upon the meaning of the single word *τοῦτος* or upon the circumstance that *παιδιον* is used in a connexion, whether before or after, in such a manner as to intimate that it must be taken figuratively in the particular phrase *τοῦτον παιδιον*? Suppose none of the evangelists had given an account of this discourse but Luke, what would have been the meaning of his statement, chap. ix. 48, “And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, and said, whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me, and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me, for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.” Here the word *τοῦτος* is not used, nor is the word *παιδιον* used by the Redeemer, so far as this evangelist records the discourse, except in the single phrase *τοῦτο το παιδιον* *this child*; but Luke has recorded the same discourse that is found in the 18th of Matthew, and his account of it, though more brief, is certainly capable of being understood. To me it appears that the meaning is to be ascertained rather by considering the whole transaction as symbolical, than by assigning a peculiar sense to any single word. Notwithstanding all the instructions and rebukes they received, the Apostles retained their expectation of a temporal kingdom, and of temporal honours, until they saw their Master nailed to the cross. To be greatest in that kingdom, to sit on the right hand and on the left, was the object of their carnal ambition. What then did the action mean, when he took a child and *set him by him*, at the very moment when they were contending for the honour of being nearest to his person? It was as if he had said, “this child shall be my prime minister.” When he added, “whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me,” it was as if he had said “this child shall be my representative, my ambassador.” What action could he have performed, what words could he have uttered, better calculated to check the ambition of his disciples?

The preceding method of interpretation appears to me equally applicable to the discourse recorded in Matt. xix. The disciples were slow of heart to learn and had profited

little by their former lesson. Either the phrase, *to become as a little child*, Matt. xviii. 3, had been understood by them carnally, as Nicodemus had understood the phrase, *to be born again*; or they had forgotten its spiritual import. Certain it is that they were again, as Dr. W. observes, p. 69 “in special need of the instruction then given them.” In eastern courts, as for example that of Ahazuerus, the Persian monarch, the sovereign was far removed from the people, and it was in some degree within the power of his courtiers to guard the way of approach to him. This power the Apostles never attempted to exercise but in the case of the little children brought to him on this occasion. But, an application for blessings Jesus never rejected himself, and the power to reject he never delegated to his Apostles. This usurpation on their part greatly displeased him, Mark x. 14. What their motives were we know not: whether they designed only that their Master should not be troubled, or whether, in their simplicity, they had become jealous of these young candidates for his favour, we need not determine. Possibly they had feared, when they saw a young child set in the place that they had so much coveted, lest the King Messiah, who they believed was never to die, entertained thoughts of postponing the establishment of his kingdom, until the young rival and others such as he should be grown: or lest among the strange things which he did, he would give them even at their present age, by supernatural power, qualifications to fill the highest offices of his kingdom. Whatever their particular views and motives may have been, their conduct seems to have proceeded from the same ambitious spirit, that he had before rebuked, for they received a like rebuke: and his discourse on this occasion may be understood as if he had said, “Give place, ye ambitious and worldly-minded, who need to be changed into children. Think not, by this usurpation to secure to yourselves the honours ye covet. The privileges and honours of my kingdom shall be given to these children, and to other children such as they.” This he said with the same symbolical meaning as in the former case, and it is no more to be taken literally than the phrase “whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me,” is to be taken literally, as importing that this child should be in fact the Saviour’s ambassador and representative. Thus understood, the words have an animation that suitably expresses the great

displeasure, which the Redeemer manifested on the occasion. According to the other interpretations which have been proposed, his displeasure does not appear in his words, but they are comparatively cold and lifeless. Yet if this interpretation should not be satisfactory, there is no need to insist on it. Enough else has been said, to show that infant baptism cannot be proved by this text.

ON 1 COR. VII. 14—THE UNBELIEVING HUSBAND, &c.

Dr. W. compares his own interpretation of this text with that which Dr. Gill has given. I shall not think it necessary to defend the interpretation of Dr. Gill, as a different one, which is contained in a note p. 42 of *Pengilly's Scripture Guide to Baptism* published by the Baptist General Tract Society, appears to me to give the true sense of the passage. It may be seen in the following extract, in which I think it is also clearly demonstrated, that the text is decisive against infant baptism.

“The Jews considered all Gentiles to be unclean, and thought it unlawful for a Jew to be in the house, keep company, or eat with, or touch a Gentile. By some means, possibly from the influence of Judaizing teachers, the church at Corinth seems to have been agitated with the question whether the same rule ought not to be established to regulate the intercourse of the members of the church with other persons; that is, whether the church ought not to decide, that all who were without were unclean to them who were within; just as Gentiles were unclean to Jews; and that therefore it was inconsistent with Christian purity to dwell, keep company, or eat with, or to touch them. While this question was undergoing discussion in the church, it was perceived that it involved a very important case. Some of their members were married to unbelievers, and if such a rule should be established, these members would be compelled to separate from their unbelieving husbands or wives. Although the lawfulness of the marriage was not questioned, yet it would be unlawful for a believing husband to dwell with his wife, until God had converted her. The church resolved, probably after much discussion of the question, to write to the Apostle respecting it. This letter he had received, as appears from the first verse of this chapter. On the general question of inter-

course with unbelievers he treats in the fifth chapter, and decides that, to keep company or eat with persons who make no pretensions to religion is not unlawful, and that, were all such persons to be esteemed unclean, and their touch polluting, Christians must needs go out of the world. On the particular case of those members of the church who were married to unbelievers, the Apostle treats in the chapter before us. He decides in v. 12 and 13 that they may lawfully dwell together, and in v. 14, for the conviction and silencing of any members of the church, who might object to his decision, he in substance says; *the unbelieving husband is not unclean, so that his wife may not lawfully dwell with him: the unbelieving wife is not unclean, so that her husband may not lawfully dwell with her. If they are unclean, then your children are unclean, and not one parent in the whole church must dwell with or touch his children, until God shall convert them; and thus Christianity will be made to sever the ties that bind parents to their children, and to throw out the offspring of Christian parents into the ungodly world from their very birth, without any provision for their protection, support, or religious education.*

“It will be perceived in the preceding interpretation that the phrase *your children* is taken in a different sense from that which it obtains in any of the interpretations usually offered. It is here supposed to refer to the *whole church*. Had the Apostle designed to speak of those children only, who have one parent a believer and the other an unbeliever, he would have said (*τεκνα αυτων*) *their children*, instead of (*τεκνα υμων*), *your children*. In addressing the church, and in giving general precepts, he uses the pronouns *ye* and *you*. See preceding chapter throughout, and verses 1 and 5 of this chapter. But in v. 8, where he gives directions applicable to particular cases, although he introduces the phrase, “I say to the unmarried and widows,” he makes reference to these persons, not by the pronoun *you*, but *them*: “It is good for *them* to abide even as I.” The same mode of speaking he continues to use as far down as to the verse in question: “let *them* marry,—let *him* not put her away,—let *her* not leave him.” After the same manner he would have said, “else were *their* children unclean,” had he intended only the children of such mixed cases of marriage as are referred to in the preceding part of the verse. What further confirms this

opinion, is, that in the original text the substantive verb is in the present tense; “your children *are* unclean,”—a mode of speaking more suited for the stating of a parallel than a dependent case.”

“The general principles of the preceding interpretation fall in precisely with the course of the Apostle’s argument commenced in the 5th chapter. When these principles have been established, it is not of vital importance to the sense of the passage to determine the translation of the preposition *εν*. Many have translated it *to* as it is in the very next verse. This sense accords well with our interpretation. The unbelieving husband is sanctified to the wife, just as it is said in Titus i. 15, “*unto* the pure all things are pure.” But perhaps the more literal rendering, *in*, will give the Apostle’s sense more accurately. While both parents lived in unbelief they were unclean, to themselves, and to each other: “unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.” Titus i. 15. According to the Jewish rules respecting ceremonial cleanness the conversion of one party would not render the other party holy. But in gospel ceremonies it is different. By the abrogation of the Jewish ceremonial law, and by the conversion of the wife, the *unbelieving husband* (*ἡγιασται*) *has become holy*, not in himself, but (*εν τη γυναικι*) *in the wife*. That the Jews considered Gentiles unclean as stated above, may be proved from various passages of scripture. See Acts x. 28, xi. 3. John xviii. 28. Gal. ii. 12. Dr. Adam Clark states in his note on John xviii. 28, “The Jews considered even the *touch* of a Gentile as a legal defilement.”

“It is clearly implied, in the Apostle’s argument, that all the children of the Corinthian Christians had no nearer relation to the church than the unbelieving husband of a believing wife. He declares that their cases are parallel; and that rules of intercourse, which would require the believing husband to separate from his unbelieving wife, would require believing parents to separate from their children. But there is no conclusiveness in this argument, if the children had been consecrated to God in baptism, and brought within the pale of the church; for then the children would stand in a very different relation to the church and to their parents from that of the unbelieving husband or wife. Therefore, unless we charge the Apostle with arguing most inconclu-

sively, *infant baptism* and *infant church membership* were wholly unknown to the Corinthian church, and if to the Corinthian church, unquestionably to all the churches of those times.”

A note appended to Wilson’s Scripture Manual exhibiting the same general view of this text concludes thus, “The Apostle in effect says, ‘If it is unlawful for a member of the church to dwell, keep company, or eat with, or touch an unbeliever, then it is unlawful for you to dwell, keep company, or eat with, or touch, your children, and consequently the care, support, and especially the religious education of them must be wholly neglected.’ The laws of the commonwealth of Israel are not applicable to gospel churches, because of their different organization. That children are not members of the latter, is the very fact upon which the Apostles seizes, for the foundation of his argument in this text, which is therefore decisive, against infant baptism.”

I am sorry that we cannot be favoured with remarks from Dr. W. on the preceding interpretation. It corresponds so nearly with much that he has written, that I am ready to conclude, it will commend itself to his judgment. He says p. 36. “*Ακαθαρτος*, according to Schleusner, signifies, *that which is prohibited by the Mosaic law, or that from which the people of God were required to separate themselves.*” Referring to Acts xiv. 28, he says; “A man is there called *ακαθαρτος*, *unclean*, with whom the Jews thought it unlawful to have any familiar intercourse.” He represents it, as often used to denote *a pagan, an alien from the worship of the true God, or one who does not belong to the people of God, or to the society of Christians.* The text under consideration he renders thus: “*Alioquin et liberi vestri remoti essent a societate Christianorum. Otherwise your children also would be removed from the society of Christians.*” Dr. W. urges it as of the first importance to notice the peculiar Hebrew sense of the principal words found in the passage before us, because Paul was by birth and education a Hebrew. Let us then take the very sense of *ακαθαρτος* given above: “*that from which the people of God were required to separate themselves: a man with whom the Jews thought it unlawful to have any familiar intercourse.*” With this explanation of the term in our minds, let us come to the interpretation of the text in question: “*Other-*

wise your children also would be removed from the society of Christians." If the *society of Christians* means the *familiar intercourse of Christians*, then Schleusner's interpretation is precisely that which is given in the preceding extract.

Dr. W. explains the sanctification of the unbelieving husband thus: p. 90. "By his connexion in marriage with a believing wife, he is, in some sort, separated from the society of heathen, certainly from the *familiar intercourse* with them which he once had: that, on account of the pious woman with whom he is so closely connected, he is to be regarded in a light different from that, in which he could be regarded, if he were altogether a pagan, and had no such relation to a Christian partner; and that by the effect which her faith produces upon him, he is brought into such a state, that she may with propriety continue to LIVE WITH him. Their intercourse comes under a sanctifying influence *by means of her piety.*" Let the holiness of the children be understood in precisely the same way, as relating to *familiar intercourse*, and to the propriety of their parents' *living with them*: the interpretation of Dr. W. will then agree in what relates to the meaning of the principal terms, with that which is contained in the preceding extract. With this agrees also what he has said, p. 92, "Now the Apostle virtually told the Corinthian Christians, that the ancient, national law was not binding upon *them*, any more than the law of circumcision; that those believers who were lawfully married to unbelievers had no occasion to dissolve the marriage bond. And he suggested to them one consideration of great weight, namely, that if according to the Mosaic law, and the example of the people in the time of Ezra, they were to put away their unbelieving *partners*, and so treat them *as pagans*, *καθαῖστα*, *unclean*, they must consider their *children* also as *unclean*, i. e. *heathen* children, and put them away likewise, as the people did in the case referred to." These three extracts from Dr. W's. book, might almost take the place of the note quoted from Pengilly's Scripture Guide, so nearly do they coincide with it. If our Pædobaptist brethren could but admit it into their minds that children may, without being baptized, have *familiar intercourse* with their Christian parents, and continue to *live with them*, with just as much propriety as an unbelieving husband and believing wife may continue to live together; the sense of the Apostle, in this

much disputed text, would be obvious and clear. Is not the unbaptized child of a Baptist holy, in precisely the same sense in which the unconverted wife of a Pædobaptist can be so regarded?

To the argument from this text in favour of infant baptism it has ever been an insuperable objection, that it makes the holiness of the children different from that of the unbelieving husband or wife. In meeting this objection Dr. W. at first argues that the difference might be admitted especially since a verb is used in one case and an adjective in the other. But how shall it be determined whether it is the adjective *holy* which is applied to the children, or the verb *to make holy* which is applied to the unbelieving husband or wife, that has *baptism* in it? We are all certain that one of them does not include baptism: who is certain that the other does? But if there is uncertainty whether the term *holy* includes baptism, then infant baptism derives, at the most, only a doubtful support from this text: and the doubt is increased just in proportion to the improbability that the Apostle would use these words in different senses in the same sentence: and to the possibility that a clear and consistent meaning may be assigned into which baptism does not enter. But Dr. W. finally labours to show that, according to his interpretation, "the two words, though the one is a verb and the other an adjective, have really the *same general sense*." He accounts for it that baptism is included in the one case and not in the other by saying "the difference so far as there is any, arises from the obvious difference of the subjects." See p. 90 to the end of the paragraph. In all this a discerning mind will perceive, that there is a begging of the question. This text is brought to prove that infants are proper *subjects* of baptism. The holiness which in this text, in the *same general sense*, is predicated of two different subjects, it is said either includes baptism, or does not include it according to the difference in the subjects. Now suppose we affirm that neither of the subjects is such that the holiness thereof can properly include baptism, will this text prove the contrary? When an unbelieving husband and an infant child are before the mind, who knows that there is such a difference in these subjects, that baptism may, with propriety, be administered to the one and not to the other? Any one who knows this *beforehand* may adopt Dr. W's. interpretation. This fa-

mous text, on which so much reliance has been placed, can prove infant baptism to none but those who already believe it.

MOSHEIM'S ACCOUNT OF BAPTISM.

To the examination, which you have made of the testimony from ecclesiastical history, I feel disposed to subjoin a remark founded on the account given by Dr. Mosheim. He says, Cent. 2, Chap. 4, Sect. 13, "Adult persons were prepared for baptism by abstinence, prayer, and other religious exercises. It was to answer for them that sponsors or godfathers were first instituted, though they were afterwards admitted also in the baptism of infants." This is the first intimation which he gives, that infants were baptized. In the first century he speaks of the baptism of none others than Christian converts, and having stated that baptism was administered "by immersion of the whole body in the baptismal font," he adds, "It was customary that the converts should be baptized and received into the church, by those under whose ministry they had embraced the Christian doctrine." In the second century he says, "The persons that were to be baptized after they had repeated the creed, confessed and renounced their sins, and particularly the Devil and his pompous allurements, were immersed under water and received into Christ's *kingdom* by a solemn invocation of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, according to express command of our blessed Lord."

Now, if the facts were just as they appear in this history is it at all probable that infant baptism was an original practice? If both believer's baptism and infant baptism had been practised together from the times of the Apostles without sponsors, is it at all probable that when sponsors were introduced, they should have been used *first* for adults and *afterwards* for infants? Is it not much more probable that baptism with sponsors just as it appears on the face of this history, was an intermediate step between believer's baptism and the baptism of infants? When sponsors had been admitted in behalf of adults, to repeat the creed and the ceremony of confessing and renouncing their sins, the Devil and his pompous allurements, probably at first with some token of assent on the part of the candidates; it became easy to introduce gradu-

ally the baptism of very young persons: and this appears to be precisely the state of things of which Tertullian complained.

INFANT DEDICATION.

The idea that the baptism of infants, is a ceremony by which they are dedicated to God, is that which I suppose has the strongest hold on the feelings of Christian parents; and tends above all others, to give it respect in their eyes. It is by keeping this idea steadily in view, that Dr. W. has shown how well the practise accords with parental affection. He says p. 104, "It must surely be the wish of pious parents to give up their children to God; and to do this in the temple of God, where the prayers of many will ascend with their own to the Lord of heaven and earth in behalf of their children." But if we may argue from one dispensation to another, the ceremony of public dedication "in the temple" was not made anciently by circumcision, but by certain appointed sacrifices, and therefore it ought not now to be made by baptism, but by the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise. Circumcision might be performed, and I presume generally was performed in the family, and without any officiating priest, and so far was it from being considered as consecrating the infant or rendering him holy to the Lord, that the child was considered to be, with the mother, unfit to touch a hallowed thing or enter the sanctuary until three and thirty days afterward, when the sacrifices were offered which were required in the ceremony of purification, and when the infant might be publicly presented to the Lord. See Doddridge, Clark, and especially Campbell on Luke ii. 22. It is true that no sacrifices whatever could purify or consecrate an uncircumcised male, and therefore the circumcision of male infants must precede their purification and presentation; but it is equally true that circumcision was not the dedicating rite. The sacrifices of purification were allowed to be made for female infants, without any previous prerequisite rite, at the end of eighty days; and in our freer dispensation, infants both male and female may from their very birth be given up to the Lord, with the sacrifices of prayer and praise, without any prerequisite rite whatever; and this, I presume, every pious parent will be inclined to do, and will often carry them on his

heart before the Lord ; and, glad that no purifying ceremony is now necessary in order to their admission, he will delight to take them with him to “ the temple of God,” whatever he may think as to the necessity or propriety of making a public solemn presentation of them there.

MODE OF BAPTISM.

I shall wholly decline to follow Dr. Woods in his arguments on the mode of baptism, and the rather as you propose to take up this part of the subject. At present I feel, as to this matter, more inclined to lament than to argue. I lament in the first place, with Dr. Campbell, who, in his note on Matt. iii. 11, after having stated that “ the word βαπτίζειν, both in sacred authors, and in classical, signifies *to dip, to plunge, to immerse,*” subjoins: “ It is to be regretted that we have so much evidence that even good and learned men allow their judgments to be warped by the sentiments and customs of the sect which they prefer : and in the second place I lament that this ordinance of Christianity should have been so corrupted as to give entirely a false view of the gospel we profess.”

Perhaps, some explanation on this last point is necessary. When a soul comes to Christ, it often happens, that one of the last strong holds of Satan, from which it is delivered, is a trust in its own evangelical obedience. We soon learn to distinguish between the righteousness of Christ, and our own legal righteousness; but to distinguish between the work of Christ for us, as the object of our faith, and the effects of grace within us, communicated by the Holy Spirit, is far less easy. But that faith which fixes upon internal sanctification, instead of Christ, is not the faith of Christ. The gospel exhibits Christ; the supper exhibits Christ; and surely, that ordinance by which we first profess the faith of Christ, ought not to hide him from view. When a believer is immersed, the burial and resurrection of Christ are exhibited, and the very ceremony, by which he takes upon him the profession of Christ, significantly tells, that his faith is not fixed upon internal grace, but upon him who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. But, when an infant is sprinkled, is Christ exhibited? Let Dr. Woods answer. “ When adult believers receive baptism themselves,

they hereby express their belief, that they are by nature polluted with sin and must be sanctified by the Spirit, in order to be admitted into heaven; and they express their desire for such sanctification, and their determination to seek after it, in the diligent use of all appointed means. When we present our infant children for baptism, we express our belief that they are the subjects of moral pollution, and must be born of the Spirit, in order to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven: and, we express our earnest desire that they may experience this spiritual renovation, and our solemn determination to seek after it, by fervent prayer to God, and by faithful attention to all the duties of christian parents. This seems to me a perfectly natural and satisfactory view, of what is signified by the baptism of children," p. 137. Baptism, I know, is a mere outward ordinance, a mere sign; and so the word *Christ*, is a mere word, a mere sign. Neither the ordinance nor the word, can save the soul. Yet, is it not highly important, in preaching the gospel, that the name Christ should represent the true Saviour? and is it not in like manner important in administering baptism, that it should represent the true object of faith?

May you, my dear brother, ever be faithful to keep all the commandments of our Lord, just as they have been delivered to us; neither breaking the least of them yourself, nor teaching others to do so: and while you are careful to observe even a mere ceremony, if HE was careful to institute it, may the better things of the kingdom, even righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost, be yours for ever.

I am, as ever, your affectionate brother,

JOHN.



LETTER VII.

Dear Brother—In my last I offered some remarks on the testimonies which Dr. Woods adduces from Ecclesiastical History in favour of Infant Baptism; and intimated that I would also notice his observations on the Mode of Baptism. I now proceed to fulfill my engagement.

MODE OF BAPTISM.

An honest disciple of Christ will cheerfully accompany Dr. W. to the Commission, to ascertain what is his duty as to the ordinance of Baptism. He will desire to know simply what was the mind of Christ; and having learned this, he will yield implicit obedience. If it should seem to him that *baptism* and the *washing of feet* are duties equally obligatory upon all the followers of Christ, so far as it appears from his commands; (p. 168) then he will be governed by the same rules in his observance of these institutions. He will either content himself in both cases with the moral signification of these rites, wholly disregarding the outward ceremony: or he will, in both cases, literally obey the commands. But if it should appear to him that the command of Christ *to baptize* was intended to be understood *literally*, and to be obeyed *literally* to the end of time, (and this, so far as I can perceive, is Dr. W's. opinion, and certainly he will not argue that the neglect of one commandment will justify the neglect of another,) then, however he may decide concerning the washing of feet, he will be satisfied with nothing short of *literal* obedience to the command by which baptism is enjoined. He will therefore look to the commission as his rule of duty, not only when he is inquiring who are the proper subjects of baptism, but also when he is inquiring how this rite is to be administered: and as in the one case, so in the other, he will avail himself of every light within his reach, which may assist him to discover what was the mind of Christ. He finds the whole direction in the commission as to the manner of administering this rite, contained in the term βαπτίζοντες. It will therefore be his single inquiry, what Christ meant by this word.

THE COMMON SIGNIFICATION OF BAPTIZE.

In explaining the terms used in 1 Cor. vii. 14. Dr. W. refers to the *usus loquendi*. He says, p. 86, "The chief argument which I shall now urge in its support is the *usus loquendi*, that is, the sense generally attached in other parts of scripture to the principal words, on which the interpretation must depend; and especially the sense which these words have, when applied to the same subjects." Precisely this rule of interpretation should be applied to the case now before us.

Whatever was usually meant when a man was said to be baptized, the Saviour meant when he gave his commission. There are few words in any language, which are not used occasionally in a sense different from the prevailing one; but in such cases we always expect to find something either in the nature of the subjects to which they are applied, or in the connexion in which they are used, that will guide us to the peculiar sense they then obtain. If every sentence shall be declared to be ambiguous or indefinite in its meaning, the words of which are occasionally used in a sense different from the prevailing one, then it will be next to impossible to compose a sentence which shall have a certain and definite meaning. Had the commission been given in the English language, "Go, teach all nations, *immersing* them, or *plunging* them, or *dipping* them," every Englishman would conceive the meaning sufficiently certain and definite, and would think himself a prevaricator, rather than an honest disciple, if he should contend, that sprinkling or pouring was meant, or any thing whatever different from the usual sense of these terms. Yet in Johnson's Dictionary, the verb *to immerse* has three senses; *to plunge*, four; and *to dip* four: and, what is remarkable, one of the senses of the last verb is *to moisten*, *to wet*; the example for which use of it is the following from Milton:

"And though not mortal, yet a cold shudd'ring dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder."

When used in a neuter sense, one of the meanings of the same verb is *to enter slightly into any thing*: the example is given from Pope: "When I think all the repetitions are struck out in a copy, I sometimes find more upon *dipping* in the first volume." But what would we think of any one, who should argue hence, that the command, Go teach all nations, dipping them, means no more than *to moisten* or *to wet*, or to cause to enter *slightly* into water, as by stepping into the edge of the stream? We should refer such a one to the *usus loquendi*, and if he would not submit to this supreme law in language, we should cease to reason with him.

To ascertain what is the usual sense of *baptize*, since it is a Greek word, our ultimate recourse must be to the instances of its use in Greek authors.

The following are the instances in which βαπτω is used in the Greek Scriptures.

	Rendered in our common version.	In Thomson's translation.
Exodus xii. 22.	dip.	dip.
Lev. iv. 6.	dip.	dip.
— iv. 17.	dip.	dip.
— ix. 9.	dip.	dip.
— xi. 32.	put into.	plunge.
— xiv. 16.	dip.	dip.
— xiv. 51.	dip.	dip.
Num. xix. 18.	dip.	dip.
Deut. xxxiii. 24.	dip.	bathe.
Joshua iii. 15.	dip.	dip.
Ruth ii. 14.	dip.	dip.
1 Sam. xiv. 27.	dip.	stuck.
2 Kings viii. 15.	dip.	dip.
Job ix. 31.	plunge.	plunge.
Ps. lxxviii. 23.	dip.	dip.
Dan. iv. 33.	wet.	bathe.
— v. 21.	wet.	bathe.
Luke xvi. 24.	dip.	dip.
John xiii. 26.	dip.	dip.
Rev. xix. 13.	dip.	dip.

The following are the instances in which βαπτίζω occurs in the Greek Scriptures and the Apocrypha.

2 Kings v. 14.	dip.	dip.
Isaiah xxi. 4.	—*	overwhelm.
Judith xii. 7.	wash.	
Ecclesiasticus xxxiv. 25.	wash.	
Matt. xx. 22, 23.	baptize.	
Mark vii. 4.	wash.	
— x. 38, 39.	baptize.	
Luke xi. 38.	wash.	
Luke xii. 50.	baptize.	
1 Cor. x. 2.	baptize.	

ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ is used more than seventy times in the New Testament to denote the Christian ordinance, in all which cases it is rendered baptize.

* The Hebrew word differs from the Greek, and is rendered *affright*.

It will be seen from this table of references, that to dip is most evidently the usual sense of βαπτω. The derivative βαπτίζω is rendered *dip*, *overwhelm*, and *wash*, expressing in all these instances an immersion of the whole body, as will appear from considering the passages in which it is so rendered. Compare Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 35, with Numbers xix. 19, and Mark vii. 4, and Luke xi. 38, with Dr. Campbell's note on John xiii. 10. Several of the instances in which it is rendered *baptize*, refer to *overwhelming* sufferings, and one of them to the children of Israel being completely surrounded by the cloud and by the sea, as described Exodus xiv. 29.

In determining what, according to the *usus loquendi*, is the sense of ακαθάρτος, Dr. W. refers, p. 80, to the authority of Schleusner. Let us see what the same author has said on the word βαπτίζω.—“βαπτίζω. 1. Properly; immergo ac intingo, in aquam mergo: [*to immerse, to dip, to plunge into water.*]—2. It denotes abluo, lavo, aqua purgo; [*to wash away, to wash, to cleanse with water.*] Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 38.—3. Hence it is transferred to the solemn rite of baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19.—4. Metaphorically, like the Latin imbuo, large et copiose do atque supposito, large profundo; [*to give and supply largely and abundantly, to pour out largely.*] Matt. iii. 11, Mark i. 8, Luke iii. 16, John i. 33, Acts i. 5, coll. Acts ii. 17, xi. 16.—4. By metaphor βαπτίζω signifies calamitatum fluctibus obrui, mergi miseriis; [*to be overwhelmed in the billows of calamities, to be plunged in miseries.*]”

Quotations might easily be made from Josephus* and heathen authors, (as the late Dr. Ryland has done in his Candid Statement) and also from eminent critics and lexicographers, which would abundantly confirm the declaration of Dr. Campbell, that “βαπτίζω, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse: and is always construed suitably to this meaning.” But the references and quotations already made, are sufficient to show, that a man is not baptized in the sense of that term, which was usual in the days of Christ and his Apostles, when a very small part of his body is made wet with a very small quantity of water.

But Christ must be understood to have meant definitely and precisely, what the word he used imported, in the usual sense of it, unless it can be shown from its connexion, or the circumstances in which it was uttered, that it was meant to be taken in a different sense. “The rule of interpretation,

which is of the highest consequence, and which will aid us most in discovering the true meaning of the scriptures, in relation to this subject now before us is, that we *put ourselves, as far as may be, in the place of those who gave instruction, and of those who received it.*" p. 42. Now, as an *argument ad hominem*, proselyte baptism, it is admitted on all hands, was performed by immersion; and therefore, if the Apostles would naturally think of this, when interpreting and executing their commission, they must have supposed that immersion was intended.

It happens that βαπτίζω is less frequently used in the Greek scriptures, than its primitive, βαπτω, except where it refers to the ordinance in question. Advantage is taken of this circumstance. Dr. W. says, "There are many reasons for supposing that βαπτίζω, being a derivative from βαπτω, has a less definite, and less forcible sense than the original," p. 151. But why did the Saviour use the lengthened derivative to express his intense sufferings, if the primitive would have been more forcible? There are many derivatives that are more forcible than their primitives; and it should not be hastily concluded that this is less so. It would scarcely have been preferred to the primitive word to express the sinking of a ship, or the immersing of a man until he was drowned, if it had been less forcible in its signification. See Josephus' Antiq., book 9., ch. 10., § 2.; and book 15., ch. 3., § 3.; and Wars of the Jews, book 1., ch. 22., § 2. The true power of the Greek termination ιζω, is explained in the following extract from Judson's sermon on baptism. "The word denoting baptism is derived from the *verbal* of this primitive word, by a change in the termination, which, according to an established principle of the Greek language, *never* affects the primary idea; but when made on words expressing a quality or attribute, merely conveys the additional idea of *causing* or *making*.

"The termination ιζω, in Greek derivatives, is precisely of the same import, as the termination *fy*, in English derivatives, from the Latin *fic*, to make; as, sanctify, *to make holy*, from sanctus, *holy*; mollify, to soften, from inollis, *soft*, &c. On the same principle, in Greek;

ἀγνίζω, *to purify*, from ἀγνος *pure*;

σοφίζω, *to make wise*, from σοφός *wise*;

γεμίζω, *to fill*, from γεμω, *to be full*, &c.

“ And derivatives are thus formed, not only from adjectives and neuter verbs, but also from the *verbals* of transitive verbs; *αἰρέω*, to choose; *αἰρετός*, chosen; *αἰρέλιζω*, to make chosen. to choose.

εμφανίω, to show; *εμφανής*, shown; *εμφανίζω*, to make shown, to show;

καθαίρω, to cleanse; *καθαρός*, clean; *καθαρίζω*, to make clean, to cleanse;

πίνω, to drink; *πῖος*, drank; *πιδίζω*, to cause to be drank;

ρίνω, to sprinkle; *ρίντος*, sprinkled; *ρίντιζω*, to make sprinkled, to sprinkle.

And according to the same analogy; *βαπτω*, to immerse, *βαπτος*, immersed; *βαπτίζω*, to make immersed, to immerse.”

From this explanation it appears that *βαπτίζω* is neither less forcible, nor less definite in its signification, than *βαπτω*. Dr. Campbell says, they are synonymous; *notes on Mark*, vii. 4., and *Matt.* xx. 22.

It may here be added, that the force of the Greek termination *ίζω* is often expressed in English by *ize*; as,

legal; legalize, to make legal;

harmonious; harmonize, to make harmonious;

from system, systematic, has been formed systematize, to make systematic;

so from to jeopard, to hazard, some have formed to jeopardize, to make hazarded, to hazard.

According to the same analogy may be formed,

from to bapt, (for so *βαπτω* may be Anglicized, or made English,) to dip, to baptize, to make dipped.

Dr. W. says, p. 151., “ Yet even *βαπτω* does not always signify a total immersion. This might be made evident from classic usage; and it is perfectly evident from the New Testament. See *Matt.* xxvi. 23. He that *dippeth his hand* with me in the dish; *εμβαψας την χειρα*. Mark has it *ὁ εμβαπτομενος*, he, the person that dippeth with me in the dish. Now, whatever liquid the dish contained, it cannot be supposed, that Judas plunged his hand all over in that liquid. Nothing more can be meant, than that he took the bitter herbs that were eaten at the passover, or other articles of food, and with his fingers dipped them in the sauce prepared. And yet it is said by Matthew, that Judas *dipped his hand*, and by Mark, that *he himself dipped* in the dish.” I have given this quotation

entire, because it contains all the author has said against our acceptation of βαπτω. "It does not always signify a total immersion." I grant this. To dip the hand as in this instance, or the tip of the finger, as in Luke, xvi. 24., does not mean an immersion of the *whole* body, but only of that *part* which is said to be dipped. If it could be made to appear, that Christ commanded to baptize the head, or the face, or the hands, or the feet of his disciples, then we should content ourselves with the immersion of these parts only; but our brethren maintain, that they have baptized the whole man, when they have applied a very little water to a very small part of his body. "It cannot be supposed that Judas plunged his hand all over in that liquid." This I also grant. To dip the hand in a *dish*, does not mean to plunge it all over in a *liquid*. I suppose, a hand may be dipped in an empty dish, or in a dish containing solids. Does Dr. W. think the evangelist meant that Judas *washed*, or *wet*, or *sprinkled* his hand with this liquid? No. He does not think so. He chooses none of these terms by which to explain this Greek verb. But what term does he use for this purpose? "Nothing more," he says, "can be meant, than that he took the bitter herbs which were eaten at the Passover, or other articles of food, and with his fingers *DIPPED* them in the sauce prepared." The word, after all, is dipped. Though the noun *hand* is explained to mean the herbs, or food, which it held, and the noun *dish*, to mean the liquid which it contained, the verb amidst all these figurative interpretations, still retains its literal signification, to dip, even according to Dr. W.'s decision; and this decision must be regarded as the more important, because it is upon the only case adduced, as an exception to the prevailing sense. But Dr. W. further notices, that Mark uses the middle voice of the verb, ὁ εμβαπτομενος, which he renders *he himself dipped*. Does he mean hereby, (for I know not what he means,) that the subject and the object of the verb in the middle voice must be the same? "The middle voice signifies what we do, first, *to ourselves*, second, *for ourselves*." Valpy's Greek Grammar. Now, whatever it was that Judas dipped, there is no difficulty in accounting for the use of the middle voice, since he dipped *for himself*. Eminent critics understand the middle voice, βαπτίζονται, in Mark, vii. 4., in this way, and suppose it means the washing of the articles brought from market, an interpretation by no means unfavourable to *immersion*.

Concerning the word βαπτίζω, Dr. W. says, "it does indeed signify *to immerse* or *dip in water*; but it also signifies *to wash*, and to wash in different ways." If it does indeed signify *to immerse* or *to dip in water*, then, is it not likely that it was used in this sense by Christ, in the commission? Does not the etymology of the word, and its prevailing sense, and the frequent use of immersion among the Jews, favour this supposition? It must be insisted on, that the language of a speaker or writer, is not ambiguous, because the words which he uses have sometimes different senses, from those in which he designs to employ them. Every speaker, or writer, who intends to be understood, will always guard against the use of a word, if there is not, at least, sufficient preponderating probability, from the connexion and circumstances in which he uses it to point out to an honest uncaptious mind, the sense which he intends. Did Christ intend to be understood? Surely he did. Let then every disciple weigh the probabilities, whether he intended by this word, that which Dr. W. says it certainly does mean, namely, *to immerse*, or *dip in water*, and if the probability is in favour of this sense, then he may be assured, that Christ meant so, and ought to practise accordingly.

Dr. W. says, "βαπτίζω signifies *to wash*, and to wash in different ways." I do not deny, that there are many sentences, in which the sense *to wash*, is sufficiently expressive of the meaning of this word, to be a suitable rendering for it, but I deny it is the proper sense of it. Every one, who is accustomed to translate from another language, knows that his mind is prone to seek out, and fix upon, some one sense to every word, and to explain all special uses of it as modifications of this general sense, arising from the peculiar circumstances of its use in those cases. A word becomes in reality, two words, if it has two leading senses, that are independent of each other; thus, *to lie*, in English, has two independent leading senses, but it constitutes in each of these senses a distinct word. But no one, I believe, will affirm that there are two Greek verbs, βαπτίζω, one meaning *to immerse*, and the other *to wash*. These senses are not, therefore, independent of each other, and one of them must be the principal sense of the verb, and the other a subordinate sense, since no one pretends that there is a more general sense than either, from which they are both derived.

Now, I deny, that *to wash*, is the principal leading sense of the verb βαπτίζω. If the general sense attached to it be *to immerse, to dip*, then all the peculiar modifications will be found to follow from this sense naturally, and in a way, easily to be accounted for; but they cannot be derived from the sense to wash. Who can make sense of our Saviour's words, Luke, xii. 50., if thus rendered; "I have a washing to be washed with." The mind revolts at the idea of interpreting this figurative language of our Saviour, with a reference *to wash*, as the general literal sense of the verb; but, how expressive is the rendering of Dr. Campbell, "I have an *immersion* to undergo!" Many other sentences of the same kind might be produced. The following shall be given from Justin's dialogue with Trypho, part 2. p. 327. "Christ has redeemed us, βεβαπτισμενους ταις βαρυταταις ἁμαρτιαις, *submersos gravissimis peccatis*, immersed in most heavy sins." Who could make sense of this passage, if he had it in his mind, that to wash instead of to immerse, is the sense of the verb? If among the various modifications of sense which this word may receive from peculiar circumstances, it may mean "to wash in different ways." One of these ways unquestionably is, by immersion; and if the commission were read, "Go teach all nations, *washing* them, &c.," to me it appears there would be sufficient reason for supposing this mode of washing to have been intended. But Dr. W. says, "The most common mode of ceremonial purification among the Jews, was, *the sprinkling of consecrated water.*" But, without waiting to dispute the comparative frequency of this mode, will Dr. W. affirm that in the numerous instances in which unclean things were required to be *washed*, they were washed for the most part, or even frequently, or even in any case, by the *sprinkling* of consecrated water? Will Dr. W. affirm, that any Jewish priest, ever purified, by the sprinkling of consecrated water, any unclean thing, which Moses had commanded to be put into, or dipped in water, as expressed by the verb βαπτω? Alas; the disciples of Christ are in this particular, less observant of their Master's words, than were the disciples of Moses.

But what proof is there, that βαπτίζω in the commission, may signify so imperfect and partial a washing, as our brethren practise. They do not wash the whole body, but the face only, and, for what reason they fix upon this part of the

body, I cannot tell, since I know not that any of the sprinklings of consecrated water, among the Jews, were made upon the face, and certain I am, there is no command, or example, or even hint, or suggestion, in the New Testament, for washing, or baptizing the face. Further, this very partial washing is also very imperfectly done, since it often consists in sprinkling on the face a few drops of water, and that not consecrated, but common water. I ask, what reason is there to believe, that, when our Saviour commanded that his disciples should be baptized, he meant only, that they should receive this very imperfect and partial washing by sprinkling. Dr. W.'s reasons consist in remarks made upon the use of the noun βαπτισμος, in two passages of scripture; Heb. ix. 10., Mark, vii. 4. But βαπτισμος is not the word used in the commission. We might say, using the phraseology of Dr. W., there are many reasons for supposing that βαπτισμος, being a derivative from βαπτίζω, has a less definite, and less forcible sense. Why may we not, with an assertion of this kind, silence all his argument, since it depends entirely upon the use of this derivative βαπτισμος? But let us not resort to this expedient, for, I apprehend, that though we should affirm many such reasons exist, we should be put to it, if called upon to produce them. It is true, that Schleusner, though he renders βαπτίζω, *to immerse, to dip*, renders βαπτισμος *washing, cleansing, ablu-tion*; but, we are not to infer that such a washing, or ablu-tion is properly meant by this word, as does not convey the idea of immersion which prevails in the primitive. It should be recollected, that dipping, or plunging, may be for the purpose of *polluting*, as well as of *purifying*, see Job. ix. 31. Whenever either βαπτω, or βαπτίζω, or βαπτισμος, is used in such circumstances, as show evidently that the immersion is performed for the purpose of purification, then the general sense of the word may be considered to be so modified by these circumstances, as to include in it the idea of purification. βαπτισμος, always, in the New Testament, is so used, as to include this idea, and this accounts for the fact, that this lexi-cographer renders the noun βαπτισμος, *washing, ablu-tion*, while the noun βαπτισμα, which is used in the New Testa-ment, in such circumstances as do not imply purification, Matt. xx. 22., &c. is rendered by him *immersion*. As βαπτίζω in several instances, is rendered *wash*, so βαπτω, in Job. ix. 31. might be rendered *defile*, and the rendering is even more ex-

pressive than *plunge*, of the prominent idea in the passage. But however prominent the idea of defilement or of purification may be, it is still an *accidental* idea, dependent upon the circumstances and connexion in which the word is used: but the idea, which, though less prominent in the sentence or the design of the writer, is yet *essential* to the true sense of the word, is *immersion*. So, *purification* is a prominent accidental idea of βαπτισμος, where it occurs in the New Testament, yet the *essential* idea in the sense of the word, is *immersion*; and this cannot be denied on any better ground, than we might deny immersion to be intended, in Job ix. 31., because defilement is the prominent idea.

Stockius renders the word βαπτισμος, lotio, ablutio, baptismus; (washing, ablution, baptism;) yet, in explaining further, he says, “**GENERALLY**, and according to the force of the word, it denotes immersionem ac intinctionem; (immersion, dipping.) **SPECIALLY**, it denotes, first, *properly*, the immersion, or dipping of a thing into water, that it may be washed, hence it is transferred to sacramental baptism, in which, formerly, the person to be baptized was immersed into water, that he might be washed from the filth of sin, and received into the covenant of grace. Second, *figuratively*, by metonymy, or metalepsis, it denotes washing, Mark. vii. 4. 8., Heb. ix. 10.” If the judgment of this lexicographer be taken, βαπτισμος, in both the texts from which Dr. W. argues, is used in a special figurative sense, and therefore no valid argument can be drawn from them, to do away either the general or special proper sense, in which last it applies to the ordinance of baptism. But is not immersion intended even in these two texts? Dr. Macknight renders, Heb. ix. 10. “*divers immersions* :” and on Mark vii. 3., 4., his observations (see Harmony, sec. 64.) are important, showing both the frequency and manner of Jewish baptismal purifications, and also the true sense, as I conceive, of the 3d verse of that chapter. “The law of Moses required external cleanness, as a part of religion, not, however, for its own sake, but to signify with what carefulness God’s servants should purify their minds from moral pollutions. Accordingly, these duties were prescribed by Moses in such moderation, as was fitted to promote the end of them. But, in process of time, they came to be multiplied prodigiously. For the ancient doctors, to secure the observation of those precepts that were really of divine institution, added many

commandments of their own as fences unto the former; and the people, to show their zeal, obeyed them. For example, because the law, Lev. xv. 11., saith, “Whomsoever he toucheth that hath the issue, (and hath not rinsed his hands in water,) he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even;” the people were ordered to wash their hands carefully, and to bathe themselves immediately on their return from places of public concourse, and before they sat down to meat, lest by touching some unclean person in the crowd, they might have defiled themselves. The Pharisees, therefore, being very zealous in these trifles, would eat at no time, *unless they washed their hands* with the greatest care; and when they came from the market place, they would not sit down to table, till they had first *bathed themselves*. From this source came that endless variety of purifications not prescribed in the law, but ordained by the elders, such as the *washing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and of tables*, not because they were dirty, but from a principle of religion, or rather, of superstition.” Calmet says, *Article BAPTISM*: “All legal pollutions were cleansed by baptism, or by plunging into water. Certain diseases, natural to men and women, were to be purified by bathing;” Dr. Gill has shown, in his notes on Mark vii. 4., that the Jews did use *immersion*, in the ceremonial purification, not only of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables, but also of beds, couches, pillows, and bolsters; and has quoted canons in which immersion of these is explicitly enjoined. The argument, therefore, that “to suppose that beds or couches were immersed, would be unreasonable,” is an argument founded on a supposition, that is contrary to demonstrated fact. Dr. W. says, “Divers washings are mentioned, Heb. ix. 10. The original is *διαφοροῖς βαπτισμοῖς*, *divers baptisms*. These were not all performed in one way; and certainly not by *immersion*. The divers baptisms, or ablutions, mentioned Heb ix. 10., doubtless, included all the different ablutions, or ceremonial cleansings, prescribed in the Mosaic law. These were performed in different ways, but chiefly, by *sprinkling consecrated water*.” That all the ceremonial purifications were intended by the apostle to be included in the phrase *divers baptisms*, is a supposition entirely gratuitous. His words are:—“Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances;” or according to the translation of

Macknight, "Divers immersions and ordinances concerning the flesh." The *carnal ordinances* are certainly much more comprehensive in signification, than the *divers baptisms* or *immersions*, and include all the ceremonies for the purification of the flesh, such as that mentioned in verse 13 of the chapter: "The ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:" that is, the sprinkling of the consecrated water, made of the ashes of the red heifer, was an ordinance for the purifying of the flesh, a carnal ordinance, an ordinance concerning the flesh. There is, therefore, no ground for the affirmation, that the purifications which were performed by sprinkling consecrated water, were "doubtless included" in the *divers baptisms* mentioned by the Apostles. But it is said, "The adjective *διαφορος*, signifies *different, of various kinds, dissimilar*, as in Rom. xii. 6. But when the Apostle says, in Rom. xii., 6.; "Having then, gifts differing according to the grace given us," did he mean that some of these gifts were not really *gifts*, but something *different from gifts*? Certainly, he meant no such thing: but as the context clearly shows, he meant that they were all *truly gifts*, but given for different purposes; for prophecy, for ministry, for teaching, for exhortation, &c. In like manner, when he says *divers baptisms, or immersions*, he means that they are all really baptisms or immersions, however they may differ in other respects. The immersion on divers occasions, for divers purposes, of divers persons and things, as of priests and people, sacrifices, vessels, &c. constituted *divers immersions*, without the necessity of supposing that some of those immersions were performed by *sprinkling*. Had the words been *διαφοροις ραντισμοις*, *divers sprinklings*; would Dr. W. have argued that some of the sprinklings were performed by immersion?

THE RITUAL SIGNIFICATION OF BAPTIZE.

The most plausible argument ever urged in favour of a partial application of water, for baptism, is that which Dr. W. thus states, p. 152. But even if it were the case, that *βαπτίζω* always signifies *to dip, or immerse all over in water*, when applied to other subjects; it would by no means certainly follow that it has this signification, when applied to the Christian rite of *baptism*. There may be sufficient reasons,

use, should not be performed in a manner exactly in conformity with the common signification of that word. This we well know is the case with the word by which the other Christian ordinance is denoted. The word supper, in English, and $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\upsilon\omicron\nu$, in Greek, have a very different sense, when applied to that institution, from what they have in ordinary cases. Eating a morsel of bread does not constitute a supper, a principal meal; although this is the common signification of $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\upsilon\omicron\nu$. But in this religions rite, eating a small morsel of bread is called a supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. And the apostle charged the Corinthians with abusing the ordinance, because they made use of more food, than the design of the ordinance required. Now if the word which denotes one Christian rite, has a sense so widely different from its usual sense; why may it not be so with the word which denotes the other Christian rite? As $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\upsilon\omicron\nu$, in reference to one rite, signifies, not a usual meal, but only a very small quantity of bread; why may not $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$, in reference to the other rite, signify not a complete dipping or washing, but the application of water in a small degree? This would present the two institutions in the same light."

This argument is provided as a resort, in case it should be proved that $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$ means to dip, or immerse all over in water. So far, therefore, as this argument is concerned, we may, in our reply, take it as granted to us, that this is the common signification of the word, and that both in the commission and every where else, it may be rendered *immerse*, with as much propriety as $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\upsilon\omicron\nu$ is rendered supper in 1 Cor. xi. 20.

We should here consider the fact, that there is but a single instance of the use of $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\upsilon\omicron\nu$, in which it is supposed to have this peculiar signification, namely, 1 Cor. xi. 20. The instances are exceedingly numerous in which other words are used with reference to religious rites, and even $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\upsilon\omicron\nu$ is repeatedly used with reference to the paschal supper. In all these instances it is an invariable rule, that words when applied to religious rites have the same signification as in other cases, and are subject to the same rules of interpretation. If $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\upsilon\omicron\nu$ in 1 Cor. xi. 20., is an exception, it is a solitary exception. It is certainly the part of true criticism, in determining the meaning of $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$, to follow the general rule, rather than the single exception. Besides, we have frequent use of $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\omega$ with reference to religious rites. See the examples before

quoted from the LXX. The Jewish priests seem never to have thought, that when Moses enjoined *dipping* in religious rites, he meant a diminutive dipping, or one that might be performed by sprinkling, and no one has suggested, that these priests mistook the meaning of their lawgiver. Is it not infinitely more probable that βαπτίζω follows βαπτω, in obeying the general rule, than that it follows a very different word in a solitary deviation from all rule and analogy?

If upon a single instance, we should establish it as a rule, that words, when applied to a religious rite, may have a meaning which they obtain no where else, who will limit the application of this rule, and tell us, how many of the words which relate to a religious rite, have an extraordinary meaning, or how widely their meaning differs from that which they obtain elsewhere? Perhaps the words εσθιω, and πινω, although they mean every where else *to eat* and *to drink*, do, when applied to a religious rite, mean only *to handle* and *to look upon*. Who will determine for us? Has the legislator of the church committed to any one a lexicon of ritual terms, by which his simple hearted disciples may find out what he meant? Or has he given to any persons on earth, an authority to decree what ceremonies they may think proper, by assigning to all the ritual terms of scripture what sense they please? That the terms used in reference to religious rites may sometimes have a figurative rather than the literal meaning, sometimes a secondary sense rather than the primary, every one will admit: but this is what happens in all other speaking or writing, and the same rule of criticism is to be applied in this as in other cases: namely, to prefer the literal and primary signification, if nothing forbids. Thus we understand the word *is*, in the phrase "this is my body," to have the sense of *represents*: because the literal primary signification would make the sense absurd and false: but the word has the same sense when not applied to a religious rite, as in the phrase, "The field *is* the world," For the same reason, the phrase, "As often as ye drink this cup," is to be interpreted according to a common figure of speech, "As often as ye drink of the *liquor contained in this cup*." But the same literal sense of the terms, and the same rules of figurative interpretation are found here, as in all other cases.

It deserves to be noticed further, that βαπτίζω, and δειπνω, are differently circumstanced in their application to the two

ordinances: one of them is found in the words of Christ's command; the other is not, but is, at most, only a name which the ordinance has received. Our conduct, in obeying the commands of Christ, is to be regulated, not by the names which his institutions may receive, but by the words of his commands. We conceive that believers are said in scripture to be *buried* in baptism, at least, twice as often as the eucharist is called a *supper*: baptism may, therefore, be called a burial, yet no one would infer hence, that the body should be left for a long time under water, as in a real interment. Baptisms represent a real *burial*, in which the body of Christ continued three days in the grave. The eucharist represents the free and abundant communion, in which the Lord *supps* with his people, Rev. iii. 20., in which the great *supper* is spread, Luke xiv. 16, and which will be perfected at the marriage *supper* of the Lamb, Rev. xix. 9. Yet Christ did not say, "Go teach all nations *burying* them," nor, "Take a *supper* in remembrance of me." His command in the latter case is, *eat* this bread, and *drink* this cup, and he did not institute this ordinance as a *supper*, but *after supper*. Now if the command is *eat, drink*, could this command be obeyed any otherwise than by eating and drinking? Would it suffice only to apply the bread and cup to the lips? In like manner, when Christ said, "Go, teach all nations *immersing* them," can the command be obeyed any otherwise than by performing a real immersion? In the eucharist, he commanded to eat bread, and drink wine, but not to take a full meal; and we know from the circumstance that this ordinance was instituted immediately after the disciples had taken a full meal, that a full meal was not intended. The Corinthians, when they converted this ordinance into a full meal, did truly eat and drink, yet they did not fulfil the command more strictly and literally than we do; while on the other hand, they departed from the example and manifest intention of Christ, and were censured for so doing by the Apostle. If we do not literally and fully obey the divine command, when we restrict ourselves in this ordinance to a morsel of bread, and a few drops of wine, we do wrong so to restrict ourselves, and as you have observed in another case, we ought rather to undo the wrong than establish it as a precedent.

What gives the argument we are considering much greater plausibility, than it would otherwise possess, is the fact that

the name, *the Lord's Supper*, has become the name generally applied to this ordinance, both in common discourse and theological writing, just as baptism is to the other ordinance. However freely this name may be tolerated in common discourse, it should be remembered, when important arguments are concerned, that it is not a name commonly used in Scripture. We every where meet with the terms, *baptism* and *baptize*, as applied to one ordinance, but in all the word of God, there is only a single instance, in which the term *supper* is supposed to be applied to the other, and concerning this solitary instance, we have the following remark of Parkhurst, under the word $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\omega\nu$: " $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\alpha\kappa\omega\nu$ $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\omega\nu$, the *Lord's Supper*, occurs in 1 Cor. xi. 20. It appears, from this and the following verses, that the appellation does not strictly mean the eucharist, but a supper in imitation of that of which our Lord partook, when he instituted the eucharist. For this remark I am indebted to Dr. Bell." Dr. Guyse says on this verse: "I see no reason to suppose, as MANY do, that the Apostle here refers to their *Love Feasts*." Schoettgen, in his enlargement of Pasor's Lexicon, *Article* ΑΓΑΠΑΙ , [*Love feasts*,] says; "So were called those feasts, which were celebrated by Christians either before or after the use of the holy communion. See 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21. *Joach. Hildebrandi Antiq.* p. 176. *Schurzfleischii diss.* 86. *de veteri agaparum ritu.*" See also Calmet's dictionary, article ΑΓΑΡÆ , at the close of which article (*Taylor's edition*,) we have the following sentence: "However, we must, at any rate, vindicate the Corinthians from that gross profanation of the *eucharist*, with which, from our translation, or rather from our common acceptation of the phrase 'Lord's Supper,' they have been reproached." It seems, therefore, that in the judgment of many eminent men, we have not a single instance in scripture, in which the eucharist is called the Lord's supper. Their opinion, if correct, sweeps away at once, the whole foundation on which this plausible argument rests.

I think, it deserves to be inquired whether the Apostle, in this verse, intended $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\alpha\kappa\omega\nu$ $\delta\epsilon\iota\pi\omega\nu$ for the name of any institution either divine or human. Had he so intended, it would have been natural to prefix the definite article which he has not done. Middleton says, "The article *may* here be omitted by the same *license* by which it is so frequently wanting before Κυρίως : in the same manner as *national appellations*

partake of the license which is allowed to proper names." This is, perhaps, one of the instances meant by professor Stewart, (Translation of Winer's Greek Grammar, p. 59.) in which he says, Middleton has "cut the knot without untying it." The translation of Wakefield expresses all that is in the original: "So then, when ye meet together, *it is not to eat a supper of the Lord.*" The Corinthians took a *full meal, a real supper*, even to excess, both in eating and drinking. The Apostle denies that this was a supper of the Lord. But he no where affirms that "the eating of a small morsel, is a supper," as Dr. W. has stated in the premises of his argument. Middleton has made the following quotation from *Michaelis*: "In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, we find the plainest indications that they celebrated *Sunday*. They assembled on the first day of the week, (*κατα μιαν σαββατων*;) and the expression *κυριακον δειπνον*, 1 Cor. xi. 20. may be translated as in the Syriac version, "a meal which is proper for the Lord's day, or a Sunday meal." But it is of no importance to our present argument, whether the phrase, "*it is not to eat a supper of the Lord,*" means, it is not to eat a feast *which the Lord has instituted*, or it is not to eat a feast *which the Lord can approve*; or, it is not to eat a feast *proper for the Lord's day*. According to any of these interpretations, the phrase has no definite reference to an institution either human or divine.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

Having ascertained, that according to fair rules of scripture interpretation, βαπτίζω means *to immerse*, when applied to the Christian ordinance; we have before us, in the commission, a positive command for immersion; and in the scripture history positive proof that believers were anciently immersed. Every declaration, that any were baptized, is proof as direct and positive as language can make it, that they were immersed. Therefore, if Dr. W. could succeed in showing, that the *circumstances*, which attend the several instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament, do not prove that immersion is the only proper mode, he would only take away from us the circumstantial proof, leaving us in full possession of that which is positive. If, even all the circumstances could be shown to be against the probability of these persons having

been immersed, they would operate against the credibility of the history, but would not disprove that the facts are so stated. But, upon due examination, it will be found, that the circumstantial proof and the positive are on the same side. In the examination of the circumstantial evidence, I shall be more brief, as it is of less importance.

“John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, *because* there was much water there.” John iii. 23. This circumstance is manifestly favourable to immersion. To evade its force, the ‘much water’ is supposed by Dr. W. to have been necessary for the accommodation of the crowd that attended his ministry, and not for the purpose of baptizing, but this is not the sense which naturally strikes the mind on reading the passage. The suggestion that ἕδατα πολλα means ‘many springs or streams of water,’ I did not expect from Dr. W. See Dr. Doddridge’s note on the place.

That John baptized *in Jordan*, Mat. iii. 6, is another circumstance favourable to immersion. With this agrees the statement, that both the candidate and the administrator went down *into* the water for the performing of this duty, and when it had been performed, *came up out of* the water, Acts viii. 38, 39. The translations *in, into, out of*, are in these connexions unquestionably correct, according to the *usus loquendi*; and according to the same rule, Mat. iii. 11, should be rendered, ‘I indeed baptize you *in* water, &c.’ See Dr. Campbell’s note. If ‘to baptize *in Jordan*,’ and ‘to baptize *in* water,’ mean that the baptized were *put in* the water of the river, they furnish *positive* proof of immersion. If they mean that the baptizer and the baptized stood in the river, (and the first of the phrases may mean nothing more,) they contain only *circumstantial* proof. ‘To go down into the water,’ and ‘to come up out of the water,’ do not express the act of immersion, but preparatory and consequent acts, and are therefore only circumstantial proof; but it is circumstantial proof exceedingly strong, that the administrator and the subjects should go down into the water or stand in the river for the performance of the rite. The preposition *ex*, *out of*, is used to express the coming forth of Philip and the Eunuch from the water after baptism, but that which is used in the case of the Saviour, is not *ex* but *απο*. Dr. W. has laid hold of this fact, and says, (which I am willing to grant,) that this preposition generally signifies *from*. After having been im-

mersed, Jesus 1, emerged *from* the water *in* which he had been baptized; 2, and then came up *out of* the water *into* which he had gone down; 3, and lastly, departed *from* the river *to* which he had come. If the phrase *αεβη απο του υδατος*, means the first of these, as Dr. Campbell seems to have thought, it affords positive proof of immersion; if it means the second, as was perhaps the opinion of our translators, it contains exceedingly strong circumstantial proof to the same effect; if it means the third, as Dr. W. thinks, the proof is less strong, but it is certainly still favourable to immersion. Why on the supposition of any other mode than immersion did they go "into the river where the water was a few inches deep," or "to the edge of the river," or, I may add, even in sight of it? Do those who practise sprinkling, go to rivers? If much water was necessary for the multitude, yet why go to the river for *baptism*? We might here by way of retort, ask, should we expect to hear of repairing to rivers for baptism in a history of *Pædobaptist Missions*?

On the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch, the Dr. observes, "that if going down into the water proves that he was wholly immersed, it proves the same of Philip;" but this is a mutilated account of the matter, for it is said, that "*they went down both of them into the water, and he baptized him*"; that is, one of them immersed the other. Was there no immersion then, on that occasion? If not, by what words could a Greek writer describe such an action; or cannot that copious language express this action at all, even when it describes a combination of the strongest circumstances, and subjoins thereto an express declaration? See Dr. Doddridge's note on this place.

In reference to the case of the Jailer, it is abundantly sufficient for us, simply to keep in mind, that Philippi was situated by a river side, and that it was easy to baptize in the night, and safer, under existing circumstances, to attend to it in the night than in the day time. The historian affirms that the Jailer was baptized, i. e. immersed, and there is certainly no circumstance mentioned that implies an impossibility of immersion. On the contrary, it is a circumstance unfavourable to any other supposition, that the baptism was performed *out of the house*, for it is said expressly, that after having been baptized, "he brought them *into his house*." This circumstance will have still more weight, if we suppose that when

“they preached the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house,” they were assembled *in the house*, since in that case it will appear that they went out of the house for the purpose of performing the baptism. Dr. W. says, that at the time of preaching to the household, “they were clearly not out of the limits of the prison,” but for the proof of this fact, (to use the words with which he concludes his paragraph,) “I would merely ask what evidence he finds of this in the New Testament?” We affirm, that there was a river near, and have Scripture proof, see ver. 13, of the chapter; but although it is usual in eastern countries to have tanks of water in their prison yards, as well as in the yards and gardens of their private houses, (*see Judson’s sermon on baptism preached at Calcutta,*) we do not affirm that the prison at Philippi may not have been an exception, and we have not the scripture evidence Dr. W. calls for on this point, unless he will allow us the privilege used by himself on another occasion, p. 98, 99, of urging the *silence* of scripture for proof.

The remarks, p. 156, on the baptism of the three thousand, remind me of the statements which some have made concerning the river Jordan. It has been affirmed, that it was a mere rivulet, and that it was impracticable to immerse a person in it! Can any one, who reflects a moment on it, suppose, that a city so populous and of such consequence as Jerusalem was, should be so destitute of water as the Dr. represents it? He ought to have borne in mind, that Jerusalem contained a very great multitude of people beside its own inhabitants at the time referred to, and, according to him, they needed much water at all events. Men forget to be consistent oftentimes, when supporting a favourite hypothesis. “It was about the twentieth of March,” he informs us, “and there was no rain in Jerusalem at that season.” This is a mistake, for the twentieth of March was about the time of the latter rain in Judea. To do justice to Dr. W., we must suppose this a typographical error. The feast of Pentecost corresponding to our Whitsuntide, happened near the last of May. But even at this season an absolute scarcity of water at Jerusalem cannot be supposed, since all the tribes of Israel were required to assemble there annually for the celebration of this feast. Dr. Macknight, speaking of the six water-pots, mentioned John ii. 6, says, see Harmony, sec. XIX. “They were placed there some of them for the cleansing of cups and tables,

and others for such purifications as required the immersion of the whole body. They were therefore of great capacity." If in Cana, a remote village of Galilee, a poor family not able to furnish a marriage feast with wine, were thus provided with the means necessary for ceremonial purification by immersion, how abundant must have been the provision for this purpose in the city of Jerusalem, the centre of all their ceremonial worship; and this provision was necessary not for the inhabitants of the city only, but also for the immense crowds who attended their religious festivals, and who on these occasions must have had access to such places of purification. "The brook Kidron," says Dr. W., "was dry."—"I would merely ask what evidence he finds of this in the New Testament?"—He says, further, "And there was no stream or fountain of water in Jerusalem, or near it, except the pool of Siloam or Siloah; (also called Gihon, 2 Chron. xxxii. 30,) which is a fountain of water not far from the southeast corner of the city, at the foot of Mount Zion and Moriah." A reader of this statement should consult Calmet's Dictionary, *articles* GIHON and SILOAM; or Dr. Clarke, on 2 Chron. xxxii. 30, Isaiah xxii. 9, and John ix. 7; also, Fragment No. 66, by the editor of Calmet's Dictionary.* See moreover, 2

* Chateaubriand visited Jerusalem about twenty years ago. The following extracts are from his *Travels*, pages 311, 312, 353.—"Having descended Mount Sion on the east side, we came, at its foot, to the fountain and pool of Siloe, where Christ restored sight to the blind man. The spring issues from a rock, and runs in a silent stream.—The pool, or rather the two pools of the same name, are quite close to the spring.—Here you also find a village called Siloan. At the foot of this village is another fountain, denominated in Scripture Rogel. Opposite to this fountain is a third, which receives its name from the blessed Virgin. The Virgin's fountain mingles its stream with that of the fountain of Siloe.

"We have now nothing left of the primitive architecture of the Jews at Jerusalem, except the pool of Bethesda. This is still to be seen near St. Stephen's gate, and it bounded the temple on the north. It is a reservoir, one hundred and fifty feet long, and forty wide.—The pool is now dry, and half filled up.—On the west side may also be seen, two arches,

Chron. xxxii. 4, with 2 Kings xviii. 17, and xx. 20 ; Neh. ii. 14, and iii. 15, 16, and John v. 2, and ix. 7 ; and Dr. Gill on Acts ii. 41. Whatever places of bathing and ceremonial purification by immersion were open to the immense multitudes from every nation under heaven, assembled on this memorable occasion, were of course accessible to the Apostles and their converts ; for they had such favour with the people, that opposers seem to have been struck dumb. As to changes of raiment, about which our author make a difficulty, they certainly needed to have brought these with them for their convenience in attending upon the feast ; and if any were by chance destitute, those warm hearted converts, who called none of the things which they possessed their own, would certainly have been ready to furnish them. In seasons of revivals as that was, people's hearts and hands were open, and trifles would not hinder them from obeying their Lord, and following his example, as they appear to have been in good earnest. They would not stand long to reason and cavil about immersion, as cold critics do ; but in the ardour of their love, would submit, without delay, to every divine institution. But there is another difficulty, we are told, more serious still. How could so many be immersed in so short a time ? This formidable mountain is soon removed. I would ask then, how much longer would it take to immerse a person, than to sprinkle him ? The difference, every thing else being equal, would be very trifling. There is no necessity of supposing that all the converts were baptized by the Apos-

which probably led to an aqueduct, that carried the water into the interior of the temple."

The dimensions of the pool of Bethesda, as given by Maundrell, are 120 paces long, 40 broad, and 8 deep. According to the dimensions as given by Chateaubriand, it measures 380 feet around, so that 80 administrators of baptism might stand within its verge, 4 feet from each other, and be engaged in baptizing at the same moment: and each one, not having 40 to baptize, the whole 3000 might have been baptized in this single pool in less than one hour. But there were other pools, and twelve baptizing places, mentioned by Dr. Gill, in the temple, and, no doubt, many cisterns, or tanks, belonging to such of the converts as dwelt in Jerusalem.

ties. The seventy Disciples, whom Jesus had commissioned to preach his gospel, were in all probability present, and the Apostles might readily command the services of such assistants. See Acts x. 48. In this case there were not forty to be baptized by each administrator, including the Apostles.

The allusions in scripture to the ordinance of baptism, especially those in Rom. vi. 3, 4, Col. ii. 12, contain, in my opinion, notwithstanding what Dr. W. has said, circumstantial proof in favour of immersion; but as we are in no need of this argument, I shall not follow him in his laboured attempt to set it aside. As he admits the authority of Dr. Doddridge to have weight, p. 89, I would refer to what that writer has said on this subject. "It seems," says Dr. D., "to be the part of candour to confess, that here is an allusion to the manner of baptizing by immersion, as most usual in these early times." Note on Rom. vi. 3, 4; see also Macknight, on both these passages. Dr. W. says, p. 160, "After all, it will be seen, that there is no small difficulty in finding any great resemblance between a man's being dipped or plunged in water, and Christ's being laid in a sepulchre, which was hewn out of a rock." The same might be said with respect to the resemblance between a loaf of bread and the body of Christ. A well executed picture of the crucifixion, such as may be seen in Catholic chapels, has much more resemblance to the body of Christ, than is furnished by a piece of bread; yet considering all the ends to be answered by the eucharist, the Divine wisdom has determined that we should keep Christ's death in memory, not by looking at a crucifix, but by the eating of bread. In like manner some means might have been devised for representing the burial and resurrection of Christ, which would have borne a nearer resemblance thereto than immersion in water does. But when we consider that baptism not only represents the burial and resurrection of Christ, but also our fellowship therewith, and the removal or washing away of our guilt thereby, nothing could more conveniently, aptly, and instructively accomplish all these ends at once.

Dr. Woods, after some further remarks, comes finally to the conclusion, that Christ and his Apostles left the mode of baptism *undecided*. That our English translators, by retaining a Greek word instead of translating it, have done so, we admit; but that the sacred writers have done so, we shall not

soon concede. The Greek church have continued to immerse from the earliest times. One would think that the Greeks understood their own language better than strangers, and that in a controversy between them and men of other nations, as to the meaning of a word in their native tongue, we need not long hesitate whose definition to prefer. Indeed, as already stated, a number of the most learned and pious Pædobaptists have candidly conceded all for which we plead in reference to the import of the language of scripture on this subject.

Dr. Woods assumes, p. 164, that we rely on the testimony of Ecclesiastical History as a conclusive argument in favour of baptizing by immersion, and that, therefore, we ought to admit the same testimony in favour of *infant* baptism. We can inform him, that in reference to ecclesiastical history, while he admits it to be a valid argument in favour of immersion, we esteem it as collateral evidence only; and further, that he is welcome to all the aid which the history of the church during the first two centuries, will afford him in support of infant baptism.

IMPORTANCE OF THE MODE.

“Baptism, as to the mode of it,” we are told, “is not of any essential consequence,” p. 164. This I think is very dangerous ground to go upon. He who is now indifferent as to the mode, may become indifferent as to the thing itself, and to other things that God has commanded, and who can tell where his indifference will end? We, my brother, have a very instructive lesson in the condition of the Society of Friends in this vicinity at this moment. The founders and leaders of this people taught them that baptism and the Lord’s supper were useless things, and now how much further have they gone! The result seems to be, that the vital and distinguishing principles of christianity, total depravity, regeneration, trinity, atonement, and resurrection, by the majority of that people, are either totally discarded, or fritted away into allegories. The same thing may be observed of the whole tribes of Arians, Socinians, Universalists, &c.; they all in general hold, what have been rightly termed positive institutions, as being very unimportant things, and we see where they have landed, or rather we see where they have been

wrecked, and should take warning. The sentiment expressed by Bishop Taylor, commends itself to my mind with reference to any positive institute. "That it be obeyed or not obeyed is all the question and all the variety.—If it can be obeyed, it must: if not, it must be let alone." I would oppose this noble sentiment, to all that Dr. W. has written about *usage*, *decency*, and *conveniency*.

That God blesses his cause among both Baptists and Pædobaptists, is a proof, not that different modes of baptism are equally acceptable to him, as our author insinuates, p. 169, but that he is gracious to us, notwithstanding our errors and disobedience. We are informed, "that there are some Christians and some teachers of religion, who show an unaccountable forwardness to introduce discussions on the mode of baptism." I too might relate some things which I have known on the subject of party zeal in religion. I have heard it said, in a time of revival, such a person has embraced religion, and has come out in sentiment a decided Baptist. At this I did not wonder, for to me it is natural enough to suppose, that a sincere inquiring soul, with the Bible in his hand, would feel it his duty to follow the example of the Saviour, and thus begin to keep his commandments. But no sooner has this been noised abroad, than the individual has been visited by many for the purpose of persuading him that something else than immersion would answer; and it is well, if, when nothing else would avail, he was not told that the Baptists originated with the mad men of Munster, and that, moreover, they held that most dreadful tenet, *close communion*. I sincerely wish, with our author, that the number of those who act thus, may be few, and that persons may be left to do what their consciences and their Bibles unite in teaching them to be an incumbent duty. Further, a little of that charity and forbearance which the Dr. so highly recommends, will enable our Pædobaptist brethren to make some allowance for us in this matter. The *mode* of baptism, as they term it, is with us baptism itself; and they must be fully apprized, that in our estimation a person who has not been immersed, has not been baptized. On the other hand, if a believer has been immersed, they never question his having been baptized. As, therefore, we do not stand on equal ground, we think that we are entitled to some indulgence.

According to their own account, they contend for the *mode* only of doing the thing; but we contend for the *thing itself*.

There are many other topics in these Lectures, on which I might offer some remarks, but I have already indulged in observations far beyond what I intended. I conclude, therefore, by a few general reflections.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

1. The method of conducting the Baptismal Controversy, seems to be greatly improving. It is now managed with more of Christian temper. We have reason to praise God, and congratulate our brethren on this state of things.

2. The progress of truth on the subject of baptism in this country, especially since the Revolution, has been astonishing. Thanks be given to the Author of all good, that notwithstanding our numerous deficiencies and great unworthiness as a denomination, he has made us the instruments of propagating to such a degree, correct sentiments relative to an important institute of the Christian religion, as well as of the conversion of many sinners unto himself.

3. I trust we feel disposed promptly and fully to reciprocate the friendly and exalted sentiments with which Dr. Woods closes his treatise. Although we feel it to be an imperious duty to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, even if in so doing we should differ from those whom we otherwise love and esteem, yet we look forward with unspeakable delight to the period when, by the progress of light and truth, Christians shall dwell together in unity of sentiment and feeling. And this we think will be brought about, not by their neglecting or treating as nonessential, any of the commands of their Lord; but by their being of one heart and one soul, in believing what God says, and in doing what he enjoins.

4. Finally, while we have cause to lament the diversity of sentiment and practice which prevails among the professed followers of Jesus Christ, let us rejoice in prospect of that complete felicity, where all our errors and imperfections shall be exchanged for truth and consummate holiness. "Here we know in part, and we prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away."

I remain your brother in the Lord,

DAVID.

APPENDIX.

FROM DR. RYLAND.



Βαπτω is thus used in Heathen authors.

Homer.—As when a smith, to harden an iron hatchet, or pole-ax, *βαπτει* dips it in cold water.—*Odyssey*, book ix. line 392.

Plato uses the word several times in one paragraph. *Οι βαφεις, επιδαν βουληθωσι βαψαι ερια*, The *Dyers*, when they are minded to dip wool, &c.—*ευτω δε βαπτουσι*, and so they dip it, &c. *De Republica*, Book iv. p. 637. Or, *Serranus's edition of Plato's Works*, Vol. II. p. 429.

Lycophron.—The child *βαψει* shall plunge his sword into the viper's bowels.—*Cassandra*, ver. 1121.

Euripides.—Go, take the water-pot—and *βαψας*' dip it in the sea.—*Hecuba*, Act iii. ver. 609.

Theocritus.—Every morning my servant *βαψαι* shall dip me a cup of honey.—*Idyllium* v., ver. 126.

The boy let down a capacious pitcher, making haste *βαψαι* to dip it.—*Idyllium* xiii. ver. 47.

Marcus Antonius.—A conqueror in that noble strife of mastering the passions, *βεβαμμενον* immersed entirely in justice. (*penitus justitia imbutum.*)—Lib. iii. p. 37.

The mind *βαπτεται* is imbued by the thoughts, *βαπτει* dip or imbue it, therefore, in the constant meditation of such thoughts.—Lib. v. p. 85. Glasgow edition.

Dionysius Halicarnassensis.—One plunging *βαψας* his spear between the other's ribs, who, at the same instant, pushed his into his enemy's belly.—*Antiq. Rom.* lib. v. p. 278.

JOSEPHUS, whose authority must be of singular weight, as being nearly contemporary with the apostles, and, like them, a Jew, writing in Greek, repeatedly uses the word *βαπτισμα*.

Describing the purification of the people at Sin, he says, "When any persons were defiled by a dead body, they put a little of these ashes into spring water, with hyssop, and (βαπτισαντες,) baptizing, i. e. *dipping*, or *immersing*, part of these ashes into it, (εξεραινον) they sprinkled them with it." Lib. iv. c. iv. § 6. p. 146. This quotation clearly shows the difference between baptizing or dipping, and rhanizing or sprinkling.

He says, concerning the ship in which Jonah attempted to flee from the presence of the Lord, the ship was about to be baptized, (βαπτιζεσθαι) i. e. sunk, or overwhelmed. Antiq. lib. ix. c. x. § 2. Hudson's edition, Vol. I. p. 419.

He uses the same word twice concerning the death of Aristobulus, the brother of Mariamne, who was drowned at Jericho, according to Herod's order, by certain Greeks, who enticed him into the water, to swim, and then, under pretence of play, βαπτιζοντες ουκ ανηκαν εως και πανταπασιν αποπνιζαι, baptizing, i. e. *immersing*, or putting him under water, they did not leave off until they had quite suffocated him. Jewish Antiq. book xv. vol. I. page 666.

He mentions the same event in his Wars of the Jews, book I. ch. xxii. § 2. "The young man was sent to Jericho, and there, according to his order, being *immersed* (βαπτιζομενος,) in a fish-pond, he came to his end." Vol. II. 1012.

N. B. Archbishop Usher, uses a word on this occasion, which being now become ludicrous, is sometimes *chosen* to describe our practice, (especially by such of our brethren as are most violent for candour,) "*ducking* him as he was swimming, as it were in sport and jest," &c. Should not our brethren be *certain* that their Lord was not immersed, before they prefer this low synonym to immersion?

Josephus, in his Life, speaking of his own voyage to Rome, and providential deliverance when shipwrecked, says, "βαπτισθεντος γαρ ημων του πλοιου, for our own ship being baptized (or overwhelmed) in the midst of the Adriatic Gulf, we being about the number of 600 persons, swam all night, and at day-break, about 80 were taken up by another ship."—Hudson's Josephus, II. 905.

He uses the same word figuratively in two other places.

In the Wars of the Jews, he says, "Many of the noble Jews, as though the city was on the point of being *overwhelm-*

ed, (βαπτίζομαι,) swam away, as it were, from the city.”—Vol. II. 1105.

Again, speaking of the heads of the robbers getting into Jerusalem, he says, “These very men, besides the seditions they made, *baptized* the city, (εβαπτισαν την πολιν,) i. e. *overwhelmed* it, *plunged* it into ruin, or were the cause of its utter destruction.”—Vol. II. 1169.

The same author uses επιβαπτίζω figuratively for totally overwhelming. So, speaking of the sons of Herod, he says, “This, as the last storm, (επιβαπτισεν) *epibaptized* or *utterly overwhelmed*, the young men, already weather-beaten.”—Vol. II. 1024.

And when the inhabitants of Jotapata urged him to stay there, they pressed him not “to leave his friends, nor, as it were, to leap out of a ship enduring a storm, into which he had come in a calm. For the city must be *epibaptized*, or *utterly overwhelmed*, (επιβαπτισειν) no one daring to oppose its enemies, if he, who kept their courage up, should depart.”—Vol. II. 1132.

Βαπτίζω occurs in the following passages from heathen authors.

Esop's Fables, Oxford edition, 1698, p. 88. Fable 156, the Ape and the Dolphin.—“The dolphin vexed at such a falsehood, βαπτίζων αυτον απεκτεινεν, *immersing* him, killed him, i. e. by plunging him into the water. Let any child judge what the word means here.

Orpheus, in his *Argonautics*, line 510, p. 78.—Αλλ' οτε Ωκεανοιο ροον βαπτίζετο Τιταν—But when the sun *immerses* himself in the water of the ocean.

Anacreon, White and Miller's edition, 1802, p. 92, νθ. ascribed in some editions to Julian the Egyptian. In an old edition there is a Latin translation by the celebrated Philip Melancthon.—“Platting a garland once, I found Cupid among the roses:—taking hold of him by the wings, εβαπτισ' εις τον οινον, I *immersed* him, or *plunged* him into wine, and drank him up with it,” &c.

An old verse has often been quoted from *Plutarch*,—Ασκος βαπτίζη, δυναι δε τοι ουθεμις εσι,—The bladder may be *dipped*, but never drowned, or it may be immersed, but it cannot be kept under water.

Polybius, speaking of a sea-fight between the Carthagi-

nians and the Romans, says, "They *immersed*, (or sunk) βαπτίζον, many of the vessels of the Romans."

Basil, the Christian father, speaks of "suffering with those that were *immersed* or plunged in the sea." (βαπτίζομενοις.)

Gregory Nazianzen.—"That we may not be *immersed* or sunk with the ship and the crew." (βαπτισθωμεν.)

Polybius.—"Such a storm suddenly arose, through all the country, that the ships were baptized, or *immersed* in the Tyber."

Polybius, III. c. 72. (See Elzivir's *Livy*, book xxi.)—"The infantry crossed it with difficulty, baptized or *immersed* up to their breasts."

Porphyry, speaking of Styx, the fabulous river of hell, says, "The person that has been a sinner, having gone a little way into it, is *plunged*, or *immersed* up to the head." βαπτίζεται μέχρι κεφαλῆς. p. 282.

Strabo uses, μέχρι ομφαλου βαπτίζομενων. *Immersed* up to the middle.

Diodorus Siculus.—"Many land animals, carried away by the river Nile, being *immersed*, are destroyed; others escape, fleeing to higher places."

Plutarch uses this word figuratively, speaking of Otho's "being *immersed*, or *overwhelmed*, or *sunk*, (βεβαπτισμενος) in debts of fifty millions of drachmæ."

Plato speaks of his "knowing the youth to be *overwhelmed* or *immersed* in sophistry."

Strabo.—"But the lakes near Agrigentum have indeed the taste of sea-water, but a different nature, for it does not befall the things which cannot swim *to be immersed*, (βαπτίζεσθαι,) but they swim on the surface like wood." *Geography*, l. ix. p. 421.

He speaks of a river, in another place, whose waters are so buoyant "that if an arrow be thrown in, μολλις βαπτίζεσθαι, it would scarcely be *immersed*, or would hardly *sink*." l. xii. p. 809.

He mentions also a lake on the top of which bitumen floats, in which a man cannot be *immersed*, βαπτίζεσθαι, but is borne up by the water. l. xvi. p. 1108.

Dion Cassius.—"Such a storm suddenly pervaded all the country, that the ships that were in the Tyber were *immersed* or *sunk*." τα πλοια τα εν τω Τιβεριδι βαπτισθηαι. Book xxxvii. § 57. Vol. I. p. 148.

(2)—“how would not his ship be *immersed* or *sunk* βαπτισθειη by the multitude of our rowers?” Book 1. § 18. Vol. I. p. 617.

(3)—“they were either *immersed*, (βαπτιζοντο,) their ships being bored through, or,” &c.

(4)—“these from above *immersing* (βαπτιζοντες) or sinking them (i. e. the ships) with stones and engines.”—Book 1. § 32. Vol. I. 647.

Diodorus Siculus.—“Most of the land animals, if they are intercepted by the river, are destroyed, being *immersed*. (βαπτιζομενα.) lib. 1. § 36. Vol. I. page 43. Amsterdam, 1746.

(2)—τους δε ιδιωτας ου βαπτιζουσι ταις εισφοραις. But the common people they do not *overwhelm* with taxes.—lib. 1. § 67. Vol. I. p. 85.

(3)—της δνεως βυθισθεισης, in the text, “whose ship being sunk.” In the note, “βαπτισθεισης, being *immersed*, is the Coislilian reading, which is sufficiently elegant. See Polybius, I. 51.” lib. xi. § 15. Vol. I. 417.

(4)—“the river being borne on with a more violent stream, (πολλους βαπτισει,) *immersed*, or *overwhelmed* many.” lib. 16. § 30. Vol. II. 143.

Heliodorus.—“killing some on the land, and *immersing* or *plunging* (βαπτιζοντων) others into the lake, with their boats and their little huts.” Ethiopia, lib. i. cap. xxx. page 55.

(2)—“perceiving that he was altogether abandoned to grief, and *overwhelmed* or *immersed* in calamity.”—τη συμφορα βαβαπτισμενον. Lib. ii. cap. iii. p. 65.

(3)—“since the things you met with have *overwhelmed* you. (βαπτιζεν. *Casus tui obruebant ac demergebant.*”) lib. v. cap. xvi. p. 227.

Life of Homer, ascribed to *Dionysius Halicarnensis*, “Homer speaks of the whole sword being so *immersed* (βαπτισθειτος) in blood, as to grow warm with it.”—*Opuscula Mythologica*, page 297.

Aristotle uses this word when speaking of the Phenicians that dwell at Cadiz, “who, sailing beyond the pillars of Hercules, came to certain uninhabited lands, which at the ebb, are used not to be *immersed* or *covered over with water*, βαπτιζεσθαι, but when the tide is at the full, the coast is quite inundated.”—*De Mirabilibus*, page 735.

Lucian represents Timon the man-hater as saying “if any one being carried away by a river, should stretch forth his

hands to me for aid, I would push him down when *sinking*, βαπτίζοντα, that he should never rise again." Vol. I. page 139.

The two most diminutive instances produced by Schwarzius are these:

Æschylus.—"Immersing his two edged sword in slaughters." Doubtless by *plunging* it into their bodies, not by holding it before a small puncture to be sprinkled.

Aristophanes, in *Plato*, says, "I am one of those who were *baptized* yesterday."—meaning, who drank much, or as an Englishman would say, who had well soaked ourselves, or were *immersed* in wine.

An instance has been quoted against us from HOMER'S Βατραχομυομαχία, or battle of the frogs and mice, where it is said of the death of the frog Crambophagus,

βαπτετο* δ' αϊματι λιμνη πορφυρω,

And the lake was tinged or dyed with purple blood: or it was *overwhelmed* with blood.

But let the burlesque nature of the poem be considered, where every thing is heightened to the most extravagant degree, and the gods are introduced as consulting about this tremendous war, and the word *immerse* would not be too strong for the Poet's design. The heart of this gigantic and heroic frog was so full of blood, that it made the lake so red, that a solid body dipped in blood could not have been redder.

But one passage is produced from ORIGEN, on which more stress is laid than on all others, in which he speaks of the wood of Elijah's sacrifice as being *baptized*, though the wood was certainly not *dipped* in water, but four barrels of water *poured* upon it three times over. Very true. But read the account in 1 Kings, xviii. 33—35, consider the object of the prophet to prevent all possibility of collusion, and then say if ORIGEN had written in English, might he not have used the word *immerse* with propriety, and without rendering its usual meaning ambiguous? Also, would not any of our opponents think such a three-fold soaking, as bad as even a trine immersion?†

References to immersion in the Fathers might by produced without end.

*—This is from βαπτω, not from βαπτίζω.

† The Reviewer in the *Evangelical Magazine* for 1813, p.

I will only mention one in Chrysostom, on Col. ii. 12. *εταφη ημων ο πρωτος ανθρωπος*, says he, *εταφη ουκ εν γη αλλ' εν υδατι*. Our first (or former) man is buried, he is buried not in earth, but in water.

Surely if these instances will not suffice, we must despair of settling the meaning of any word in a dead language; and if English should be as long disused as Greek, it may by and by be questioned, if the English Baptists themselves intended by pleading for *immersion*,* to insist on the propriety of putting the whole body under water.

No man can have a greater respect than myself, for my dear and venerable friend Mr. Scott, whom I consider as the best *practical Expositor* of Scripture that ever I read; but I think, if he were to re-examine the subject, and consider all the evidence here produced, he would hardly attribute it to our regarding "Jewish traditions more than either the language of Scripture or the Greek idiom," that we contend that *Baptism* always signifies *immersion*. See Note on Matt. iii. 6.

On the most impartial consideration, I am compelled in my conscience to believe, that there never was a word in any language, with which so much pains, management, and violence was ever used, to deprive it of its original meaning, as hath been employed with *βαπτω* and *βαπτίζω*. And I verily think, that if Christian baptism had never been instituted or never been altered, there is no word in the Greek language, whose meaning would have been less disputed.

ISAAC CAUSABON, at the end of *Whitaker's Greek Testament*, London, 1633, referring to Matt. iii. 5, 6, has these words, "*Hic enim fuit baptizandi ritus, ut in aquas immergerentur: quod vel ipsa vox βαπτίζειν declarat satis, quæ non significat δύνειν, quod est fundum petere cum sua pernicie, ita profecto non est επιπολαζειν. Differunt enim hæc tria, επιπολαζειν, βαπτίζειν, δύνειν. Unde intelligimus, non esse abs re quod jam pridem nonnulli disputarent, de toto corpore immergendo in ceremonia baptismi: Vocem enim βαπτίζειν urgebant.*" For this was the ancient rite of baptizing, that they should be

461, refers to a passage in ARISTOTLE. Why did he not insert the *whole* passage from Dr. GALE, pp. 116, 117!

* All that the Reviewer of Mr. Booth says, respecting Dr. Gale's confession that *βαπτω* does not always import a *total* immersion, applies *equally* to the English word *dip*. See Dr. Gale, p. 140.

immersed in water, which even the word βαπτίζειν sufficiently declares; which does not signify δύνειν, which is to sink fatally to the bottom;* so certainly it is not επιπολαζειν, to swim on the top. For these three differ, επιπολαζειν, βαπτίζειν, δύνειν, to swim on the surface, to immerse, to sink to the bottom. Whence we understand that it is not without ground, that some have disputed long ago, respecting the immersion of the whole body in the ceremony of baptism; for they urged the word βαπτίζειν."

I close with a remark of Dr. Campbell. "Another error in disputation, which is by far too common, is when one will admit nothing in the plea or arguments of an adversary to have the smallest weight. I have heard a disputant of this stamp, in defiance of etymology and use, maintain that the word rendered in the New Testament *Baptize*, means more properly to sprinkle, than to plunge, and in defiance of all antiquity, that the former method was the earliest, and for many centuries the most general practice in baptizing. One who argues in this manner, never fails, with persons of knowledge, to betray the cause he would defend; and though with respect to the vulgar, bold assertions generally succeed as well as arguments, sometimes better; yet a candid mind will disdain to take the help of a falsehood, even in support of truth." *Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence*, p. 480.

Some of our modern Pædobaptists are determined, however, that no one shall detect *them* in making the *least* concession, on either branch of this controversy; and they maintain that no concession is of any avail as to the meaning of the term, or the practice of the primitive church, unless the person who makes it, immediately alters his practice, and even though he retain his Pædobaptist sentiment, yet refuses to baptize any child except by immersion. Dr. Wall, Dr. Campbell, and *hundreds* more of their greatest scholars, according to these gentlemen, will have hard work to vindicate their integrity. We leave *them* to settle this controversy. We conceive that the force of truth, constrained them to make concessions which the force of custom prevented them from carrying into practice.

* Yet JOSEPHUS, POLYBIUS, DION, STRABO, DIODORUS, and HELIODORUS, sometimes used it in this sense.

ERRATA.

Page	Line	
5,	11	--for p. 35, read p. 55.
11,	13	--after as, read scholars.
13,	22	--for p. 85, read p. 94.
35,	1	--for intercourse, read improvement.
43,	13	--after introduced, read in its place.
49,	10	--for youth, read youths.
52,	12	--for immersions, read immersion.
59,	31	--for $\iota\omega$, read $\iota\omega$.
68,	24	--after according to, read the.
75,	6	--for xxiv. 35, read xxxiv. 25.
78,	4	from the bottom, for ζ , read σ .
84,	14	--for Apostles, read Apostle.
84,	at the bottom,	supply why a religious rite, though denoted by a word in common
85,	3	--for word, read words.
94,	9	--for make, read makes.



THREE
ADDITIONAL LETTERS
OF
DAVID AND JOHN,
CONTAINING
ANIMADVERSIONS
UPON
THE LECTURES OF DR. WOODS
ON
INFANT BAPTISM.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE COLUMBIAN STAR.

RE-PUBLISHED AT THE DEPOSITORY OF
THE BAPTIST GENERAL TRACT SOCIETY,
NO. 36 NORTH FIFTH STREET.
PHILADELPHIA.

1830.

To the Editor of the Columbian Star and Christian Index:

DEAR BROTHER—You had the kindness formerly to allow a place in your paper to the Letters, written by a christian friend and myself, containing animadversions upon the Lectures of Dr. Woods on Infant Baptism. These Lectures have passed through a second edition; and the alterations and additions that have been made, have given occasion for three additional Letters, which are now offered to you for publication. Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

DEAR BROTHER—You have been apprized for a considerable time that the Lectures of Dr. Woods on Infant Baptism have passed through a second edition. I obtained a copy yesterday and will send it to you by the earliest opportunity for your perusal. It contains thirty-one pages more than the former edition, besides an appendix of sixteen pages, and an additional preface of two pages.

KIND NOTICE OF THE LETTERS OF DAVID AND JOHN.

In the additional preface, Dr. W. has noticed our Letters in a very kind manner. Though you may regret, as I do, that he did not feel himself at liberty to reply to our arguments, yet I am sure you will be gratified to perceive the good spirit that his remarks evince. They are as follows:

“I wish to express my particular respect for those who have made remarks on my Lectures; particularly for those who wrote the Letters of David and John, and for the Author of the Numbers in the Christian Watchman, by Senex. Both these publications were kindly forwarded to me. The pamphlet containing the Letters above mentioned, which exhibits very respectable talents as well as candid and fraternal feelings, was rendered still more valuable to me, by a private and affectionate letter which accompanied it, from one of the authors.

To the reasoning contained in the publications above named, I decline any formal answer, in conformity with my previous, and uniform resolution. But it will not be difficult for men accustomed to controversy to see, that my silence in this case must be a matter of some self denial.

I take pleasure in acknowledging, that the strictures of my Baptist Brethren have been of real use to me, and have led me to correct some mistakes, to give to some of my expressions and arguments a more unexceptionable form, and to establish my position by some new considerations.—

Had I more time to devote to the subject, I should be able to derive more benefit still from the remarks of my opponents."

CONCESSIONS.

The next, which is the concluding paragraph of the preface, mentions that he has been induced to give a new examination to the arguments from ecclesiastical history; and that in this examination he has requested and obtained the aid of his colleague, the Rev. Professor Stuart. The result of this examination he states is an increased and full conviction that Ecclesiastical History affords a conclusive argument in favor of Infant Baptism. I was induced by these remarks to direct my first attention to the Lecture which contains the argument from Ecclesiastical History; and I find that, in this part of the work, the present edition differs considerably from the former. As I purpose to send you the book that you may read and judge for yourself what additional strength the argument has acquired in the present edition, I shall content myself with stating the alterations that have been made in so much of the argument as relates to the testimony of Justin Martyr and Irenæus, the first and oldest witnesses that are cited.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

Former Edition.

My first citation is from Justin Martyr, who was born near the close of the first century, and who wrote his apology, from which the citation is made, near the middle of the second century. Among those who were members of the church, he says, *there were many of both sexes, some sixty, and some seventy years old, who were made disciples from their infancy.* The word he uses is *ἐμαθητεύθησαν*, *they were proselyted, or made disciples;* the very word which Christ had used in his commission to his Apostles—"Go ye and make disciples of all nations," *μαθητεύσατε.* The persons referred to, Justin says, were made disciples *ἐκ παιδῶν*, from their *early childhood.* The

Present Edition.

A citation has commonly been made from the apology of Justin Martyr, written about the middle of the second century.—Among those who were members of the church, he says, *there were many of both sexes, some sixty, and some seventy years old, who were made disciples to Christ ἐκ παιδῶν, from their infancy or childhood.* The word he uses is *ἐμαθητεύθησαν*, *they were proselyted or made disciples.* Though I have no doubt of applying this word to infant children, who are publicly consecrated to God, and whom their parents and the church engage to instruct and train up for Christ; yet as the phrase, *ἐκ παιδῶν*, may relate to children who have come to years of under-

word is applied to the little children whom Christ took in his arms and blessed. It is evident therefore that Justin understood the command of Christ to *make disciples and baptize*, as applicable to little children. And he wrote only about one hundred years after Matthew, who records that command.

standing, as well as to infants, I am satisfied on a review of the testimony of Justin, that it cannot well be urged as conclusive in favor of pædobaptism. Still I think it altogether probable, and beyond any reasonable doubt, that Justin meant in this place to speak of those who were made disciples, or introduced into the school of Christ by *baptism* when they were infants.

You will perceive, from this comparison, that your strictures upon the argument which was founded upon the testimony of Justin Martyr, appear to have been of "real use;" but it is certain that they have not produced an "increased and full conviction," that this testimony "affords a conclusive argument in favor of Infant Baptism." The erroneous statement which you pointed out respecting the word used by the evangelists, for the children which Christ took up in his arms and blessed has been corrected; or, I ought rather to say it is not repeated. The argument is really given up. It is indeed still thought to be "beyond any reasonable doubt, that Justin meant those who were made disciples when they were infants." But opinions which are acknowledged to be without proof do not constitute argument. In your strictures it was satisfactorily demonstrated, as it appeared to me, not only that the word *παις* is applicable to any age from infancy to manhood, but also that in ordinary cases, it is not the term which would be used to denote a mere infant. It fell in with the design of Justin to give as early a date as possible to the discipleship of the persons whom he mentions. And since he carries back this date, not to their infancy, but to their youth or boyhood, the proper inference to be drawn, is, that these persons had *not* been made disciples when they were infants. Some consideration is due also to the fact, that the persons of whom Justin speaks, were, at the time, far advanced in age. Persons who have just entered upon their manhood, are not accustomed, when they speak of their boyhood, to include in it so many years as very aged persons do. It is altogether unnatural, in reviewing the history of one who has attained to the age of sixty or seventy years, to limit the period of his boyhood, to the first one, two, five, or even fifteen years of his life.

IRENÆUS.

Former Edition.

Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of John, was born near the close of the first century. He says, "Christ came to save all persons, who by him are born again unto God, (renascuntur in Deum,) *infants*, and *little ones*, and children, and youths, and elder persons."...In this argument we are not concerned at all with the opinions of Irenæus, as to the *efficacy* of baptism. Our only enquiry is, whether it appears from his writings, that Infant Baptism was the *prevailing practice*.—The passage above cited contains satisfactory proof of this, as it fairly admits of no construction which can lead to any other conclusion.

Present Edition.

Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, was born near the close of the first century. He says; "Christ came to save all persons, who by him are born again unto God, (renascuntur in Deum) *infants*, and *little ones*, and children, and youths, and elder persons."...In this argument we are not concerned at all with the opinions entertained by Irenæus as to the *efficacy* of *Baptism*. Our only inquiry is, whether it appears from his writings, that Infant Baptism was the *prevailing practice*.—The passage above cited is supposed to contain proof of this. But though it is quite evident that the word *renasci* was used by Irenæus, as well as by the Christian Fathers generally, to denote *baptism*, I shall not count this passage among those which are to be regarded as of chief importance and as most decisive in favor of Infant Baptism.

You will perceive that much less confidence is expressed in the proof which this testimony has been supposed to contain. You have shown that the passage quoted from Irenæus receives a better interpretation, when the word *renasci*, *to be born again*, is taken in its scriptural sense; and with this scriptural sense Irenæus cannot be supposed to have been unacquainted. That Christian writers of so early an age should have wholly lost the scriptural sense and use of the terms *regenerated* and *born again*, which denoted the essential distinction of the christian character, is even more incredible than that infant baptism should have been introduced.

ACCUSATION.

At the end of the Lecture, which contains the argument from Ecclesiastical History, a note is added of which the following is the first paragraph:

"I am reluctant to say what truth and justice seem to require me to say, respecting the manner in which several

Baptist writers have treated the historical argument in favor of Infant Baptism. I make the appeal to men of any denomination, who have the requisite qualifications, and can find opportunity to give the subject an impartial and thorough examination, whether an instance can easily be found, of greater unfairness in reasoning, or of a more determined effort to discolor facts, and evade all arguments on the opposite side, than is exhibited in the writers referred to."

There is a very grievous accusation implied in these sentences; but I am not willing to believe that it was intended for us. To be thought by Dr. W. to be so uncandid, would be extremely painful. But I am willing to indulge the pleasure of believing that he judges us to possess "candid and fraternal feelings." Besides I do not know any thing in your Letter on this subject which could furnish ground for so grievous an accusation. Almost every thing which you have advanced is sustained by the authority of Dr. Doddridge, whose reputation for candor is well established, and who in this instance, had no temptation to "discolor facts." When we say on the subject of Infant Baptism what Doddridge, Taylor, Salmasius, Suicerus, Curcellæus, and Episcopius, have said before us, whatever may be thought of the truth of our statements, our candor ought not to be questioned.

I have another reason for believing that these accusations were not intended for us. Your Letter pointed out mistakes of Dr. W. respecting the testimony of Justin Martyr, which a person of a more suspicious mind than yourself might have pronounced to be an "effort to discolor facts:" but no suspicion of this kind was expressed. When you noticed the error in which a fact respecting the use of *παις* had been wholly mis-stated, you simply called it *an oversight*. In animadverting upon that complete discoloring of Justin Martyr's testimony, which had been produced by giving such a translation to *παις* as bound its sense down to the period of mere infancy; you simply stated, that this translation *cannot be justified*, and adduced the authority of Justin Martyr himself and of the very Lexicon which has been published at the Seminary where Dr. W. teaches.— Dr. W. has become sensible of these errors; and I think he cannot be insensible of the kind manner in which they were pointed out, and I conclude that he would not have return-

ed this kindness by bringing against you the accusation contained in the preceding quotation.

The only part of our Letters which, so far as I can discover, has received a formal reply, is what relates to the interpretation of 1 Cor. vii. 14. A refutation of this interpretation is attempted in a note at the end of Lecture V. I design to enter into a very careful examination of this refutation, and will give you the result at a future day.

Very affectionately yours, JOHN.



LETTER IX.

DEAR BROTHER—I thank you for the privilege of perusing the copy you sent me of the 2d edition of Dr. Wood's Lectures on Infant Baptism. I am pleased with the kind manner in which he notices our publication. Although he has declined a formal reply, yet, he has given particular attention to some of our animadversions. Your exposition of 1 Cor. vii. 14, has claimed special regard, and credit must be given to our Author for the ingenuity with which he has attempted a refutation of your views on that passage. I have, however, no misgiving on that subject, and I am persuaded that the ground you have occupied is still tenable. I shall be glad, therefore, to receive from you further remarks on that text, which, of all others in the New Testament, has been deemed, by some of our Pædobaptist brethren, of the greatest importance in this controversy.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

While the citations from the early writers fail to support infant baptism, a strong argument against it may be derived from the language they have used when speaking of baptism. They call it Regeneration and Illumination. They have in this used a similar mode of speaking to that which is employed by the Redeemer: "This bread is my body."—They understood baptism to be a sign of Regeneration or Illumination: or, in other words, they regarded the baptized as Regenerated or Illuminated persons, that is, Believers.

It is well known that the church of England uses the same kind of language with regard to baptized persons,

which is found in the early Christian Fathers: and her meaning has been thus explained by a late writer. "I contend, then, that the ground on which the church speaks of all those, whom she has baptized, as regenerate, is neither more nor less than THE SUPPOSITION—THE ASSUMPTION, OF THEIR SINCERITY IN THEIR PROFESSIONS." *An Inquiry into the Effect of Baptism by the Rev. Joseph Scott, M. A.* p. 136. The same writer says, p. 5, "It is well known, that in very early times, strong language came into use, in the Christian church, concerning baptism, and the blessings connected with it:" and he accounts for the use of this strong language, in the following manner: p. 172. "An easier and more obvious solution is, that of understanding professed Christians to be addressed upon the ground of their profession—upon the supposition of their sincerity. This, we have seen, is continually done by our church: more or less it is done at all times: and never could it be so natural to do it, as when the profession of Christianity brought with it many dangers to men's property, to their liberty, and even to their lives. In such times the apostles wrote, and in similar times the language was introduced, which has led men too frequently to confound the outward sign with the inward grace of baptism; or at least to suppose, that the latter necessarily accompanies the former. In such times it was natural and reasonable to believe, that *professed* Christians were *real* Christians—that those who were baptized were indeed regenerate by the Spirit of God. And this affords a most easy account of the means by which the strong language, that has been so long in use, was brought into the church." These remarks appear to me to contain sound sense and a satisfactory explanation of the manner in which the strong language under consideration came into use. And as it was then, "natural and reasonable to believe, that those who were baptized were indeed, regenerate by the Spirit of God;" so it would have been unnatural and unreasonable to apply this strong language concerning baptism to persons who could give no evidence of being regenerate.—When he comes to account for the use of this strong language by the church of England to baptized infants, this author finds great difficulty. On this subject he writes thus: "These questions are addressed as to the child himself; the answers considered as his answers. It is as if, by a sort of legal fiction, to which we are no strangers in the most important temporal transactions, the soul of the child

were considered as transferred to his sponsor, and as speaking in and by him. One is certainly somewhat at a loss for words, in which to speak of engagements, supposed to be made by an infant incapable of any knowledge of the transaction. But, as the case of infants is obviously attended with difficulties peculiar to itself, the church has entered into explanation on the subject. If it be thought that there has been some more difficulty in making out this case than that of adults; I beg to suggest, that it is nothing more than what naturally results from the condition of infants, supposed to make vows, and on the faith of those vows, pronounced regenerate; while they can give no evidence, in their conduct, either of a regenerate or unregenerate state." p. 141—146. Mr. Scott may have stated correctly the ground on which the church of England declares baptized infants to be regenerate: but was this "sort of legal fiction" understood and practiced upon in the days of Irenæus? If it was not, "it was natural and reasonable to believe that those who were baptized were **INDEED** regenerate by the Spirit of God;" and not regenerate, merely by a sort of legal fiction.

TERTULLIAN.

Tertullian condemned the baptism of very young persons, which was gaining ground in his day. Dr. Wardlaw, of Glasgow, is quoted (Appendix p. 207) as affirming, in opposition to Mr. Cox, that Tertullian did not condemn such baptisms, but only advised delay. The truth is, however, that Tertullian did condemn all rash administration of baptism; and quotes against it, the scriptures, *Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine; and, Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins.* Among the condemned rash baptisms, he reckons [*præcipue*] especially the baptism of children. He advises delay, therefore, not because the admission of such persons to baptism was merely inexpedient or questionable, but because it was in his opinion wrong. He maintained that the administrator was not at liberty to give it to every applicant. The opinion evidently was acted upon, in the days of Tertullian, that the whole responsibility of baptism rested upon the applicant; and that the administrator had no inquiry to make as to the condition, disposition, or age of the person; but was at liberty to give to every one that asked. To the prevalence of this doctrine, connected with the notion that baptism was necessary to salvation, the

practice of infant baptism may be traced. The sponsors took the whole responsibility upon themselves. It was only necessary that the candidate should *ask*, and the administrator was at liberty to *give*. Tertullian opposed this doctrine, and maintained that the administrator shared the responsibility, and was bound to regard the condition, disposition, and age of the candidate; and he warned him lest by administering it to improper persons he should be partaker of other men's sins.

There are two important particulars in which the argument fails, which Dr. W. has founded upon the quotation from Tertullian.

Because Tertullian opposed the baptism of children, it is argued that it was the common practice. This argument however is by no means conclusive. Particular instances of error may be opposed long before that error becomes established into a common practice: and a common practice may be opposed long before it becomes *the* common and much less the universal practice. What notions will be entertained respecting the present age of the world, a thousand years hence, if it shall be believed that every thing is with us a common practice which any of our writers object to as rash. A pædobaptist minister of this vicinity, in conversation with a friend of mine, not long since, objected to the conduct of a Baptist minister, for receiving into his church, persons of very tender years, whose christian experience was not sufficiently tried. He thought this rash, and that delay was better. Will posterity, if they ever hear of this objection, argue, that the admission of infants into Baptist churches was the common practice of our time?

The argument fails in another particular. It is urged, that the *parvuli* of Tertullian were infants who needed sponsors; who had not developed their dispositions; who were not grown up; were not able to know Christ, and could not ask baptism for themselves. As to the need of sponsors, we have the authority of Mosheim for saying, that sponsors were used *first* for adults and afterwards for infants. If this authority may be relied on, the very argument of Dr. W., may be converted into a demonstration, that infants who would more naturally require sponsors, were not used to be baptized, when the practice of having sponsors was introduced. All the other proofs, that those little ones were mere infants, are manifestly defective. They may have been children even younger than

those received by the Baptist minister above mentioned; but that they were mere infants cannot be proved, unless by the last particular referred to, namely; "Let them know how to ask for salvation, that you may seem to give to him that asketh." But when it is considered, that Tertullian, in the beginning of the paragraph quoted by Dr. W., had objected to the doctrine, that baptism ought to be given to every one that asketh, and that it is the rashness of committing or entrusting it, (*non temere credendum esse*), to every applicant that he condemns; the last sentence should, in consistence with the tenor of the quotation, be interpreted of persons, who, though they ask for baptism, are supposed not to know the value of that for which they ask; and this accounts for the use of the word *videaris*, that you may seem to give to him that asketh. It appears to me pretty clear, that the necessity of a candidate's asking for baptism was admitted even by those whom Tertullian opposed; and that the inarticulate cries of new born infants were not, in his time, construed to be an asking for baptism, although afterwards in the days of Cyprian they seem to have been thus interpreted. Dr. W., I presume, does not use sponsors in baptism. If the baptism of children which Tertullian opposed, was the prevailing custom, then the use of sponsors was the prevailing custom, and the argument which proves the propriety of the one, will prove also the propriety of the other.

In this earliest account of the baptism of children, we perceive that the professions and engagements necessary to baptism were required to be made by sponsors in the name of the child; and that the sponsors were considered, by Tertullian at least, to be in *danger*, if the child proved to be of a perverse disposition, and did not keep the Grace that had been committed to him. It is easy to account for the use of sponsors in the baptism of children, if, in the original baptism, a profession of faith and repentance was required of all who were baptized. But if all the infants of believers were baptized by the Apostles, merely upon the engagement of their parents to train them up in the ways of the Lord, the introduction of sponsors was altogether unnatural. The baptism of children which existed in the days of Tertullian, is, therefore, more nearly allied to the baptism which we practice, than to that which is practised by Dr. W.

WRITERS AFTER TERTULLIAN.

The three quotations from Origen which are urged in favor of infant baptism, are taken from suspected translations; and Dr. Wall himself, has been able to produce no others. What both he and Dr. Gill have quoted from the Greek of Origen is rather unfavorable. One passage from Rufinus' translation speaks of it as a received tradition. The passage from Jerome speaks less favorably. It appears therefore, that nothing can be obtained from Origen himself to favor this cause; and that, of his translators, the most favorable is the most suspected.

In Cyprian's time we admit that infant baptism did exist in Africa; and we shew that infant communion existed there also.

APOSTOLIC TRADITION.

There was in very early times, a controversy between the Church at Rome, and the Churches of Asia, with regard to the proper time of keeping Easter. In this controversy Polycarp, a disciple of St. John took part. The following quotation on this subject is taken from the preliminary discourse prefixed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, to his translation of the Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers: chap. 6, sec. 7. "Nor was his care of the church confined within the bounds of the Lesser Asia, but extended even to Rome itself whither we are told he went upon the occasion of the Quatodeciman controversy then on foot between the Eastern and Western Churches, and which he hoped to have put a stop to, by his timely interposition, with those of Rome. But Anicetus and he could not agree upon that point, *each alleging Apostolical tradition, to warrant them in their practice.*"

If within 60 years of the death of the Apostle John, apostolical tradition could not be determined, how could it be determined by Rufinus and Austin? And how can a christian with a good conscience, build his faith on their decisions?

R. ROBINSON.

Dr. W. makes great objection to the writings and spirit of Mr. Robinson; in which he is sustained by his colleague, Professor Stuart. I shall not attempt a vindication of Mr. Robinson's sentiments and temper in general, yet, I feel myself called upon to make a few remarks. 1. In the language of Dr. W., I may observe that, "The strange opin-

ions which he held, have nothing to do with the facts¹⁷ which he states. "In regard to such facts," if his statements are corroborated by respectable writers, and especially by those of opposite sentiments and practice to himself, "his testimony is entitled to full credit." Our Author finds it necessary to caution his readers repeatedly against confounding the peculiar opinions of his witnesses and their testimony to facts. See pp. 113, 114, 122, 124; of the present edition. I claim the same privilege. Did Robinson hold stranger sentiments than Origen?—2. I think there is more *severity* in the professor's remarks, than the occasion called for. "*Shallow criticism, palpable unfairness, profane levity, the most gross and palpable indecency.*" These are hard terms. I have looked over the pages to which he refers us, and think that the incidents and anecdotes related by Mr. Robinson might as well have been omitted, as they seem to have but a very remote, if any, connexion with his main subject; but I doubt whether the cause of Infant Baptism can be said to have suffered in the hands of Mr. R., on the ground of decency, since its history furnished facts that even he declined to record—see his history, p. 385. 3. It is said, p. 140, that the Baptists in America refer to Robinson's History of Baptism as good authority. What others have done, I cannot tell; but on turning to our 5th letter, it will be seen, that we did not rest our statements on the authority of Mr. Robinson, but corroborated them by the testimony of eminent Pædobaptist writers. In justice however to Mr. Robinson, it ought to be observed, that he seldom makes any important statement without exhibiting vouchers, and thus giving the reader an opportunity of examining for himself.

VALUE OF THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT.

Dr. W., has written several pages on the value of the argument from Ecclesiastial History. In our former animadversions we briefly noticed some things which he had said on that subject; but I have two or three observations to make in addition. 1. He insists that it appears from the testimony of the Fathers, that Infant Baptism was the "uniform practice" of the primitive church. Now, in the language of Dr. W. I make my appeal to men of any denomination, who have the requisite qualifications, and can find opportunity to give the subject an impartial and thorough examination, whether this be fair, after the list of names which we had given who were *not* baptized in Infancy?

This ought to have prevented the repetition of the phrase "uniform practice," at all events, if ever it could be proved that it was practiced to any considerable extent—2. He urges the competency of these witnesses, from their contiguity to the days of the Apostles, their interest in the subject &c. Here is rather a singular case. Several witnesses are brought forward to prove, that Infant Baptism was the uniform practice in their time, and had been from the days of the Apostles; and yet some of these persons themselves, though born of Christian parents, were not baptized in infancy. We must suppose either that their testimony is misconstrued, or, that it is inconsistent with facts, i. e. false; in either case, it cannot be of any weight in the present controversy. I ask again, would our good brother at Andover admit the testimony of these witnesses in the case of the use of sponsors, and of infant communion? But the instance of the dispute about the time of keeping Easter sufficiently admonishes us, with what caution we are to receive the testimony of the Fathers concerning Apostolical traditions. 3. He urges the consequences of rejecting the testimony of the Fathers in the case of infant baptism. "What evidence have you, except the testimony of uninspired men, that the several books which constitute the Old Testament as we now have it, are the very books, to which Christ and the apostles referred as the word of God?" This surely is a strange question! What evidence? We have the books themselves containing the very passages to which they appealed; cannot we determine for ourselves, whether the books of the Old Testament contain the passages quoted in the New? Again "We have no voice from heaven, and no express testimony of any inspired writer that the several books which compose the entire canon of the New Testament, were given by inspiration of God, or that they were all written by Apostles, or even by christians. But we go to Eusebius, and to other uninspired writers, and we find that *they* regarded these books as the genuine productions of those to whom they are commonly ascribed, and as having divine authority." Here two very different things seem to be confounded, or at least put upon a level; namely, the ascertaining of the writers of the several books of Scripture, and the evidence of the inspiration of those books. This kind of reasoning adopted by Dr. W., when I consider that it was addressed to young men designed for the christian ministry, is somewhat alarming. Does the proof of the inspiration of the

books of holy Scripture depend on identifying the penmen? Have we no other, or no better evidence of inspiration, than we derive from Ecclesiastical history? I hope that on more mature reflection, our author would be willing to modify the statements made on p. 138—139. "In sober truth," this manner of writing, is calculated to injure his own cause. But what is of infinitely greater moment, it is suited to produce doubts so far as it may have influence, in reference to the divine authority of the holy Scriptures. Indeed, the cause which requires such arguments to support it, ought to be considered as desperate and should be given up.

It ought however to be carefully remembered, that if all the writers of ecclesiastical history had united, in giving unequivocal testimony of the prevalence of a practice, for which we have *confessedly*, neither precept nor example in the New Testament, it would have been entirely inadequate to prove it to be a divine institution; for our faith should stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

In conclusion I would remark, that however irksome this, or any other controversy may be in itself, yet when we recollect that it is the means, frequently, of eliciting truth, and that it may be conducted in the spirit of the Gospel, it should not be despised and condemned, seeing it may be made to answer very important purposes, connected with the glory of God and the best interests of men. I do not, therefore, regret, for my own part, the attention which I have paid to these Lectures, as thereby I have had occasion to explore again the field of controversy, and I think I have profited by the labor, and shall be more ready to give to every one that asketh me, a reason of my faith and practice.

May God preserve you and me from all error is the prayer of your brother in the Lord. DAVID.



LETTER X.

THE ANTI-PÆDOBAPTIST INTERPRETATION OF 1 COR. 7,
14. DEFENDED.

My Dear Brother,—I have read no part of the lectures of Dr. Woods, with so much interest as his remarks on the interpretation of 1 Cor. 7, 14. which has been given by the Baptist General Tract Society, and which we had quoted in our letters. It is indeed the only part of our letters to

which he has given a formal reply. I had feared lest my confidence in the correctness of this interpretation was too great; and I was, on this account, exceedingly desirous to know, what objections an able pædobaptist could bring against it. I am at length gratified, and am able to state to you, that my confidence is rather increased, than lessened, both in the correctness of the interpretation, and in the conclusiveness of the argument against infant baptism founded upon it.

The chief objection brought against the interpretation of Dr. Gill, is, that it gives a sense to the words *holy*, and *sanctified*, which is contrary to the *usus loquendi*. Against our interpretation no objection of this kind is even hinted.

In our interpretation, it is one peculiarity that the verse throughout, is understood to be an address to the *whole church*. The admission of this alone, would overthrow the pædobaptist interpretation at once; and of course it is opposed by Dr. W. That the words, 'else were your children unclean,' do not refer to the whole church, he says is perfectly clear and unquestionable; but I find no proof adduced, except what relates to a general view of the apostle's argument. He seems to admit that the use of the pronoun *your*, instead of *their*, is a reason in favor of our view; though he considers it by no means conclusive, "as there are," he says, "instances which cannot be numbered in every part of the Bible, of a similar change in the pronoun, when the same persons are addressed." Although I think much more attention is due to these little words than is often paid to them, yet I will by no means undertake to maintain that irregularities of style in the use of pronouns, do not occur. But I am of opinion, that their existence is not to be supposed, unless it be for some sufficient reason. In the present case, if the Pædobaptist interpretation is sense, and ours nonsense, ours, notwithstanding its grammatical accuracy, ought to be rejected, and the other though grammatically inaccurate, to be preferred. But if I am not greatly mistaken, it is far less with respect to accuracy of expression, than to soundness of sense, that our interpretation of the text is decidedly superior.

The proposition which the apostle has undertaken to demonstrate, is, that a believer may lawfully dwell with an unbeliever to whom he is married. The argument which he adduces in proof, is, that the contrary position cannot be maintained without an evil consequence which he thus expresses, "else were your children unclean." The argu-

ment is just, if the evil is truly a consequence; and it is the more forcible, (other things being equal,) according as the evil is greater.

In our interpretation, holiness is understood to signify fitness for familiar intercourse; and it is taken in the same sense, whether it is applied to the children, or to the unbelieving husband or wife. The apostle is understood to argue, that, as the children are fit for familiar intercourse, so the unbelieving husband or wife, is fit for familiar intercourse. The Pædobaptist interpretation, supposes the holiness to vary in its application to the two different subjects. In one case it implies, a fitness for familiar intercourse; in the other, a fitness for ecclesiastical relation; and the apostle is understood to argue, that, since the children are fit for ecclesiastical relation, the unbelieving husband or wife, is fit for familiar intercourse. According to our interpretation, the apostle is understood to say, that, if the unbelieving husband or wife, were unfit for familiar intercourse, the children would, in like manner, be unfit for familiar intercourse. According to the other interpretation, he is understood to say, that, if the unbelieving husband or wife were unfit for familiar intercourse, the children would be unfit for ecclesiastical relation. Now I maintain, that our interpretation is preferable even if the text had read, else were *their* children, &c. for the following reasons: 1. The holiness of which the text speaks is taken in the same sense throughout. The objection which has been made on this ground against the pædobaptist interpretation has never been removed, notwithstanding the labor that has been taken for this purpose. 2. The argument is at least equally just. If an unbelieving wife were required to be separated from the familiar intercourse of her believing husband, the separation of their children from the familiar intercourse of their father, must inevitably follow on the very same principle. So Dr. W. has stated. "He suggested one consideration of great weight, namely: that if according to the Mosaic law, and the example of the people in the time of Ezra, they were to put away their unbelieving partners, and so treat them as pagans; they must consider their children also as unclean, i. e. heathen children, and *put them away* likewise, as the people did in the case referred to," p. 95. That branch of the apostle's argument, therefore, in which he wards off an evil consequence, will appear to as great advantage, if that evil be supposed to be a separation of the children from familiar intercourse, as it does on the suppo-

sition, that the evil guarded against was a separation from ecclesiastical relation. But there is another branch of the argument, in which the children are affirmed to be holy, on the supposition that the husband or wife is holy. That a fitness for familiar intercourse must belong to children, if it belongs to their unbelieving parent, is an inference so clearly just as to be admitted at once by every one: but it is by no means so clear, that a fitness of the children for ecclesiastical relation may be justly argued from a fitness of the unbelieving parent for familiar intercourse. 3. The argument is stronger, since the evil guarded against is greater. Admission to familiar intercourse may exist without admission to ecclesiastical relation; but exclusion from the former necessarily implies exclusion from the latter, and is consequently a greater evil. The apostle had been led, by the nature of his subject, to that view of holiness in which it implies a fitness for familiar intercourse; and had he kept this before his mind, the way was prepared for a strong argument against the principle which he opposed, by showing, as an appalling consequence of it, that it would require the exclusion of the children from the familiar intercourse of that parent who would be concerned for their eternal welfare, and of all other persons who might guide their feet into the way of life. One of these interpretations supposes that he did enforce this argument: the other supposes that he did not; but that, introducing another view of holiness, he contented himself with laying to the charge of the principle which he opposed, no other evil consequence than that of injuring the children in respect of ecclesiastical relation.

In the preceding paragraph a comparison has been instituted between two interpretations, one of which is that commonly given by pædobaptists, and the other agrees in all respects with ours, except that it yields the point as to the extent of the apostle's address, and admits that, not the children of the whole church, but those children only are intended who had one unbelieving parent. There are two cases of frequent occurrence, which the apostle's argument will not reach, if understood according to either of these methods of interpretation. The first case is, when a believer and an unbeliever joined in marriage, are without children. Here there is no evil consequence to guard against; and, for aught that the argument says to the contrary, the principle may be maintained that such persons ought to separate. The second case is, when the children

of such a marriage have become grown, or, when the conversion of one parent takes place after the children are grown. Here, though the separation of the children from familiar intercourse is an evil, yet it is not a greater evil than the separation of the unbelieving parent, and therefore the argument, according to one interpretation, is weak: but, according to the other interpretation, it is positively false. If one parent was a believer when the children were young, then they had a right to the covenant, which the future separation of their parents would not affect. Of course the propriety of such future separation might be maintained in spite of the apostle's argument. If the conversion of one parent takes place after the children are grown, no argument whatever can be raised against their separation, founded upon any injury which the children would sustain in respect to ecclesiastical relation; for the effect upon the children in this respect is the same whether the parents continue together or separate. Indeed, the pædobaptist interpretation not only represents the apostle's argument as false, in its application to this particular case, but even his very language is not true as a statement of fact: for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; and yet the children being adults, are not holy, but are excluded from ecclesiastical relation because of their own unbelief.

The interpretation which we gave in our letters, from the Baptist General Tract Society, embraces every case of marriage between a believer and an unbeliever, whether they have infant children, adult children, or no children.— It places the apostle's argument upon the broad principle, that a separation is not more requisite between husband and wife, than between parent and child. It has the further advantage of rendering the argument much stronger than the other interpretations do. The evil consequence which it shows to be involved in the principle that is opposed consists in a separation not merely from ecclesiastical relation but from familiar intercourse; and extends not to a few, but to all the children of the church; and makes christianity to oppose parental feeling, to destroy parental obligation, and to ruin the offspring of all pious parents. It is therefore not true that "there is not any reason for considering it as addressed to the church at large, except that *you* and *your*, the pronoun of the second person, is used instead of the third person, *they*." This method of interpre-

tation not only makes the use of the pronoun correct, but it keeps up the same idea of holiness throughout the text, it makes the language of the apostle true, and his argument forcible. Neither of these is done by the interpretation which Dr. W. advocates.

The refutation which Dr. W. has attempted of our interpretation, depends upon three principles, which need only to be stated distinctly, in order that one of them shall appear false, and the other two a begging of the question.

The first principle is, *that no case must be introduced in a demonstration which is not brought to view in the proposition.* The following words have no force unless this principle be established: "It is perfectly clear from the passage, that the apostle refers to only one particular case, namely, that of a believing husband connected with an unbelieving wife, and a believing wife with an unbelieving husband. This was the subject before the mind of the apostle. And the judgment which he expresses, his reasoning, his conclusion,—all that he says, relates to this case." I grant that the case which is here mentioned, is the only one proposition that was before the apostle's mind, and that the whole demonstration must therefore relate to this case. But it is perfectly clear, nevertheless, that another case is introduced in the demonstration: for, whatever children may have been intended, they constitute a case which is not contained in the proposition, and which is introduced merely for the sake of the argument that the apostle derives from it in support of the proposition. Twenty distinct cases might have been introduced in the same manner; and it might nevertheless have been true that every thing which the apostle said, related to the one case that was before his mind in the proposition. All this objection, therefore, about the unity of the case comes to nothing.—The apostle does introduce the case of certain children: and whether they were the children of the whole church, or only of a part, must be learned from his words, and not from this false principle of reasoning to which Dr. W. himself would not agree to submit; since, while infant baptism is the case before his mind in the Lectures which he has published, he has thought it justifiable to introduce the case of the Christian Sabbath, and of female communion, in the arguments which he has advanced. With regard to the extent of the apostle's address, Dr. W. makes the following remarks: "Speaking of a believing wife who is connected with an unbelieving husband, he says, such a husband is

sanctified by his wife so that she is under no necessity to leave him;—and the same as to a believing husband and an unbelieving wife; and then he adds, *addressing himself, unquestionably to the same persons*, otherwise . . . your children would be unclean.” This confident assertion, “addressing himself unquestionably to the same persons,” stands instead of all further argument. And what does this assertion mean? Whom had the apostle been addressing? Was it the unbelieving husband whom he had declared to be sanctified by his wife; or the unbelieving wife whom he had declared to be sanctified by her husband? These persons were not members of the church, and therefore they could not be addressed in an epistle directed to the church.—Can an instance be found in any part of the apostle’s writings, in which he turns suddenly from the persons to whom he wrote in order to address unbelievers, without giving any notice whatever of this sudden apostrophe? The address in the first verse of the chapter is manifestly to the church; and is continued to the church down to the verse in question. Even the phrase, “I say *to* the unmarried and widows,” does not divert the apostle from his address to the church; since he immediately applies to these persons, not the pronoun *you*, but *them*. In the verse immediately following the one under consideration the church is again addressed. And in the next verse though individuals are addressed they are members of the church and not unbelievers; and due notice is given of this change in the address by introducing the vocatives, O husband, O wife. After this the apostle immediately resumes the address to the church; and intimates that what he had said was intended to be an ordinance for the church. I ask then who was it the apostle had been addressing? It was unquestionably the church. I therefore recall all objection to the confident assertion of Dr. W. and freely acknowledge its perfect accuracy. The apostle was *addressing himself unquestionably to the same persons*, the very same that he had been addressing in all the preceding part of the chapter, namely, the CHURCH.

The second principle upon which the refutation depends, is, *that the children of two believers must necessarily be holy, and the children of two unbelievers necessarily unclean*. We believe that, with respect to holiness, all infant children are alike, whether their parents are believers or unbelievers.—If by holiness be meant a fitness for familiar intercourse, even the children of two unbelievers are holy, and stand on

the same ground with the unbelieving spouse of a believer. Both may be admitted to familiar intercourse when the duties of life require it. If a fitness for ecclesiastical relation be meant, the infant children of two believers are, in our judgment, unholy; standing, as before, on the same ground with the unbelieving husband or wife. The contrary of this, however, is taken for granted by Dr. W. The argument on which his refutation may be said wholly to depend, proceeds thus: "What sense can the passage have, if we understand it as addressed to Christian husbands and wives generally, both parties being believers? Else were your children unclean! How? Why? The apostle says, it would be so, were it not that the unbelieving partner is sanctified by the believing. But *here* according to the supposition, there *is* no unbelieving partner. And then what sort of relation has the conclusion to the premises? The reasoning supposed consists of two parts. First; if the unbelieving partner were not sanctified by the believing partner, the *children of all other christians would be unclean*.—Second; but now as the unbelieving partner is sanctified by the believing partner, *the children of all other christians are holy*. The first could not be true. If the unbelieving partner were not sanctified by the believing, it would indeed follow that their children would be unclean, but it would not follow that *other* children would be unclean, where both parents were believers. The conclusion in the second part is *true*; but it does not follow at all from the premises.—The children of the church generally, where both parents are believers, are indeed *holy*, in the sense of the apostle; but not because a believing partner sanctifies an unbelieving."—The first part of the apostle's argument is hypothetical. The hypothesis is, *If the principle be true which he opposes*. He does state, according to our interpretation, that, *on this HYPOTHESIS*, the children of two believing parents would be unclean. "This," says Dr. W. "could not be true. Why? Is it because the hypothesis will not warrant the conclusion? No. It is, *he says, because there is no unbelieving parent*. So then, be the hypothesis what it may, the children of two believing parents must be holy: and this assumed principle is so self-evident that it needs no proof, and so certain that it may be used for a test of the accuracy of apostolical reasoning. This assumed principle truly refutes our interpretation most effectually. It will also effectually sustain the cause of infant baptism. If it holds good on every possible hypothesis; let the hypothesis be that ho-

liness when predicated of children always implies a right to baptism. The argument is now very short. The children of two believing parents, are, upon every hypothesis, holy. One hypothesis is, that holiness, when predicated of children always implies a right to baptism. It follows, therefore, that the children of two believing parents always have a right to baptism. So easy is it to prove infant baptism, or, I may add, any thing we please. We have only to vary the hypothesis, and this accommodating principle will allow us to prove that the children of two believing parents are any thing and every thing that we would have them to be.

The third principle is, *that the case of the children is a dependant, and not a parallel case.* It is taken for granted that their holiness depends upon, and is derived from the holiness of the persons who are mentioned in the preceding part of the verse. This assumption having been made, it follows necessarily, that none but the children of these persons could be intended. Our interpretation proceeds upon a different principle. It supposes that the children constitute a parallel case; and that their holiness stands upon the same ground with that of the unbelieving husband or wife, both being derived from the application of the same general rule. For the principle which we assume, a reason was given. "In the original text the substantive verb, is in the present tense; 'your children ARE unclean,'—a mode of speaking more suited for the stating of a parallel, than a dependant case." But should we admit that this is a reason of no weight, what follows? Both principles must have their merit tried by the comparative excellence of the interpretations, founded on them; and that neither interpretation, should be required to agree with the principle upon which the other is founded. Yet ours is tried and condemned, because it does not agree with the principle which has been assumed for the other. Dr. W. says, as quoted above; "The conclusion in the second part is *true*; but it does not follow at all from the premises." In other words, the sanctification of an unbelieving wife, cannot be the premises from which the holiness of any children shall be concluded except her own. This objection is valid, if the case of the children is dependant; but if it is a parallel case, the objection is without force. If the wife of one believer, and the child of another, stand on the same level, each of them sustaining a natural relation, and neither of them an ecclesiastical; where is the absurdity of arguing from one case to the other?

The concluding paragraph of Dr. W., is taken up in stating the principles which he deems essential to a just interpretation of the passage. They involve the principles which I have already shown to be either not true, or a begging of the question. He states them thus.

“If we would give a just interpretation to this passage, we must remember the following things.”

“1. That it related to a particular case, and to that only. 2. That the uncleanness spoken of in the children, was an uncleanness which would be the consequence of their having an unbelieving parent, supposing that the faith of the other parent had no influence to prevent it. 3. That the holiness the apostle attributed to children, was a holiness they had in consequence of being the children of a believing parent. Had both parents been heathen, the children would certainly have been unclean in the sense intended. And even one of the parents being a heathen, or an unbeliever, *would* have rendered the children unclean, had it not been for the influence of the other parent’s faith. They were to be regarded as holy, purely because one of their parents was a believer, and because the faith of that parent prevented the uncleanness which would otherwise have belonged to them, in consequence of their having an unbelieving parent. It was the faith of the believing parent, which put the children upon a level with the other children of the church. *Those* were holy in consequence of the faith of *both* their parents. *These* were holy in consequence of the faith of *one* of their parents.”

“Now I think no interpretation of the passage which does not accord with these principles, can be admitted as correct.”

In all this it is manifestly taken for granted, that the apostle argued about the holiness or unholiness of the children, not as dependant upon the establishment or rejection of some general principle, that might equally affect other cases, but as necessarily dependant upon the holiness or unholiness of their parents, whatever general principle might be imagined to exist. The position that the children of two unbelieving parents must necessarily be unclean in the sense of the apostle, I utterly reject. They would be unclean on the principle which he opposed; but on that which he established, they are holy; that is, capable of being admitted to familiar intercourse. Unto the pure, all things are pure. There is not a word in the apostle’s argument which intimates that the holiness of the children

depended upon their parentage. It depended solely upon the establishment or rejection of the general principle which he was applying to a parallel case. To assume the contrary of this in undertaking the refutation of our interpretation, is, to take for granted the very thing in question, and to condemn our interpretation, because it does not agree with this assumption, is to condemn it merely because it differs from a preconceived opinion.

To compare the justness and force which the argument possesses, according to the two interpretations, it will be convenient to put down distinctly and in order, the propositions of which the reasoning consists. The holiness of the children is not the *conclusion* of the apostle. It is the conclusion which our pædobaptist brethren seem to have before their minds when investigating this text; but the conclusion upon which the apostle's mind was fixed, was, that a believer might lawfully dwell with an unbelieving spouse; and the holiness of the children constitutes a part of the premises from which the conclusion is drawn. The apostle did not write in syllogisms, placing his conclusion last; but he stated his conclusion first, and then pointed to the sources of proof. To bring out his conclusions last, we should reverse the order of his proposition, thus:

1. Your children are holy: *therefore*,
2. The unbelieving spouse is sanctified: *and therefore*,
3. The believer may lawfully dwell with his unbelieving spouse.

There is no difficulty in perceiving, how the third of these propositions follows from the second; and the only question is, how the second follows from the first. Our interpretation supposes that the two cases are parallel, and that the apostle argues the truth of the second from the truth of the first, on the ground of their being parallel. The pædobaptist interpretation, makes the first proposition express an effect, of which the second expresses the cause; and the truth of the second is supposed to be inferred from the truth of the first, on the ground that a cause must exist for the effect. According to our view, the first proposition from which the others are derived, expresses the fact, that a believing parent may lawfully dwell with his children—a truth sufficiently obvious to be the foundation of the apostle's argument. According to the pædobaptist interpretation, the first proposition expresses the supposed fact, that the children of one believing parent, are fit subjects of baptism. But this fact could not be better known to the Co-

rinthians, than the lawfulness of the believing parent's dwelling with the unbelieving. The apostle therefore according to this view, proves what is doubtful by what is equally doubtful. Again, according to our interpretation, the second proposition is a legitimate inference from the first; because of the parallelism of the two cases. But according to the other view, it is difficult to conceive how the second proposition can be a legitimate inference from the first; or how the sanctification of a mother, which does not qualify her for baptism, can be the cause of a holiness in her child, which shall include a fitness for baptism. Thus the propriety of the reasoning according to the two different interpretations may be compared; and certainly that interpretation which makes the apostle argue with propriety and conclusiveness, and express his argument in language consistent and just, ought to be preferred.

The interpretation which I have been defending, may with propriety be called anti-pædobaptist, since it directly opposes infant baptism. If the interpretation can be sustained, the controversy may be regarded as decided.

Yours very affectionately,

JOHN.

1871
The first of the year
was a very dry one
and the crops were
very poor. The
winter was also
very cold and
the snow was
very deep. The
spring was also
very dry and
the crops were
very poor. The
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