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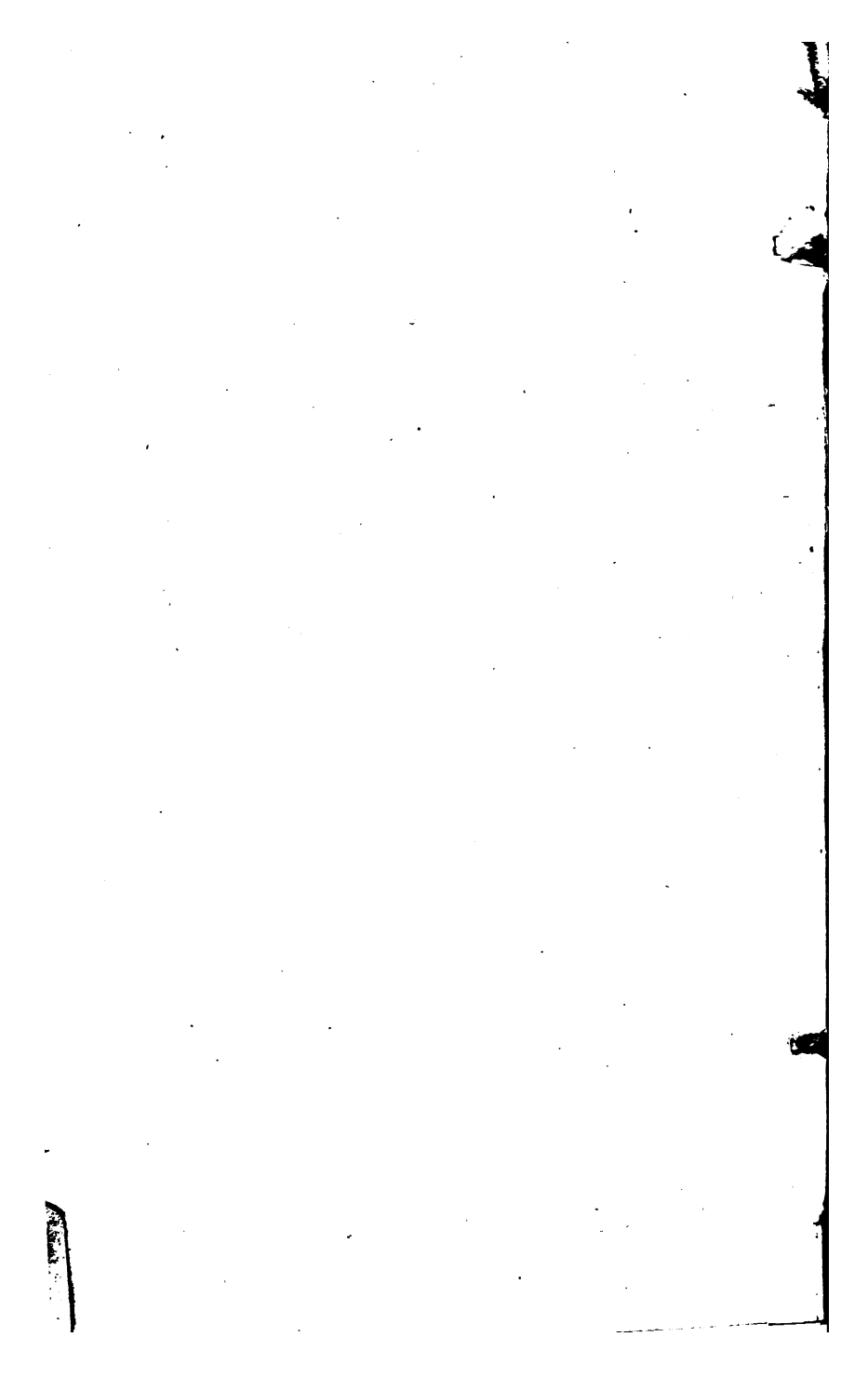
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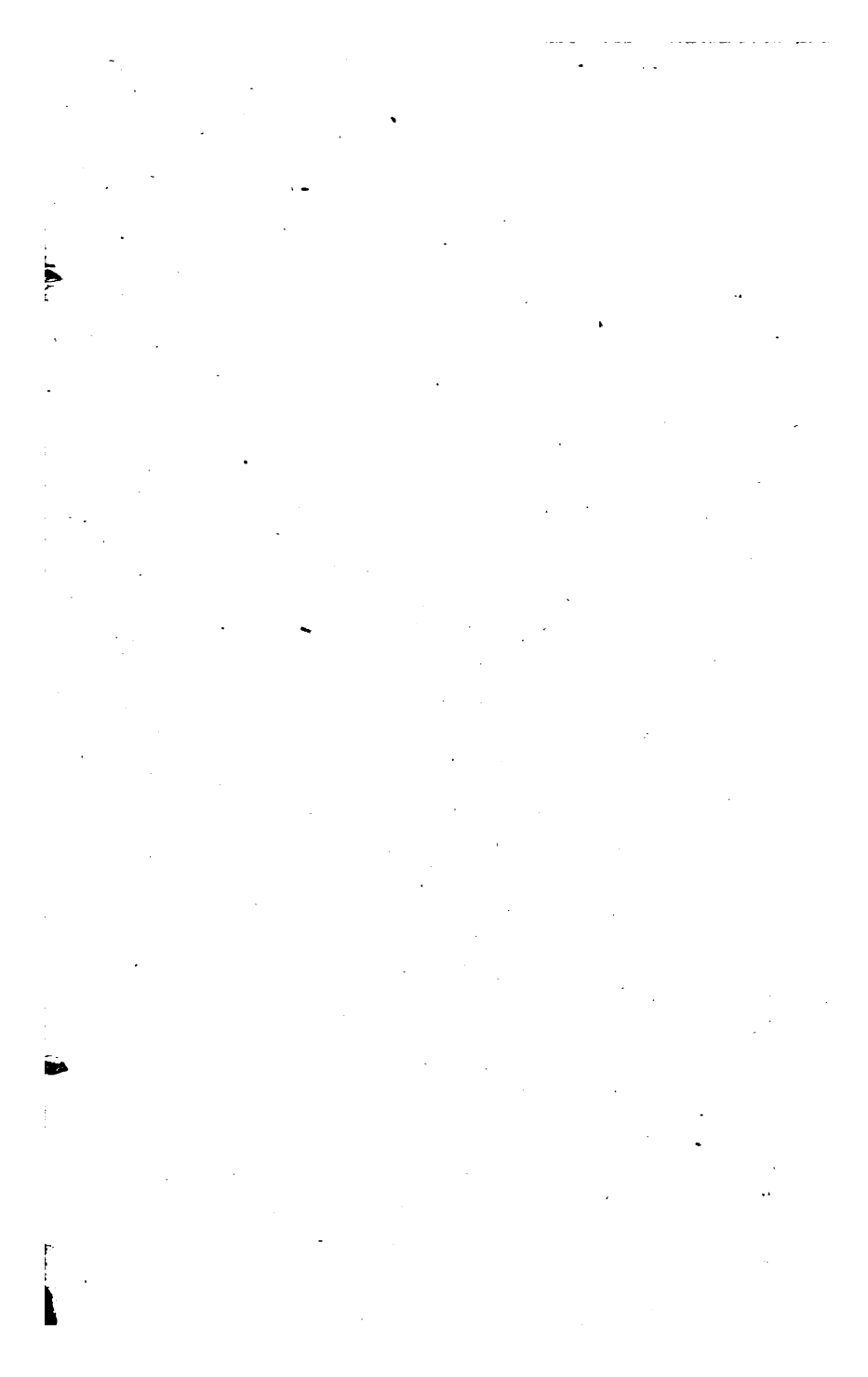


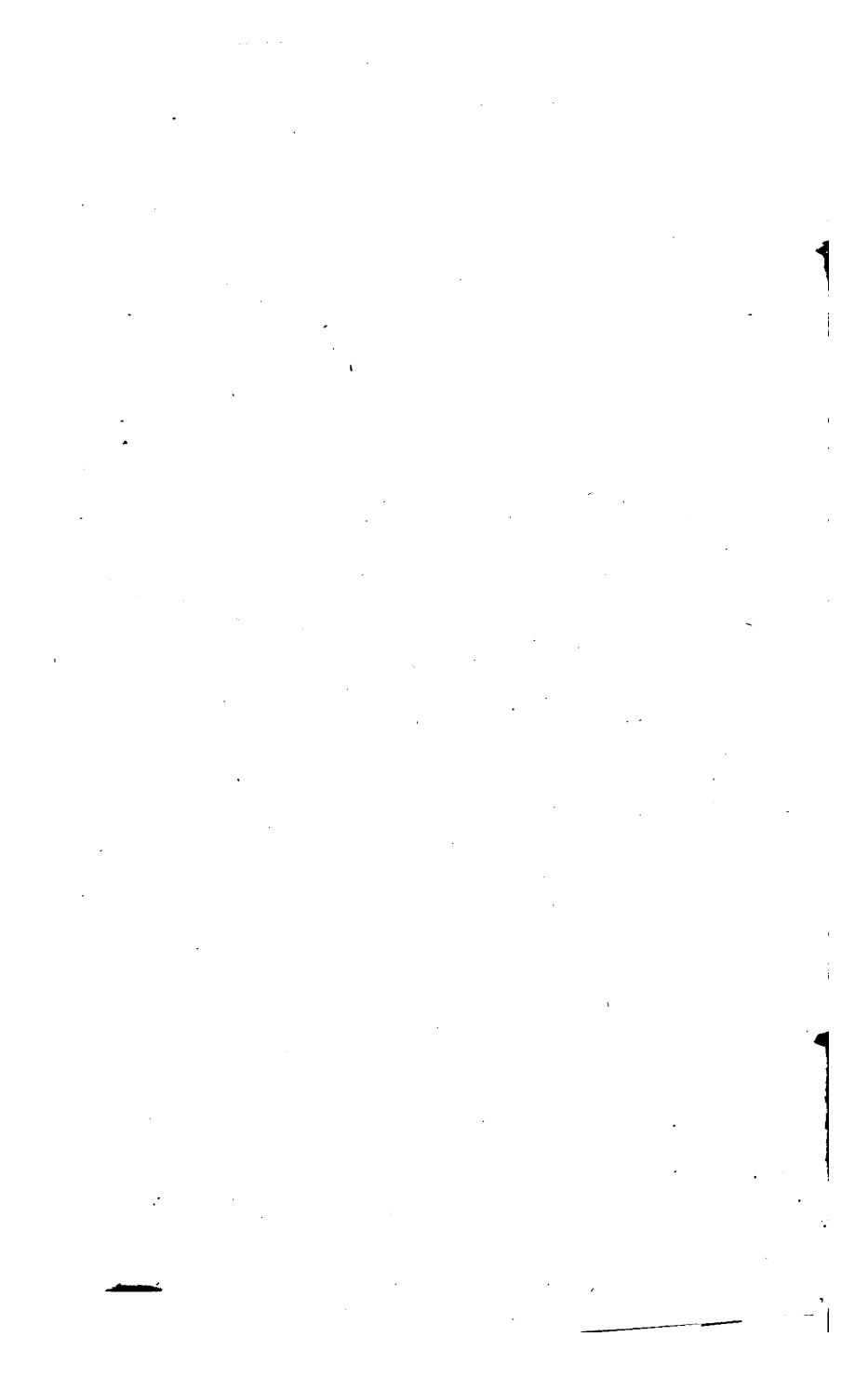
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NEW LIGHT

ON THE SUBJECT OF

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,

(PRESENTED IN THREE PARTS, VIZ.

- I. Believers proved to be the only proper subjects of Christian Baptism.
- II. The different modes of administering this ordinance in use among the Churches shown to be valid.
- III. Open Communion with all Evangelical Christians illustrated and defended.

BY JABEZ CHADWICK, A. M.
Of Genoa, Cayuga County, N. Y.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE question, who are to be baptized, has received, and continues to receive, different answers. Some affirm that believers in Jesus are the only proper subjects of this ordinance; others insist that not only believers, but their infant children, or households, are proper subjects.

It is obvious, that the one or the other of these opinions, and of the respective practices founded thereon, must be wrong. Either the former class fail, in part, to do what Christ has solemnly required to be done; or the latter go beyond his order, and baptize multitudes who do not come within the compass of their commission.

Taking *unauthorized* ground, whether it be done by *the one*, or *the other*, materially alters the course prescribed by our Lord, and deranges the order which belongs to his kingdom.

Not that I would represent the error, in either case, as *fatal*. There are doubtless Christians among both Baptists and Pedobaptists. Nevertheless, the error of the one, or of the other, is extremely hurtful, and ought to be relinquished.

The subject of Christian baptism is one of great practical importance. This is evinced by many considerations: some of which are the following, viz: its being a *positive* institution, and one of the two *Christian* sacraments, or *New Testament* ordinances; its being a *badge of discipleship*, and a *door of entrance* into the visible church; its forming, of course, a *dividing line* between the *visible kingdom* of Christ and the *world*; its being a *bond of union* among Christian professors; and its laying the baptized under *peculiar obligations* to a holy life. There is, also, a *peculiar prominence* given to this ordinance in all the *New Testament records*.

It is therefore, as above stated, a subject of *great practical importance*. The authority and glory of Christ, and the good of Zion, are seriously affected by the manner in which this subject is viewed and treated.

The duty and proper employment of Christians is to obey the precepts of Christ, their Lord and Master. "Ye are my

friends," said he, "if ye do whatsoever I command you." Again; "he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." To each of his disciples, he says, "follow me." Moreover, we are particularly cautioned and warned not "to take from," nor "add to his words." It, therefore, becomes every one, and especially, every minister of the gospel, to make himself acquainted with the mind of Christ concerning this matter, and to do the thing, and the *only thing*, which he has enjoined.

Christ certainly intended that infants should, or should not be baptized. And he has either commanded that they should be baptized, or he has not. If the former be the fact, we ought to know it: and if the latter, we ought to know it, and act accordingly.

Moreover, whatever be the will of Christ in relation to this point, it is reasonable to suppose that it is so plainly *revealed*, that the humble and honest inquirer may discover it. It would be a reflection upon him and upon his word, to say that his will cannot be gathered from what is written.

He has, surely, not left this matter in uncertainty. He has not intrusted the business of legislating thereon, either to his church, or to his ministers. He is Lord over his own house and kingdom. The Father testified from the cloud of glory, "This is my beloved son, *hear him.*" No one, therefore, who is not inspired by his spirit, has a right to make laws to bind the consciences of men, or, in any measure, to lessen, or enlarge his appointments.

If we admit the scriptures to be a sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice, we must, (to be consistent,) allow that they contain clear and satisfactory light upon this subject. Consequently, if we err, it is because we do not thoroughly examine and understand the scriptures, and the fault is our own.

Christians ought to be more thoroughly awake to this subject.

Much, indeed, has been said and written on it. But so long as error prevails, and the followers of Jesus are divided, and the church marred and rent asunder; the subject should still excite a deep and prayerful interest, and lead to a candid and laborious investigation: not with a view to gain the mastery; but to find out the real will of Jesus. How shall error be rooted up, and the deplorable evils which exist in relation to this subject be removed, except by honest inquiry, and diligent research? and by a willing submission to the testimony of the scriptures?

In this investigation, it is of high importance to be willing to receive light from any instrument whom the Lord may raise up for that purpose—i. e. from any one whom the Lord may

assist to give a right construction of his word, and to point out the good old way which had been forsaken. God often raises up men to expound his word, and correct prevailing errors, from quarters which would have been least expected.

No one should reject the light which may be reflected upon the subject, through pride of opinion, or partiality to his own sect, or order; because it does not proceed from them, or come in the way of his choosing. But when, upon due examination, the doctrine advanced is found to be verily true, it should be embraced, from whatever quarter it comes.

Believing that I have obtained *new light* upon this subject, not by means of any *new revelation*, but from the holy scriptures, I solicit the attention of the publick to what I have to say, although I am conscious of my unworthiness. Though I might have been the last from whom any thing could have been expected that would elucidate this subject; yet the Lord can work by just such means. And his name alone be praised for the knowledge which I trust he has given me.

It will be seen, at once, that if the scheme here proposed and advocated be correct, viz. that believers are the only proper subjects of baptism, but the mode of administration is not essential, its adoption will tend to remove a mighty wall of separation which has long existed between two great bodies of evangelical Christians, the Baptists and Pedobaptists. Each of these bodies must yield something to the other: The Pedobaptists must give up the baptism of *infants*, and the Baptists must give up the principle that *immersion* is the *only valid baptism*; and then the separating wall is removed. They can, then, without any embarrassment, come around the table of their common Lord.

This is the *line* on which, I am persuaded, they ought and *must* eventually meet. For both belong to Christ, and the form of baptism used by each is valid; therefore the one ought not to say to the other, you may not eat with me at the table of Jesus; but both ought to sit down together and celebrate his dying love. It highly becomes these sections of the church to give up their respective errors, and to receive each other in the Lord, as Christ hath received them, to the glory of God.

While I am constrained, for reasons hereafter stated, to take the ground of anti-pedobaptism, I cannot insist on immersion as the only valid mode of baptism; and hence exclude all from communion who have not been immersed. My stopping here, I am sensible, exposes me to censure from the Baptists, as my giving up infant baptism does from the Pedobaptists. I have not the satisfaction to please either, although I extend the hand of charity to both.

But I am neither to believe, nor to write, to please men. My object should be, and is, to elicit and defend the truth; and to his own master each of us must stand, or fall.

The propositions which I shall undertake to illustrate and defend, are these three, viz :

I. Believers are the only proper subjects of Christian Baptism.

II. The different modes of administering this ordinance in use among the churches, are valid.

III. Open communion with all evangelical Christians, is a duty and privilege.

Follow me patiently, dear reader, in the defence of these propositions, and judge of my arguments and illustrations in the light of the holy scriptures, and pray that you may be enlightened to know the Redeemer's will.

PART I.

BELIEVERS PROVED TO BE THE ONLY PROPER SUBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.



CHAPTER I.

*Containing the argument from the apostolick commission for the
baptism of believers only.*

THE final commission which our Lord gave to his apostles, as recited by Matthew, Chap. xxviii, 19, 20, is in these words: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

He had, previously, sent them to preach the kingdom of God to the cities and towns of Israel. And he had also, previously, made *many disciples*, whom the apostles, by his order, *baptized*.

But, now, they were bidden to go and *make disciples of all nations*, and *baptize them* in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit.

This commission, unquestionably, extends to *all ordinary ministers*, and contains the *warrant* for the administration of baptism.

And the *plain import* of it is, that they were first to teach and then baptize such as should believe their doctrine. There is no order to baptize any till they were taught. And the qualification which was to precede baptism manifestly implies something more than *simply* being taught, viz. a *cordial reception of the word*. It is plain from the passage itself, (especially as it stands in the Greek) and from what precedes and follows in the gospel records, that our Lord did not mean that his

ministers should baptize *promiscuously*, after having announced their message, without any regard to the effect produced. They were commissioned to teach the nations with a view to their *conversion*, and *when converted*, they were to be *baptized*. Hence the following words, which describe the scene, in part, that passed on the day of pentecost, under the sermon of Peter, furnish a plain comment on this commission: "Repent and be baptized every one of you," &c. "Then they that *gladly* received his word were *baptized*."

But the sense of this commission is more clear and definite as it stands in the original Greek. The Greek word "matheusate," rendered in English, "teach," signifies to *disciple*, or to *make disciples*. This rendering, no one, who can construe Greek, will dispute. It is universally admitted by the learned on both sides. The commission, then, runs thus: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them," i. e. the *disciples* whom they should make by teaching and preaching the gospel; or, they were to baptize the nations *when disciplined*. Nothing can be plainer than that they were to make disciples of the nations, *first*, and *then* baptize them. The order to baptize extends no further than to the disciples made by teaching. We cannot apply baptism to other subjects without *altering* and *enlarging* the commission, which we have no right to do.

It is a plain matter of fact, that infants are not named in this commission, as proper subjects of baptism, upon the faith of their parents, nor is there any thing said that implies that they have a right to this ordinance. The order was to baptize *disciples*, or *believers*; and here it terminates. Yes, my brethren, *it positively terminates here*. There is not a *syllable* pertaining to the baptism of any *besides disciples*.

The apostles, in their *former* commission, had been *limited* to the nation of Israel; but now they were directed to go and disciple *all nations*; i. e. to make *converts* of them, through the attending power of the Holy Ghost; and then they were to *initiate* them into the visible kingdom of Jesus by baptism. Hence the evangelist Mark, in reciting this commission, uses these words: chap. xv. 15, 16. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This wording of the commission is equally definite with the other; showing the proper subjects of baptism to be believers only. "He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved."—This contains authority for the baptism of *none but believers*. To say, as Pedobaptists generally do, that it relates merely to

adults, and, therefore, does not affect the case of *infants*, is at once to admit, that it contains no authority for *infant* baptism.

But if infant baptism be a duty, we certainly have a right to look for the expression of Christ's will in relation thereto, in the commission which he gave to baptize. And the fact that it is not contained, either in the final commission or in any previous commission which he gave his disciples for baptism, goes very far, (to say the least,) to show that the practice is wrong. Unless something *very explicit* in favour of the baptism of infants can be found elsewhere, (which, however, is not the case,) we ought to conclude at once, that it is not the will of Christ that they should be baptized. It would be so perfectly natural for the Lord Jesus, as the New Testament lawgiver, when appointing this ordinance, to determine the proper subjects of it, that if infants were intended to be baptized, we must reasonably conclude, they would have been mentioned in this commission. It is unaccountable that they are not mentioned, if indeed they are to be baptized. To say that the principle was settled *before*, in the *practice of circumcision*, is not relieving the difficulty; because, as I shall show, the principle was not settled therein; and even if it had been, it would have been reasonable to expect a recognition thereof in this commission. So important an article would not have been omitted.

Especially, have we a right to look for the expression of Christ's will in this commission, if he intended infants should be baptized, as this is a *positive* institution, which, of course, is not based upon a previous moral fitness in the thing itself, but rests wholly on his will and pleasure; and hence does not admit of *inference* and *analogy* like moral precepts. The commission, in this case, is the *very instrument* which must be expected to contain the rule of administration.

If Christ had not instituted baptism, we could not have inferred the duty of practising it from any moral precept contained in the Old Testament, or inculcated by himself, nor from any ancient custom, or rite, whatever. Whether there should be such an ordinance, depended wholly upon his will; and of course, it depended wholly upon his will how far this rite should be applied. It is therefore but just and reasonable to conclude that, if he meant it should be *applied to infants*, he would have given instructions to that effect. And his not having done so, naturally leads us to conclude that he *did not intend* it should be applied to them. To induce a belief that they are proper subjects of this ordinance, when the commission authorizes merely the baptism of *disciples*, or *professed believers*, there must be *something positive* produced from some other part of scripture;

a "*thus saith the Lord,*" which will *indubitably settle* the question. But this cannot be done, as I shall hereafter show.

Instead of there being any thing *elsewhere* in the *New Testament* in favour of infant baptism, the construction which I have given of the commission is confirmed by the previous history of baptism, during the ministry of John, his predecessor; and during his own publick ministry; and by the *subsequent* history of this ordinance during the ministry of the apostles.

CHAPTER II.

The Baptism of John shown to be distinct from Christian Baptism, and only preparatory to it ; yet that it reflects light upon the present question as it was applied to believers only.

It is abundantly manifest that the introductory baptism of John was limited to adult professors of repentance and faith in the coming Messiah. I do not recollect ever to have heard of one, who seriously maintained that John baptized infants. It appears to be universally conceded, that he baptized only such as became his disciples by professing the repentance which he preached, and declaring their belief that the long-expected Messiah was about to make his appearance among them.

He came to "make ready a *people prepared for the Lord*;" to announce *his approach* ; and to be the inspired and honoured instrument of *pointing him out* to the people.

Therefore, although there are good reasons for believing that his baptism was not Christian baptism itself ; but merely an introductory rite, which commenced, and ended, with him ; yet as an example of adult baptism merely, it reflects light upon the present question. The practice of making an *open and publick distinction* among the members of the *Jewish Church*, and of admitting *select individuals* from among those who were capable of being taught to a sacred and divinely appointed rite ; and that with an express view of making "*ready a people for the Lord*," commenced with him ; and this was known to the apostles, and would naturally have a bearing upon the subject of Christian baptism. It was an indication that *this also belonged to select individuals*, and was designed to *make, or distinguish* those who were called out of the world to be the *acknowledged people of Christ*. His baptism being confined to adults who professed repentance, not only served to lead the way to the ready understanding and reception of believers' baptism as instituted by Christ ; but it occasioned an *additional necessity* for the express mention of infants, if he had intended the ordinance should be applied to them.

While the baptism of John, however, manifestly favours the doctrine now advocated, as above stated ; the following reasons

will show that it was distinct from the baptism instituted by Christ.

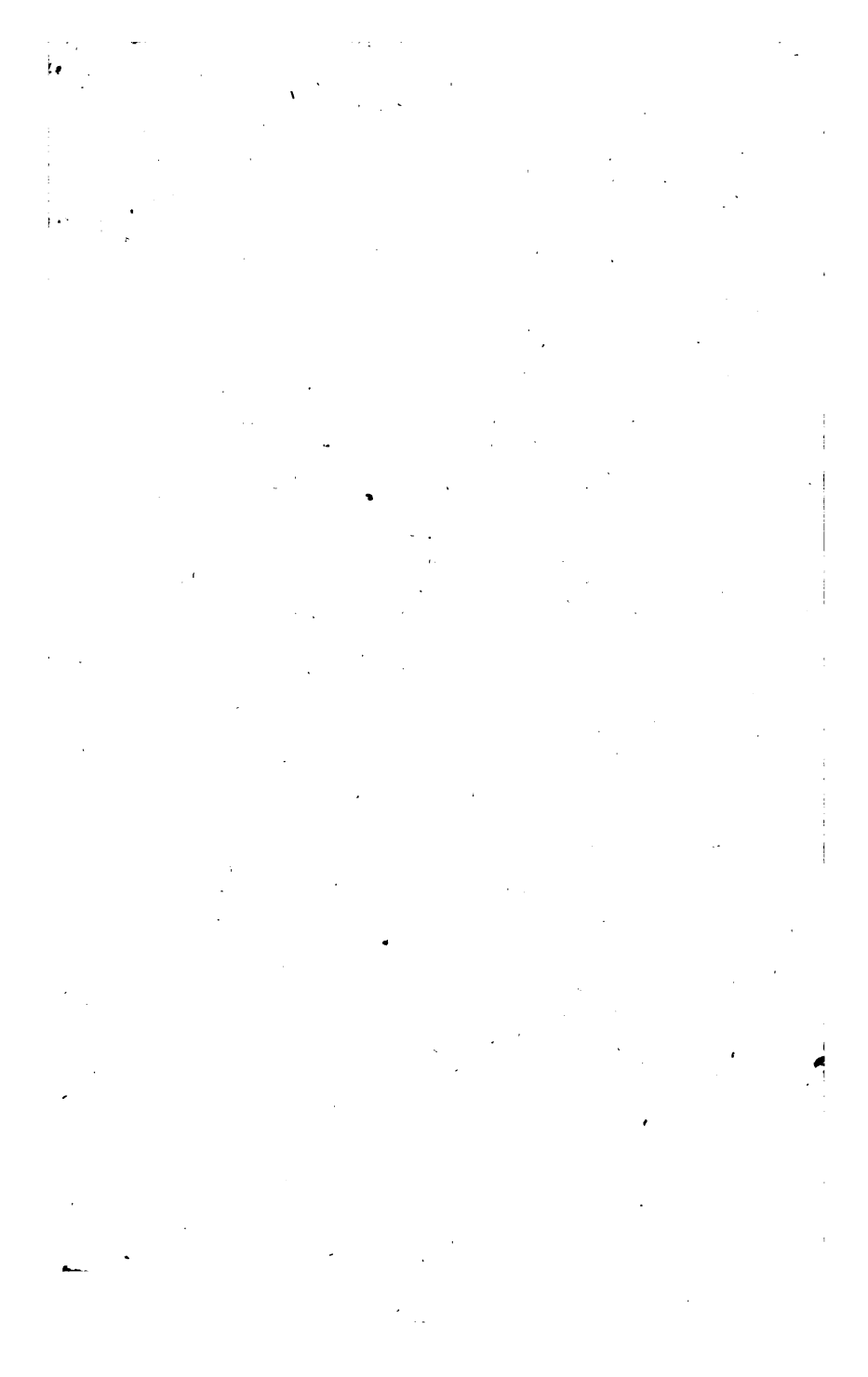
1. It is evident that the kingdom of heaven had not *actually come* when John commenced his ministry and baptism; but what he said and did was merely *preparatory thereto*. Therefore, his baptism could not have been Christian baptism itself.

2. John "baptized the people unto repentance, saying that they should believe on him that should come after him." And although this was Jesus, as the event proved, he did not, in general, direct them to *his very person*. His commission had nearly expired before he pointed out *Jesus* as the *Messiah* whom they had been taught to expect. Therefore, to baptize them upon a belief that the *Messiah* was coming, and to baptize them upon a belief that *Jesus was the very person*, were manifestly different things. Many of the Jews believed that the *Messiah* was speedily coming, who rejected the claims of *Jesus of Nazareth*. And this might have been the case with some of John's disciples. Doubtless, those of them that were real converts, acknowledged *Jesus* when they came to know his claims, because their hearts were previously prepared therefor by divine grace. But it is probable that many of his disciples were not true converts, although they professed repentance; and these, like other impenitent Jews, probably did not acknowledge *Jesus* to be the *Messiah* whom they had been expecting. Their being the disciples of *John*, evidently did not, as a matter of course, make them the disciples of *Jesus Christ*. Hence, the baptism of the former was distinct from that of the latter, and merely introductory to it.

3. That these baptisms were distinct, is manifest from the fact that some of John's disciples were *re-baptized* as the disciples of Christ. Of this we have an account in the xix chap. of Acts, verses 1—5. "And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, unto what, then, were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, i. e. on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Various attempts have been made to show that these disciples were not *re-baptized*. But the word itself plainly shows that they

were; and this would not have been necessary, nor consistent, if John's baptism and Christ's had been the same.

These considerations appear to me sufficient to show that John's baptism was not Christian baptism; but merely introductory thereto: yet in the ways before mentioned, it reflected light upon the present question.



CHAPTER III.

Christian Baptism shown to have been instituted by Christ during his life and personal ministry.

SOME time after John had entered upon his ministry, and had baptized many to repentance, our Lord Jesus Christ publickly entered upon his; and to do honour to John as his forerunner, and set an example of ready submission to all the appointments of God, though he was without sin, he came forward, and was baptized of him in the river of Jordan; and was *then and there* publickly and solemnly declared, not only by John himself, who was raised up and inspired for that purpose; but by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost, and an audible voice from the Father in heaven, to be *the Son of God, and the Saviour of mankind.*

Whereupon, after being forty days tempted of the devil, he commenced his publick ministry, and instituted a baptism of his own. It was not only his province to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire, but he introduced a baptism *with water*, as a badge of discipleship, and a significant emblem of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And in this practice, instituted during his own life and ministry, we find the origin of Christian baptism. It *did not* commence with the ministry of John, as many have maintained: *nor was it delayed till after the resurrection* of Christ, as many others have maintained: but it commenced *during his own life and personal ministry.* It is strange that *this important point* has been *so generally overlooked.*

Tracing the publick history of our Lord, especially as it is related by the evangelist John, we find that he first collected several disciples at the river of Jordan, near the place where he had been baptized. Then, he departed with them into Galilee, where he performed the miracle of turning water into wine at a wedding, and "manifested his glory;" and where he gained some accession to the number of his disciples. From thence, after a short time, he went up to Jerusalem, where he held the memorable conference with Nicodemus, and said,

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Leaving the city of Jerusalem, he came into the country of Judea, where we are informed that “he tarried and *baptized*.” This is the first express mention which is made of his having introduced baptism; though it is probable that the disciples which he had previously made were baptized. The record of this fact is in John iii. 22. “After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and *baptized*.” Here, then, we have *unequivocal testimony* of the fact that Jesus, soon after he entered upon his publick ministry, *practised baptism*. Intimations of this fact are given before, particularly in what he said to Nicodemus, and by his having collected a band of disciples. So that he probably commenced baptizing immediately upon his beginning to make disciples. But the fact of his having baptized, is not *expressly asserted* till now. Whatever may be thought of his previous practice, he certainly administered baptism, or caused it to be administered, at the *time* and *place* here alluded to. Mention of this fact is again made in verses 25 and 26 of this chapter. “Then there arose a question among some of John’s disciples and the Jews, about purifying; and they came to John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, *the same baptizeth*, and all men come to him.” There is another express mention of this fact, chap. iv. 1; 2, 3. “When, therefore, the Lord knew how the pharisees had heard that Jesus *made and baptized more disciples* than John, (though Jesus baptized not himself, but his disciples,) he left Judea, and departed again into Gallilee.”

Here, therefore, there are *three express passages* in support of the fact that Jesus, during his life and personal ministry on earth, and *at*, or *near* the commencement of his publick course, did introduce and practise, to a very considerable extent, the ordinance of baptism. And from the *last* of the three, we have the *very information* which we should naturally expect in such a case, respecting the *subjects* to whom it was *applied*. They were *disciples*, and *them only*. The people were first made disciples, and then baptized. Mark the words, for they are highly emphatical and instructive: “*Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John*” He did not *first* baptize them, and *then* make disciples of them; but he made disciples of them *first*, and *then* baptized them. There is no mention made of parents, who, after being baptized themselves, brought their children to baptism likewise, nor any encouragement given for them to do so. There is an admirable simplicity and plainness.

in the narrative, informing us who were baptized, viz. those who *first became the disciples* of Christ. Infants are not included in the record, nor is there the least intimation that they were baptized, or were ever intended to be.

But, if Christ had intended this ordinance for them, he surely would have mentioned them as proper subjects, and the sacred and impartial historian would have inserted the fact that they were baptized.

It is exceedingly evident that the baptism performed by Christ during his publick ministry, like that of his predecessor, was adult believers' baptism only. And I believe it is *conceded* that it was such on all hands.

If, then, it shall appear that it was Christian baptism itself—the very same ordinance that was to be continued in the church, this will afford strong and convincing proof that infants ought not to be baptized.

Many, I know, deny that it was Christian baptism, and labour, in that way, to avoid the argument which it furnishes for believers' baptism only.

But when the subject is impartially examined, it will be evident that it was *no other* than *Christian* baptism, the *very same* that is contained in the last apostolick commission. For it was a baptism which *Christ himself* instituted. And if it were not properly Christian, or New Testament baptism, then he must have introduced *two distinct baptisms*—one before, and the *other* after his death. But where is the proof of any such thing? Or what is there any where said that implies it? There is evidently no proof that he appointed two distinct baptisms *in the order* contained in the final commission to baptize *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. For aught that appears, this might have been the same form in which baptism was previously administered. The perfect silence of the scriptures is not sufficient proof that it was not.

But even if the name of the Trinity was not called in the baptism performed during our Lord's life, this will not materially affect the sameness of this, and the baptism used subsequently; so long as the disciples, or converts, were baptized *in the name of Christ, or by his authority*; seeing he is *very God* as well as *man*, and had all power in heaven and in earth committed unto him. The difference in the form of administration, (allowing such difference to have existed,) did not, under the circumstances of the case, make the baptisms distinct.

Again; if it be said they were distinct because the seal of the Abrahamick covenant was not changed from circumcision to baptism, till the death and resurrection of Christ—I would

reply, that there is no evidence that the seal of that covenant *was ever changed from circumcision to baptism*. The notion that baptism is a *substitute* for circumcision is a gross mistake, which I trust I shall fully show before I have done.

If it be further said, that these baptisms must have been distinct, because the ceremonial law was not disannulled till the death of Christ; and, therefore, the New Testament dispensation, to which Christian baptism belongs, did not commence till after that event, and of course, that this ordinance could not have been introduced before: I would reply, that the premises do not warrant the conclusion. The ceremonial law was, indeed, obligatory till the death of Christ. But the new covenant, or New Testament, might notwithstanding, have been previously introduced, and in successful operation, as well as the Abrahamic, which was undeniably in operation, during the whole time that the ceremonial law was obligatory. Besides, *gospel baptism* might as well be appointed before the death of Christ as the *Lord's Supper*.

Moreover, neither circumcision nor baptism belonged to the ceremonial law. The former was not of Moses, but of the fathers; and the latter was of Christ, the New Testament law-giver.

It is evident, also, that *two or more dispensations* of the covenant of grace may exist, and be in operation *at the same time*, without *any interference, or confusion*.

And further, it is capable of the clearest proof, that the New Testament dispensation *did commence during our Lord's life and personal ministry*.

So that this objection to the baptisms in question being the same, is unfounded.

If it could be conclusively shown that any who were baptized by Christ, or by his order, during his life, were *baptized again* after his death, this would be an argument of some force that they were distinct baptisms. But it cannot. There is no account, or any intimation, that any of the disciples made and baptized before his death, were re-baptized after it. It is evident, therefore, that the baptism instituted in his life-time, was the same as the one practised after his death and resurrection.

In addition to the above reasons, I would remark that the institution of the other New Testament ordinance, viz. the Lord's Supper, and the *admission of the twelve to it, before his death*, plainly imply that New Testament baptism was also in use *prior* to that event. If it were not, the disciples ate of the *supper before they received gospel baptism; and before they*

were regularly introduced into the gospel kingdom ; which cannot be reasonably admitted.

Again : Are we to suppose that our blessed Lord did *nothing effectually* during his life and publick ministry as to *this important subject*, but that all he did was to be *done over again* ?— This would be a gross reflection upon his character and ministry.

He made, as we have seen, and baptized many disciples during his publick ministry ; and yet it is pretended that this was *not*, in reality, *Christian baptism*, but altogether a *distinct* thing. What baptism was it, then ? Was it a continuance of *John's baptism* ? Then the disciples so baptized were *John's* disciples, and *not his*. But the Bible says they were *his*. Therefore his baptism was *not the same* as *John's*. Again : Will it be said that it was merely a *Jewish* washing, and not a *gospel* ordinance ? Whose, then, were the disciples which were made and baptized ? Were they the disciples of *Moses*, or of the *Pharisees*, or of the *Jewish High Priest* ? They must have been the disciples of the one to whom they were baptized.— Christ evidently would not have made them disciples to *himself*, and baptized them to *another*. If, therefore, they were *his own* disciples, and baptized *unto him*, this was, to all intents, *Christian baptism*—a *New Testament* ordinance—the *very same* mentioned in the commission which has been considered. The words of this commission do not imply the introduction of a *new* ordinance ; but only the *extension* of an ordinance already in being, to “ *all nations*,” as well as to the *Jews*, or to *believers* from among *all nations*.

It being now satisfactorily shown that Christian baptism was instituted *during the life and personal ministry* of Christ ; and that when thus instituted and practised, it was *believers' baptism only*, or *limited expressly to those who became Christ's disciples* ; this serves very much to settle this controversy, and to show that the sense of the final commission for baptism is what I have stated—an order to baptize *believers only*.

We will now trace the history of baptism *subsequent* to the death and resurrection of Christ ; in doing which we shall find various injunctions and examples in support of the baptism of believers ; but none in favour of the baptism of infants on the faith of their parents.

Peter said, Acts ii. 38, 41, to the awakened multitude on the day of pentecost, “ Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.” Repentance is here expressly required before baptism, and it is required of *every one of them*. They were considered and treated as *converts*.—

There is no mention made *whatever* of any *infants being baptized, or added to the church*. And I can hardly think any sober Christian will maintain that there were any infants among the three thousand then baptized and added to the *company of disciples*. It is perfectly obvious that they were adult believers, or such as were baptized on their own faith; and those subsequently added were of the same character. For we are expressly told that the "Lord added to the church daily *such as should be saved,*" or "*the saved,*" as it might have been rendered.

The next account of baptism recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, is that of the Samaritans who were converted under the preaching of Philip. Acts, viii. 6. "But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both *men and women.*" Here, again, there is no mention made of any infants. But if infants had been baptized too, would it not have been recorded? It is certainly reasonable to suppose that it would.

In the same chapter, there is also an account of the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch. The condition required of him was, "*if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.*" And the profession made by him was, "*I believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.*" So that here was the baptism of a believer. The next instance recorded is that of Saul, Acts, ix. 18, who was also a believer at the time. Then in Acts, x. 48, we have a history of the baptism of Cornelius and his friends, who were Gentiles; and the reason assigned therefor is, that "*they had received the Holy Ghost as well as the believing Jews.*" "*They spake with tongues and magnified God;*" or, in other words, they were believers in Jesus. The record is perfectly silent as to the subject of baptizing infants.

In the next place, we read of the baptism of the households of Lydia and the jailer, Acts, xvi. 15, 33. But the record in either of these cases does not imply that there were any infants baptized on the faith of their parents. The former household are, in verse 40, characterized as brethren. And of the latter it is expressly said, verse 34, that the jailer "*rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*" There is, therefore, no evidence here that any were baptized but believers.

But as great stress is laid by Pedobaptists upon these instances, and that of the household of Stephanas, I intend, in another place, to give each a more particular consideration.

The next account of baptism is that of the Corinthians, Acts, xviii. 8. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, be-

Heved on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." Infants, you see, are wholly left out of this record also. In I. Corinthians, i. 16, Paul says, "I baptized also the household of Stephanas;" but he is careful, before he closes his Epistle, to give us their character as a household of believers. See chap. xvi. 15. "Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the *first fruits* of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints."

There is another account of baptism given in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. xix. 1—5, which is that of the twelve disciples at Ephesus, and already noticed; which, of course, is only a record of believers' baptism.

In Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chap. vi. 3, we find this sentence: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" And in his Epistle to the Galatians, chap. iii. 27, we find the following sentence, viz. "as many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ." The phrases, "so many of us," and "as many of you as," plainly mean "all that."—Hence all that were baptized "were baptized into Christ's death," and "put on Christ," which can import nothing less than that they all made a profession of faith. Again, in Colossians, ii. 12, he speaks of Christians being "buried with Christ in baptism."

These are all the instances in which an express record is made of the administration of Christian baptism in the New Testament. And they are all examples of the baptism of believers only. There is *not one solitary instance* of the baptism of an *infant* upon the parents' faith in the whole New Testament history.

But the instances of baptism recorded, are a practical comment on the apostolick believers' commission. And these being instances of believers' baptism only, show conclusively how the Apostles understood the commission; that the order to baptize was limited to believers; and that no subsequent order including infants was given.

How different from the preceding accounts is the record which *Pedobaptists* give of the administration of baptism! They are wont to state the baptism of *so many adults*, and *so many infants*. Now if the Apostles had done the same, something might have been gathered from their practice, which would have been to the purpose. But as they have not made any such record; but merely recorded the baptism of believ-

ers; it is plain that they baptized *no other*; and that they did not understand their Lord *to order* the baptism of any other.

And, here, it would seem that we might rest this part of the subject.

But as the apostolick commission is confessedly of high importance in this controversy, and as all appear to be sensible that this is the proper place to look for the warrant to baptize infants, if such warrant exists; and as various attempts are made to show that it does include such a warrant, or at least that it contains nothing which militates against their baptism, it is proper, for the sake of elucidating the truth, that these attempts should be distinctly considered.

CHAPTER IV.

The various attempts to include Infants in the Apostolick Commission for Baptism, considered and refuted.

1. Some maintain that infants are included among the *disciples*, and that as they are not capable of *being taught*, they must be made disciples *by baptism*, or be thereby brought into the school of Christ.

But this is manifestly an error; for the words of the commission do not imply, or intimate, that there are *two* ways of making disciples, the *one by teaching* and the *other by baptism*. There is only *one* way described of making them, and that is *by teaching*, (the Holy Ghost accompanying the word,) and then baptism is to follow as the consequence. The notion, that when the head of a family becomes a disciple by teaching, his infants, or his household, become disciples, *of course*, or that they become such *by being baptized*, is wholly unfounded. None are disciples but such as are converted by means of the word.

It is not to be inferred that infants are to be made disciples in a different way from that of adults, on account of their *incapacity to be taught*. The words of the commission authorize no such conclusion.

This notion is not only unauthorized and absurd, but it plainly *contradicts* the sense of the commission. The very order of the words implies, that the proper subjects of baptism must become disciples *before* they are baptized. They are not made disciples *by being baptized*, for the very reason that they must become disciples *first*, and that they are baptized *as disciples*; not to make them such. Baptism is plainly stated as the *consequence* of discipleship, and not that which *precedes* it as *the thing which constitutes* discipleship. To talk of making disciples by baptism, is grossly to pervert language. It is turning the order of Christ into quite another thing from what his words make it. To maintain that this commission means that such as are capable of being taught should be made disciples *by teaching*, and that such as are not capable of being taught should be made disciples *by baptism*, is positively changing the commis-

sion from its plain and obvious meaning. It is astonishing that men will take such liberty with the word of God!

Besides; if the *incapacity* of infants to be taught were any argument for their baptism, it would be in favour of the baptism of such only as are *mere infants*, and could not apply, at all, to the baptism of a *whole household*, provided it contains *any* that have passed the strict line of infancy. And yet we constantly hear of *household* baptism after the example of *household* circumcision. And many, and I believe most Pedobaptists, do apply baptism to children upon their parents' account, who cannot be considered as *mere infants*; but are fully capable of being taught *themselves*. And if they *did not*, the argument from *household* circumcision would be *lost*. It frequently happens, that a parent does not believe till he has a large number of children of different ages, from the mere babe, to children of twenty-one years of age and more, and yet, at the time, he is the only believer in the family. Now, if the household is to be baptized upon his faith, they must all be baptized, at least all under age, together with the servants, whatever be their age. And, yet, the argument under consideration is, that infants must be baptized, and thereby be made the disciples of Christ, because they are *incapable of being taught*; otherwise they should be disciplined by teaching. The argument, therefore, from *household circumcision*, and the one from the *incapacity of infants*, are manifestly inconsistent with each other. *Infant* baptism and *household* baptism cannot be defended on the same ground. If the argument from the incapacity of infants has any weight, it will exclude all of a family from baptism, except such as are so young as to be incapable of being taught, and consequently all, in general, over *six* years of age, and, frequently, all over *four*. And it will wholly contradict the argument for *household* baptism. Does it not hence appear, that error is fated to run crooked?

Moreover; to suppose that Christ intended infants should be disciplined *merely by baptism*, on account of their *incapacity*, is making *three* sorts of disciples; whereas the scriptures treat of but *two*; viz. those that are *really converted*, and those that are *visibly and professedly converted*, but not *really*. They do not any where describe a *third* class who are made disciples *merely by baptism*, from which it is obvious that no such class exists.

It cannot be justly pretended that infants are not a *third* class of disciples; but are to be reckoned with those who give *credible evidence* of being *regenerated*. For the children of believers are as depraved as the children of unbelievers, and they give no more evidence of *piety* after they are baptized,

merely upon that account, than before. If, therefore, they are disciples, it is not because they are *real converts*, or because they *appear* to be such; consequently, they must, as I said, be a *third class*, which the Bible knows nothing of.

2. It is plead that infants are included in this commission, because they are a *part of the nations*, and Christ said, "go teach" or disciple "*all nations*, baptizing them:" and there being no other way of discipling the nations *as such*, but by making disciples of infants by baptism, seeing they are incapable of being taught, they must, of course, be included in the commission in this sense.

If this argument has any force, it will go to support the idea of a national church, and of the indiscriminate application of baptism; which most of the orthodox would not relish.

But in fact, it has no force. The order to make disciples of all nations is, from its very nature, *limited* to such as are *capable of being taught*. It does not extend to *mere infants* and *idiots*.

If the Lord had bid his Apostles go and teach all nations the Hebrew language, common sense would lead us to restrict the order to such as were capable of being taught it. It is just as obvious that the order to make disciples of all nations is limited to such as have the capacity of being taught the great things of his kingdom.

There can be no doubt that infants are capable of being renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and of having the principle of faith implanted in them, and consequently of being saved, should they die in that age, through the merits of Christ.

But they are not capable of receiving gospel instruction, and of making a credible profession of faith; and therefore are not capable of being disciplined, according to the obvious tenour of this commission.

And as they are not capable of giving evidence of grace so as to be numbered among the brethren; so they are not capable of doing the duties of church members, nor of enjoying the external privileges of the church. Hence it is abundantly evident that they were not intended to be included among the proper subjects of Christian baptism.

3. It is plead that infants are included in this commission, because the Lord Jesus was a *Jew*, and spake to *those* that were *Jews*; and that if the order had been, go teach all nations, *circumcising* them, the duty of *circumcising children* upon their parents' account, would have been considered as *implied* therein, provided nothing more had been added: and consequently, as *baptism takes the place of circumcision* under the New Testa-

ment dispensation, they must naturally have understood him to include infants in this commission.

In reply, I would remark, that if no new dispensation had been introduced, and no other instructions had been given than those contained in the Abrahamick covenant and the Mosaick law, and our Lord had said as above represented, without adding any thing more; it is admitted that they would have naturally inferred, that when the head of a family was taught and converted, all his *males* were to be *circumcised* as well as *himself*—“all that were born in his house and bought with his money.” But they would not have inferred that his *female* children and servants had any thing to do with this rite, because they were not included in the original order for circumcision. So that the above conclusion *as to children in general*, or of *both sexes*, is not warranted by the premises, allowing them to be true. Much more will the conclusion respecting the baptism of children of *both sexes* appear to be *unwarranted*, when it shall be made manifest that baptism *is not a substitute* for *circumcision*.

To evince how perfectly inconclusive this whole argument is, as it respects even the baptism of male children and servants, I would observe that our Lord *had actually introduced a new dispensation*, and *set up the kingdom of heaven*, as foretold by the prophet Daniel, by calling out from the body of the Jewish nation, a *company of disciples*, and had taught expressly that his kingdom was “*not of this world*.” He had also given various additional instructions to those contained in the Abrahamick covenant and the Mosaick law, and had come for the purpose of annulling the ceremonial code delivered to Moses, and of instituting a new order of things, and had actually introduced *two new rites*, viz. *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*, the former of which had been applied, during his life, *exclusively to disciples*, and the latter had been *confessedly applied to such merely*; therefore, if he had said, under *these* circumstances, Go teach all nations, *circumcising* them, they would not have inferred even the duty of circumcising the *male children* of believers of *all nations*: much less the baptism not only of *male*, but *female* children, when he had never taught them that baptism was a *substitute* for circumcision. And what is still further unfortunate for this argument, is, that our Lord did not say to his apostles, Go teach, or disciple all nations, *circumcising* them; but *baptizing* them. There is not a word, or hint, about circumcision in the whole commission, or of baptism's coming in the room of it.

The ordinance of circumcision was never enjoined on any

but Abraham and his descendants, and such as were incorporated with them in their *national* capacity; and to them it has never been annulled, (which I shall show particularly in a subsequent chapter.) Therefore, baptism cannot be a substitute for that ordinance; and so the argument from circumcision is wholly lost.

4. It is plead that infants are included in this commission, upon the ground that baptism is a seal of the same covenant of which circumcision was, and appointed for the same purposes. But this ground is wholly untenable, and the argument is good for nothing. Where are we told that baptism is a seal of the same covenant of which circumcision was? or even a seal of any covenant whatever? *Surely not in the Bible*, although the sentiment is constantly advanced as though it rested on the highest scriptural authority.

Besides, as circumcision was never obligatory on the *Gentiles* in their separate national capacity, and was never *abrogated to the Jews*, but remains in full force to them, there can be no ground to consider baptism as a substitute. As the case is, such a thing could not be.

It is capable of the clearest proof that circumcision was continued to the believing as well as to the unbelieving Jews through the whole of the apostolick age, and not the least notice is taken of baptism's being a substitute, when the circumstances manifestly required that this notice should have been taken, if such had been the fact. Therefore, it is perfectly unwarranted and preposterous to consider it a substitute for that rite.

Besides; should it even be admitted that the seal of the Abrahamick covenant is changed from circumcision to baptism; nothing could, hence, be conclusively argued, under all the circumstances, in favour of the baptism of infants.

The question will naturally arise, when was it changed? Was it changed during our Lord's personal ministry? or not till after his resurrection? I believe it is generally maintained by Pedobaptists that it was not changed until after his resurrection; and that the baptism which he appointed before was a different thing, and not a seal of the covenant. But this opinion, as I have already shown, is unauthorized. It is certain that Christ introduced a baptism during his life, and *at or near* the commencement of his publick ministry. And we do not any where learn that he afterwards introduced a different one. He certainly made and baptized disciples *in his life-time*; and these were not baptized to *John*, nor to *any other man*; but to *him, as his disciples*. The record plainly says so. And those that were baptized after his resurrection, were not baptized *other-*

wise than *as his disciples*. "As many of you, says Paul, as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Those who received baptism during our Lord's personal ministry were as truly admitted into his kingdom as those that received it afterwards. It is, therefore, abundantly clear that these baptisms were the same.

Consequently, if the seal of the Abrahamick covenant was changed from circumcision to baptism, the change must have taken place *during our Lord's life and personal ministry*.

But the application of baptism, which is called by Pedobaptists the new seal, was then determined, by his will and order, to belong *only to believers of both sexes*. He made disciples by teaching *before* he baptized them. There is not a syllable in favour of his baptizing any others. The argument, therefore, from the change of the seals, if such change were admitted, is inconclusive. The same change, whereby the new seal, as it is called, is applied to *females*, limits the application of it to *believers of both sexes*:

All will be forced to admit that there is a change in the application of the new seal, from that of the old; inasmuch as it is unquestionably applicable to *females*, whereas the former seal was expressly limited to *males*.

If, therefore, *this change* might be made, and if it be allowed that *this was suitable and proper*, under the *new dispensation*; a *still further change* might likewise be made, so as to *restrict baptism to believers of both sexes*, as best suited to the *spiritual nature* of the gospel dispensation; and this might be done without destroying the idea of its being a seal of the same covenant. Every one can see that it is not necessary to its being a seal of the same covenant, that it should be applied to *infants*, any more than that it should be *limited* to the *male sex*. If the lawgiver could consistently make the latter alteration, and yet it be the seal of the same covenant, he manifestly could the former. And such a change as *extends* the application of gospel baptism to *females*, and *limits* it to *believers of both sexes*, evidently befits the present more spiritual dispensation and economy, wherein, instead of taking *one whole nation*, as formerly, to be his people, in distinction from others, he takes *believers from among all nations*.

And when we find that this ordinance was, in fact, *thus limited*, during our Lord's *personal ministry*, it was evidently *not* his pleasure that it should be applied to any but believers. And, hence, it would have been perfectly unnatural for the apostles to infer, under all the circumstances, that infants were included in their final commission. And the subsequent

history of their transactions shows, as we have seen, that they did not infer any such thing.

Therefore, nothing is materially gained to the cause of Pedobaptism, by admitting that the Abrahamick covenant is the one which we are now under, and that the seal thereof is changed as above.

But, in fact, the Abrahamick covenant is *distinct* from the *new covenant*, and baptism is *not a seal of either*, or of *any other covenant*. It is a simple ordinance of the New Testament, or covenant, which is a different dispensation of the covenant of grace, both from the Sinai and the Abrahamick dispensations. The only seal of the new covenant is the blood of Christ.

Moreover, baptism is a *positive* institution, the nature and use of which are, accordingly, to be determined by the words which contain it—by the very authority on which it rests, as signified therein, and not by inferences drawn from a previous appointment.

There is, indeed, some similarity in the nature and use of the two ordinances; although the one does not answer all the purposes of the other, and in some respects they serve *different* purposes. Yet this similarity in certain respects will not determine the extent to which baptism is to be applied. We are restricted in this case by the appointment of the lawgiver, and the known practice of his inspired apostles. And these determine that the ordinance belongs only to believers of both sexes.

That baptism does not answer all the purposes of circumcision, must be obvious to any one who will candidly examine the various items of the Abrahamick covenant.

Although one, or two, of the provisions of that covenant belong to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, it does not belong to them *as a whole*. But circumcision had respect to it *as a whole*, confirming *all its promises*. Therefore baptism, which belongs to Gentiles as well as Jews, cannot answer all the ends of circumcision, allowing that it does *some* of them. And this very circumstance requires a difference in its application, and naturally limits it to believers of both sexes.

It is perfectly clear that a different use was made, *at first*, of baptism, from that which was made of circumcision. It was not applied to Jews *in common*, or *promiscuously*, like circumcision, nor to *all* the males of a man's house; but to *select persons* from among that *circumcised* people, and from among their *respective* families—to such only as became Christians, or believers in Jesus. Here, then, is a point in which there is a *dissimilarity* in the nature and design of the two institutions. We cannot therefore rightly infer the duty of infant baptism.

from any *similarity* which may exist in *some other respects* between them.

Thus, the various efforts which are made to make it appear that infants are included in the commission for baptism, are altogether ineffectual. It is plain, after all, that it is *limited to disciples, or believers*.

CHAPTER V.

Circumcision shown to be of perpetual obligation to the Jews, and hence Baptism cannot be considered as a substitute.

IT is a common opinion that the rite of circumcision was annulled, when the new dispensation was introduced, and that baptism was appointed *in its stead*. But this opinion has been adopted without scriptural authority. The notion that baptism is a substitute for circumcision, is one of the strongest arguments employed for the baptism of infants. If this notion therefore shall appear to be unauthorized, it will tend very much to overthrow that cause; it will, in fact, subvert its main pillar. This, then, is a point which deserves to be seriously considered.

Some may start at the idea that circumcision was *never abrogated to the Jews*, and think it will lead to horrible consequences. But let us patiently examine the matter.

Circumcision was certainly in full and approved use among the Jews at the commencement of our Lord's ministry, when baptism was *first appointed*: and yet no notice is taken of *this* being a substitute for *that* ancient rite, or of its ever being *designed to be*.

Circumcision continued, also, in approved use during the whole of our Lord's ministry, in which he was continually *making and baptizing disciples*. And it was in use when the *final commission* was given to teach and baptize all nations; and yet all is silent on the subject of its *abrogation, or discontinuance*, and of the appointment of baptism in its *stead*, as a seal of *the same covenant*.

It was, moreover, in use on the memorable day of Pentecost; and yet Peter said, "Repent and be *baptized, every one of you*, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins," without *saying a word* about the *new seal's* coming in the place of the *old*: he never *intimated* that they were no longer to circumcise their children.

It was in use when Peter had the vision respecting the calling of the Gentiles, and actually went (being convinced and *overpowered* by a miraculous vision, and by the express order

of God) to Cornelius and his friends, for the purpose of instructing them in the things of the gospel; and yet there is not *even a suggestion* respecting the *change of the seals*, and the *discontinuance of circumcision to the Jews*.

It was in use when the brethren went up from the church at Antioch to Jerusalem, on the question about circumcising the Gentiles, to inquire whether that church had given direction to the teachers who came out from them to impose circumcision and the Mosaick rites on the Gentiles; which must have been seventeen years after the conversion of Paul; as appears from his epistle to the Galatians; and yet there is *not a word* said about the *supposed substitution*, or of the *abolition of circumcision among the Jews*: when if any such thing had taken place, and was known, the occasion required that it should be *stated*, and the principle of substitution *defended*; and when the *bare statement* of it would have for ever *put to silence* the question respecting the *circumcision of the Gentiles*.

All which would have been required was to state that the Lord Jesus had abrogated the rite of circumcision, and appointed baptism as a new seal of the same covenant—a seal that was common to all nations, and one which had actually been in use a number of years, both among Jews and Gentiles; and hence that there was no necessity for circumcising the Gentiles; yea, that the idea was palpably absurd. Moreover, that it was both unnecessary and absurd to continue circumcision among the Jews themselves, seeing they were, from the very first, in possession of the new seal. This, I say, would have been all which was required to terminate this dispute and silence the Judaizers.

Or, at most, it would have been sufficient to say, that although circumcision was *permitted to the Jews*, notwithstanding it had become obsolete, on account of their prejudices and strenuous adherence to their ancient usages; and notwithstanding a *new seal or token* of the covenant had been introduced; it was perfectly unnecessary and unwarrantable to impose circumcision on the Gentiles, who had *never been under the Mosaick law*, and who, by the *express appointment* of Jesus Christ, were likewise in possession of the *new seal*.

Now I say that what is contained in the one or the other of these statements, would have been amply sufficient to settle that whole controversy *at once*, and *for ever*.

And had the principle *been true*, that circumcision was disannulled and baptism *substituted in its room*, the occasion *imperiously demanded such an explanation and disclosure*. To neglect this argument was not only to act inconsistently, and even dishonestly, in keeping back a plain and important principle which,

most intimately respected the peace and welfare of the church ; but, to lay aside the exercise of *common sense*. Who can suppose, when so much interest was taken in the question, and when so many insisted that the Gentiles should be circumcised and keep the law ; and when there was so much argument and disputing in that venerable assembly of *apostles, elders and brethren*, that a *profound silence* would have been observed respecting a *principle, which, if true*, would have put an *immediate end* to the controversy. An expert Pedobaptist would have decided the cause in *two minutes* ; yea, in *one* ; so that no one could have had a face to urge the imposition of circumcision on the Gentiles.

And yet no one appears to have thought of this overpowering argument. No intimation is given that the *supposed change* had taken place in the *seals*, and that circumcision was *abolished to the Jews*. Here, I say, *in the very place*, and *on the very occasion*, when this subject could not, from the nature of the circumstances, have failed to be discussed and plainly stated, if it had been real, *not a tittle is uttered*. What then is the legitimate conclusion ? It is, that the sentiment that baptism had taken the place of circumcision, and that circumcision was no longer obligatory on the Jews, *was not known*, and *was not true*.

After the church at Jerusalem had expressly denied giving the teachers in question any direction to impose circumcision on the Gentiles, and much had been said in the council *for* and *against* the measure, an *inspired decree* was delivered by the apostles, in which the Gentiles were expressly exempted from the practice of circumcision, and the ceremonial rites of the law ; which decree implies, at least, that the Jews considered themselves bound to continue this institution.

It is conceded that they appear generally to have thought that the rites of Moses were also obligatory ; which were, in reality, abrogated by the death of Christ, and therefore not binding, although their use was tolerated for a season. This matter, probably, was not fully cleared up, till Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, and till the *first covenant* " which waxed old and was ready to vanish away," was completely broken in the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the nation.

This circumstance, however, does not materially affect the argument.

Their conceiving that the observance of the ancient rites appointed by Moses was necessary, as well as circumcision, is no evidence that they knew any thing about this supposed change in the seals ; nor is it any evidence that *circumcision* and *these rites* are to be placed on the same footing, so that if

one was, in fact, abrogated, the other was also, although the use of both was permitted for a season. For it is plain that the *abrogation of these rites did not annul circumcision*; because "it was *not of Moses*; but of the fathers." It was *not a part* of the ceremonial law, although certain regulations were made by Moses relative to its observance. But it belonged to *another covenant* "which the law *could not disannul*." The abrogation of the law, therefore, did not abrogate *this rite*, as originally instituted to Abraham, *any more than the covenant* to which it belonged. The ceremonial law given by Moses might be *done away*, and yet the covenant with Abraham *continue, together with its appointed token, to those for whom it was designed*, viz. the *natural descendants* of that patriarch. *And such was the fact*. Therefore this rite, and the Mosaick ritual, were not placed on a parallel footing.

Hence, the Jews' conceiving, for a time, that they were bound to observe this law, after it had, in fact, ceased to be obligatory, does not affect the subject of circumcision, which belonged to *another covenant, that has not, and cannot pass away*. Their misapprehension respecting the continuance of the Mosaick rites, does not imply that they were under any mistake as to the continuance of circumcision; nor does it serve to show that they knew any thing about a substitute for that ordinance. But the total silence above noticed shows that they did not.

Had they continued circumcision merely on the same principle with the rites of Moses, the *second* argument above stated would have met the case in question, and perfectly silenced the plea for the circumcision of the Gentiles. And they, surely, would not have failed to employ it, when it was so appropriate, and so urgently required.

As to the Mosaick rites themselves, no one pretends that there was a *substitute appointed*. They all, of course, terminated, *as types, in Christ*, to whom they pointed, and in the spirituality of his kingdom. Had there been a change, and *others appointed in their stead*, the case would have, evidently, required the *mention* of it. Its not being mentioned, is, of itself, a conclusive argument that no such thing existed.

So in the other case, no mention being made of the change of circumcision to baptism, when the occasion, in every view, *imperiously required it*, shows that it was not a reality.

Nor do the following words of Paul, Gal. v. 2, 3, viz. "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; for I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law," present any difficulty. For it is evident that he

does not refer to the *simple practice* of circumcision; but to the perverted notion of it which was propagated by the Judaizing teachers, viz. "That except they were circumcised and kept the law, they could not be saved." It was this view of circumcision that he was opposing, and not the simple institution as a token of God's covenant with Abraham. Hence he says, "whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace," i. e. from the scheme of grace. Certainly if they were circumcised upon this principle, "Christ would profit them nothing;" for grace and works could not be intermixed.

Yet circumcision might be continued on *other* grounds, and was so continued by the purest and best Jewish believers. We have already traced its continuance down to the period of the council which sat at Jerusalem. And we shall be able to trace it still farther. If, therefore, the mere practice of circumcision after the death of Christ rendered him unprofitable to the circumcised, the whole multitude of *believing* as well as *unbelieving* Jews, hereby excluded themselves from the benefits of his atonement, and made themselves debtors to do the whole law; for they were all in this practice. But this cannot be. Therefore, Paul unquestionably refers to the aforesaid corrupted view of this rite and the customs of Moses.

He himself allowed of *simple circumcision to the Jews*, though he would not consent to have it imposed on the Gentiles. He was, indeed, accused of opposing circumcision altogether; but it was not so. This will clearly appear, together with the continuance of circumcision among all the Jews, *believing* as well as *unbelieving*, from Acts, xxi. 17—26. "And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they *ought not to circumcise their children*, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say unto thee: we have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that *those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that*

thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that *they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.* Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering were made for every one of them."

The date of this transaction must have been several years after the time of the aforementioned council; and yet "the many thousands of Jews which believed were all zealous of circumcision and the law of Moses." It is sometimes asked, did the believing Jews continue to practise circumcision? In this passage we have a definite answer. *They did, all of them.* Even Paul did not teach the believing Jews that were among the Gentiles that they ought not to circumcise their children, as it had been reported. Otherwise, his compliance with the measure proposed by the brethren at Jerusalem to silence the clamour of the people, was practising a lie. For the very object of this measure was to counteract the report that he had so taught. And Paul's freely consenting to this measure was a full and publick declaration that he had taught no such thing as was reported. He allowed of circumcision to the Jews, let them live where they would.

Here, again, when the circumstances of the case plainly demanded that the change of the seals, and the discontinuance of circumcision to the Jews, (if such had been the fact,) should have been noticed; not a word is uttered, or an intimation given. Nor is there any mention of this afterwards.

Instead of this, circumcision was strenuously practised "by the many thousands of Jews which believed," as well as others, long after the introduction of the Christian dispensation; yea, through the whole period of the New Testament history. They were so precise in regard to this subject, that the report that a single individual had set himself against the practice and the prevailing customs, excited the indignation of the whole multitude of Jews, and exposed him to the fury of the populace.

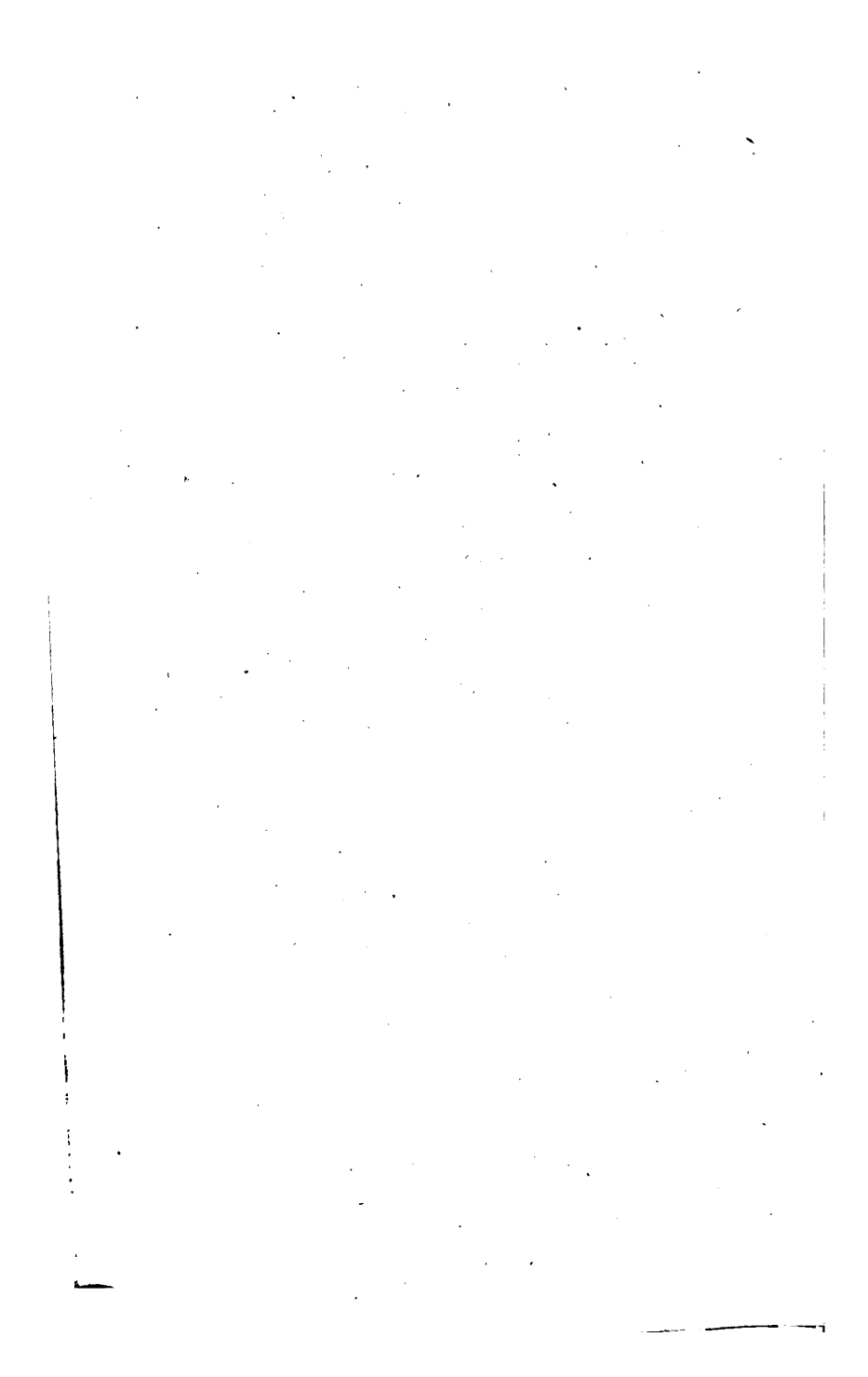
Yea, there is nothing in the whole of the New Testament records which contains any notice of baptism's taking the place of circumcision, or of circumcisions's being discontinued to the Jews, or ever intended to be. But if such had been the fact, this notice must certainly have been taken.

I am, therefore, warranted in saying, that the seal of the Abrahamick covenant was never changed from circumcision to

baptism, and that circumcision was never abolished to the Jews, but remains to this day in full force.

Especially will this appear, when we take into consideration the perpetuity of the covenant to which it belonged, and the order of God to Abraham that every man-child among his descendants, without limitation, should be circumcised.

Great stress is often laid on the silence of the Jews respecting the privileges of children, as though this could not have been, if infants had not been baptized during the apostolick age. But from the above view of the case, this silence is easily accounted for, allowing that infants *were not baptized*. There was no occasion to complain, seeing the Abrahamick covenant was not abridged, nor their right to circumcise their children called in question. If circumcision were ever a privilege, it was a privilege to Jews still; and upon Gentiles, in their separate national capacity, it had never been conferred. What ground, therefore, existed for the Jews to complain? Evidently none. And we do not hear any complaint from the Gentiles, for they did not, under all the circumstances, consider circumcision a privilege to them. Believers among them were brought upon a level with believing Jews in point of spiritual privileges, and this was enough. They had cause to be satisfied with their circumstances in other respects. Hence we hear of no complaint from any quarter. But this furnishes no argument whatever for infant baptism.



CHAPTER VI.

The fact that the kingdom of heaven was set up, or the New Testament dispensation introduced during Christ's life and personal ministry, particularly illustrated and proved.

It was predicted by the prophet Isaiah, that "a king should reign and prosper"—that a "child should be born, and a son given, who should be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace; that the government should be upon his shoulder, and that of his kingdom there should be no end."

It was foretold by Daniel, that in the time of the fourth great kingdom that should arise, i. e. in the time of the Roman monarchy, "the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which should break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and stand for ever."

The Lord Jesus-Christ was the king thus promised, and his New Testament church the kingdom which he should establish and reign over.

Moreover, the prophet Jeremiah foretold that God would "make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which he made with their fathers when they came out of Egypt," wherein he engaged to "write his law in their hearts, and that he would be their God, and they should be his people." This is the same as the New Testament, of which Christ is the mediator.

This covenant evidently began to take effect during our Lord's life and ministry. A very important change *then began to be effected* in the constitution of the church; and the *kingdom of heaven* was then set up. A chosen people was called out and separated from the publick mass, and brought under a peculiar set of laws and regulations. And Christ then began to claim and to exercise, in various respects, the prerogatives of Zion's king.

The *true rise* of his kingdom was when he began to *make disciples and baptize them*. For he said that "except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God." No other period can be assigned for its rise which is so reasonable and so consistent as this.

It is evidently not correct to fix on the day of Pentecost, as some do, for the change of the dispensations and the rise of this kingdom, because the Gospel Church was in existence *before*. The three thousand converts *were added unto them*, i. e. the company of disciples previously formed, and many of whom were assembled together on that great and notable occasion. There is no record of any new church being formed on that day, nor of any thing that implies it; and yet we immediately hear of a "church" to which "the Lord added daily such as should be saved." And this could not be the *Jewish church*; for these converts were *already members of that*, and hence *could not be added*. The church spoken of, was, indeed, composed of native Jews and proselytes. But it was manifestly distinct from *the body* of the nation, or from the *Jewish church* as it had previously existed. It was a church which had arisen from among that people, or the same church that formerly existed, brought under a *new constitution* which retained the *sound* part and rejected the *rest*; which circumstance shows that it was altogether distinct from the body of the nation.

And it could not have been *then* formed, because, as before remarked, it was in existence previous to that day. There was a body of disciples, or Christians, in being at the commencement of that scene, prepared and authorized to receive members.

And there is no mention made of this church being formed a while *previous* to that day, yet *subsequent* to the resurrection of Jesus. No one, it is presumed, will fix upon any part of this interval as the time in which this church was formed. Besides, it is evident that it was in being *at the very time* of the resurrection. Paul's declaration that "he was seen alive after his passion, of more than *five hundred brethren* at once," is satisfactory proof of this.

Further: The administration of the Lord's Supper to the twelve a little before his death, an ordinance which belongs exclusively to the New Testament church, shows that it existed *then*, and that the disciples were a part of it. And hence we find that it was formed *previous* to the death of Christ. And so we may proceed, step by step, till we come to the period when he began to collect a company of baptized disciples; when we shall, undoubtedly, find the origin of that church, or kingdom, which was like a grain of mustard seed that is very small at first, but grows and becomes a tree; or like the stone which, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, was cut out of the mountain with-

out hands, and became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Our Lord's saying in Galilee, some time after he had made and baptized disciples, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is *at hand*," forms no valid objection against this view of the subject. Neither does his subsequently bidding the apostles to preach the same doctrine in the places which they visited. For no more is necessarily implied in this form of expression than that the kingdom of God was just about to make its appearance *in these places*, which would be perfectly consistent with the idea that it had *already been set up elsewhere*. The word "*engike*," rendered "*at hand*," is in another place rendered "*nigh*." "Be ye sure of this, the kingdom of God is come (*engike*) nigh unto you." There is, therefore, nothing in this term which forbids the idea that our Lord's kingdom had already come or that the New Testament church was already formed in some other part of Judea.

Christ was, indeed, *born a king*; but he did not probably declare himself *as such*, and openly commence the work of "ordering and establishing his kingdom," till the time of entering on his publick ministry, "after the baptism which John preached." It was one part of John's office to proclaim his Messiahship, and to point him out to the people. His real character and office were also testified by a voice from heaven, at the time he was baptized, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear him."

Directly upon this, he asserted the prerogatives of the Redeemer and King of Zion; performed various regal acts, appointed publick officers in his kingdom, and gave laws and institutions upon his own mediatorial authority, particularly *baptism*, and afterwards the Lord's Supper. His style of speaking was, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you*." Hence it is said, "he spake with authority, and not as the scribes."

This all shows that his kingdom had come, and that the new dispensation and the new constitution and organization of the church which had been predicted, were *actually introduced*.

There was, manifestly, some *great change* in the state and constitution of the church denoted by the setting up, or coming, of the kingdom of heaven. No one can reasonably question this. Yet many insist that the change did not take place till after the death and resurrection of Christ. But what has been said plainly shows that it took place before, even at, or near the commencement of his publick ministry.

This being an important point, and one which, if substantiated, will go far to settle this whole controversy; I would remark still further, that the words of Christ, Mathew, xi, 11, 12,

furnish clear proof thereof. "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

It should be particularly observed, that, previous to his making this declaration, he made and baptized many disciples; and that *some* of the twelve, at least, were administrators of this ordinance; (for "Jesus baptized not himself, but his disciples;") and this being a ministerial, or official act, it is clear that they were, at the time, authorized ministers of the gospel. Christ had already given them a commission, to some extent, to teach and minister in his name. Not only this; but, previous to his making this declaration, he had expressly called and appointed the twelve *to be apostles*, and had sent them before his face into the cities of Israel to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and work miracles in his name.

He manifestly means, therefore, by "the least in the kingdom of heaven," the *least of the apostles*. The *least* of them was *greater* than John, because they acted *immediately under his mediatorial authority*; and were appointed to announce that he had *actually come*; and were endowed with *greater light and more eminent gifts* for the perfecting of the church. Hence it appears that the kingdom of heaven had *actually come*: otherwise the apostles could not be in it, and not only in it, but office-bearers therein of the highest description.

Moreover, the kingdom of heaven is here said to suffer violence from the days of John the Baptist "until the time that he spake these words, and "the violent took it by force." Whatever be the meaning of these phrases, they show, *conclusively*, that this kingdom had *then commenced*. The meaning probably is, that it was eagerly sought, and the subjects of it escaped for their lives to the ark of safety, and pressed their way through all opposition and temptation. They were so impressed with their spiritual need, and with the fulness and mercy of Christ, that they were resolved to venture upon him, and risk all consequences. They took the kingdom as it were by force. At any rate, it could not have been taken in this manner, if it had not existed.

The words "from the days of John the Baptist," plainly denote that this kingdom was set up either before, or at the close of his ministry. The real period of its rise appears to have been a little *before* John finished his work. Christ entered upon his publick ministry, and made and baptized disciples,

while John was yet preaching and baptizing; and the people were eager to hear him and to become his disciples. All which shows that the gospel kingdom was then introduced.

This fact is still further supported by the parallel passage in Luke, xvi. 16. "The law and the prophets were until John: *since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.*" This declaration unquestionably proves the previous introduction of this kingdom; for every one can see that no one could press into it, if it had not then come. For he is not speaking of the world of glory, but of the kingdom of God, as set up in this world, in the days of the gospel, agreeably to ancient prophecy. It is therefore clear that this kingdom commenced a little before, or at the close of John's ministry.

Again: chap. xvi. 20, 21. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, lo here, or lo there, for behold, the kingdom of God is within you," i. e. among you, or in the midst of you. So the words might have been rendered. And this is obviously the true sense. He could not mean that the kingdom of God was in the *hearts* of those proud, unbelieving Pharisees; but simply that it was *among them, or in the midst of them*; although they perceived it not, inasmuch as they had wholly mistaken its nature and end. It did not appear in that *external pomp and grandeur* which they had been expecting. The proof from this passage is decisive: "The kingdom of God is *among you, or in the midst of you.*" The New Testament church, called the kingdom of God, was certainly formed and established during the life of Christ; and it was no other than that *select company* of disciples which he *collected and baptized.*

We have still further proof of this point, in the event of our Lord's riding into Jerusalem upon an ass, attended by the multitude of his disciples, in fulfilment of the prophesy of Zechariah. "Shout, O Zion, behold thy King cometh unto thee, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Here, therefore, was both a *King* and a *kingdom.*

Again: When our Lord was arraigned before Pilate, he acknowledged himself to be *the King of the Jews*, and, by way of explanation, and for the prevention of all alarm as to his claiming secular favour or honour, he said, "My kingdom is not of this world." It was *purely spiritual.* He was therefore a *King* before he suffered, and had a *kingdom*, which con-

sisted, at the time, of *believing Jews*, or of the *company of his disciples*.

The same might be shown still further from many of his parables, which clearly represent his gospel kingdom as actually set up, though, at first, very small, and by no means answering the expectations of the carnally minded.

The circumstance also previously mentioned of his administering the Lord's Supper—an ordinance of this kingdom, to the twelve, while yet with them, shows that this kingdom had been already introduced.

It is of very *great importance* to understand this matter correctly. For if the change of the dispensations, and the setting up of the kingdom of heaven, or the New Testament church, took place during our Lord's life and ministry, then the instructions which he then gave, and the practice which he then introduced, will reflect much light upon the question at issue, as well as upon the nature of this kingdom generally.

Many overlook and reject all which is said about Christ's making and baptizing disciples during his life, and all which was done by the apostles under their first mission to the cities of Israel, as having nothing to do with the proper subjects of baptism, from the notion that the New Testament dispensation was not introduced till after his death and resurrection; yea, not till the day of Pentecost, and that all which was done previously was under the law.

But this is a gross mistake. It is abundantly manifest that the new covenant, or new dispensation, was introduced during our Lord's life, and at, or near the commencement of his public ministry. What, therefore, was then said and done by him and his disciples, belongs to this *very question*, and goes to settle it in favour of *believers' baptism only*; as no order was given for the baptism of any others, and no others were, in fact, baptized.

As the introduction of the Sinai dispensation did not interfere with the Abrahamick; so the introduction of the New Testament dispensation did not interfere with either. The ceremonial code was indeed eventually disannulled, but there was no necessity for this being done previous to the introduction of the new covenant dispensation.

The change, denoted by the setting up of the kingdom of heaven, or by making a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah, appears to have been effected *by degrees*, till the whole of the New Testament economy was settled. Existing believers, or such as professed to be of this character, were collected together by our Lord and formed into a separate com-

pany, or society, from the nation at large, and were initiated by baptism. And to this society he gave ministers, laws and privileges, till his whole will was declared. And it continued to increase and spread.

Although it is often plead that no church *essentially new* has been set up, all must admit that the *form and constitution* of the church are greatly *altered*. There certainly was a time when the *believers* in Jesus began to be considered the *New Testament Church*, in *distinction* from the body of the Jewish nation, whereas they *had not been* thus considered before; whether it be supposed that they were *called out*, and *separated* from the great body of the nation and its rulers; or that the unbelieving part were *cut off*, or *excommunicated*, leaving the believing part to subsist, and act, in a *separate* capacity.

And this change, or revolution, must have been *the introduction of the kingdom of heaven*, which is spoken of in the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, with so much emphasis.

The question, therefore, now before us, is, when did this change take place? The true answer, as I have fully shown, is, *at or near* the commencement of our Lord's publick ministry. It is evident, also, that it consisted in *calling out a believing people* from the body of the nation, rather than in a *formal excommunication of the unbelieving part*. This *calling out* of the true Israel, and embodying them under the Messiah, prepared the way for the ultimate *breaking of the Sinai covenant* with the body of the nation, and their final rejection.

I admit that Christ has never had but one church in the world, which has existed under different dispensations and constitutions.

The Abrahamick church was the same that existed in the days that were before the flood; yea, from the first dawn of mercy to our world; yet it was under a very different constitution.

In like manner, the Christian church is the same as the Abrahamick; yet under a very different form and constitution, one that is much more perfect; and one that is intended to be final, as to this world.

But although the church is now essentially the same as formerly, it is never styled *the kingdom of heaven*, until Christ, the Lord, actually came down from heaven to reign in human nature, and to give it its ultimate type and privileges. The kingdom of God *had not come before*, in the sense which the scriptures intend by this phrase. The church was before *national*, at least among the Jews, and was connected and identified

with a worldly kingdom. But under the gospel, it is wholly spiritual in its organization ; separate from all worldly associations ; and from all the laws and regulations of men ; and placed under the mediatorial government of Christ. Yet it is so formed and constituted as to live among any nation, and under any form of civil government ; and the members, as citizens, are expressly required to be subject to the powers that be. It is under this new and final constitution and form, that it is called the *kingdom of God*, or of *heaven*.

As when a new king commences his reign, he requires of his subjects the oath of allegiance, and makes new laws and regulations ; so our Lord Jesus Christ, when he became incarnate, and entered upon his mediatorial kingdom, by the consent and appointment of the Father and the Spirit, commenced his reign by calling his subjects to swear allegiance to him ; or, in other words, by calling them openly to own and submit to him as their Saviour and King, and to receive a significant badge of this acknowledgment and submission in baptism, by which they might be openly and emphatically known and distinguished from the rest of the people.

He gave also other institutions and laws, whereby his reign is distinguished, and his kingdom perfected.

This kingdom is both *spiritually* and *visibly diverse* from all others, as it was foretold that it should be. None have a right of admission by virtue of their natural birth, as in other kingdoms, even in the *Jewish kingdom* ; but they must be called into it by *renewing grace* ; otherwise they have *no right to enter*. And although men, having no access to the hearts of others, cannot wholly exclude those of unsound minds, they ought not to receive any but such as give credible evidence of grace. The members of the gospel church are, by profession, Christians and brethren—a household of faith, a select, spiritual society.

Now, such a state of things having been actually introduced, during our Lord's continuance on earth, the apostles would naturally take this to be the rule of their procedure *afterwards*. They would not depart from the precedent established, *without express instructions*. There is great weight in this argument from the early type of the Christian church, as a society of believers only, to show that infant baptism is wrong. As we should naturally expect that Christ would settle the question who were to belong to his kingdom, and who were to be baptized, in the very beginning of his reign ; so we find that he did, and he gave no different instructions afterwards. All that has been observed under this head goes to show that I have given

the true sense of the apostolick commission. Every attempt to include *infants* fails. This commission must be *altered* and *amended*, and the *very nature* of the gospel kingdom *changed* from what we find it in the gospel records, to make out a warrant for infant baptism. But we have certainly no right to do this. It is impiety and presumption to do it.



CHAPTER VII.

The memorable passage, Acts, ii. 38—41, particularly examined.

THE practice of the apostles, acting under the immediate inspiration of the Spirit, as well as the commission which they received of the Lord Jesus, is naturally regarded as a proper source of information in relation to the present question.

Hence great efforts are made by Pedobaptists to show that the apostles did, in fact, practise the baptism of infants, and consequently, that this shows how they understood their commission. We frequently hear it asserted, in positive language, that the apostles practised infant baptism.

If this could be clearly made out, I admit that the practice would be correct. In that case, it would appear that Christ gave them additional instructions to those contained in the aforesaid commission.

But it evidently cannot be made out. The apostles have given no notice of having received additional instructions on this point, which include infants; neither are there any facts recorded which show that they did baptize them. But their whole history, as we have in fact seen already, and shall see more fully hereafter, goes to establish believers' baptism as the only gospel baptism.

It is, indeed, argued from the passage referred to at the head of this chapter, that the promise mentioned is that memorable promise made to Abraham, that God would be a God to him and to his seed after him; that baptism is represented as a token, or seal, of this promise, as circumcision was previously; and that the promise is to believers and their children as it always had been. So that here is a warrant for the baptism of infants.

But a careful examination of the passage will show that this construction is unwarranted and grossly erroneous. It reads thus: "Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all

that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

The promise here referred to is evidently not the before-mentioned promise to Abraham, but the promise of the Holy Spirit, which is contained in the passage itself, and repeatedly mentioned in the connexion, and which was contained in a prophecy of Joel that respected that very reason, and was expressly quoted as then fulfilled. God had said by him, chap. ii. 28, 32, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh—and whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." Christ had also said, while he was with the apostles, John, vii. 38, 39, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Also, chap. xiv. 16, 17. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter—even the Spirit of truth." And after his resurrection, he bid them, Acts, i. 4, wait at Jerusalem "for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye have heard of me," alluding to the above.

Accordingly, the apostle Peter reasoned on that occasion in this plain and forcible manner, chap. ii. 33: "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father *the promise of the Holy Ghost*, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

With this ever-blessed promise fully in view, which was then *actually*, and *most strikingly* fulfilling, he said to the awakened multitude, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and to your children," &c. Now, from the whole record, and its connexion, what can be plainer than that he referred to the promise of the Holy Spirit, which, in case they should believe and be baptized, they should receive. He had just been citing a prophecy in which this promise was contained, and had applied it expressly to that occasion. He had also expressly referred to Christ's "being exalted," and to his having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit," and had consequently affirmed that "he had shed forth what they then saw and heard." Moreover, the apostles and brethren, as directed by Christ, had been patiently waiting for this very scene.

It is, therefore, exceedingly evident, that he did not refer to that special and comprehensive promise made to Abraham and his seed, but to the promise of the Holy Ghost in his sanctifying and comforting influences, and to a certain extent, in his miraculous influences, which was to them, and their children, and to all that were afar off, even as many as the Lord should call, precisely on the same condition of personal repentance and submission to Christ.

The promise of the Spirit as a sanctifier and comforter, is made expressly to all that believe. Hence Paul says, Eph. i. 13, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that *Holy Spirit of promise.*" And, Romans, viii. 9, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Here, therefore, we see that there is a *conspicuous promise* which belongs to all believers—one which they are entitled to immediately upon their believing and submitting to Christ, and being baptized in his name. And in addition to this, many, in that early age of the church, received the miraculous operations of the Spirit. But these are not the most material things contained in the promise. The great and peculiar blessing was the gift of the Spirit to sanctify and comfort them—to illumine their hearts and seal their forgiveness and redemption. And to this the apostle manifestly refers—a promise made alike to parents and children and all others, both near and afar off, *personally*, upon their *personally* embracing the gospel.

It was one which perfectly suited the occasion—one that was peculiar to all believers—and, therefore, one that tended to enforce the direction given to those distressed and agonizing sinners.

This, therefore, was not the aforesaid comprehensive promise to Abraham; nor was it a promise that if the parents would repent and be baptized, they should not only themselves receive the Spirit and be saved, but their children likewise; or that their children should also repent and receive the Spirit upon their account, or in consequence of their faith. But the promise was to the children *personally* in the same sense that it was to the parents; and it was to the one, on the same condition that it was to the other: and it was equally upon the same condition to all that were afar off. Whoever repented and submitted to Christ, should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost—or the Holy Spirit of promise, as a sanctifier and comforter.

Hence, this declaration of Peter is no more a warrant for baptizing the children of believers for their sake, than the children of unbelievers. For there is nothing more promised here to the former, than to the latter—yea, nothing more than is

promised to all others—to mankind generally. The *very same promise*, and on the *very same condition*, is *indiscriminately* made. Every repenting and believing sinner, whether parent or child, male or female, bond or free, at home or afar off, shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is the plain and obvious sense of the passage.

Therefore, it does not give the least countenance to the practice of baptizing children upon the faith of their parents. We might derive as good an argument from this passage for baptizing all the ends of the earth upon the faith of the parents addressed by Peter, as their immediate children. For the promise is as positively said to be to all them that were afar off, as to their children. If therefore this promise gave a right to the baptism of the latter, upon the faith of their parents, it did equally to the former. This consequence is unavoidable. And hence it is, of itself, sufficient to overthrow the argument; for an argument that proves too much, proves nothing.

Besides, the words *to your children*, include the *adult* as well as the *infant* children; so that the argument is precisely as strong for the baptism of the former, upon their parents' faith, as of the latter. Here again it proves too much, and so destroys itself.

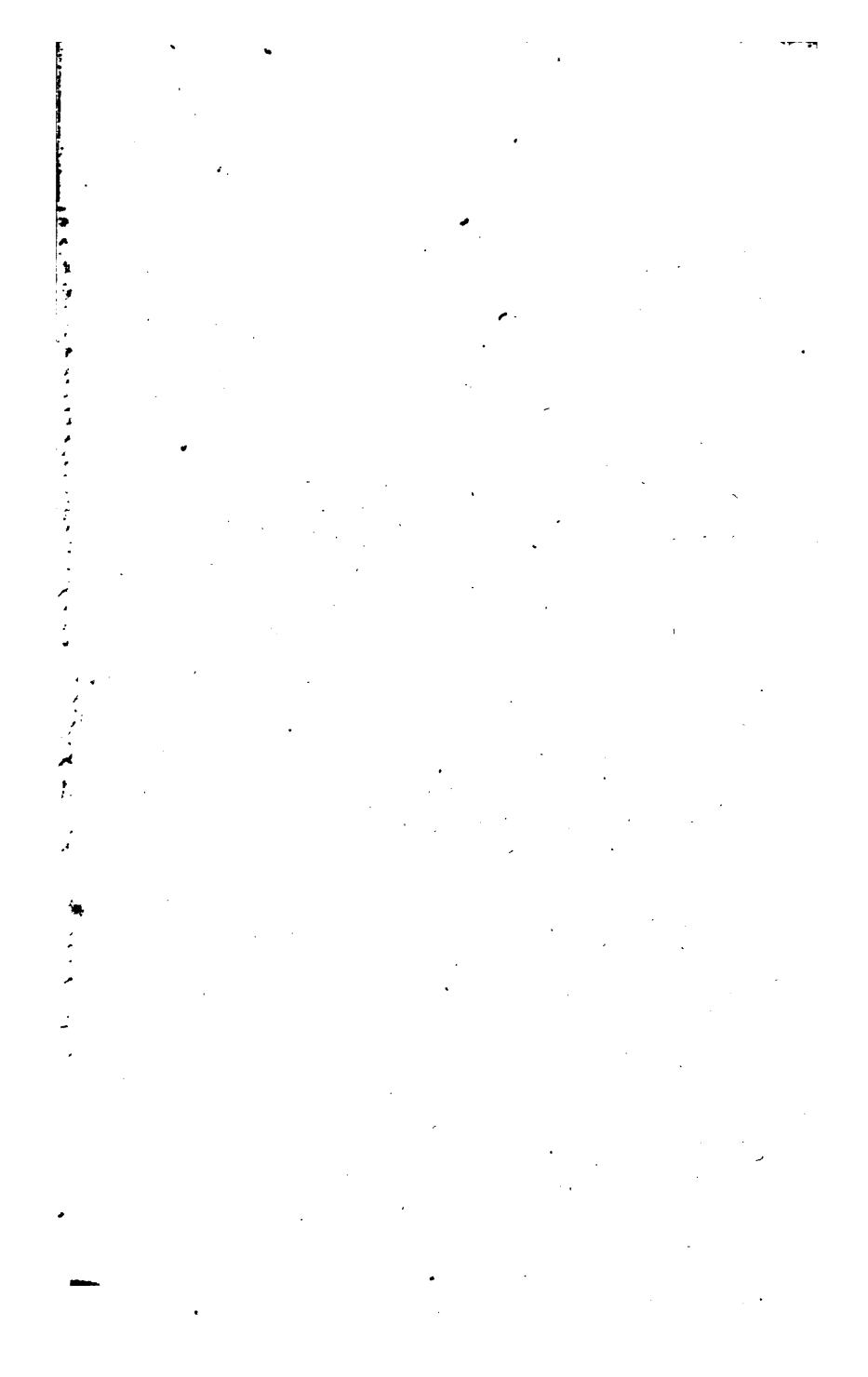
How astonishing it is that men will build this practice upon such a foundation! Here is certainly nothing that intimates that children were baptized on the faith of parents, or were ever intended to be. Here is not even any thing more promised to believing parents respecting their children, (whatever may be promised elsewhere,) than is promised to unbelieving parents respecting theirs. The promise is to each *personally*, and to all of every rank, and every where, *personally*, whom God shall call by the gospel, and on the same *personal* condition. Repentance, in every instance, as it respects *parents, children, or strangers*, is *before* baptism. "*Repent and be baptized, every one of you.*" O that this blessed doctrine had always been taught!

Will any sober Christian come forward and say that there were infants baptized on that occasion? If any dare do it, does it not manifestly become them to tell *how great a proportion* of the three thousand were *adults*, and *how great a proportion* were *infants*? But the very attempt to designate the number of each would confound any one. Yea, it would confound any one to attempt to make out that a *single infant* was then baptized. And there is certainly no mention made of the infants being brought another day. It is evident, there-

fore, that this whole account—this memorable transaction—has nothing at all to do with infant baptism.

The comprehensive promise to Abraham that God would be his God did indeed include all spiritual blessings, and it included them to all his true seed, and therefore *this* particular promise was included that I have been treating of, and was eminently fulfilled on the occasion referred to. But this is no evidence that this was the promise particularly intended. The blessing here specified by the apostle was also included in *the promise to our first parents*, that “the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head.” Also in the following promise of God in the prophecy of Isaiah. “My righteousness shall be forever, and *my salvation from generation to generation.*” But will any one say that either of these promises was the one particularly referred to by Peter; and, thence, undertake to draw an argument for infant baptism? This might as well be done, as to say that the aforesaid promise to Abraham was referred to, and thence to infer the duty of baptizing infants.

There are other promises besides that made to Abraham, and reference may be had to *these* as well as to *that*, by the inspired apostles on different occasions. To *one* of them, *instead of the promise to Abraham*, which was sealed by circumcision, reference is most certainly had in the present case.



CHAPTER VIII.

The three instances of the Baptism of a Household, recorded Acts, xvi. 14, 15, 33, and I. Cor. i. 16, particularly examined.

Great stress being laid on the baptism of the households of Lydia, the Jailer, and Stephanas, as so many examples of infant or household baptism in the Pedobaptist sense of the phrase, a particular examination of each is required.

I will begin with that of Lydia, Acts, xvi. 14, 15. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."

To make out, from this instance, an apostolick example for infant baptism, it must, in the first place, be made to appear that Lydia's household contained *infants*, properly so called. And in the second, that they *were baptized on her faith*. Unless both of these points are proved, it is not an example for the baptism of infants, or unadult children. But neither has ever been proved, and neither can be proved, for the proof does not exist.

It is, moreover, necessary to the argument, to prove that this household contained *none but infants*, or *unadult children*; for there is precisely the same evidence that the *whole household* were baptized upon Lydia's faith, as that *any* of them were. If it be admitted as *possible*, and even *probable*, that there were others in the family besides infants, who were baptized upon their own faith, the argument is lost. For the main force of it lies in this, that there is no express mention made of any one's faith except hers; and yet there is a record of the baptism of the household in connexion with hers. If, therefore, notwithstanding this manner of recording the baptism of the household, it be admitted both *possible* and *probable* that there were some in it that were adults, and were baptized

on their own faith, it will follow that *all* might have been of this description. If the words do not necessarily *exclude* all adults from the household who were baptized on their own faith, they contain no solid argument for the baptism of *any* upon the faith of Lydia. For if there were *any* adult believers, they might have *all* been such. And hence there is no proof that she had any infants who received baptism upon her account.

And, now, is there any thing, in fact, in this record, which excludes the idea that there were adults in her family, who were baptized on their own faith? There evidently is not. The word household is not limited to infants, as every one knows. It contains the members of a family, be they adults, or infants, or both.

The household of a *man* includes, not only his children, but his *wife* and *servants*—*all* that compose his family. But when the household of a *woman* is spoken of, it seems to be implied that she has no husband. Nevertheless, she may have *adults* in her family, as well as *infants*; or it may consist *altogether* of *adults*. It may consist altogether of *adult servants* and *boarders*; or it may consist of children that have arrived to *adult* age; or of *these* and some *infants*. From this known use of the word, household, it will follow that Lydia's household might have contained adults that were baptized on their own faith. And if it might have contained adults of this description, it might have contained no other; notwithstanding no one's faith is expressly mentioned but hers. Yea, it is not only possible, but probable, that she had adults in her family that were capable of acting, and did act, for themselves, in this important concern.

This appears from her occupation and rank. It is most natural to conclude from the history, that her home was in the city of Thyatira, three hundred miles distant; and that she was here on business merely—for the purpose of disposing of her purple goods; and, of course, she would be very likely to have adult servants, or attendants. And if she actually had small children, it is not probable that she brought them with her upon such an undertaking.

There is, therefore, the highest probability that she had adults in her household, who were bound to act for themselves, and who were baptized upon their own faith. And if there might have been such in her family, there might have been *no other*. Yea, it is probable there were no other. The argument, therefore, is lost.

The words certainly do not, of necessity, imply that she had

infant children, and that they were baptized on her faith. The most that any one can pretend to say is, that it is more probable that she had, than that she had not.

But will this do, even allowing the statement to be correct, to found so important a practice upon as that of infant baptism? Was the matter left to be determined by *mere probability*? It is unreasonable to conclude this.

But even this argument fails. For there is the greater probability that they were all believers, as above stated. This is especially the case, when we connect the subsequent account, related verse 40. "And they went out of the prison, (viz. Paul and Silas,) and entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen *the brethren*, they comforted them and departed."

Now, who were *these brethren*? Were they some of Paul's company whom he had left there, or who had collected there while he and Silas were cast into prison? Or were they the members of her household? It is altogether most probable that they were the latter, as we have no account that Paul left any of his company there, provided he had any more with him at the time than Silas. The phraseology also, better suits the case of those who were taught than that of the teachers, and of those that were resident there than of those that travelled with the apostle. "When they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed." These brethren, it appears, were *left behind*; and of course, it is in no wise probable that they were any of Paul's companions; but there is every reason to believe that they were the members of Lydia's household. And their being called brethren, shows that they were converts who were baptized on their own faith. At any rate, it is *quite as probable* that these brethren composed her household, as that it was composed of infants or unadult children. So that the argument, even from *probability*, to make the best of it, is lost.

If it be still alleged, that in *most* families there are infant children, and that consequently it is most probable there were in this, it may be replied, that *many* families contain no such children, and that *most* families, under *similar circumstances*, do not contain any. And this, with the additional mention of the brethren that were in her house after the baptism, renders it decidedly the most probable that she had no infant children in her family on this occasion. Therefore the greatest probability is still on the side of believers' baptism merely, even from this very instance, which is unquestionably the most favourable of the three to the cause of infant baptism.

This greater probability in favour of their all being believers is not materially lessened by the manner in which the bap-

tism of the household is related. To give the argument from hence any weight, the practice of infant baptism must be *presupposed*. From the known practice of Pedobaptists, we should, indeed, conclude from such a mode of expression, that the household contained infants that were baptized upon her account. But we should not conclude any such thing from the known practice of anti-Pedobaptists. All that would be inferred in that case would be, that the whole family believed as well as she, and were baptized on their own faith. There is evidently nothing in this record, allowing the apostles to have practised believers' baptism only, which is inconsistent with that practice, or which conveys a different idea. The *only force* of the argument lies in *presupposing* that the apostles practised infant baptism, which is the very thing to be proved.

Nor is there any thing to lessen the probability in favour of this being a family of believers, in the words, "If ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there," without any express mention of the faith of the household: because she spoke as the head of the family, whose business it was to give the invitation. There was no necessity for mentioning the faith of her household in this place. The mode of expression is perfectly consistent either with the idea that she had no infant children, or that she had. It is no proof either *for* or *against* the piety of the household. But the subsequent account of there being *brethren* in her house, as I have shown, is a plain intimation that her household were believers. On the whole, therefore, there is nothing gained in favour of the Pedobaptist cause on the ground of *probability*.

But even if there was as great a probability as the Pedobaptists suppose, that there were infants in this family; yea, if it were certain that there were; this would not be satisfactory proof that they were baptized on her account. We might meet the Pedobaptists on their own ground, and say the record respects merely the adult part of the family, as the Lord had given no order for the baptism of any but adults. *They* generally say that the words of Christ in Mark, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;" relate merely to adults, and do not touch the case of infants; that the very argument from these words which would exclude them from baptism, would exclude them also from salvation. Although I do not admit the justness of this statement, yet *they* cannot complain, if we dispose of the other case in the same way that they do of this. Certainly it might be argued with as much propriety, and more, that the mention of the baptism of the household only related to the adult part,

and not to those who were too young to be instructed and to profess faith. Seeing the commission to baptize expressly mentions none but believers, it might be plead that the mention of the baptism of a household means, of course, the adult part, and no more. Therefore, the fact that there were infants in her family, if ever so probable, and even if proved, would not prove infant baptism.

And further; if it were as probable as Pedobaptists suppose, that there were infants in this household who were baptized on Lydia's faith, this would not settle the point; because this is not the kind of proof required, especially in the case of a *positive institution*. To base such an institution upon *mere probability*, would open a field for inference and conjecture quite too wide, and it would be a gross reflection upon the wisdom, accuracy, and faithfulness of the New Testament lawgiver. What if this probability, as some allege, were as three to one in favour of the Pedobaptist view; so long as it is *mere probability*, in a case where an *explicit warrant* is required; and so long as it is admitted by these persons that the probability on the side of there being none but adults who acted for themselves is as *one to three, i. e.*: one third as probable as the other, there is evidently no warrant to consider this as an example of infant baptism. If it be allowed that one family in three have no infant children; yea, if the proportion were stated to be still less; it will clearly follow, that this household might have been of that description. And so the point is not proved that here were infants baptized on Lydia's account. And when it is considered that mere probability would not afford adequate proof, even if it were ever so great, it is palpably unjust to consider this as an example of infant baptism. I have even shown that the argument, *from probability itself*, is in favour of the baptism of believers only, from this very instance.

Moreover, it should be particularly observed that it does not belong to me to prove that there were *no infants* in this family; or, if there were, that they were not baptized upon Lydia's account; but to the Pedobaptists to prove that there were infants in it, and that they received baptism on her account; neither of which is capable of being done. And if, after all, it should be said that as Pedobaptists cannot prove that there were infants in it, so neither can I prove that there *were not*, then I would say, that in that case, the passage is no proof either *for or against* the point in debate; and so it is left just where the apostolick commission and history leave it, as I have already shown, in favour of a warrant merely for the baptism of believers.

The next instance of the baptism of a household which I

am to consider, is that of the jailer, recorded in this same chapter, verses 31—34. "And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house."

Here, again, to make out an example of infant, or household baptism, in the sense contended for, it must be shown that there were infants in this family, and that they were baptized on the jailer's account. But is there any such thing asserted or fairly implied? Evidently not, but the contrary.

It is plainly asserted that "they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house," which shows that there were none in the family but what were capable of being taught. It is also said that "he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house," which is positive proof that the whole family believed, and were converted to Christ. For if we connect the clause—"with all his house," either with the word "rejoiced," or with the word "believing," it denotes a similarity of character in the jailer and his family, produced by means of the gospel. If we connect it with the latter word, then it is affirmed that the whole house believed as well as himself. And if we connect it with the former, then it will follow that the whole house rejoiced as well as he, i. e. participated in the same joy of faith and pardon of sin, which comes to the same thing.

I admit that both the words "rejoiced," and "believing," are in the singular number in the original Greek; and they are likewise evidently so in our language. But what of that? Does it hence follow that he was the only one of the family that "believed and rejoiced," or "rejoiced and believed?" Not at all. The clause, "with all his house," connected with either of these terms, shows that the family were all brought into the same state with himself, and were baptized on the same ground of personal faith.

The Greek word, "*panoiki*," is correctly translated, "with all his house." To render it, as some are inclined to do, "domestically," or "in," or "through the whole house," is to destroy all its beauty and force. What is it to rejoice, or believe "domestically," or "in," or "through the whole house?" Does it mean that he went through every apartment rejoicing, or believing, first through the lower rooms, then through the chambers, and then through the cellar? Is this all that the

passage imports? It is dishonourable to the spirit of inspiration to allow it; especially as this rendering is not only trivial and absurd, but it confines the rejoicing, or believing, wholly to the jailer himself; and hence the passage makes no mention whatever of the effect produced on his family—it gives not the least intimation that they were partakers, *either* of his *faith* or of his *joy*. And yet it cannot be reasonably supposed but that some good effect was produced on the family by such a miracle, and by so remarkable an escape from suicide, and by such plain and pungent preaching, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost; and it would have been natural to record this effect. Yea, it is manifest that the inspired historian intended to record it; and the record is contained in the clause in question. There is nothing else which mentions it. But the *above translation* confines the import of it to the jailer himself and to the building which he occupied, and therefore nothing can be learnt therefrom as to the effect produced on his family. It is evident, therefore, that this translation cannot be correct. But, *panoiki* being a contraction of two words, one of which signifies *all*, and the other *the house*, or *family*, is rightly rendered, “with all his house,” whereby the effect produced on his family is related as well as on himself.

Besides, it is palpably inconsistent to speak of this as a remarkable instance of the fulfilment of the promise which is supposed to be contained in the Abrahamic covenant respecting children; and yet confine the sense of the above term, as in the rendering which I am opposing, and consequently, the effect produced, to the jailer himself.

If we admit, as we evidently must, that the clause in question is the true rendering of the Greek term, “*panoiki*,” and that it is a brief recital of the effect produced on the jailer’s family, there is nothing gained to the cause of infant baptism by connecting it with the word “rejoiced,” and not with that of “believing.” It will still be manifest that the whole family were converted. In that case, it will read, that “believing, or having believed, in God, he rejoiced with all his house;” which plainly imports that they believed and rejoiced too, or at least, that they were partakers of the same joy which he experienced, that resulted from faith and a view of the pardoning mercy of God; and that they must have accepted the offer of salvation as well as he. There is no intimation that he was filled with *one* kind of joy and they with *another*. Surely the cause must labour hard which requires the making of such a distinction.

Especially is it manifest that the family participated with him in the joy of faith, when he had been expressly told that they

should be saved on the same condition which was proposed to him, viz. faith in Christ, and when all the family had been instructed with a view to their personal salvation, and had all been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It is clear from these facts that the clause before us is intended to describe the effect produced on the whole family, as well as on himself; and it was *the same effect*. And whether we connect it as before observed with the word *believing*, or with the word *rejoiced*, it amounts to the same thing, to a full and positive declaration that the whole family believed on Jesus. And that being the fact, they were undoubtedly baptized upon their own faith, and not upon his.

Further: The phrases, "all his house," and "all his," include his *wife*, provided he had one, together with his *domesticks* and *attendants* generally, as well as his *children*. And there is manifestly as much evidence that he *had* a wife as that he *had* children. Consequently, there is precisely the same evidence that *she* was baptized upon his account as that *they* were. If the household were baptized upon his faith, the inference is unavoidable that his wife stood upon the same footing with the children and the servants, for she belonged to the household; and so it is as much the duty of every man to offer his wife in baptism, as his children. He is bound, also, to offer up all his servants, though they should equal the number that belonged to Abraham. There is no stopping short of these consequences, provided the argument for household baptism, from this instance, be allowed to have any force. The extent, therefore, to which it will carry us, shows of itself that it is unsound.

Again: If, as some pretend, there is a promise in this passage, that if the jailer would believe, his household should believe and be saved also, and if what transpired, (allowing the family to have been converted,) was a remarkable fulfilment of this gracious promise to the believing parent, it should be observed that it included his *wife* and *servants* as well as his *children*. So that the promise in the Abrahamic covenant, which is supposed to be referred to by the apostle, secures the piety and salvation of a man's wife and servants as well as his children, upon his account, or as a consequence of his faith and keeping covenant with God. But this is carrying the blessing further than any one pretends—further than any one can bring a shadow of proof, from the word of God, to support the sentiment. Yet the consequence is unavoidable. To restrict the promise of salvation to the children for the father's sake, when the wife

and servants belong as much to the family as the children, is obviously unfair.

But, in truth, when Paul and Silas said, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," there is no reason to believe they meant that the faith and salvation of the family would certainly accompany his own faith, or faithfulness. But the plain and obvious meaning is, that if he would believe on Christ, he should himself be saved; and if they would believe, they also should be saved, or that he should be saved on the condition stated, and that they should be saved on the same condition. As the angel told Cornelius, when directing him to send for Peter, that "he should tell him words whereby he and his house should be saved," so Paul and Silas told the jailer words whereby he and his house should be saved, provided they would heartily receive and confide in them. And this is all that the aforesaid promise imports. This must be plain to every candid observer. The family did accordingly believe for themselves, and were saved, as the word clearly asserts.

That this was a family of converts who were baptized upon their own personal faith and profession, will be made still further evident by comparing the phrases, "and to all that were in his house;" "he and all his;" and, "believing in God with all his house;" with several other similar phrases, used elsewhere, which evidently mean that the whole family spoken of believed. It is said, John, v. 53, of the nobleman whose son was cured by our Lord's simply saying at a distance from his house, "thy son liveth," that "himself believed, and his whole house." Again; it is said, Acts, x. 2, of Cornelius, that he was "one that feared God with all his house." And again; it is said, Acts, xviii. 8, in the account given of Paul's success in preaching at Corinth, that "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord *with all his house*; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized." Now, will any dispute that, in each of these instances, the whole family believed and praised God? How could the fact have been more clearly asserted? And in the last of the three it is not only clear that the whole family of Crispus believed, but that they were baptized upon a personal profession, being included in the "many of the Corinthians" that "hearing, believed and were baptized." It is presumed no one will question that this family was baptized upon their own account. It has never, I believe, been brought as an instance of household baptism in the Pedobaptist sense.

If, therefore, it be received as a matter of fact that these whole families believed, because the record plainly declares it,

why should it be called in question that the jailer's whole family believed, when the fact is, as plainly asserted as in either of the other cases? yea, asserted in the *very same terms*? It is said of Crispus, that he believed in the Lord *with all his house*; and of the jailer, that he "rejoiced, believing in God *with all his house*." The phraseology in both cases is the *very same*. The fact, then, of the conversion of the whole family, is as positively asserted in the *latter* case as in the *former*. If the words used, with regard to the jailer's family, do not imply that the whole of them believed, the same words used with regard to the family of Crispus, do not imply that the whole of them believed. And if not, what other terms would have conveyed to us the knowledge of the fact, provided it had been real? Surely, no other terms could have been more explicit and positive. So that if we may take the liberty to contradict such testimony as this, we might contradict, or evade, any other whatever. Upon this principle, there is no language but what may be construed, explained away, and evaded, to suit the fancies of men. O, the amazing influence of tradition and prejudice, when so *artless*, so *explicit*, and so *unequivocal* a record of the conversion of a *whole* family, in the same memorable night, and of their consequent baptism, upon their *own personal faith*, can be so twisted, shaped, and turned, as to be viewed as an apostolick example of infant baptism! How is it that men of apparent candour, knowledge, and piety, can be so attached to a preconceived opinion, as to overlook this plain and demonstrative evidence of the conversion of this entire family, and of their baptism on their own faith, and still produce this as an apostolick example of the baptism of infants upon the faith of their parent, or head. It is truly surprising to see so many, in the face of all this light, still disposed to say that the jailer was the only one that believed, and that his family were baptized upon his faith!

But leaving them to answer to their own Master, I feel authorized and constrained to say that this instance does not afford the least countenance to the practice of baptizing infants. It is a plain recital of the triumph of divine grace in rescuing a poor sinner from the very jaws of destruction, and in bringing him and his whole family, in one blessed night, to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and joyfully to enter his gospel kingdom by baptism. And every man can see this for himself. Nor was it an unusual thing in that remarkable age, for whole families to repent and believe the gospel together, as the instances above cited will conclusively show.

If, therefore, after all which has been said, any will yet insist

that there is no evidence that the jailer's whole family believed and were baptized on a personal profession of faith ; but that the family were baptized on his account, we may well despair of giving them conviction.

The third and only remaining instance of the baptism of a household, which is on the records of the New Testament, is contained in I. Cor. i. 16 : " And I baptized also the household of Stephanas."

The same course requisite to make out an example of infant baptism in either of the other cases, is requisite also in this ; otherwise it gives no support to the practice. But here, also, it cannot be proved that there were infants in the household, and that they were baptized on the faith of Stephanas. Even if there were infants in it, by taking Pedobaptist ground in another case, as already stated, I might fairly dispose of the argument for their baptism.

But there is no necessity for resorting to any such method ; for the inspired apostle has given us the character of this family as a family of believers in this very epistle, chap. xvi. 15. " I beseech you, brethren, ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the *first fruits* of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." This is so plain a declaration that the household were all believers, that Doctor Guise, a strong Pedobaptist, in his paraphrase on the New Testament, consents to take it from the list of examples of infant baptism, and admits that this family " were all adult believers, and so were baptized upon their own personal profession of faith in Christ."

The Doctor undoubtedly states the fact as it is. For although the baptism of this family is recorded in the first place without making any particular mention either of their faith, or of Stephanas' own ; yet their character is carefully given afterwards. They were the first fruits, or converts, of Achaia. There is no doubt then, that they were baptized on their own faith. There is not the least intimation that Stephanas first became a convert, and had his family baptized upon his account, and that, some time afterward, they were converted, but the contrary. The date of their conversion was the same as his : they became first fruits in the same sense that he did. The scriptures no where speak of *two-kinds* of first fruits. The apostle could not have used more appropriate language to denote the conversion of the whole family, than that they were the *first fruits*, or the *first disciples*, made in that region, and that they had given evidence of their sincerity by ministering to the saints.

These, then, are the only instances recorded in the scriptures of the baptism of a whole household ; and the proof is full and clear in the two last, at least, that they were families of believers ; and in the remaining instance, viz. that of Lydia's household, the proof falls very little short, if any, of being positive. To say the least, there is decidedly the greatest probability, from the record itself, leaving out all other considerations, in favour of their all being believers. So that although it does not belong to me to prove that there *were not* infants in these families, but that they consisted wholly of adult believers, but to the Pedobaptists to prove that there *were* infants in them, and that they were baptized *on the faith* of their respective heads ; yet I am able to furnish such proof, clearly and decidedly in two cases out of the three, and in the third it is nearly, if not quite, positive. At any rate, the greatest probability is in favour of this being a family of believers. So that it utterly fails of being an example of infant baptism.

Even if I were not able to prove that there were no infants in these families, so long as the Pedobaptists cannot prove that there were, they are of no advantage to their cause. In that case, they furnish no proof either *for* or *against* infant baptism. And hence the matter is left just where the commission and all the other recorded examples leave it, altogether in favour of believers' baptism, and that only.

I have now, therefore, evinced the assertion that the apostles practised the baptism of infants to be utterly unfounded. The three instances above examined furnish no evidence of any such thing. And there are no other ; nor is there any thing else which furnishes this evidence, as I shall still more fully make to appear. The scriptures evidently guard against any inference being drawn from the facts and circumstances related, in favour of this practice.

CHAPTER IX.

The right of believers only to baptism confirmed by the constitution of the Apostolick Churches.

IT is abundantly evident that the churches formed by the Apostles were *societies of believers—select companies* called out of the world by means of the gospel, through the accompanying power of the Holy Ghost; and professing gospel obedience. Hence the notion of infant-membership in the New Testament church, is without foundation. The constitution of the primitive churches forbids the idea of infants being *born in the church*, or of their being *admitted into it by baptism* upon the faith of their parents. This would make them, at once, to consist of *professed disciples and acknowledged unbelievers*; whereas the scriptures represent them as a *household of faith—select companies of Christians, or brethren in Christ*.

I have already shown that our Lord collected and baptized a company of disciples during his life, which was the origin of the New Testament church.

There was a company of disciples, at least an hundred and twenty, convened together at Jerusalem on the day of pentecost, to whom the three thousand were added on that day: and these three thousand were such as were awakened under Peter's sermon, and "gladly received his word." They were converts, as all will allow; such as appeared and professed to be cordial believers in Jesus as the Messiah. And those which were daily added to the church were "such as should be saved," or *the saved*, as the phrase might have been rendered, denoting that they were renewed persons, or at least, were so considered. And there is no mention of any other than believers being added.

And thus things went on. We soon read that "many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand." Then we read of the "*multitude of them that believed*, who were of one heart and of one soul." Then again, that "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." But no men-

tion is made, in all these accounts, of any infants being added by baptism on their parents' account.

The history continues the same through the whole book of Acts. The Samaritan church consisted of those "who believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ," and who "were baptized, both men and women." The first Gentile church which was formed by Peter at Cesarea, consisting of Cornelius and his household and friends, were such as "received the Holy Ghost," "spake with tongues, and *magnified God*." The church at Antioch, which was at first composed of *Grecians*, or Hellenist Jews, i. e. of Jews who spoke the Greek language, consisted of such as "believed and turned unto the Lord." They were such as were "added unto the Lord"—"disciples who were called *Christians* first in that place." So the word of God expressly describes them. And there is no difference in the subsequent accounts of the formation of churches. There is not the least hint given of any being received but those who were reputed believers.

And, in the epistles which were afterwards written to particular churches, and some to the church at large, the same character is given of the members. They are described and addressed as societies of believers, or renewed persons. For example, the inscription to the church of Rome is in these words: "To all that be in Rome, *beloved of God, called to be saints*." To the church at Corinth it is this: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to *them* that are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus, called to be *saints*, with *all* that in every place *call upon the name of Jesus Christ* our Lord, both *theirs and ours*." To the Ephesians he writes thus: "To the *saints* which are at Ephesus, and the *faithful* in Christ Jesus." And to the Philippians thus: "To *all the saints* which are at Philippi: I thank my God upon every remembrance of you—for *your fellowship* in the gospel from the first day until now—being confident of this very thing that he which *hath begun a good work in you* will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." St. Peter inscribes his first Epistle "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Asia, and Bythinia, *elect*, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

These inscriptions afford a correct sample of the manner in which all the primitive churches were addressed. They were expressly written to, and described as *Christian societies*, not in the modern lax sense of the phrase, but in a peculiar and restricted sense, as societies of persons professing to be the children and

followers of Christ. They were considered as communities of renewed persons, or such as professed to be renewed, and to be subject to Christ. Hence apostates were described as "false brethren, crept in unawares;" or as persons who had fallen from their Christian profession, and were thereby manifested not to be of the company of the faithful, as they once appeared to be.

There is not the least intimation of there having been another sort of members, viz. unconverted children and infants, who were admitted and baptized on their parents' account.

The members of which these churches were composed, were full and complete members; and if any did not adorn their profession, and could not be reclaimed, they were to be cast out of the society of the faithful, as directed by Christ in the xviii. chapter of Matthew.

It does not appear from any of these accounts, that the New Testament church was considered as a school, or nursery, for the unconverted children of believers; but merely as a fold for the sheep of Christ.

Children were, indeed, to be instructed, but *not in the church*, till they became believers.

It is true the Apostles, in their epistles, addressed both parents and children, (whence the duty of all parents and children may be inferred,) but they addressed them as believers and as brethren and sisters in the Lord. There were believing parents and believing children in these churches, and their being connected in this manner did not annihilate their natural relations and duties.

Indeed, if it could be shown that in some cases, these addresses to parents and children include others besides believers, no serious difficulty would be created; for the main drift of these epistles would show that these churches were composed of none but reputed saints.

If the apostles, after addressing adult believers, or the professing part of the churches, had addressed their children as baptised, and as a distinct portion of them, and urged upon them their baptismal obligations, as Pedobaptists are wont to do, it would have given some support to the practice of infant baptism. But there is *nothing of this*; no, *not even insomuch as one of the epistles*.

Now, if it had been the constant practice of the apostles to baptize children and consider them members of the church, is it not wholly unaccountable, that not one appropriate address is made to them, as such.

Not only is there no address made in their epistles to the children of believers as members of the church, or as being within the pale of the church; but there is none made to them as children in covenant with their parents though not church members, or as those to whom the covenant had a particular respect. Their baptismal obligations are never urged *on this ground*. Had they been, it would have been an argument for their baptism. But nothing of this do we find. No such baptismal obligations are urged. The only obligations, founded on baptism, that are ever described and enforced, are those which pertained to adults—to those who had “put on Christ,” or professed the Christian faith.

There is, therefore, nothing in the constitution of the apostolick churches which favours the baptism of infants; but every thing to the contrary. The membership of infants, as such, was not known in these churches; nor was there such a thing known as children being in covenant with their believing parents, except they were believers themselves. Infant baptism being never based on either of these grounds; and there being no hint given of any such thing being practised at all, and no distinct addresses being made to unconverted children as members of the church, or as children in covenant, in all the epistles and records of the New Testament, it is evident that the practice did not exist.

CHAPTER X.

Containing an examination of Mark, x. 13—16, Romans, xi. 16, 17, and I. Corinthians, vii. 14.

My object in this chapter, is to show that the principal *select* passages which are adduced in support of infant baptism, do not, when fairly construed, give it any countenance, but are perfectly consistent with the view which has been given of the apostolick commission and practice, and of the constitution of the primitive churches.

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

It will be observed that these children were not brought to Christ for *baptism*, but for his *blessing*: and there is no record made of his having *baptized* them, or of his having *ordered them to be baptized*.

Besides, if he had been in the practice of baptizing infants, and these little children had been brought to him to receive baptism, it is not at all likely that the disciples would have rebuked those that brought them. Their forbidding them to be brought to him, shows conclusively, that they had not been accustomed to see infants baptized.

Where, then, is the alleged proof from these words, in favour of this practice? Is it found in the *compassion* which Jesus manifested towards these children? This would be equally an argument for the baptism of the children of the *unbelieving* Jews as for that of the *believing*; and for the baptism of *all classes* of sinners without regard to age or character—for they are all the objects of his compassion. He even wept over impenitent Jerusalem, “saying, how often would I have gathered thy chil-

dren as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not." It will not do, therefore, to base the practice upon the compassion, tenderness, or kindness which he manifested towards these children: nor ought we to excite the sympathies of parents to induce them to perform what he has not required at their hands.

Does the alleged proof of infant baptism, then, lie in the declaration, "for of such is the kingdom of God?" It must be here if any where. And hence the common argument is, that here is a recognition of the membership of infants in the New Testament church, the same as in the old; and hence their right to baptism is considered as following *of course*.

It will be obvious that none can avail themselves of this argument except such as believe that infants are as fully members of the church now as formerly.

But the argument from their church membership, if it proves any thing, proves too much, and hence overthrows itself. For if it proves their right to baptism, it equally proves their right to the Lord's Supper. Infants, as members of the Jewish church, were admitted to the *passover* as well as to *circumcision*—yea, females were also admitted to the former, whereas males only were admitted to the latter. And it is universally allowed by Pedobaptists that *the Lord's Supper* has come in the room of *the passover*, as truly as *baptism* has in the room of *circumcision*.

Therefore, if infants are to be baptized because they are members of the church, they must also be brought to the Lord's Supper upon the same ground. The argument is precisely as strong in favour of the latter as in favour of the former. And there is evidently no consistency in bringing them to the one ordinance and debarring them from the other, when the very same principle which leads to the one leads to the other also. Yea, the argument for infant communion has additional strength, inasmuch as females were admitted to the *passover* because of their church membership; whereas they were excluded from *circumcision*.

But only let this argument from the membership of infants in the church have its full latitude and effect, and let infants be brought to the Lord's Supper as well as to baptism, and its inconclusiveness would at once be discerned by all enlightened evangelical Christians. The celebration of this ordinance in that case, would cease to be peculiarly the communion of saints. It would be a transaction common to believers and acknowledged unbelievers. The principle that grace is a necessary

qualification for communion at the Lord's table would have to be given up.

But the argument from the church membership of infants not only destroys itself by proving too much—i. e. proving the right to the Lord's Supper as well as to baptism; but it is otherwise inconclusive. Their membership, if admitted to be as full as it was originally in the Jewish church, would not, of itself, determine their right to baptism. This is evident among various other considerations, from the fact that females were members of that church, and yet had no right to circumcision. *Simple membership*, therefore, in the church, did not give this right. And if it did not give the right to circumcision, it will not give the right to baptism.

If it be said that *females* were formerly included in the *males*, it might be said, with equal propriety, that *children* are now included in their *parents*, and hence need not be baptized any more than females needed to be circumcised.

If it be further said that the former seal was not *applicable* to any but males, I might reply, that notwithstanding the difference of sex, females might have had a mark in their flesh as well as males; or if simple membership in the church gave them a right to the seal of the covenant, some other seal might, and doubtless would have been adopted, which might have been, with the same propriety and convenience, applied to both sexes.

It is evident, therefore, that the right to circumcision was not based upon mere membership in the church. *But that which gave this right was the express order of God, the institution being positive.*

In like manner, that which gives a right to baptism, is the *express order* of God, the institution being also *positive*.

If, therefore, it could be ever so clearly proved that the infants of believers are members with their parents in the New Testament church, this would not, of itself, establish their right to baptism: yea, it would afford no valid argument for this practice. We should need a "Thus saith the Lord," as in the other case.

But in truth, there is no evidence from the passage under consideration, nor from any other quarter, that the membership of infants is continued in the New Testament church; but there is clear and abundant proof to the contrary, as we have already seen, and shall more fully see hereafter.

When our Saviour said, "of such is the kingdom of God," he might have meant that the subjects of this kingdom are like little children in their temper and qualities. Accordingly he adds, "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not re-

ceive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." This exposition is adopted by many excellent divines.

But our Lord, more probably, meant that the kingdom of God consists of little children as well as of adults; i. e. some little children belong to it as well as some adults. The expression does not imply that all little children belong to it any more than all adults. It does not imply that all the little children of believing Jews belonged to it any more than the general mass of adult Jews.

It is manifest that the kingdom of God did not embosom the adult members of that nation *promiscuously*, or *as a body*; but *select individuals* of them *only*, who were called, by divine grace, out of the world. The fact, therefore, that this kingdom consisted of little children as well as of adults, did not imply that it embosomed all little children, or even all the little children of believers.

That grace then reigned in the hearts of some little children as well as of some adults, and that it does now, there is ample reason to believe: for it is written, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." As an eminent fulfilment of this passage, little children followed Jesus with the multitude, when he rode upon the ass into Jerusalem, "crying, hosanna to the Son of David."

For aught appears, the children in question might have been of this description—young believers—such as could heartily and understandingly acknowledge Jesus to be their Saviour and Lord. Or, if they were not already converted, they might have been old enough to be instructed and brought to the knowledge of the truth. There is nothing in the terms "little children," which necessarily conveys the idea of *mere infancy*.

Indeed, if they were mere babes, the passage may be easily explained without admitting the membership of infants in the gospel church.

But the probability is that they were children of some size, like the little children which belong to the Sabbath schools in these days—old enough to be benefited by instruction. The terms used may be very properly so applied and understood.

The word "*e pais*," from which "*ta paidia*," (little children,) is made in the accusative case plural, is expressly applied, Luke, viii. 54, to the daughter of Jairus, who was about twelve years of age. It is there rendered "damsel;" but the strict meaning of it is *little child*. It is a word frequently used to denote a little child. So that in the scripture sense of this

term a little child may be twelve years of age. Some of those brought to Christ might have been as old as this damsel. The word "brephous" is also rendered "a child," II. Tim. iii. 15, and applied to Timothy at an age sufficient to know the holy scriptures; and therefore it is not restricted to a mere infant as to age. Hence, when Luke calls the children that were brought to Christ, chap. xviii. 15, "ta brephe," (infants) they might, nevertheless, have been of a sufficient age to be instructed and converted by means of the gospel.

The *English* terms, *infants* and *little children*, are used with a good deal of latitude, even to denote all in a state of minority.

Therefore, for aught appears, as I said, these children might have been old enough to be instructed, and understandingly to say, "Hosanna to the son of David."

Besides, the position in which our Lord is represented as receiving them, shows that they were not mere babes. "He took them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them." But if they were mere babes which were taken into his arms as we are wont to take such children, it would not have been convenient, as every one can see, to "put his hands on them." Therefore no more is meant by his "taking them up in his arms," than receiving them between his knees and putting his arms affectionately around them; and then, placing his hands upon their heads, as Jacob did his upon the heads of the sons of Joseph, he blessed them; which was the thing for which they were brought to him. This is a circumstance which corroborates the opinion that they were children of sufficient age to be instructed.

It might, therefore, with the strictest propriety be said, "of such is the kingdom of God," i. e. "the kingdom of God" consists of such little children as these as well as of adults: especially if they were young believers already. But if they were not already converted, they were capable of complying with the gospel offer, and hence it was improper to forbid them to come to Christ.

In either case, those parents did well in bringing them to Jesus for his blessing, in hope that he would instruct them and save them.

It was very customary with the Jews to bring their children to persons of eminent gifts, learning and piety, to receive their benediction. The above transaction seems to have been in compliance with this custom. And their believing that Jesus was the Messiah, was an additional reason for bringing their children to him to be blessed.

If, therefore, we understand by the kingdom of God, the

visible gospel church, it might be truly said that "of such is this kingdom." Some are called in very early life, and give credible evidence of piety. And children of the size above described are manifestly entitled to gospel instruction, at least with a view to their conversion.

The phrase does not imply that all little children, not all the children of believers, belong to the kingdom of God; but, merely, that some of them do. The kingdom of God consists of little children as well as of adults. This is all the passage affirms. And as it does not include *all adults*, neither does it *all little children*. Many of them grow up in habits of sin, and never give any evidence of piety.

But the passage presents no particular difficulty, allowing these children to have been mere infants. For the kingdom of God may be taken in its highest and most perfect sense to mean the kingdom of glory; and it is unquestionably true that this consists of infants as well as of adults. Although mere infants cannot exhibit that evidence of piety and make that confession which is required to enter the *visible* church, they may be sanctified and become meet subjects of the *invisible* church. The mercy of God may reach them as well as others. Yea, there is reason to hope that it does reach *all who die in mere infancy*, and that they are admitted into the world of glory.

Nevertheless, nothing more is asserted in this passage, than that *some* little children are of the kingdom, or belong to the kingdom of God. The words "*of such*," do not imply "*all such*." It may be said with reference to adults, "of such is the kingdom of God." But here every one can see the phrase does not mean "*all such*." This kingdom does, indeed, consist of adults: but not of *all adults*—*all* are not heirs of glory. So it consists of Gentiles as well as Jews, but not of *all of either*. In like manner it consists of *infants*, but not of *all of them*, i. e. the words do not imply that it includes them all; and the subsequent lives of many show that it does not, though it may include such as are taken away in their infancy.

On the whole, therefore, there is no proof from this passage that infant membership is continued in the gospel church as it was formerly in the Jewish church. None come in *by birth*, or *by the profession of their parents*; but every man upon *his own faith and profession*.

But even if this passage did contain proof of the continuance of infant membership, the same as in the Jewish church, their baptism would not follow as a thing of course, as I have already shown. It would be required that the will of Christ should be expressed to that effect, whereas it is not.

But though the argument from the supposed membership of infants fails, it may still be plead that this passage contains special encouragement to bring little children to Christ, and hence, as a natural consequence, that they should be offered in baptism.

I would reply to this statement, that we undoubtedly have encouragement to bring our children to Christ for his *blessing*; but this is no more a warrant to bring them to *baptism* than to the *Lord's Supper*. Will any pretend that this is a warrant for bringing children to the Lord's table upon their parents' faith? They might as well do it as to infer their right to baptism. There is not a word about baptism. These children were brought wholly for another purpose. Can we not bring our children for a *blessing*, without offering them in baptism, which we are no where required to do? If we could not bring them for a blessing without baptism, we could not bring them to be blessed *but once*, unless we would have baptism continually repeated. But it is our duty to bring them daily to Christ that they may be blessed. This subject, therefore, has no connexion with infant baptism. It fails, in every view of it, to authorize this practice.

I will next examine Romans, xi. 16, 17. "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off; and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree."

I here freely admit that the *olive tree* is intended to represent the *church*, and that the *Christian church* is a continuation of the *Abrahamick*; but at the same time I maintain that it is under a *new covenant* and *constitution*—under *new laws and regulations*, and that these are such as *exclude all but believers, or professed believers*; so that the *unbelieving children* of believers have no place in it. The church now may be essentially the same as formerly; and yet there may be a new arrangement with regard to membership. It may no longer be perpetuated by natural generation, but the members may all stand by faith. "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith."

Pedobaptists suppose that here is a relative or federal holiness attributed to the natural seed of believers, and that as a holy seed, they should be baptized. Also, that the root and fatness of the olive tree mean the blessings and privileges of the *Abrahamick church*, from which they infer that believing Gentiles inherit the same privileges for their children which Abraham did for his; and consequently, that these must include the right

of applying to them what is termed the *new seal* of the covenant, and of claiming *the promise*, provided they are faithful, that *God will be their God*.

As to the first particular, I would observe, that although the nation of Israel are in a sense called holy, it will appear, on careful examination, that this is not the subject here treated of; and therefore the passage will give no countenance to the notion of a relative holiness now in the children of believers.

The apostle is here speaking of a *real holiness*, both in the *root* and in the *branches*. He is describing the *real heirs of promise*—the *spiritual Israel*. The argument runs thus: If the *root* be *holy*, so are the *branches*; i. e. if *Abraham*, who is here referred to as the *root*, were a *true believer*, and a pattern for all his children, who, together with himself, are to inherit the blessing, then they must be *holy too*; they must have *the same character*. *The lump* is like the *first fruit*. Hence the holiness spoken of in the *branches*, is a *real holiness*, the same as in the *root* and the *first fruit*.

The seed embraced in the promise to Abraham, were not "those of the circumcision only, but those who were also of the faith of Abraham." Something more than carnal descent was necessary to constitute them heirs of Abraham's blessing. To be "Abraham's children," they "must do the works of Abraham."

Rightly to understand this passage, we must take into consideration the whole scope of the apostle. He had been obviating an objection, arising from God's having cast off the major part of the Jewish nation, notwithstanding his covenant with Abraham respecting his posterity, showing that merely because the Jews were the descendants of that patriarch, they were not *all children* in the sense of the promise. God's promising to be the God of Abraham's seed in their generations, did not imply that he would be the God of them *all*, but only of an *elect* seed. Hence it is said, "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called;" i. e. as the apostle reasons, "they that are the *children of the flesh*, these are not the *children of God*, but the *children of the promise* are counted for the seed." "The *children of the promise*" are the *pious*, which God would call in the successive generations of his posterity, the *Isaacs* which he would multiply to an indefinite extent. And these were always the objects of his love and care.

Therefore he had not cast away his true people, although even a majority of the Jews were rejected. "God hath not cast away his people which he *foreknew*," says the apostle, "for I

also am Israelite," &c. "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

This interpretation of the promise solves every difficulty respecting God's dealings with that people. And the view which is here given of the case is only further illustrated and extended in the passage under examination.

The 16th verse should be taken in connexion with the 7th; for what comes between, is rather a digression, though it pertains, in some degree, to the main subject treated of. The argument then will be this, viz. "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." The *heirs of promise* were expressly designed to be a *holy people*: God said he would "multiply Abraham," i. e. *literally and spiritually*; the latter was the *highest and most important* sense; i. e. he engaged that he would multiply *persons of his character* as the stars of heaven. Hence for any to be included in the promise as *heirs of the same blessing* with him, they must have the *same character*—they must likewise be *holy*—not *federally or relatively holy*, but *really holy*. "For if the *first fruit* be *holy*," i. e. if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were *truly holy men*, "the *lump* is also *holy*;" i. e. the *whole body of the seed* included in the promise, is *holy too*, and that in the *same sense*; as the *whole lump of dough*, or the *whole harvest* was *holy* in the same sense that the *first fruit* was.

Again: And if the *root* be *holy*, i. e. if *Abraham* the father of the Jewish nation be *holy*, so are the *branches*, viz. the branches included in the *promise—the seed* that should be called and blessed with faithful Abraham. It was manifestly intended that the *same holiness* should descend from generation to generation to give a right to the promise. "Abraham's children" must and "would do the works of Abraham." "If the *root* be *holy*, so are the *branches*, viz. the *approved branches—the real heirs*; for they were *not all* Israel which were of Israel; *neither* because they were the *seed* of Abraham were they *all children*."

The apostle adds: "And if *some* of the branches be *broken off*." "The *branches*," in this clause, mean *not the holy branches*, but the mere "*natural branches*"—those that "were of the *circumcision only*."

The olive tree, *previous* to this breaking off of some of the branches, included the *nation, all of the posterity* of Abraham in the line of Isaac and Jacob. God, then, separated one whole nation in distinction from all other nations, to be his people, and thus connected church and state together; so that chil-

dren were then *born in the church*, because they were *born of the nation* which God had thus separated to be his people.

But he has now placed the *same church* under a *new covenant* or constitution, whereby the *sound part* is retained, i. e. *the believers*, and *the residue* is cut off or rejected. The church is no longer perpetuated by *natural descent*, or in a *national capacity* as before, but consists of *select individuals* that are *born of the Spirit*, or of such as *profess and appear* to be born of the Spirit.

Hence the branches that are said to be broken off, are the mere "*natural branches*"—"children according to the flesh."

This construction does, indeed, make the apostle speak of *two sorts of branches* in these two verses. *But it is evidently as proper to understand him to speak of *two sorts* of branches in these connected verses, as to understand him to speak of *two kinds* of holiness in a single verse, viz. the 16th, as the Pedobaptist interpretation maintains, viz. a *real holiness* and a *federal holiness*. For there were "*children of the stock of Abraham*, who were *not of his faith*; and *such were broken off*; while the *rest, the believers, remained*; and *with those that remained, believing Gentiles were grafted in*. The church, or the olive tree, under the new constitution, is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles, and of no other. It being no longer national in its character, infants are no longer members by birth, nor are they considered, *federally, a holy seed*. But the church is a *select company*, called out of the world

Some of the branches were broken off, and some remained. Now the question is, *who remained*. The Pedobaptists say, *believers and their infant children*. But where is the proof of this? It is, surely, not contained in this chapter; but the contrary is manifestly implied. The words "*because of unbelief they were broken off*," show that all unbelievers, whether old or young, were broken off, and that none but believers were retained. And *all mankind* are divided into these *two classes*. Although *mere infants* cannot be said openly to reject the gospel, they are depraved by nature, and cannot be reckoned among the friends of Christ; but must be included in the class of unbelievers. No one can consistently say they are included among *believers*, and that they "*stand by faith*."

I do not deny that some of them have *the principle* of faith, or that they are born of the Spirit, and sanctified, as it were, from the womb. And, consequently, should they die in infancy, they are prepared to join the blood-washed throng in heaven.

Still they are not *born into the world with the principle of faith*; otherwise they would not need to be *born again*.

Therefore, *merely as infants*, or by virtue of *their being born of pious parents*, they are not members of the *household of faith*. Consequently, they cannot be considered as standing *by birth*, in the good olive, seeing that all who remain therein stand *by faith*.

It is evident that, although some infants are sanctified in that early age, (and perhaps all who die before they come to years of understanding,) multitudes are not sanctified, but grow up in sin and unbelief. Therefore it would be highly absurd to consider infants *in common*, or even *the infants of believers*, as renewed unto holiness. And even those who are renewed cannot give evidence thereof, nor can they understandingly enjoy any church privilege. It is not our province to judge the heart, and hence the incapacity of infants to give a reason of the Christian's hope, forbids their being received as disciples and baptized. So far as the rule for baptism and church fellowship is respected, they must be considered in unbelief. They actually are in unbelief unless born of the Spirit: and such of them as may be born of the Spirit, cannot give us the evidence thereof; and so we have no rule that reaches their case; but must leave them to the disposal of God.

The cutting off of the branches, so far as the *invisible church* is respected, includes all who are unrenewed, of every age: and as the *visible church* is respected, it includes all who are not visibly and professedly renewed. Some may belong to the former who do not belong to the latter; and some may belong to the latter who do not belong to the former. The rule by which we are to act will neither bring into the visible church of God every true saint, nor exclude every one that is not a true saint. The visible church, like the invisible, is a *select society*, and there are certain qualifications necessary in those that are received; but these qualifications may be apparently, yet not really possessed; and so the church be deceived with regard to some of her members.

It is no argument that the infants of believers should be reckoned with the household of faith, and baptized, on the ground that some of them may be born of the Spirit; because if admitted, it would be equally in favour of the baptism of the infants of *unbelievers*; for doubtless *some* of them are born of the Spirit too. And certainly the former are no more capable of manifesting a renewal than the latter.

Besides, if we were to say that the seed of believers are to be considered *really holy* till they manifest the contrary by their

conduct, and so base their union to the olive tree and their baptism on this ground, the argument could not apply in favour of *household baptism*, because it frequently happens that a household contains children who are old enough to be ranked decidedly with unbelievers. And such are often baptized, too, upon the faith of parents. Here is an evident inconsistency : for these children most clearly belong to the class of unbelievers who are cut off.

To remedy the whole difficulty, will it be said that the faith by which the children stand is merely the faith of the parents, and that the former are acknowledged to be unbelievers ?

In reply to this I would remark, that in no part of the account given of the good olive is it said that parents stand *by faith together with their unbelieving children* ; but the privilege is *limited to actual believers*. “ And thou standest *by faith*.”

But it will be further plead that the apostle speaks of the believing Gentiles partaking of “ the root and fatness of the olive tree, by which must be meant the blessings and privileges of the Abrahamick church, and consequently, as circumcision was formerly applied to infants as a token of these blessings, so baptism should be applied to them now.

This argument implies that baptism is a substitute for circumcision, which is not the case, as I have already shown. Besides, it implies that females were circumcised as well as males, which was not the case. It also implies that the children of Jewish believers were continued in the gospel church, which is taking for granted the very thing in dispute. If those children were not considered as belonging to the good olive after the breaking off before mentioned, as I have shown, then the root and fatness of the tree, of which believing Gentiles partake, in common with believing Jews, must mean something which *both inherit for themselves, and not for their children, viz. justification by faith and eternal life*. “ So then,” says the apostle Paul, in another place, “ they that are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

I know we meet with the following words in the Abrahamick covenant, viz. “ To be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.” But the seed here is not restricted to his *immediate children*, as the argument for infant baptism implies ; but embraces his *remote posterity* also : therefore, if the promise applies to each believing parent in the same sense that it did to him, and baptism is to be administered to his seed on the same principle that circumcision was to Abraham’s, then not only his *immediate children*, but his *grand children* and *great grand children*, yea, *all his succeeding posterity*, must be baptized on his account, or by virtue of God’s covenant with him. And con-

sequently the church would become completely national. It is very manifest that the right of circumcision to Abraham's seed, *however remote*, was based not upon the faith of *successive parents*, but upon *their descent from him*, and *God's order* that they should be circumcised in their generations. Therefore, there would be no authority for requiring faith of *each successive parent* in the line, in order to the baptism of his children, but the right of all would follow from the faith of the *first*. Certainly, the seed included with Abraham embraced his *remote* as well as *immediate* children; although all of each generation were not heirs of his blessing; but only such as the covenant should be established with, or such as should be effectually called. Yet *all the natural seed* were to be *circumcised*. Hence it will be seen, that if we insist that the covenant is established with each believing parent in the same sense that it was with him, and hence infer the duty of infant baptism, the right to baptism belongs as much to his remote posterity as to his immediate. And if this extent of the right is not maintained, the argument is lost; and Abraham's case must be confessed to be peculiar, as it truly was.

It is abundantly manifest that parents in common do not stand in the same relation to this covenant that Abraham did—not even Jewish parents. God has not made such a promise to each believer, respecting his seed after him in their successive generations as he did to that patriarch. His was a peculiar case. He was the honoured father of the Jewish *nation*, which God, by a free and sovereign act, separated from all other nations. God promised not only that he would give him a numerous natural posterity, but also a numerous spiritual posterity from among them, and also from the Gentiles. And *to this seed*, which he would call, by his grace, in their successive generations, he promised to *be a God*. This, therefore, gives a very different view of the case from that which is presented by *limiting* the term seed, to his *immediate* offspring; and fully evinces that he stood in a *peculiar* relation to the covenant made with him, and that ordinary parents were *not* to be thus *distinguished*. Others are not fathers of the faithful in the sense that he was. But all believers, first among the Jews, and then among the Gentiles, are *the seed* of Abraham, to whom the promise was made, and is sure. Thus, as the apostle asserts, "he was the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised." He was also the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcis-

ed, inasmuch as he was the progenitor of Christ, and a constituted pattern of justifying faith.

But notice here, particularly, that he was not "*the father of circumcision*" to Gentile believers, as some very improperly state, and hence ground an argument for infant baptism. The Bible says no such thing, as every one, on careful examination, will see. He was simply "the father of all them that believe though they be not circumcised." And this he was in the two respects above named.

It cannot be made out that each succeeding believing parent takes exactly the place of Abraham, or, in all important respects; and that he is an heir to all respecting his seed which was promised to Abraham respecting his. God does indeed promise to each believer the blessing of a free justification through faith in Christ, and engages to be his God; and to enjoy this, is what is intended by partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree.

God did undoubtedly promise blessings both temporal and spiritual in this covenant, to Abraham and his seed *indefinitely*, not only of the *first* generation, but of the *tenth* and the *fortieth*, and beyond. He also promised the blessings of salvation to the Gentiles indefinitely, to the end of the world.

But it will not hence follow, that each believer steps into Abraham's shoes. Isaac and Jacob did, indeed, partly stand in the same relation to their posterity that Abraham did; yet there was a difference in some respects in their cases. Every thing was not promised to them that was promised to him. And as to ordinary believers, there is a vast difference between their standing and that of Abraham's. They are not Abraham, nor a succession of Abrahams. Instead of being *the fathers* of the faithful, they are *the seed* of faithful Abraham. They are all included in the term *seed*, and therefore cannot stand in relation to the covenant *as fathers*. Abraham and *his seed* include the whole. "For if ye be *Christ's*," says Paul, "then are ye *Abraham's seed*, and *heirs* according to the promise," viz. the following: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Christ was the seed of Abraham, and hence, if we are the children of Christ, we are the seed of Abraham, and heirs of the same justifying righteousness. To be freely justified by faith, is to be heirs according to the promise, or to partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree.

It cannot be the meaning of the covenant made with Abraham that all believers should *partake of every thing* promised to him; for it is certain that they were not all to be the natural progenitors of Christ—that they were not all to have a numerous posterity, and that kings were not to come out of them all

—that they were not all to be the fathers of many nations, and that Gentile believers were not to have the land of Canaan for their inheritance; but these blessings were all engaged to him. Therefore, partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree, means something short of enjoying all those things which were promised to Abraham. It is *restricted to that great blessing of justification and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.*

There will doubtless be a seed born to Christ, and consequently to Abraham, in the successive generations of Gentiles as well as Jews; and so the covenant made with him will be in operation to the end of the world, and be, in fact, what it was termed, an everlasting covenant.

But while Abraham thus becomes “the father of many nations,” or “the heir of the world,” by means of believers of all nations being justified and blessed *in his seed*, i. e. in Christ Jesus, it is evident that there were certain blessings promised to him and his natural posterity, in this covenant, which do not belong to the Gentiles, (though the Gentiles may enjoy others of equal amount,) and hence the covenant, as *a whole*, and circumcision as its appointed token, were peculiar to the nation of Israel.

Circumcision, as I have before conclusively shown, was never intended for *the Gentiles*, in their separate national capacity, nor has it ever been abolished *to the Jews*. Some of the peculiar blessings contained in this covenant, are yet to be further fulfilled to the natural seed of Abraham, and hence they are bound to continue the use of its seal. And they will, undoubtedly, continue a separate people, that God may abundantly fulfil what he promised and sealed to that patriarch.

But let not us Gentiles complain, neither let us boast. God’s peculiar goodness to Abraham’s seed *formerly*, and his intended goodness to them *hereafter*, ought not to excite our envy or our murmurs: for he has a right to do what he will with his own. Besides, although our lot, in certain respects, is plainly to be distinguished from theirs, he hath dealt bountifully with us also, in respect both of spiritual and temporal blessings.

As the work of grace was mainly carried on *formerly*, for many centuries, among the Jews, and they were *first* favoured with the light of the gospel; so it has *latterly* been mainly carried on, for centuries, among the Gentiles. “Blindness in part, has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”

Moreover, we have a goodly portion of the earth, and abundant supplies of temporal good things, although the Lord has not given us *the land of Canaan*. And in respect of *spiritual* pri-

vileges, we stand on a level with the Jews. Yea, our spiritual privileges, at present, are much greater than theirs, though it is their own unbelief which excludes them. The gospel constitution was designed, in this respect, to bring both on a level. "Seeing it is one God which justifieth the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." The Jew is not recommended to God by his *circumcision*, nor the Gentile by his *uncircumcision*; nor is either hindered from coming to him by his peculiar lineal descent or local condition. All are naturally guilty before God, and must be justified by faith. All need the new birth to enter the kingdom of heaven. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a new creature." And "faith, which worketh by love," is the only thing which justifies through the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law?—of works? Nay, but by the law of faith."

Here, then, we have a fair and full statement of what is meant by "the root and fatness of the olive tree," and by being "heirs according to the promise."

The promise of God is not to each believer and his seed after him, in their successive generations, in the same extensive and peculiar sense that it was to Abraham and his. For it must be always carefully understood that the promise to him respecting his seed was *not limited* to his *immediate* children, as the argument herefrom for infant baptism implies; but extended to his *remote* posterity; and hence it was the order of God that the whole should be circumcised. The *nation* was, in God's own time and way, to inherit the land of Canaan, and some in each successive generation were to be called by grace, and so a seed like Abraham be preserved, which ultimately should be as numerous as the stars of heaven, or as the sand upon the sea shore.

Now, to pretend that God promises all this to ordinary believers, and that each believing parent stands in the same relation to that covenant which Abraham did, is to maintain what there is no foundation for. The argument from the covenant made with him, if it proves any thing, proves too much—vastly too much; and therefore, according to an acknowledged rule of logick, proves nothing.

It not only implies what is not true of other believers, and what will not be pretended to belong to them, but it proves, so far as it can be brought to bear at all upon the case, that all of a man's posterity should be baptized upon his faith, *however remote*; yea, that the Gentiles should be *nationally baptized*, as the Jews were *nationally circumcised*. So that we should have

national churches at once, enclosing, by their very constitution, vast multitudes of unbelievers; and there would be no longer any distinction between the church and the world.

The extent, therefore, to which this argument will carry us, shows its inconclusiveness.

On the whole, it is perfectly plain that Abraham's case was a peculiar one in various respects; and that God made a peculiar covenant with him. And instead of claiming to stand in his shoes, and of applying to ourselves and our seed all that was promised to him and his, we ought to be satisfied with having a place among the spiritual seed, and with being heirs, through faith, of the same justification, adoption, and sanctification, and of the same eternal glory which will be awarded to them, and with the opportunity afforded for our children to hear the same gospel, believe and be saved, and with the general encouragement which attends the use of means and the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous. The great and essential blessing, which all sinners need, is *common* to *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and to enjoy this is to be *blessed* with *faithful Abraham*, or to inherit what is called in another place "*the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*"

I will now examine I. Corinthians, vii. 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

Pedobaptists do not suppose that a *real* holiness is here attributed to the children of the believing parent; but a *relative* or *federal* holiness, which sort of holiness, to say the least, is very difficult to be described.

But whatever it be, it belongs as much to the *unbelieving parent* as to the *children*. For it is said that "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband." And to be "*sanctified*" is *to be made holy*. Here, therefore, is a holiness positively ascribed to the unbelieving parent as well as to the children. Consequently, if the latter are to be baptized because they are holy, the former must be baptized likewise, because he is sanctified. The argument is just as good for the baptism of the unbelieving partner for the sake of the believing, as for the baptism of the unbelieving children. The right of the children to this ordinance is based upon the *holiness* which is here attributed to them. Who, therefore, can avoid seeing that the *sanctification* attributed to the unbelieving parent gives him an equal right thereto?

It is argued that the children here are called holy, though

but one of the parents be a believer, in the same sense that the children of the Jews were, and to illustrate the subject, reference is had to Ezra, ix. 2: "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands." But it will be readily seen that the terms, "holy seed," are here applied to *adults*—to such as were capable of marriage—to fathers and sons together, which furnishes proof, among many other passages, that seed means *posterity*, and is here applied to the *posterity of Abraham*, including adults as well as infants. But while this passage does not meet the case, I admit that the *nation*, including parents and children, is called a *holy nation*; because God had severed it from all others to be his people, and had promised to preserve a truly holy seed among it; and because he had taken it, collectively, into covenant with him at Sinai, which covenant, being *conditional* and not *absolute*, was made with *all the people*, both great and small, and was transmitted to generations then unborn. Such of the congregation as were capable of acting, promised to obey it, and the rest were bound by God's order to obey it when they became capable. This, though founded, as well as the Abrahamick, on the covenant of grace, was distinct therefrom, as I shall have occasion hereafter more fully to show.

That people, therefore, as a body, were called *holy*, either because of their separation from other nations, or because of their having nationally entered into the covenant at Sinai, or because of God's having always a remnant, at least, among them that were truly holy; or for all these reasons together. And the children being a part of the nation, were considered, in a sense, holy, together with their parents, though they were, by nature, wholly depraved.

But agreeably to the prediction of the prophets, Jeremiah and Zachariah, God has "broken the covenant which he made with *all the people*," viz. the Sinai covenant, and introduced "a new covenant," which is made with *only a part of them*—"the remnant" which he has called, and will call by his grace. And together with the breaking of this covenant, the whole of the Mosaick ritual is *disannulled*, and the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles is broken down. Consequently the former *relative national holiness* of the Jews has ceased. No man is henceforth to be called common or unclean, as the Lord expressly showed in Peter's vision of the "great sheet let down from heaven," enclosing "all manner of four footed beasts and creeping things, and fowls of the air." The notion that there is now a *relative, or federal holiness* in the children of the

believer, is without foundation ; and hence the argument built thereon is lost.

The true sense of this passage appears to be the following, viz. Inasmuch as it was unlawful for the Jews to marry wives from among other nations, and as those who had done so were expressly required, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, to put them away, together with the children that were born of them, as being an illegal progeny ; this circumstance, probably, induced a doubt among the Corinthians, or some part of them, whether it were lawful for believers to continue in marriage with their heathenish companions ; and they had, probably, proposed this matter to Paul in a letter, as a case of conscience. Whereupon he decides, in case the unbelieving partner chose to remain with the believing, that no separation ought to take place. The circumstance that one was a believer and the other not, did not, by any means, nullify the marriage covenant into which they had entered, or render it unlawful to continue it. The case, though it might seem to resemble that mentioned by Ezra, was not to be disposed of as that was, seeing the Gentiles were never under the ceremonial law, and seeing that law was now abolished to the Jews themselves. And to make the case plain, and to render the lawfulness of the parties continuing to cohabit manifest, he says, "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband ; else were your children unclean ; but now are they holy"—i. e. the believing party's connexion with the unbelieving, was pure and lawful, and consequently the children were *clean*, whereas, if it were not lawful, they would be *illegitimate*.

The unbeliever was sanctified to the use of the believer. As it is written, "to the pure, all things are pure ;" and "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused ; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." All those things which God hath created, and all those institutions which he hath appointed for man's benefit, are lawful, pure, and sanctified to Christians. Among these institutions, marriage holds a conspicuous place. The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, or is continued in the married state without defilement or impropriety ; and *vice versa*.

This sanctification rather relates to the *continuance* of the married relation under the circumstances stated, than to the *formation* of it in the first place. There is nothing said which implies that the marriage, at first, was illegal, and that people cannot be legally married unless at least one of the parties is a believer—nothing which implies that the children of parents

who are both unbelievers are bastards. The lawfulness of the connexion, at first, is plainly admitted; nobody appears to have questioned it. The doubt which arose related to the continuance of the marriage connexion after one of the parties became a believer, and the other remained a heathen; and the lawfulness of its continuance is what the apostle intends to assert. "Else," says he, or otherwise, "your children were unclean; but now are they holy." That is, if the continuance of marriage under such circumstances were not pure and lawful, your children would be impure, or illegitimate: but, as the case actually is, they are pure and lawfully begotten. The connexion of the parents being pure, the children are pure of course. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled;" and this continues to be the case, though one of the parties has embraced the gospel, and the other continues in heathenism, or unbelief.

The Greek word "*agioi*," here evidently means the opposite of unclean, i. e. *clean*. Dr. M'Knight, in his critical exposition of the epistles, says that "*agios*" primarily signifies "that which is clean, or free from defilement;" and, as evidence of this, refers to Deut. xxiii. 11: "Therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no *unclean thing*." And "*egiastai*," he says, means "cleansed from those defilements which render a thing unfit for sacred use," or, "fitted for a particular use." If these definitions are correct, (and no one will question that the doctor was a great scholar,) the above construction is perfectly fair and natural. The apostle does not mean that the children in question are *saints*, as some render "*agioi*," or that they are *holy* in the sense that the children of God are, or that professing Christians are so denominated: but he uses the word in the *primary* sense, to denote "that which is *clean*, or *free from defilement*," and means, merely, that the children are *civilly clean*; not *spurious*, but born of *lawful marriage*, according to God's holy ordinance. The *holiness* thus attributed to the children, answers precisely to the *sanctification* attributed to the unbelieving partner; and this can, certainly, mean no more than that he is sanctified to the use of the believing, or that the connexion in marriage is pure and lawful.

It should be particularly observed, that the children are not said to be holy because the *believing* parent is sanctified; but because the *unbelieving* is. This circumstance decidedly favours the above interpretation. The sanctification of the unbeliever can be understood only in a civil, or legal sense. Consequently, that holiness which flows from it, or is consequent upon it, can only be understood in the same sense, so that the passage in-

terprets itself. It does not give the most distant support to the practice of infant baptism.

Besides ; the argument from this passage for that practice may be overthrown on another ground, viz. if it have any force, it will prove altogether too much : for it would unavoidably lead to *infant communion*. If the children of the believer are to be baptized because they are holy in the ecclesiastical sense—because they belong to the holy congregation of the Lord—they should also be brought to the Lord's supper, as the children of the Jews were to the passover. It is palpably inconsistent to baptize them upon the principle that they are *holy*, and then reject them from the supper as *unclean*. It is easy to see that the argument, if it proves any thing, proves too much ; and therefore proves nothing.

I have now examined the principal select passages employed on the side of Pedobaptism ; and there are no others of any material weight. When the arguments from these are fairly refuted, it would be unavailing to bring forward any others ; and I think I may confidently say, *they are fairly refuted*. This closes the examination of what is contained in the New Testament in relation to the subject.

Hence, if we lay aside the prejudice of education, and submit to the plain decisions of inspiration, we must admit that the doctrine of infant baptism is not contained in any part of the New Testament records. There is neither precept nor example for it, nor any thing else which fairly and necessarily implies it.

I have carefully examined the commission for baptism, the history of the institution, and the practice of the apostles ; the constitution of the primitive churches ; and all the select passages which are of any material consequence in the case ; and I now deliberately and fearlessly assert, that there is no warrant for the practice any where to be found.

Indeed, our Pedobaptist brethren are forced to confess that it is no where to be found expressly, or in so many words. But they *infer* it from certain statements and principles ; and even from the *silence* of the New Testament Scriptures upon the subject, strange as it may seem.

But I have shown that we, not only, have no explicit warrant for the practice, (the very warrant required in a positive institution,) but that there is no solid inferential proof in the New Testament in its favour. On the other hand, every thing is against it. The premises cannot be furnished from any part of the New Testament, from which the conclusion can be fairly and necessarily drawn that infants were, or should be bap-

tized. The more this part of the word of God is searched with the temper which becomes Christians, the more apparent it will be that the ordinance of baptism is limited to believers.

I doubt not that many have believed and still believe the contrary, who are sincerely devoted to Christ. At the same time I must say, as a reasonable and dying man, that I do not believe that the Saviour or his apostles taught any such thing. No man can put his finger upon the passage that teaches it.

It would seem to me that enough has been said to convince every impartial inquirer that the gospel does not teach this doctrine.

But if it were true, is not the New Testament manifestly the place to look for it? Where should we expect to find a New Testament ordinance, but in the New Testament records? Where else should we expect to find instructions how to attend upon, and to whom to apply a New Testament institution—a positive law, resting solely on the will of Jesus? Surely it must be obvious to every sober, enlightened mind, that this is the place to learn his pleasure upon the subject; and yet we find nothing but a warrant to baptize believers. We must, therefore, conclude from this entire omission of the right of infants, that he did not intend the ordinance for them. For to infer a thing to be our duty merely because the New Testament is entirely silent about it, is the grossest inconsistency. The principle would lead to very shocking consequences.

I know it will be said that the principle upon which this practice rests was *previously* settled; and, therefore, no new instructions were needed; and, hence, the silence of the Saviour and his apostles is rather an argument in its favour.

Why do not our brethren argue thus in a similar case, viz: *that of the Lord's Supper*, and say the principle upon which infant communion rests was *previously* settled in the appointment of the *passover*; and, therefore, no new instructions were needed; and, hence, that the entire silence of the New Testament respecting their right to it, is rather an argument in support of it than against it.

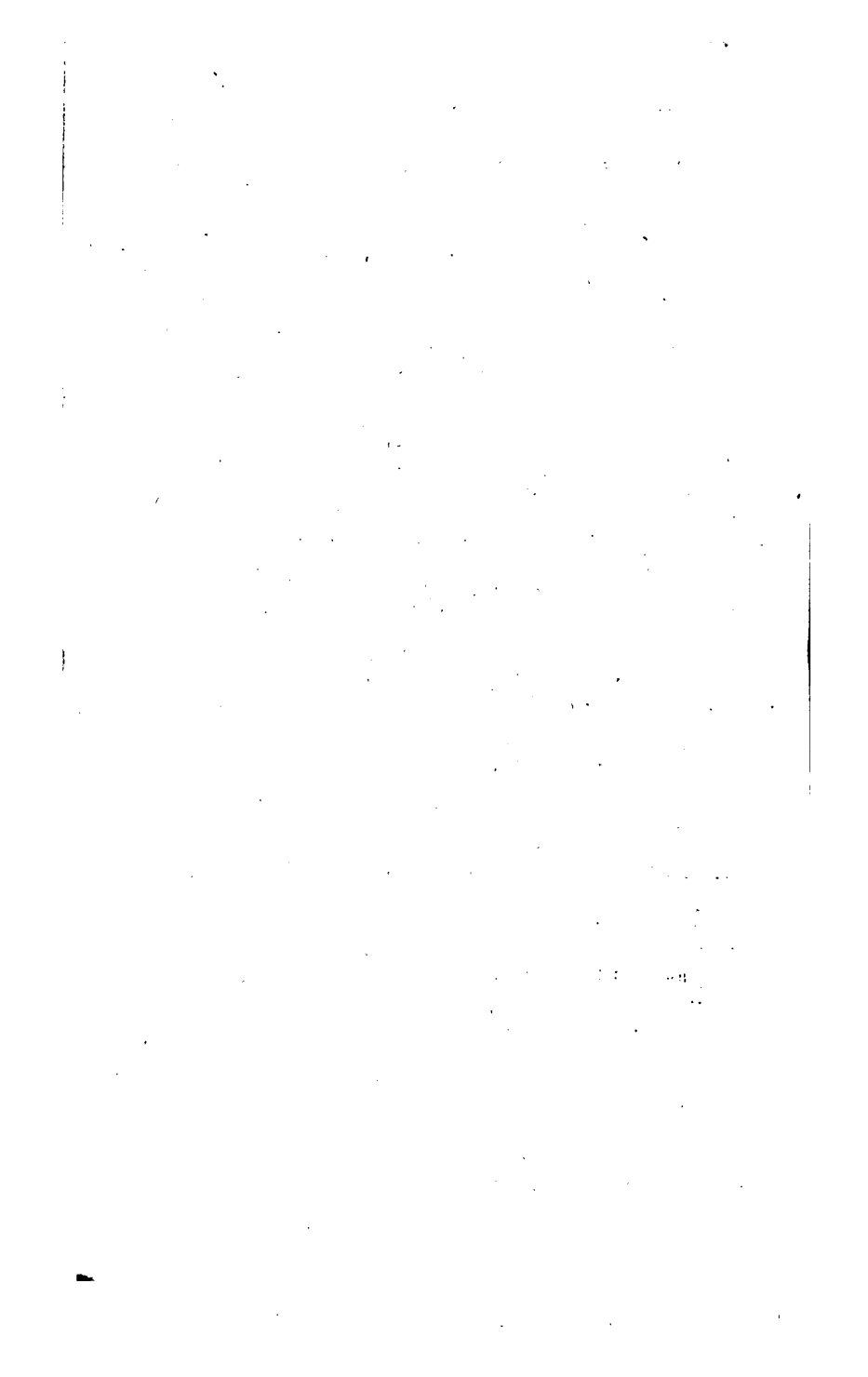
But, in this case, the defect of such reasoning would be easily seen. And if men would but open their eyes, it would be seen also in the other case.

But, as unnatural as it is, to leave the New Testament and repair to the Old to learn the nature and extent of a New Testament positive law, I intend to examine *that* also, with a view still further to bring out the truth, and to take up the stumbling blocks which men, and not the scriptures, have thrown in the way.

But, before we enter upon the examination of that part of the word of God, let me exhort you to ponder well on what has been already advanced. Give the arguments their due weight. If it be a fact, as I have shown, that the New Testament does not teach the doctrine of infant baptism, but simply the baptism of believers, let this truth be realized, and let it have its due weight in relation to the whole subject, and no more.

Here inquire, as sober, honest, reasonable men, whether such an important concern would have been altogether omitted in every part of the New Testament records, if it had been the pleasure of Christ that infants should be baptized. Inquire whether it be reasonable to maintain the doctrine, because God once made a peculiar covenant with Abraham and ordered that his males should be circumcised in their generations, when we are no where told that baptism has come in the place of circumcision, or that circumcision was ever abolished to the natural seed of Abraham; when the apostles were perfectly silent upon this subject, under circumstances which imperiously demanded the disclosure of the fact that baptism had succeeded to circumcision, if it were indeed true, as when some were making powerful efforts to impose circumcision and the Mosaic rites on the Gentiles, and the apostles and elders, with the whole church of Jerusalem, were convened to consider of the matter. Inquire whether it be reasonable to suppose, after all which Christ had said about the nature of the gospel kingdom, and the importance of adhering strictly to his instructions; and after all the particularity which he observed in other matters, that he would have left this concern entirely out, if it had been his pleasure that infants should be baptized. Judge whether this entire silence, under all the circumstances, amounts to a warrant for the baptism of infants, or whether it amounts to a plain prohibition.

I do not say these things to prejudice you against any light which may yet be reflected upon the subject, but to prepare you to judge of things as they are.



CHAPTER XI.

The Nature of Positive Institutions illustrated and established.

THE main argument for the baptism of infants being founded on the covenant which God made with Abraham, and professedly exhibiting no other kind of proof than that which is derived from inference and analogy, it becomes a question of very serious importance, whether inferential proof is admissible in the case of a positive institution; whether we are under the necessity, or are at liberty to *infer* our duty in regard to one positive institution, from the duty enjoined in another.

This, then, is a proper place to examine the nature of positive institutions.

There is manifestly a material difference between *moral* precepts and those which are *positive*. A few testimonies from eminent Pedobaptist authors may be here pertinently introduced. I shall insert them as they are quoted in Rev. Mr. Frey's Essays on Baptism. Bishop Butler says: "Moral precepts are precepts, the reason of which we see; positive precepts are precepts, the reason of which we do not see. Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command; positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all, were it not for such command, received from him whose creatures and subjects we are."

President Edwards says: "Positive precepts are the greatest and most proper trial of our obedience; because in them the mere authority and will of the legislator is the sole ground of the obligation, and nothing in the nature of the things themselves; and, therefore, they are the greatest trial of any person's respect to that authority and will."

And Dr. Sherlock says: "What is matter of institution depends wholly upon the divine will and pleasure; and though all men will grant that God and Christ have great reason for their institutions, yet it is not *the reason*, but *the authority* which makes the institution. Though we do not understand the reasons of the institution, if we have the command we must obey;

and though we could fancy a great many reasons why there should be such an institution, if no such institution appear, we are free, and ought not to believe there is such an institution because we think there are reasons assigned why it should be."

The distinction noted by these authors between moral and positive precepts, is manifestly correct and important. It is plain to every observing mind. Therefore, from the very nature of positive institutions, the aforesaid questions must be answered in the negative. Inference and analogy, though allowed in the case of a moral duty, are not in the case of a positive law. For the very nature of a positive law implies that it is not based upon any previous fitness in the thing itself, but solely on the pleasure of the lawgiver. Hence this pleasure must be signified in the law itself. And we have no right to supply any deficiency which we may think we discover, by comparing it with a previous positive institution, and reasoning therefrom; but we are expressly limited in our interpretation to the law itself. The very *enactment itself* must contain the *rule of duty*.

This principle is the one which all Protestants proceed upon when contending with the Roman Catholicicks, in regard to their peculiar rites and prerogatives. They very justly and forcibly plead, that nothing short of "an explicit grant, a positive command, or a plain example in the New Testament, can prove their divine origin.

The Non-Conformists also proceed upon the same principle in their controversy with the Episcopalians in regard to the peculiar claims of their Bishops, and the peculiar usages of their church. They say, "produce your warrant for this, that, and the other, from our only rule of faith and practice—a *divine precept*, or an *apostolick example*, relating to the point in dispute."

Now, if this ground, which is taken with Papists and Episcopalians, be correct and scriptural, it ought to be taken with Pedobaptists. Why should they, themselves, take it in the other cases, and abandon it in this? Surely, we have as good a right to demand a divine precept, or an apostolick example, for infant baptism, as Protestants in general, and Non-Conformists in particular, have to demand the one or the other, of the Papists and Episcopalians, for their peculiar opinions and practices. We do but take the very ground occupied by them when we insist that the warrant for infant baptism, if it be a duty, must be contained in the institution for baptism, as delivered by Christ and his apostles, or in some plain apostolick example. In the controversy with the abovementioned orders, all can see the inconsistency and danger of reasoning by way of inference and analogy in regard to the subject of positive in-

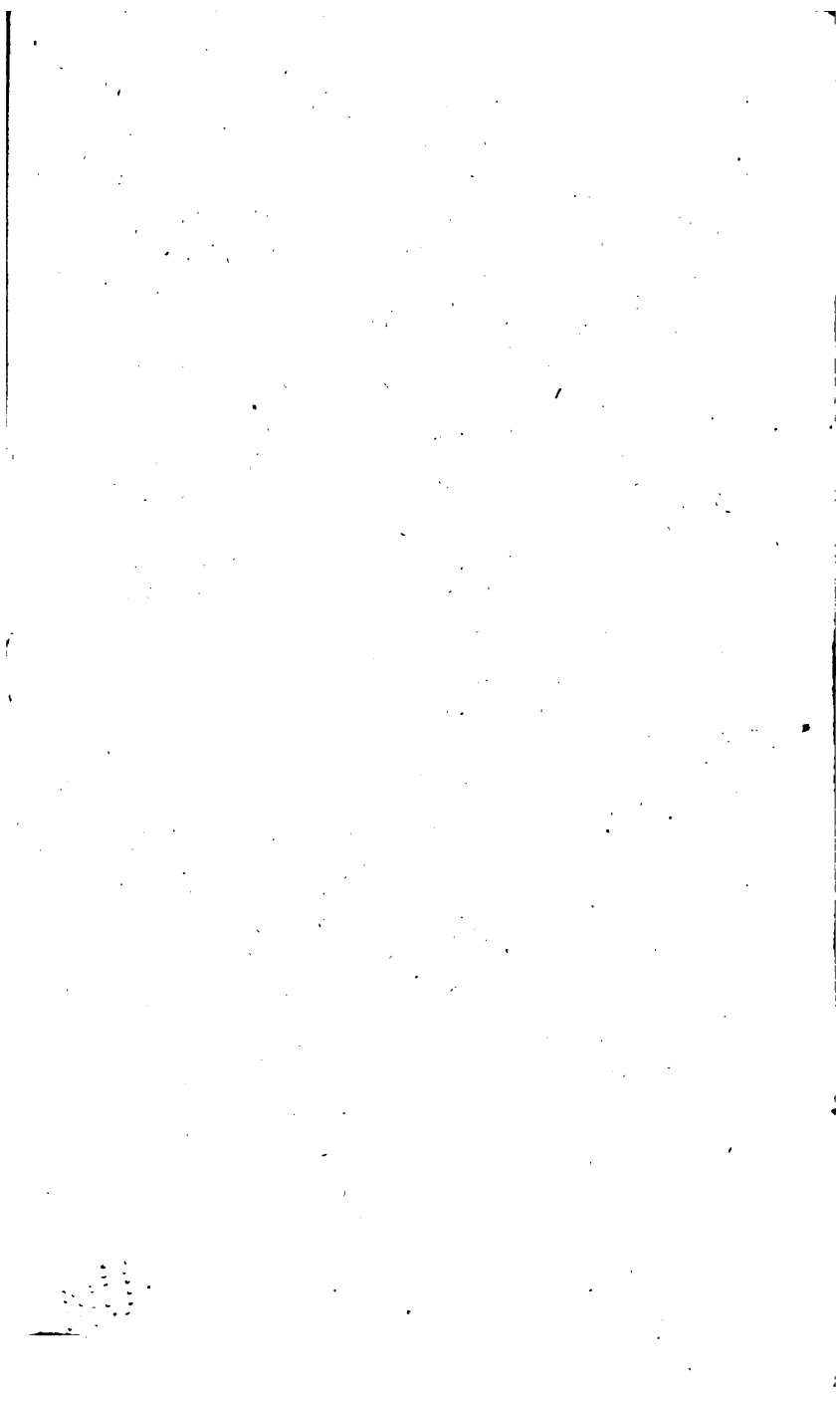
stitutions ; and yet the Pedobaptists build the whole super-structure of infant baptism upon this very kind of reasoning. They have confessedly nothing better. It is evident, therefore, that they are inconsistent with themselves.

In the one case, they unquestionably reason correctly, but in the other incorrectly ; and here lies the inconsistency complained of. Let the principles adopted and acted upon in relation to positive institutions in the abovementioned cases, be adopted and acted upon in this ; and the plea that we have a divine warrant for infant baptism would be for ever abandoned. We should no longer be referred to the Abrahamick covenant and circumcision for the due interpretation of our Saviour's command for Christian baptism, but be limited by the command itself, which, as I have abundantly shown, contains merely a warrant for the baptism of believers.

I might, therefore, justly set aside all which can be inferred from the Abrahamick covenant, and the practice of circumcision, or from any thing else pertaining to the Old Testament economy, as not being the kind of proof required in the present controversy ; *baptism being a positive institution of the New Testament.*

And in doing this, I should not only take good and reasonable ground in itself, but I should take the very ground which Pedobaptists themselves take in defending the Protestant principles in general against the claims of Roman Catholics, and the principles of Dissenters in particular against the claims of Episcopalians.

But as my object is to enlighten as far as possible, I will meet the aforesaid argument for infant baptism on other ground, i. e. I shall show, that provided the kind of proof which is plead for and attempted to be introduced by Pedobaptists in relation to this controversy were admitted to be sufficient, it does not exist. There are no *premises*, or *data*, contained in the Abrahamick covenant, or in any part of the Old Testament scriptures, from which the right of infants to baptism can be fairly and conclusively inferred, or be made out upon the strict principles of analogy.



CHAPTER XII.

The Abrahamick covenant, though a gracious covenant, or a dispensation of the covenant of grace, yet shown to be distinct from the covenant of grace itself.

It is generally maintained by Pedobaptists, that the covenant which God made with Abraham, and ratified by circumcision, was *the covenant of grace*. But on careful examination, this notion will be found to be *incorrect*.

It may be properly termed a covenant of grace, or a *dispensation of the covenant of grace*, but not *the covenant of grace itself*.

When we speak properly of *the covenant of grace*, we are restricted by the phrase to *one definite engagement or transaction*, containing the method of salvation by grace through a Mediator in contradistinction to the covenant of works. The *definite article* which is prefixed, *limits* the idea to *one* and the *same* covenant.

But when we speak of *a covenant of grace*, we are referred to one gracious engagement, or stipulation, in distinction from certain *other* engagements equally founded in grace. The *indefinite article* which is prefixed, implies that there are *more* covenants of grace than *one*, or that God has entered into *various distinct* engagements with men in their fallen state, or with some portion of them, which engagements, from the very nature of the case, must be wholly of grace or unmerited favour.

And when we speak of *a dispensation of the covenant of grace*, the definite and proper meaning is a *particular mode or method* of dispensing the blessings of that covenant. This manner of expression also implies that there are *different* modes of dispensing the blessings of this covenant, all tending to the same great and glorious result.

These distinctions are of high importance.

If God has, in fact, entered into various distinct covenants of grace with men, or that there have been various modes or ways-

of dispensing the blessings of the covenant of grace adopted, it ought to be distinctly observed. All these covenants, or dispensations, are based upon the *one proper covenant of grace*; yet they have *distinctive* characteristics, and ought not to be confounded either with one another, or with that original covenant on which they are all based.

It is upon the principle now stated that I call the covenant made with Abraham a covenant of grace, or a *dispensation of the covenant of grace*; but not *the covenant of grace itself*. If this distinction can be sustained, it will reflect great light upon the present question—yea, it will be a key to the whole subject.

While the Pedobaptists insist that the covenant of which circumcision was the appointed token was the covenant of grace, the Baptists insist that it was not; but merely a covenant of property—a temporal covenant, or a covenant of works. At the same time they admit that the covenant of grace was also made with Abraham, but hold that it was altogether distinct from the covenant of circumcision. Herein they manifestly err.

For it is capable of the clearest proof, that God made but one covenant with that patriarch, although it was exhibited, more or less clearly, at different times, or by distinct parts; and although it contained both temporal and spiritual blessings, which covenant was finally sealed or ratified by circumcision.

God indeed said, "My covenant shall be in your flesh;" yet it is evident that it was not a covenant by itself, but it was a token of the covenant. It could not be both the covenant and the token, because this would be making it a token of itself, i. e. a *token of a token*, which would be perfect nonsense.

Much, it is conceived, is lost to the cause of believers' baptism, by an attempt to make out that two distinct covenants were made with Abraham, and that circumcision was not a seal of what is termed the spiritual covenant, but only of what is termed the carnal or temporal; because the notion is so evidently contrary to fact.

Whatever the transaction with Abraham implied, it is manifest that God made but one covenant with him—that all the promises made at different times prior to the date of the transaction recorded in the xvii. chapter of Genesis, were then condensed and put into the form of a covenant, and solemnly confirmed by the rite of circumcision.

Nevertheless, we shall find, on examination, that this was neither a *mere temporal or carnal* covenant, or a *covenant of works*, nor *the covenant of grace itself*, but simply a *peculiar gracious covenant founded on that covenant*, or a *mere dispensation*

of the covenant of grace, which might afterwards be varied, and another dispensation, or other dispensations thereof, might ensue.

To determine the justness of this distinction, it will be necessary to obtain a correct definition of the covenant of grace.

The ideas of many appear to be loose and indistinct upon this subject. They are accustomed to speak of the covenant of grace, as though it were *one definite engagement*, and yet make it mean *one thing at one time*, and *another at another*. This is evidently not a proper manner of treating the subject.

We ought to fix upon some one definite transaction, engagement, or promise, as being that covenant; and then, when we talk of the covenant of grace, constantly refer thereto.

The covenant of grace will be found, upon due examination, to be the same as *the covenant of redemption*, of which President Dwight gives, in his *System of Theology*, the following definition, viz. "God the Father entered into a covenant with Christ, in which he promised him, on condition that he should become a propitiation and intercessor for sinners, as a reward of his labours and sufferings, the future possession of a church, which, under his government, should be glorious and happy for ever." This definition, with one addition, viz. that the subjects respected in this covenant should become interested therein *by faith*, is a very proper definition of the covenant of grace. Dr. Hopkins, in his *System of Divinity*, allows that "the covenant of grace, in the highest sense, is the same as the covenant of redemption," though he undertakes to distinguish it therefrom, and to make out that it is made directly with men themselves in time. This is plainly making it a *different thing from itself*, which is absurd. Two covenants cannot be the same, and yet distinct. Indeed two or more covenants may be similar in certain respects, but they cannot be different covenants at different periods, or under different circumstances, and yet the same covenant. The covenants which God has made with men in their fallen state, are similar in certain respects to the covenant made with Christ before the foundation of the world, yet they are manifestly distinct: for one of the parties is distinct in the one case from what it is in the other. To make a covenant with Christ *respecting* men, is obviously a different thing from making one directly with men themselves. We cannot, therefore, with consistency, make a distinction between the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption, and yet say that *the former is the same as the latter in its highest sense*. If the covenant of grace, in its highest sense, be the same as the covenant of redemption, then we ought ever to consider it the same,

and to regard the covenants made with us as only dispensations thereof, or as gracious covenants founded thereon.

The Presbyterian Confession of Faith allows the sameness of the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption, though many Presbyterians distinguish between them.

Now, it is evidently of great importance to determine whether these covenants are the same or not; for the one or the other must be the fact. They cannot be *the same* and yet *distinct*; though they may be *distinct*, and yet *similar* in certain respects, but *not in all*.

If these covenants be the same, then it will follow that the covenant of grace was not made with Abraham or with any other man, or with men collectively, but *with Christ* as the Redeemer and Representative of his elect people in the ages of eternity, and consisted in the promise of the Father to give him a seed from among men, which should in due time be effectually called, justified by faith, and glorified. The scriptures abundantly teach that there was such a compact, or engagement, between the Father and the Son, before the world began. And if this be the covenant of grace in the true and proper sense, then the several promises which God has at different times made to men, or the different engagements which he has entered into with them, or any individual or body of them, are only dispensations of this covenant, or covenants of grace founded thereon, and tending to the same glorious end. It would not be proper to call either *the* covenant of grace, because by this appellation, a different transaction is referred to—one that took place *before men existed*.

It is perfectly manifest that God has made various covenants with men in their fallen state, or with some individual, or portion of them; and these, from the very nature of the case, must be gracious covenants, whether they contain temporal or spiritual blessings, or both. He cannot treat favourably with sinners upon any other footing than that of grace. Yet these all have *distinctive marks*, and are *as capable* of being distinguished from *the covenant of grace itself*, as *any one deed whatever* is capable of being distinguished from *another*.

Should we disallow the sameness or identity of the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption, and say that the former was not made with Christ, but with *men themselves*, or with *some individual*, or *portion of mankind*, we shall be involved in difficulty in regard to fixing upon the *proper instrument* and giving it a *proper definition*.

If we say that the covenant of grace is *the general promise of salvation to mankind upon condition of faith in Jesus Christ*, it

may be objected that this promise contains nothing *in-itself* to secure the existence of faith and salvation, to any extent, and consequently, nothing to *ensure* the continuance of the church. Whereas the covenant of grace being the foundation of the church, must naturally be supposed to contain *effectual provision* for her *continuance and ultimate triumph*. But every one can see that a *merely conditional promise, or covenant*, does not contain this provision.

Besides, so far as any argument can be drawn from this view of the covenant for the baptism of the children of *believers*, it is equally in favour of the baptism of the children of *unbelievers*; yea, of *all classes* of sinners, whatever be their age or character; for this *conditional* promise is equally to them all. Christ hath tasted death for every man; and he that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved; yea, it is said, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;" and "whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." It would be absurd to limit baptism, as based upon this covenant, as now exhibited, to the children of believers, when the children of unbelievers, yea, *all unbelievers whatever*, have the same *conditional promise* of salvation made to them.

Many of those who consider the covenant of grace distinct from that of redemption, regard it as merely *conditional*. The proper definition of it, then, would be the promise of God to save sinners through faith in Christ. Here, therefore, is nothing peculiar to one class of children, or to one class of adult sinners. *Whoever believes* shall be saved. Hence the argument for *infant* baptism would be equally an argument for *indiscriminate* baptism. And for aught the covenant contains, sinners may, with one consent, reject the gospel, and the church run out.

And, if we should extend the promise so as to make it *absolute* as it respects the children of believers, or some of them, *on condition* of parental faithfulness, it will be seen that it does not secure *this faithfulness*, and so the blessing *may not* descend. Or if one parent is faithful, and consequently inherits the blessing for his immediate seed, they may not be faithful in their turn, and so the *succession* of pious men *may be broken*. Those who hold that there is a promise to parents respecting their children, consider it a different thing to possess faith so as to secure one's own salvation, from what it is to maintain that faithfulness towards children which will secure the transmission of the blessing to them. So that the covenant, even as now construed and extended, will not *guaranty the continued ex-*

istence of a seed of believers on earth. For this, upon this plan, we must look somewhere else than to the covenant of grace.

If we reject this *conditional* view of the covenant of grace, and say that it contains an *absolute* promise that those whom it respects shall become believers and inherit salvation, maintaining, at the same time, that it is *distinct* from the covenant of redemption, and *made with men*, or with *some one*, or *more*, of *mankind*; then, it may be asked, with whom was it made? and where shall we find it in this simple form? Was it first made with Abraham? or did it exist before? If it was not made before the engagement with Abraham, then how were those saved that existed *previously*? They could not have been saved by the covenant of grace, or by virtue of its provisions *before it existed*. Besides, it is absurd to suppose the world continued for about two thousand years, as it must have done, on this supposition, without any covenant of grace being entered into.

If, then, this covenant was made before the time of Abraham, the question returns, *with whom*? Was it made with *Adam*, or with *him and Eve together*, directly after the fall? Then it was manifestly a distinct thing from the covenant made with Abraham, though there was a similarity in *one important respect*. The promise to our first parents is in these words, included in the sentence pronounced upon Satan: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This passage contains the promise of a Saviour, and an implied promise of a pious seed; and the whole is put in an absolute form; but it does not determine from *what branch* of Adam's family this Saviour should come, nor in what particular line the pious seed should be called. And the covenant as here made contains but these *two items*.

But on examination, the covenant with Abraham will be found to contain several additional articles and peculiarities. This is recorded Genesis, xvii. 1—14. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: as for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out

of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, and he that is bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised. And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."

The peculiarities of this covenant, as *here* expressed, and *previously*, are the following, viz.

1. A promise that the Messiah should be born of Abraham's seed. "Thou shalt be a father of many nations." "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Here was something in addition to what was promised in the before-cited covenant with our first parents, viz. that the Messiah who was to come should be a descendant of Abraham. Had he descended from Lot, or Abimelech, it would have been a fulfilment of the promise to our first parents, but it would not have been a fulfilment of the promise to Abraham. Here, therefore, was obviously something *peculiar*. And this promise that Christ should be Abraham's seed was a *prominent item* of this covenant.

2. God promised in this covenant that Abraham should be "*multiplied exceedingly*," which is doubtless to be taken in a twofold sense, *literally* and *spiritually*—i. e. he should become a *great and mighty nation* in the *primary* and *literal* sense of the word—yea, the actual father of *many nations*; and also that there should be a *vast multitude of believers* like himself called from among his natural posterity, and from among the Gentiles. There was also something peculiar and very prominent in this item. The foregoing promise to our first parents did indeed imply the continuance of a pious seed among men, which would ultimately be numerous. But it did not engage a numerous seed

to Abraham, and likewise a multitude of pious descendants. That covenant might have been fulfilled, provided Abraham had had no more seed than common—yea, though he had died childless. But in that case, the covenant under consideration would not have been fulfilled. In order for this to be carried into effect, he himself must have a numerous seed, and multitudes of them must be converted and saved; and in order to this, not only Ishmael must be born of Hagar, but Isaac must be born of Sarah, after she was past age, which was a *real miracle*. God not only did not promise this in the covenant with our first parents, but he does not promise it to *ordinary* believers.

3. God promised to Abraham that “kings should come out of him,” which all must see was a peculiar item.

4. God further promised Abraham that he would continue a pious seed among his posterity in their successive generations, particularly in that branch of his family which should descend from Isaac. “And I will,” said he, “establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, *in their generations*, for an everlasting covenant.” Again: “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” This was manifestly *peculiar*. Such a thing had not been promised to any particular parent before; nor has it been promised to any one since, with the exception of Isaac and Jacob, with whom the covenant was renewed in most respects.

5. God moreover promised that Abraham and his posterity in the line of Isaac and Jacob, should have “all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.” This also was a *peculiar* and *prominent part* of the covenant. No one can doubt its being peculiar to Abraham and his natural seed, unless in the face of the clearest evidence they will come forward and maintain that the Gentiles have always had as good a right to the land of Canaan as the Jews; and that God might have fulfilled his covenant with Abraham, if he had given his posterity the land of Ethiopia, or any other country instead thereof.

The several items now enumerated, I say, were *peculiar to Abraham* and his *natural seed*, and serve to *distinguish* the covenant made with him from *that* made with our first parents, and from *any one* subsequently made. God has not made such a covenant as this with Gentile believers, nor with believers in common among the Jews.

It is true there was *one thing* in this covenant in common with every other dispensation of the covenant of grace, which belongs to *all* believers, viz. the blessing of a *free justification* by faith in Christ.

But take the covenant *as a whole*, and it was *peculiar to Abra-*

ham and his natural seed. It did not belong to the nations in common, or to believers in common among all nations; but to that *singular and wonderful* people, which God, for wise reasons, *separated from all others.*

It is hence still further manifest, that this covenant was not the covenant of grace itself, but only a dispensation thereof, or a peculiar gracious covenant founded thereon.

It appears to be conceded by Pedobaptists, that there were peculiarities belonging to the covenant with Abraham, although it be considered as the covenant of grace, and that it is not made with other believers in the same form, or to the same extent. Indeed, this is too obvious to be denied. But these *peculiar items* are called *appendages* of the covenant of grace; i. e. something *added or annexed* to it.

But this notion is manifestly without a foundation. They were not appendages of the *Abrahamick* covenant, but *component* and *essential* parts of it, as much so as *any item of any covenant, will or deed, whatever,* belongs to the *instrument itself,* and *distinguishes* it from *all other* covenants, wills or deeds. It must be perfectly obvious to every unbiassed mind that will look at the subject, that *each* of these articles was a *covenanted blessing,* and not a *mere appendage* of the covenant. Each one entered into the very body of the covenant. All the blessings contained therein were not equally important; but they were all essential parts of it, and were combined to render it one *complete whole,* or *one specifick deed,* or *compact.* And the *peculiar items* of this covenant were as much secured to Abraham *by promise,* and ratified by *circumcision,* as those articles were which are common to all believers.

Therefore, seeing the covenant, taken *as a whole,* was peculiar to Abraham and *his seed,* or *posterity,* so *circumcision,* which belonged to it *as a whole,* and not to *one part* of it in *distinction* from the *rest,* was *peculiar to him and his seed,* and was never designed for the *Gentiles,* except they were bought with Jewish money, or proselyted so as to become *one nation* with them.

This covenant, therefore, when properly analyzed and defined, does not contain any premises from which the baptism of believers can be justly inferred, inasmuch as Abraham's case was peculiar, and the same covenant is not made with *other* believers, especially with *Gentile* believers; and inasmuch as baptism, provided it be designed to answer *any* of the ends of circumcision, cannot be pretended to answer *all* of them; nor can it be considered as a *seal* of the *same* covenant. But it is altogether a *new rite,* appointed under a *new and different* dispensation of the covenant of grace.

Although it is manifest, as I have shown, that circumcision is of perpetual obligation to the Jews, it will not follow from any thing contained in the covenant transaction with Abraham, that it must be continued in the church at large, or something else as a substitute, answering the same ends and applied to the same subjects. When the peculiar nature of that covenant, and the peculiar use and design of circumcision are considered, and especially when we learn from the decision of the apostles at Jerusalem, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as recorded in the xv. chapter of Acts, that circumcision was not to be imposed on the Gentiles, and indeed, was never intended for them *as Gentiles*, or in their *separate national capacity*, and therefore, was in no sense obligatory upon them; (to say nothing here of the nature of a positive institution,) it is wholly *unnatural and arbitrary to infer the duty of baptism to any extent*, especially to infer the duty of baptizing infants, not only of the *male sex*, but of the *female*.

I freely admit, as before observed, that God made but *one* covenant with Abraham, which included all the promises made to him at different times, and that circumcision was a token or seal of this covenant.

At the same time, it must be particularly noticed that I consider the covenant, *as a whole*, as God *actually made it*, and circumcision as belonging to it *as a whole*, and not merely to a *part* of it; and hence, *as a whole*, or *as a complete covenant, compact, or deed*, I say it belonged to *him and his posterity*, and *not to mankind in common*, or to *believers in common*. And this view of it is manifestly correct, notwithstanding *one or two* of the items belong equally to Jews and Gentiles; and therefore we cannot duly infer the right of infants to baptism, not even the right of *male* infants.

The difference which exists between the new dispensation under which we live, or the new covenant, as it is called, and the Abrahamick, requires a different application of baptism appointed therein from that of circumcision.

Indeed, we cannot infer the duty of baptism at all from the covenant with Abraham and the practice of circumcision; much less the baptism of both males and females. Nor can we infer this from any other transaction or rite of the Old Testament.

Should we even take a different view of the covenant which God made with Abraham from that which I have given, and admit that it was the covenant of grace *itself*, and consequently that the beforementioned peculiar articles were only *appendages*

of this covenant, as Pedobaptists maintain, nothing would be gained which would warrant the practice of infant baptism.

For it is evident that circumcision had respect to *these appendages* as well as to the *main body* of the covenant; and that the covenant assumes a *very different appearance and character*, as exhibited in *connexion with* these appendages, from what it does *without* them, or with *other* appendages. Consequently, leaving out these appendages, or introducing others in their stead, will materially affect the subject of the seal, and of the duties of the covenantees. Hence we cannot infer the manner of applying baptism, which is a distinct religious rite, belonging to the covenant as *divested* of its *former appendages*, and administered in connexion with *others*, or, more properly speaking, *without* any others—not even if we should allow it to be also a *seal of the covenant*.

The appendages of the covenant of grace as made with Abraham, certainly rendered its dispensation or administration *different* from any one which *preceded*, or which might *follow without such appendages*, or *with others*. And circumcision certainly had respect to *these appendages* as well as to the *main body* of the covenant, or to its leading provision; i. e. it was designed to ratify *all these items* which were annexed to the covenant, *equally with the body* thereof. Consequently, we cannot, upon any just principles of reasoning, infer that baptism, which *does not have respect to these appendages*; but belongs to the covenant as administered, *without* them, or *with entirely different ones*, must be administered to the *same subjects* as circumcision. The cases not being parallel, the argument from inference and analogy is lost.

But I have fully shown that it is not proper to call the Abrahamick covenant *the covenant of grace itself*. Therefore, the peculiar items which have been enumerated *were not appendages* of this covenant. Certainly, they *were not appendages* of the covenant made with Abraham; but *definite and essential parts of it*. They belonged to the very body of the covenant, and it is surprising that any should have undertaken to distinguish them therefrom.

And this very circumstance is a conclusive argument against considering this covenant the same as the covenant of grace. It was only a dispensation thereof, or a covenant containing various gracious promises, founded on the engagement of the Father, Son and Spirit, before the world began, respecting the redemption of men.

The covenant of grace, when truly defined, being precisely the same as the covenant of redemption; it will, of course, be

seen that it is always *one and the same*: but the dispensations of it have *varied*; or we may say, that God has entered into various covenants with men, or with certain individuals, or portions of mankind, founded on the eternal engagement between himself and Son, inclusive of the Holy Spirit, who was to apply redemption when wrought out.

It is easy to see that these covenants, or dispensations, might vary, without affecting the sameness of the covenant of grace. And nothing is plainer than that they *have varied*. Some of them have contained *more ample provisions* than others. Some have contained merely *temporal blessings*; others merely *spiritual*; and others both *temporal and spiritual*. Some of them have been expressed in a *conditional*, and others in an *unconditional* form.

There does not appear to be any material difference between a covenant and a promise: for what is called a promise in one part of scripture is called a covenant in another. Both a conditional and an absolute promise is a covenant.

It is a mistaken view of the subject that *two parties mutually promising* are necessary to the making of a covenant. A covenant does, indeed, imply the existence of two parties, and so does a promise. But a covenant does not always imply an engagement of both. The promise of the one to the other, conditional, or unconditional, is a real covenant. In the case of a *will*, or *testament*, only one of the parties makes a promise, or grant; and yet this is a covenant in the highest sense. Whoever carefully examines the scriptures will see that this view of the nature of a covenant is correct.

And this will all help us to see the propriety of the foregoing distinction between the covenant of grace and its dispensations, or the various gracious covenants which are founded on it.

We shall also be able to see from this and other considerations which have been brought to view, that *two or more* of these gracious dispensations, or covenants, may be similar, in certain respects, and tend to the same great end, and yet each may have its distinctive marks, so that it may be a different covenant from any other, or all others. One of these covenants may contain provisions *more effectually adapted to the end* than another. This was in fact the case with the Sinai covenant, and the new covenant which was made at the coming of Christ, and is now in operation. Both were covenants of grace. But the promise in the former was *conditional*; and in the latter *absolute*. The former was, also, connected with the ceremonial law, which was merely typical of the redemption by Christ; while the latter exhibits the substance itself, and plainly opens

the way into the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus. Hence St. Paul says expressly that the new covenant is "a better covenant" than the old, "established upon better promises."

From this view of the covenants which God has, at different times, made with men, it is evident that we are to look to each for its *distinctive character*, and for the *application of its seal*, or its *ordinances*, if it have any; and that we cannot infer our duty in this respect, in regard to one of them, from the duty enjoined in another.

This view of the subject, moreover, prevents all confusion and embarrassment; whereas, if we make the several covenants or the leading ones which God has entered into with men, or with particular individuals, *the covenant of grace itself*, we are at once involved in perplexity, on account of the *variety*, and, in some respects, *dissimilarity* of their provisions. God promises more in one of them than in another; and for that reason it is a better covenant: yet all are founded in grace.

Therefore, it is not correct to call them essentially the *same covenant*, and this the covenant of grace; and to consider the *distinctive items* as *appendages*: because what is promised in each is essential to the covenant which contains it to make it what it is, and hence cannot be merely an *appendage*. Besides, the covenant of grace is manifestly the one made with Christ respecting men, and not directly with men themselves.

As God, by virtue of the said engagement with Christ, has made *distinct covenants* with men, although they have all *one leading feature*; and as it is manifest from the very instruments themselves, that there is a distinction not only between the new covenant under the gospel and the Sinai covenant, but also between *this* and the *Abrahamick* covenant; it is manifestly not consistent to consider baptism as a substitute for circumcision. It *does not belong* to the *same covenant*, and, therefore, *cannot be a substitute*. Neither is it appointed for the same ends; certainly not for all of them; which it must have been to make it a proper substitute. Neither are we any where told in the scriptures that it is a substitute. Besides, it has been fully shown that circumcision has never been abolished to the Jews, the natural seed of Abraham; but continued to be practised after the introduction of baptism by believing as well as unbelieving Jews; and will continue to be binding on the nation to the latest generation. And, hence, baptism is not a substitute therefor. It cannot be a substitute for circumcision to the *Jews*, because they are still bound to practise that rite. And it cannot be a substitute for it to the *Gentiles*; for it never belonged to them in their separate national capacity.

But baptism is altogether a new ordinance, pertaining to a new and very different dispensation of the covenant of grace.

It is not proper, however, to call it a *seal* of this new dispensation or covenant. For the only proper seal of it is the blood of Christ.

Baptism is no where in scripture represented as a seal of this covenant, nor of any promise which God has made whatever. It is merely required as a *duty*, being an outward purification representing the inward, and a significant badge of discipleship.

But there would be no more propriety in calling it a seal of the new covenant, than there would have been in calling the "diverse washings" under the law, seals of the Abrahamick covenant.

Baptism, being *positively* appointed, is of high importance, and it has its peculiar use as an act of open submission to Christ; a badge of discipleship, and an initiating rite into the Christian church. Hence, the very nature of the case shows that it is applicable to *believers only*.

To sustain the argument for infant baptism from inference and analogy, it must be shown that the Abrahamick covenant and the new covenant are *in all respects* the same—that circumcision and baptism were appointed for the very same purposes; and that the latter is expressly substituted by the law-giver himself in the place of the former. And then the argument would go no farther than to warrant the baptism of *male* adults and infants. It would give no countenance to the baptism of *females*.

But neither of these things can be shown; but the contrary is abundantly manifest. Hence, the argument is utterly defective, and ought forever to be abandoned.

There is evidently now the same propriety from the nature of the new covenant for applying and restricting baptism to believers of both sexes, which there was formerly for applying and restricting circumcision to the males of Abraham's house and posterity.

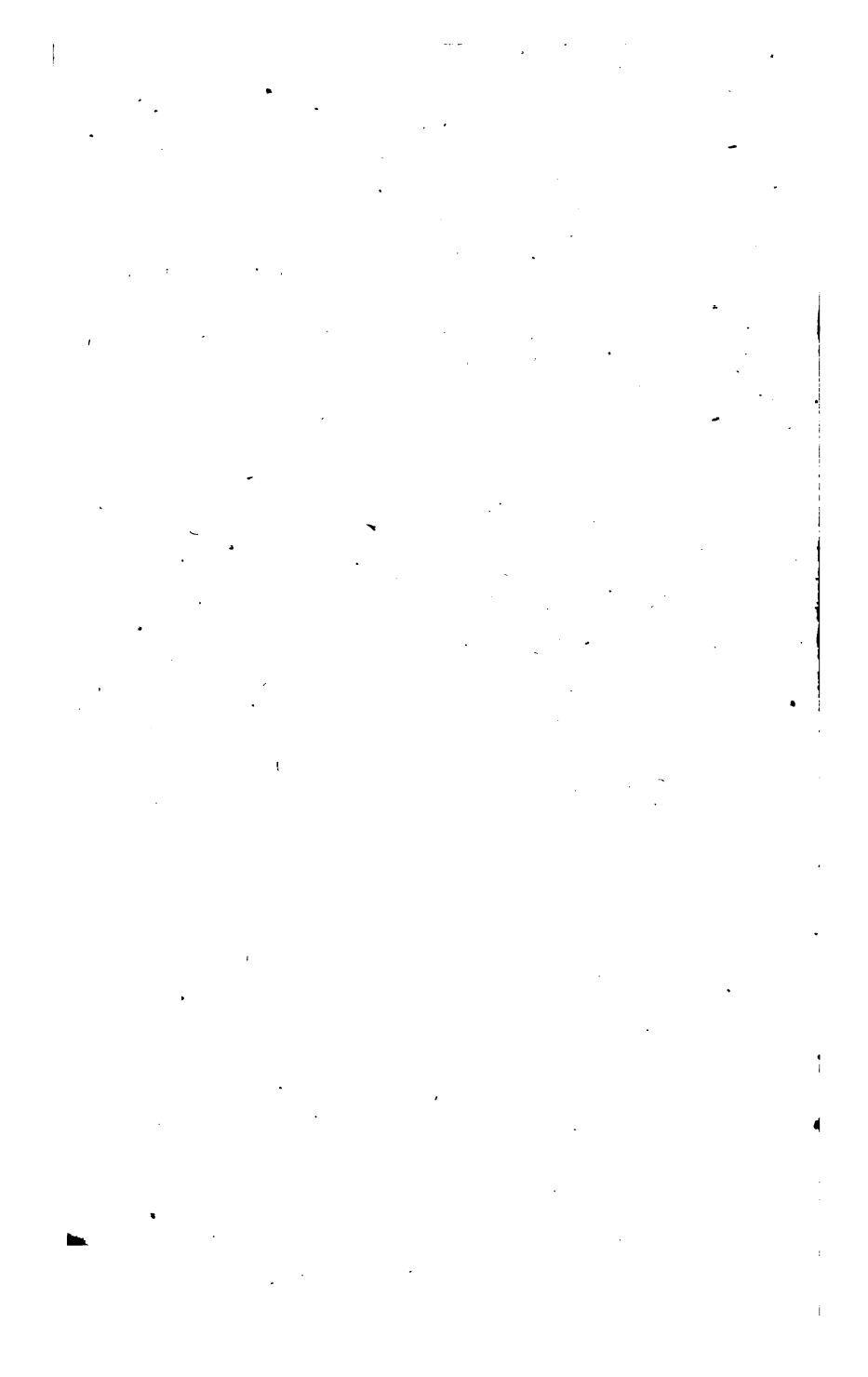
The covenant made with him and its appointed token, were designed, among other things already enumerated, to separate one whole nation from the rest of mankind; to be, in various respects, a peculiar people, and, (to use the words of Doct. Owen,) "for the bringing forth of the Messiah as Abraham's seed in fulfilment of the promise."

But the new covenant and baptism, are designed to collect and separate from the world *believers of all nations*, and to form them into *one spiritual society or kingdom*. Hence, from the

nature of the case, this ordinance should be restricted to such as, in a judgement of charity, are Christians, or disciples.

This, accordingly, perfectly agrees with the apostolick commission and practice, as we have seen. The pleasure of Christ is signified so far, but no farther.

Hence, to bring the children of believers to baptism on their parents' faith, by means of deductions from the covenant of circumcision, is wholly unauthorized, and a great corruption of this ordinance.



CHAPTER XIII.

The argument for the baptism of infants grounded on the interest which they are supposed to have in the promise of the Abrahamic covenant, considered and refuted.

ALTHOUGH the Abrahamic covenant was not properly *the covenant of grace*; yet it is confessedly important to consider its provisions as *a dispensation thereof*, or as *a covenant of grace*.

The argument in question is based upon the following declaration, viz. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."

This promise is supposed to belong to believing parents in common among the Gentiles as well as among the Jews. And as circumcision was a token of it formerly, so baptism is considered a token of it now. Hence the former warrant to apply circumcision to the infants of believers, is viewed as a warrant for applying baptism to them now.

But if I shall succeed in showing that the promise in question does not belong to believing parents in common, and their seed, not even to Jewish parents and theirs, but was peculiar to Abraham and his, and consequently, that baptism is not a token of it as circumcision was formerly, then the warrant for infant baptism, grounded thereon, will disappear.

It is of great importance to understand correctly what God did, in fact, promise to Abraham, and then we shall be prepared to determine whether his was a peculiar case, or whether the same be promised to all believing parents.

The argument in question, as generally managed, *limits* the term *seed* to Abraham's *immediate children*, and either holds that the promise was *conditionally* to *him* and also to *them*, or that it was *conditional* to *him* and *absolute* as it respected *them*, i. e. if *Abraham was faithful, they should be called and saved*.

Hence the warrant to circumcise infants is supposed to be *limited to his immediate household*; and that the covenant was to be transmitted to each successive parent and his immediate

children, on the same condition, or in the same sense, with the right and duty of applying the seal to them, and to be limited in the same manner as to Abraham and his family. So that the right of circumcision to succeeding generations, rested *not on their connexion with Abraham, their great progenitor, but on the faith of their immediate parents.*

But this limiting of the seed, and consequently the right of circumcision, to Abraham and his immediate children, and this notion of the descent of the covenant *singly or separately to each believer and his immediate seed,* are manifestly erroneous.

The real truth is, God made a covenant with Abraham, including both *himself and his posterity, indefinitely, remote as well as immediate,* particularly in the line of *Isaac and Jacob*; and this covenant embraced both temporal and spiritual blessings. Hence both himself and his *seed after him, in their generations,* were required to be circumcised. The whole nation was thus divided and separated, according to God's free and sovereign pleasure, from the rest of the nations, and a line of distinction formed between Jews and Gentiles which has hitherto continued, and will, without doubt, hereafter continue down to the end of the world.

I say his posterity were included with him *indefinitely,* by which I mean that God did not promise that all his descendants in every generation should become pious like himself, but that some of them should, and the aggregate number should be very great, as before explained, and that his posterity, indefinitely, should inherit the land of Canaan.

Hence, whatever might be the character of any succeeding parent, his children's right to circumcision remained clear and undiminished, because they were the descendants of Abraham, and God had expressly ordered that they should be circumcised. His words were, "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and *thy seed after thee in their generations.* Every man child among you shall be circumcised." This, therefore, was a sufficient warrant for the application of this rite to all succeeding generations of his seed. Every man child, whether of the immediate or remote posterity, was manifestly to be circumcised. And this rite might be administered by the father or the mother of the child, or by the physician, the nurse, the king, the priest or the common citizen—only it must be done.

But the ordinance of Christian baptism is to be administered by a regular minister of the gospel; and it would be impious in any other person to undertake to administer it, which circumstance shows a very great dissimilarity in the two cases.

That this view of the seed, as embracing *remote posterity* as

well as near; and consequently this *extended view* of circumcision, are correct, will appear abundantly evident as we proceed.

Rightly to understand the clause, "to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee," it must be taken in connexion with what immediately precedes, and with other declarations elsewhere relative to the same subject. The whole sentence runs thus: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee *in their generations*, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God *unto thee and to thy seed after thee.*" It is, hence, plain that "the seed after him" was not, *merely*, his children of the *first* generation, but of *successive* generations, *however remote*. The words are plural; not his seed in their *generation*; but in their *generations*;" which undeniably include *remote* as well as *immediate* posterity. The *fifth, tenth and fiftieth* generation were as truly included with him in the covenant as the *first*.

And they were thus included, not upon any condition to be performed by their immediate parents; but on the ground of the *free and gracious* engagement which God made with Abraham *personally*.

I do not think that even *Abraham's faith and piety* were a *proper condition*, upon which the blessing descended to his *posterity*, although God manifestly testified *his love to him in blessing his descendants*. But the whole that he did, from his call in the land of the Chaldees, for himself and posterity, was of free and sovereign mercy.

Though the scriptures sometimes speak as though there were a *condition*; the fulfilment thereof was *secured* by God's free promise. So that the covenant, considered as a whole, is presented in an absolute form, securing to Abraham the several items which it contained.

But so far as there was any condition in the case, i. e. so far as the descent of the blessing to his posterity in their generations, depended on parental faithfulness, it was evidently on condition of his own faithfulness as the *father and head* of the nation, and not on the faithfulness of parents in subsequent generations.

God might, indeed, hear the prayers and bless the instructions of subsequent parents to the spiritual good of their children; but this is not the thing which he engaged to do in this covenant, or upon the condition of which the blessing engaged was suspended. He here made a covenant with Abraham himself and his seed after him in their generations, *remote* as well as *near*, specifying positively what he would do for *him and them*.

So far therefore as any condition was required in the case, it was required of, and performed by, Abraham.

Hence the promise was absolute that God would do thus and thus for his posterity in their generations.

It is not said, neither is it intimated, that God would establish the covenant and be a God to his posterity, *provided* each successive parent, or any class or number of parents, would practise faithfulness; but the whole engagement was with himself, all was then settled, ratified and secured.

God did, indeed, renew the covenant in part with Isaac and Jacob; and in his gracious dealings with the nation, he sometimes refers to the love which he bore to them as well as to Abraham.

Nevertheless, every thing engaged to Isaac and Jacob and their posterity was, in the first place, *freely* and *absolutely* engaged to *Abraham*. To them it was only *renewed* and *repeated*.

But after the branches *spread from the stock*, as in the case of Jacob's children, no other individual subsequently stood in the same relation to the covenant that these three patriarchs did, and especially that Abraham did himself.

Hence, the favour shown to the nation in the time of Moses, nearly five hundred years after the promise was first made to Abraham, is attributed, not to the regard which God had to their immediate parents, but to the regard which he bore to those patriarchs. "The Lord," said Moses, on the plains of Moab, "loved *your fathers*, and he chose *their seed* after them, *even you* above all people as it is this day." When Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz, it is said, II. Kings, xiii. 22. "And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet."—When Moses in the xxvi. chap. of Leviticus, had predicted what desolating judgements should come upon the nation in after ages for their sins, he adds these impressive words, "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might be their God:" alluding, unquestionably, to the Abrahamick covenant. Again; God says by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xlvi. 28, "For I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure." How strikingly do we see

this declaration fulfilled to this day. Though that people are scattered among all nations, they are preserved distinct, and unquestionably they will continue so. Hence, in reference to their future ingathering, St. Paul says, Romans, xi. 25, 26, 28, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved"—"as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes."

It is manifest from these passages, that the seed included with Abraham in the covenant, means *remote* posterity as well as *immediate*; and that the blessing promised to *the seed* was not suspended upon the fidelity of *successive* parents; but was *freely* and *absolutely* engaged to him; it being always understood that the promise was indefinite, not embracing all the natural seed, but only the children of promise—such as God was pleased to call.

Hence, in the darkest periods with that people, there was a reference, as we have seen, to that covenant. God would not utterly cast them off on account of it—yea, the ordinances of heaven should depart before he would cast off all the seed of Israel from being his people. There was always a remnant of believers under the former dispensation, "according to the election of grace," and for aught appears, there has been a remnant to this day, and will continue to be. "As touching the election, the nation is yet beloved for the fathers' sakes," and will in due time "be grafted in again."

The transaction, then, with Abraham, inclusive of his seed, was a *singular* and *wonderful exhibition* of God's mercy—*altogether a peculiar case*. The cases of other parents and of other portions of our Lord's kingdom, are, by no means, parallel with his. *Other* believers may *fail entirely of having posterity*, or their *seed may run out*, or the *descent of piety among them* may become *extinct*, however glowing it might have been in the original stock; and *other nations*, however enlightened they may have once been, may *revert back* into heathenish darkness, and be *swallowed up* among the multitude of other kingdoms, and lost. But the covenant with Abraham secured to him *the existence of posterity permanently*—yea, a *numerous posterity*, and that as a distinct people, though scattered among all; and the *continued existence* of a *pious seed* to some extent, at least down to the coming of Christ, and subsequently; and, I doubt not, to the end of the world. Hence their preservation and distinction are a standing miracle.

It cannot, therefore, be pretended that God deals with other believers, especially with particular believers among the Gentiles, on so large a scale; and that baptism is to be applied to

the extent that circumcision was. The argument from this covenant and circumcision, if it proves any thing, proves vastly too much, and hence proves nothing.

As the same covenant is manifestly not made with believers in common, the practice of baptizing infants cannot be inferred from the promise in question.

While this promise to call and preserve a pious seed in successive generations, did not necessarily embrace the whole of his posterity, but often included but a remnant as in the days of Elijah, the order to circumcise was so expressed as to include the whole nation : "*Every man child among you shall be circumcised.*"

That the seed includes remote as well as immediate posterity, is still further evident from the following declarations, viz. "In blessing, I will bless thee ; and in multiplying, I will multiply thee," i. e. both *lineally* and *spiritually*. "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven." "And so shall thy seed be," i. e. as innumerable as the stars.

These promises clearly and undeniably show, that the seed connected with him are not confined to his immediate children, but include remote posterity also ; and in the spiritual sense, believers also from the Gentiles, as Paul shows in the iv. chapter of Romans.

Therefore, all this goes to give the covenant with him and circumcision a *peculiar* character, and to show that the argument from that source for infant baptism is perfectly groundless. The cases are in no measure parallel.

There is one consideration more that confirms the foregoing view of the seed, which must not be omitted. It is this : that God said, "I will give to thee and to thy seed after thee, all the land of Canaan," as well as promise "to be a God to him and his seed after him ;" and in the former case nothing can be clearer than that the seed included remote posterity, for the promise was not properly or fully verified till between four and five hundred years afterwards. Yet the phraseology is exactly the same as in the latter case.

This extensive sense of the term *seed*, while it gives the covenant a *peculiar* character, and cuts off all reasonable pretensions that the same covenant is made with other believers, furnishes a valid reason for the circumcision of the nation in successive ages, but gives no countenance to the baptism of the children of believers under the gospel.

To undertake to derive an argument from this source for this practice, obliges one to maintain, with regard to believers in common, what is palpably untrue, and to infer vastly more than any

enlightened Christian would wish, viz. not only the baptism of his immediate children, but of all his posterity, upon his faith, however remote. The argument is just as good for the baptism of the *tenth* generation as for that of the *first*; but, in fact, it is good for nothing in either case.

To say that the promise is to ordinary believing parents and their seed, *in a less extended sense* than to Abraham, is to give up the plea at once, that the same covenant now exists between God and them, and their seed, and that all which was engaged to him belongs to them. It certainly cannot be proved from the terms of the covenant itself, that God makes a less extended covenant with them and their seed, than with him and his; and therefore the argument is lost.

I know it is said, that "they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham," and that "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." But the meaning is, not that they inherit every thing which was promised to him; but only the leading blessing of justification by faith, and salvation by free grace. They are blessed with him, because the seed promised to him, spiritually and extensively considered, includes them. They are heirs of the particular promise—"in thy seed shall all nations be blessed."

But this does not imply that God makes the same covenant with ordinary believers that he did with him, not even in a less extended sense, because the very statement itself implies that it is not the same. They do not, and cannot, stand in the same relation to the covenant that he did. They are not *Abraham*, nor a *succession of Abrahams*, but simply *Abraham's seed*, in the large and spiritual sense of the terms.

If, to sustain the argument for infant baptism, it should be said that although no individual believer stands in the same relation to the covenant that Abraham did, yet that the church does *collectively*—that *the church* has stepped into *his place*, and that the promise is now to *her* and *her seed*, as it was to *Abraham* and *his*, and to *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and *theirs*; and that after *Jacob*, the *real ground* for the continuance of circumcision, was God's covenant with *the church* and *her seed*; and that accordingly, the ground for infant baptism now, is God's covenant with *the church* and *her seed*, and *not* with each *individual believing parent* and *his*; I would remark,

1. That the ground here stated for continuing circumcision to the seed of Israel, is manifestly incorrect. The scriptures never base it upon such a principle. And I have sufficiently proven that the real ground for its continuance was God's covenant with Abraham, and his order for the circumcision of him—

self and his seed. The original charter remained good, and did not require to be renewed with each successive generation of his seed; nor is it ever represented as being so renewed. The right was permanent.

2. To base infant baptism on this principle, would be basing it on one which is very general and indefinite, and one which would lead to the unlimited use of baptism.

According to this scheme, the promise is not that God will bless *each believer and his seed*; but *the church collectively and her seed*, i. e. he promises to bless them *as a class*, or to call *some* of them. Consequently, if he keeps alive a seed of believers somewhere among the seed of the church, this is all which baptism purports as being engaged. This, then, is basing the practice on *very general and indefinite ground*—on ground so very *different* from any thing contained in the scriptures, that few, if any, will, upon proper examination, undertake to defend it.

Besides, it would naturally lead to the baptism of all, without distinction, whether children of the church, or not; because God has promised to call an elect people from among the Gentiles *collectively*, as he did from among the Jews *collectively*. According to this principle, therefore, baptism should be applied as extensively as circumcision.

3. It belongs, upon this principle, to the *church*, and not to the *individual parents*, to offer up the children in baptism.

This is an unavoidable consequence: for if *the church* has stepped into *Abraham's place*, or *taken his standing* in relation to the covenant, and if *circumcision* was practised after Jacob, and *baptism* is now practised upon *this ground*, i. e. upon the ground of the promise made to *her collectively*, and *her seed*, and not upon the promise to *parents individually*, and *their seed*; then it is clearly the province and duty of *the church collectively*, and *not of the parents*, to present the children in this ordinance. The party with whom the covenant is made should manifestly be the one to give up the children. This duty, therefore, will, as I said, unavoidably belong to the church. Hence the deacons, or a committee appointed for the purpose, should bring forward the children in behalf of the church; or the baptism should be performed in some way for the church, so that it might be known to be her act, and not the act of the parents.

Hence, this would be wholly changing the ground for this practice. But the above principle will necessarily lead to it. And the absurdity of the consequence is sufficient to overthrow the premises; besides, the premises themselves have no foundation in the scriptures.

After all, therefore, which can be said upon the subject, it is clear that the promise that God would be a God to Abraham and his seed after him in their generations, was peculiar to him and them, and cannot be claimed by ordinary believers, so as to lay a foundation for the baptism of infants. Even if it should be allowed that this promise does belong to them and their seed, in the same sense that it did to Abraham and his, we could not consider baptism as a token thereof, and a substitute for circumcision, unless we are *so instructed* by the word of God, which is not the case; and hence the inference for the baptism of infants fails.

In reference to that class of Pedobaptists who consider the promise in the Abrahamick covenant *conditional*, both as it respects the *parents* and *children*, i. e. that God promised to be the God of Abraham on condition of his faith, and the God of his seed on condition of their faith, and that he promises the same to other parents and their children, on the same condition; and that there is nothing in the promise to the parents which *secures* the existence of faith in the children; I would observe, that this presents no other ground for the baptism of the children of believers, than for the baptism of the children of unbelievers, yea, of all other persons whatever, without regard to their present moral character; as I have already shown in my exposition of Acts, ii. 38, 39.

According to this exposition of the promise, the notion that the children of believers are *in covenant*, and those of unbelievers not, is entirely without foundation. The latter are in covenant as truly as the former, provided the promise is merely conditional. For it is to all—yea, to all that are afar off, as well as to the children of believers. Here, then, is no other ground for the baptism of the latter, than exists for the baptism of all mankind.

And the argument for infant baptism, based upon that view of the promise which secures the piety of the children on condition of parental faithfulness, I have already refuted in this chapter. If it proves any thing, it proves too much, and thereby destroys itself. It is, on the whole, perfectly manifest that Abraham's case was peculiar, and is not to be adduced as an example, in the point in question, for others, and especially for Gentile believers.

Neither is there any other promise than that which has been considered, to believers and their seed, which will authorize infant baptism.

Even if it could be proved that God does expressly engage to bless and save the children of believers, if faithful, this would:

not lay a foundation for their baptism, unless we are somewhere taught that baptism is a token or seal of this promise, and that it should be applied to the children as well as the parents;— which is not the case.

The existence of such a promise itself any where in the Bible, cannot be conclusively shown.

Indeed, from the ordinary connexion which God has established between means and ends; from his command respecting the religious education of children; and from his character as a prayer-hearing God, parents may take encouragement, if faithful, to hope that their children, to some extent, at least, will be brought into the kingdom.

But this does not appear to be engaged in any covenant transaction between God and each believing parent, and ratified by baptism.

The passages which are brought in support of such a covenant, in addition to the promise already considered to Abraham, will be found, on examination, to be insufficient to prove its existence.

One of these is Deut. v. 29, “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well *with them*, and with *their children* forever.” This is spoken of the nation collectively. It expresses a desire that the nation *were*, and *would continue to be*, a holy and obedient people, for the good of the present and succeeding generations. In that case, their children as well as themselves would, indeed, enjoy happiness and prosperity.— But it will be perceived that there is a condition implied on the part of the children as well as of the parents. The promise is not that if the parents would be obedient, the children should be of course; but if the children would be obedient too, they should also be happy. As long as the nation, parents and children together, should keep God’s commandments, it would be well with them. The personal obedience of each is plainly the condition of being blessed. This, then, affords no proof of the existence of such a covenant as above described. The following passages, to which the reader is merely referred, may be explained in a similar manner, viz. Deut. vi. 2, xxviii. 2, 3, 4, and xxx. 2, 6; Ps. ciii. 17, 18, and Ex. xx. 6.

The following, viz. Deut. vii. 8, 9, and x. 15; Isaiah, xliv. 3, and lix. 21; and Jer. xxxii. 39, may be explained on the principle of the promise contained in the Abrahamick covenant, as already illustrated.

The seed of God’s servants mentioned in Ps. lxxix. 36, and

cii. 28, mean not simply the carnal seed ; but the imitators of the faith of their parents, or predecessors.

Jer. xxx. 20, relates to the return from the Babylonish captivity, and therefore furnishes no proof that children stand in the same relation to the church now, as formerly.

Proverbs xx. 7, and xxii. 6, and Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26, contain a recognition of general facts, or maxims. There is wont to be a connexion between the piety and faithfulness of parents, and the piety and uprightness of their children, on a general scale, leaving room for exceptions. These are statements of the ordinary influence of a pious education upon children.— But this connexion is not noticed in the form of a covenant, but rather as a matter of fact. The same principle might be extended to the instructions of a pious minister and his people, or of a pious teacher and his pupils, or his sabbath school children : as to matter of fact, these means are wont to be blessed to some extent. But the subject is not put into the form of a covenant, and ratified with a seal. Neither is it in the former case. Therefore, the baptism of infants cannot be inferred therefrom.

These, together with those examined in a former part of this work, are the principal passages brought in support of the covenant promise which is supposed to exist in relation to believers and their seed ; and they evidently furnish no premises from which the right of infants to baptism can be duly inferred.

Even if it could be proved that God has made a covenant with believers in common to bless their immediate children, provided they are faithful, this right would not follow. Because baptism is no where said to be a token, or seal, of such a covenant, or promise, or to be designed for any such purpose.

And even if it *were*, it would not follow that it must be applied any further than to *believers of both sexes*. It is a positive institution, and the use of it is defined and limited by the very words of the institution. Were it clearly and undeniably a seal of such a promise, we might argue reasonably and *conclusively*, that it answers all the purposes of a seal, when applied to *believers of both sexes*, as truly as circumcision did when applied to the *males* of Abraham's family. It will not prove the right of the children to baptism to say that they are *interested in the promise* ; for the *females* in Abraham's family were *interested in the promise* of the covenant which God made with him, as truly as the *males* ; and yet the seal *was not to be applied to them*. Will it be said that it was not applicable to them ? But, if simply an interest in the promise gave a right to the *seal*, then doubtless God would have appointed a seal which was.

applicable to both sexes, provided circumcision was not ; or the seal appointed would have been applied to females as far as the nature of the case would admit.

The truth of the case is, this interest in the promise did not give the right to the seal : but *that* which gave the right was *the order of God*, which expressly limited it to the males.

So in the case before us, *that* which gives the right to the ordinance of baptism is not the interest of the subject in the promise, but *the order of God*, which is expressly limited to *believers of both sexes*.

This application of baptism, allowing the aforesaid covenant to exist, and baptism to be the seal of it, is a sufficient confirmation of the promise, and we have no warrant to extend it any further.

If it be said that we are not forbidden to baptize infants, I reply, neither were the Jews forbidden to circumcise *females*. Besides, we are not expressly forbidden to baptize *unbelievers*, nor our *meeting houses* and *bells*. But will it hence do to baptize them ? Surely this kind of reasoning will not do.

When the subjects of a positive rite are described, and ordered to receive it, this is a virtual and plain prohibition of its application to any other persons, or things.

In every view of the case, therefore, the argument for the baptism of infants grounded on the Abrahamick covenant, or on any covenant or promise in the Bible, fails, and ought never more to be plead.

CHAPTER XIV.

The inconsistency between the belief and practice of Pedobaptists respecting the church membership of infants, exposed.

ONE of the strongest arguments for the baptism of infants is based upon their supposed membership in the Christian church, the same as in the Jewish. The churches being the same, and the membership of infants being once established in the Jewish Church, must, it is argued, continue, unless it be expressly set aside; and, if it continue, then they should be baptized upon the ground of it.

All Pedobaptists do not plead for the continued church membership of infants; but most of them do, and place great reliance upon it. My object, in this chapter, will be to show the inconsistency which exists between their belief and practice; and, also, to make it appear that the argument destroys itself by proving too much.

Infants are baptized, either because they are members, or, to make them members. But what becomes of them afterwards? Are they treated as members? Are they considered as *brethren, saints, and the faithful* in Christ Jesus? Are they considered as being *in communion*? No, they are not permitted to come to the *Lord's Supper* upon the ground of their baptism and church membership.

Yet the Lord's Supper is supposed to come in the place of the *passover* as truly as baptism has in the place of *circumcision*. And it is perfectly obvious that children ate of the *passover* as well as adults. It was a household right.

If, therefore, the Lord's Supper has come in its place, and children are still church members, why are they not admitted to it? The argument is as strong for their admission to *communion* as to *baptism*: yea, it is rather *stronger*, because *females* were admitted to the *passover*, although excluded from *circumcision*. If *circumcision* was a household right, so was the *passover*, still more perfectly. And if baptism has succeeded the former as still a household right; the same must be said of the Lord's Supper upon the same principle. And infants cannot

be excluded therefrom, any more than from baptism, unless *their right be annulled*, which cannot be reasonably pretended, if the *other right is not annulled too*.

It is said, indeed, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." But this will not exclude infants any more than the rule "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and "if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest," excludes them from baptism. The same plea may be made in the *former* case as in the *latter*, that the rule respects *merely adults*, and, therefore, does not affect the right of *infants*. There is not, in fact, one plea for *infant baptism* which may not be urged, with equal force, for *infant communion*. Why then is the one practice observed and the other not? Why is not the very same principle allowed to operate in both cases, when they are manifestly parallel? Here is a palpable *inconsistency* on the part of Pedobaptists. Infants are considered church members long enough to secure their baptism, and then refused the privileges of members. They are treated as though they were not members. No material difference is made between them and the world. They are said to be *in the church*, and yet not *in communion*. They are admitted to *one* gospel ordinance, and rejected from the *other*, when the principle adopted with regard to *both is the same*. They are not numbered among the *brethren*, or admitted into the society of *Christians*, till they make the same profession which is required of the *unbaptized*.

They are, indeed, said to be under the watch and care of the church: but *in what sense*? Not as *brethren*. And to *what extent* are they under its watch and care? Not as deserving *excommunication* if not reclaimed by the ordinary process. For how could they be *cast out* of communion when they were never *in*? The watch and care, then, which are exercised over them are not materially different from what are exercised, or should be exercised, over all children and all persons, except that there is a special care to be exercised by parents over their own children and households.

Baptized children are indeed said to be within *the pale* of the church. But what does this mean? Are they *full and complete members*? No; *such* they cannot be, without becoming *communicating members*. Are they then *half-way members*? or *one quarter of the way members*? If so, where does the Bible treat of *such a class* of members? Seeing the inconsistency of this, will any say they are *complete members*, but not *in communion*? This is a contradiction. They cannot be *complete members*, without being received as *brethren*, and as having a *right to the communion*.

Christ makes no difference between the members of his church, allowing some to come to his table, and others not. But he says to them all, "Do this in remembrance of me." And the apostle Paul says, "We are all partakers of that one bread." Besides, there was formerly no distinction on account of age in the Jewish church in regard to eating *the pass-over*. Therefore, if the children of believers are complete members of the church, they ought to be considered *communicating members*. And the Bible manifestly knows of no other than *complete members*.

Here, then, is a gross *inconsistency* between the *principle* and *practice* of Pedobaptists respecting the membership of infants. If this principle were fully carried out, or exhibited in practice, it would manifestly lead to infant communion. But if infant communion were admitted, the church would no longer answer to the descriptions which are given of it in the New Testament, and the Lord's Supper would no longer be such a feast as it is therein represented. Instead of being a household of faith, or a society of Christians, the church would be a mixed company of *believers and acknowledged unbelievers*. And the Supper, instead of being the communion of *saints*, would be the communion of *saints and acknowledged unbelievers*. The principle defended of late by Pedobaptists themselves, that *grace* is a *necessary qualification* for communion, would have to be given up. And *the children of God* would be constrained to have *fellowship* in this *most solemn* of all transactions in this world with the *acknowledged children of Belial*. There are, indeed, as the case now is, some unsound members, at least, in the church. But they are not *systematically* and *allowedly* received as they must be in the other case.

The inconsistency of admitting *known unbelievers* to communion merely because they have been baptized in their infancy, seems to be apparent to every enlightened and reflecting mind. It would be shocking to men of piety to see the door to communion opened so wide as to receive them. Hence baptized infants are *debarred* from this privilege, notwithstanding the principle adopted with regard to their baptism would require them to be *admitted*.

The absurdity of this principle with regard to their baptism is not so readily seen, as it would be in this case, but in reality it is equally great. For they are thereby introduced into a holy and spiritual society without the qualifications which are expressly required; and after being received they are refused the most important privilege of the society, and generally treated as though the whole done at their baptism was a nullity.

The Pedobaptists are often heard to acknowledge, to a certain extent, that there is an inconsistency between their *belief* and their *practice* in relation to their children. They admit that they are justly reproached for their unfaithfulness; and undertake to concert measures for a reformation. *Something*, it is said, *must be done*, more effectually, for the *children* of the church. Their standing must be more thoroughly ascertained and settled, and the instruction and discipline intended for them must be carried more fully into effect. Accordingly, churches meet and pass resolutions; exhort parents, &c. Presbyteries and associations take the matter into consideration, and, after much deliberation, resolve to enjoin, or recommend, to the sessions and churches to awake to this subject. They *adopt*, and, perhaps, *print* a number of resolutions respecting the standing of baptized children, and the duties of pastors, sessions and churches towards them; and every thing wears the appearance of something being done to the purpose.

But, soon, all reverts back to the same state as before. There is, indeed, in some cases, a *revisal* of parental and catechetical instruction. But to prosecute a system of regular *church discipline* as though *the children were real members*, is found to be *impracticable*.

I do not state these things for the sake of irritating, or reproaching my brethren; but to expose the inconsistency of allowing of the membership of infants in Gospel churches, and the impracticability of exercising that discipline towards them which was appointed only for communicating members, or professed Christians; and to show that this is the only discipline appointed in the church.

It is found extremely difficult, in the outset, to determine the *real standing* of these children. All do not agree that they are *actual members* of the church. Or, if this be admitted, they cannot agree in *what sense*, and *how far* they are members; and in *what way* they are to be approached and dealt with;—whether *directly*, or *through the medium of their parents only*.

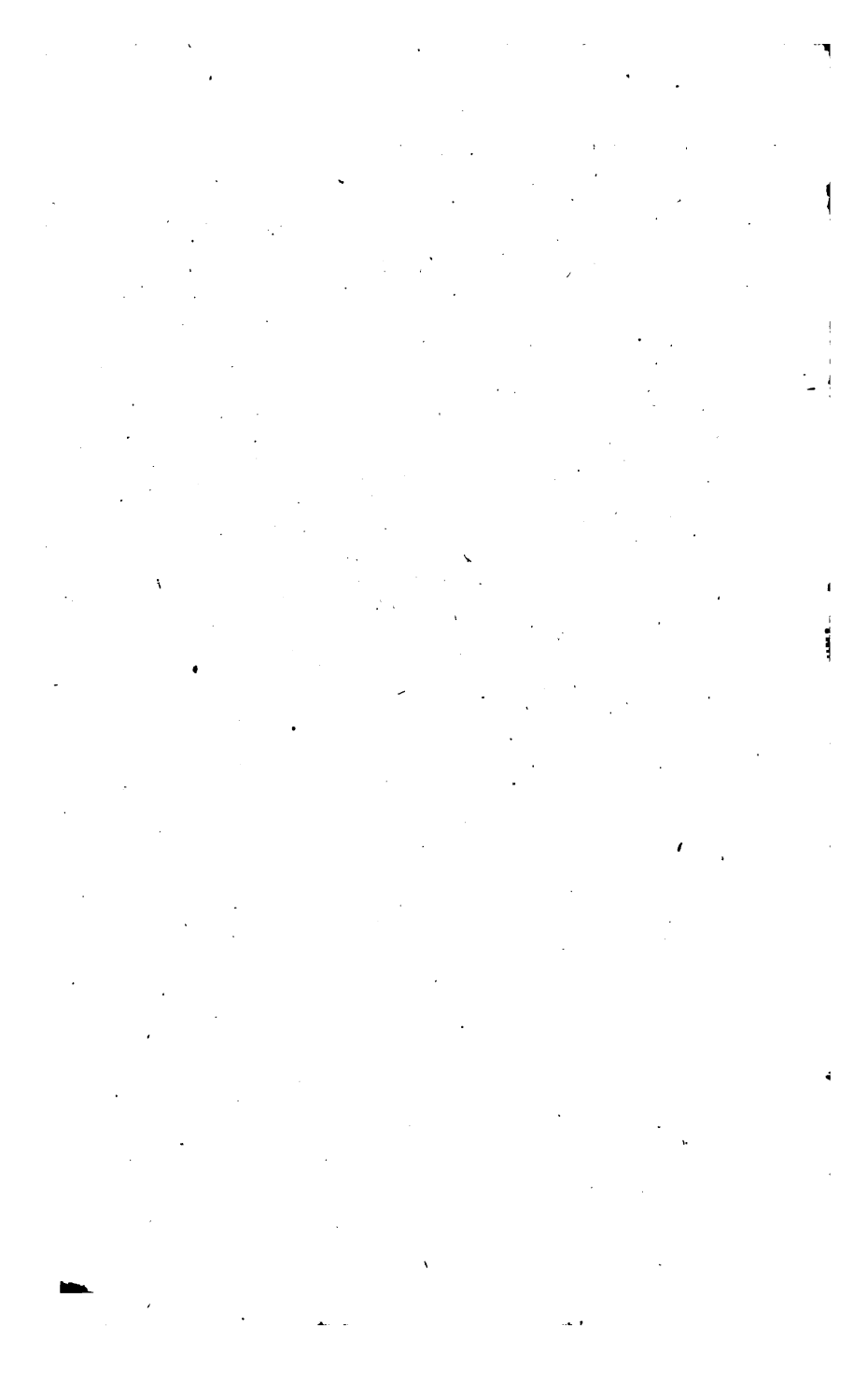
And, in case they prove refractory, it is a matter of difficulty to determine *how* they are to be brought before the church, with which they have never personally covenanted; and *how* the church are finally to dispose of them;—whether they are to *excommunicate* them outright; or *inflict some other censure*.

This subject is, in fact, attended with almost endless perplexities and difficulties. And I presume there is scarcely a Pedobaptist to be found, who has clearly worked his way through, and devised and entered upon a system of practice with which he is fully satisfied. If the real truth were told, the conces-

sion would often be made, that while they readily bring their children into the church as members, they do not know what to do with them after they are in.

And these embarrassments will remain so long as another sort of membership is plead for than that which is constituted by professing the faith of Christ, and voluntarily joining the society of Christians; and so long as another sort of church discipline is attempted to be enforced than that which was instituted by Christ for such as profess to be his disciples; or, in other words, so long as infants are *baptized upon the faith of their parents.*

The adoption of the plan of infant church membership under the gospel is attended with *another difficulty*, viz: it naturally leads to the *membership of the wife* upon the faith of *her husband*, as well as of the children: for in the Jewish church, the membership of the *former* was as fully determined as that of the *latter*. The husband, if a native Jew, was in the church with his *whole family*. If a proselyte, he entered with his *whole family, wife, children and servants*. This is too evident to be denied. If, therefore, the membership of the children continues for the father's sake, that of *the wife* must continue also; and, hence, the *latter* must be *baptized*, as well as the children, upon *her husband's faith*. The consequence is unavoidable. This, therefore, tends further to show the inconsistency complained of, and the falsity of the argument before us, which, if it proves any thing, proves altogether too much; and, consequently, proves nothing.



CHAPTER XV.

Containing additional evidence that there is such a change in the constitution of the church under the gospel as excludes the membership of infants.

THE church membership of infants under the present dispensation is not held by all Pedobaptists, as before observed: and hence such as do not hold to it must admit of the very change now plead for, seeing they were, evidently, members of the Jewish church.

But the *majority* of this denomination maintain that their membership is *still retained*, and we are boldly challenged to make it appear that it has ever been *set aside*.

Much has already been advanced in proof of the *discontinuance* of infant membership; and much more might be advanced, were it not for protracting this discussion too far. I must be contented with citing and commenting on a few more passages, and referring to others.

The first I shall notice is Isaiah iv. 2, 3, 4: "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for *them that are escaped* of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is *left in Zion*, and he that *remaineth in Jerusalem*, shall be called *holy*, even *every one* that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgement, and by the spirit of burning."

These words manifestly refer to the times of the Messiah, and denote such a change in the church, here figuratively called Zion and Jerusalem, as excludes the membership of infants, as such. The clause, "them that are escaped of Israel," denote "them that are escaped from the corruptions that are in the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour." They plainly intimate that the Messiah's kingdom should consist of a *select company*—the *redeemed of the Lord*. This is expressed still plainer by the clause "he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one

that is written among the living in Jerusalem." Here a great *sifting, purging out, or pruning off*, is foretold; in fact, a *new organization* of the church; so that he that was *left* was to be called *holy* in a *higher sense* than the term had been previously applied to the *nation*, viz: *renewed and sanctified* by the Holy Ghost. This is clearly determined to be the sense by the explanatory words, "even every one that is *written among the living* in Jerusalem," which means unquestionably not every one that should *literally subsist*; but every one who should be *quickened by the Spirit, or be born of God*. Those, therefore, who should be left in the church, would be such as are made alive unto God by a spiritual renovation; which implies that the residue should be excluded, or left out. Hence, infant membership has, of course, ceased.

Again; chap. xxvi. 1, 2: "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." This strong city is not the literal Jerusalem, but the *figurative*; the *gospel church*, which St. Paul calls "*the city of the living God*." The direction, to open the gates to "*the righteous nation which keepeth the truth*," is a plain indication that *such only* should be considered as *proper members*; and hence *infant membership is excluded*. It is true, *the infants* of believers are not expressly prohibited from entering. Neither are adult *unbelievers*. But the command to receive those of a particular character—*the righteous*, is a virtual exclusion of the rest. To receive other members than those described, would lead to great corruption and confusion.

Again; chap. lxii. 1, 2, 12: "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken." This description of the *gospel church* is such as plainly *excludes infants*. The address is to the *spiritual Zion*. "Thou shalt be called," says the prophet, "by a *new name*," which can be no other than that of "*Christians*," which was a title first given to the *disciples at Antioch*. But *who* were called *Christians*? Not the body of the Jews, nor the infants of believers; but *believers themselves only*. "The *disciples* were called *Christians* first in Antioch." The disciples alluded to were *Hellenist Jews*, or

Jews, by birth, that spake the *Greek* language, and not *Gentiles* as many imagine, though *Gentile* believers were afterwards added. The giving of this title to the followers of Christ at this time, (which was done by a divine suggestion as the original word imports) was a fulfilment of this prophecy. And, hence, the church, at the time alluded to, was to be composed of Christians, "which are not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The change predicted, then, was one that would *exclude infants*. That this is the meaning is increasingly evident from the closing words: "And they shall call them the *holy people*; the *redeemed of the Lord*; and thou shalt be called, *Sought out, a city not forsaken*," which terms clearly prove that the New Testament church should be a *select company*, called out from the world, and professing and appearing to be the children of God; and not consisting of believers and their unbelieving children.

I would here refer the reader to the following passages in the Old Testament, which teach the same doctrine, and point forward to the same change in the constitution of the church:—Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19; Isaiah, xxvii. 6, 12, and xlix. 20, 22, and liv. 13, and lxy. 15; Ezekiel, xxxiv. 22, 23; Amos, ix. 9, 10, 11, 12; Haggai, ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, and Zechariah, xi. 7, 10, 11.

The following passages from the New Testament, together with the whole Gospel history, are in exact accordance with the above predictions and explanations; viz. Mat. iii. 8, 9, 10: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

This is a plain intimation that a standing in the Redeemer's kingdom, which was about to be set up, could not be claimed *by birth*; that it was to be a spiritual and holy kingdom; and that there was to be a breaking off of the unsound branches, retaining none but the fruitful ones; all purporting the introduction of a *new order* of things.

Again; chap. xxii. 11, 12, "And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment? And he was speechless." In the parable from which these words are quoted, the calling of the guests to the wedding, represents the calling of members into the Gospel church. The blame which is here reflected upon the man who came into the King's house without

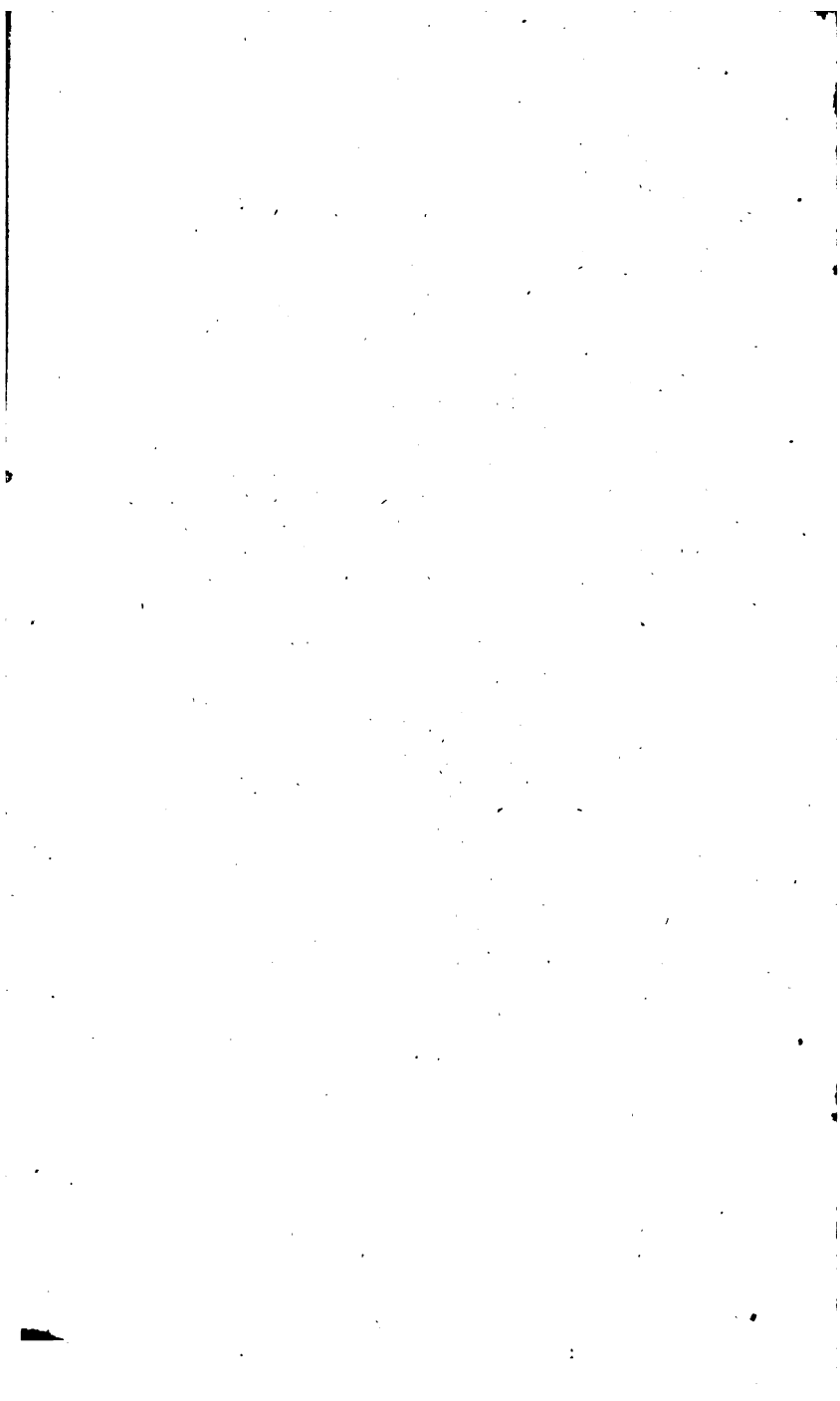
a wedding garment, shows that he had no warrant to enter without one. He is not reprimanded simply for not having a wedding garment, but for *coming in among the guests without one*. This being applied to the church, as Christ intended, shows that it is a society which ought to be inaccessible to the unbeliever. President Edwards very justly adduces this as one of his strongest proofs that grace is a necessary qualification for communion.—The Gospel church is a select company, and to give any a right to enter it, they must have on the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness, which is received by faith. Whoever enters without it, is not only blamed for being an unbeliever, but for the act of coming in. "How camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" But if infant membership is continued in the church, then unbelievers are placed in it by God's appointment. How, then, can they be to blame for coming in? If the church is a school, or nursery, for the unconverted children of believers, as this doctrine supposes, then, none of them can be to blame simply for being there: The Jewish children were never to blame for *being in that church*. But the man here intended to be described, is blamed for coming into the Gospel church. And this cannot be consistently *restricted* to the *unsound adult professor*; but it describes the case of *all graceless members*. The whole representation goes to show that the Gospel church consists of professors of religion, and *no other*, and that grace is an *indispensable qualification* to enter.—None are *born* members as in the Jewish church; and none should be received but such as appear to be Christians, as none others will be approved. The church is no longer *national*; but consists of *believers of all nations*. And this change of its national character plainly excludes the membership of infants.

Again; Eph. ii. 14, 15, "For he is our peace, who hath made both *one*, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one *new man*, so making peace; and that he might *reconcile both unto God in one body* by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." "Of twain," Christ is here said to have made "*one new man*;" and he did this "by reconciling *both unto God in one body* by the cross," which clearly shows that they become *one* by becoming *believers* in Christ, and in no other way. This consideration, then, determines the character of this "*new man*," or *Gospel church*. It is composed of *believers only*; and, hence infant membership is no part of its constitution. Doctor Guise, though a learned Pedobaptist, in his paraphrase on this passage, introduces the apostle

as saying, "Christ has abolished these (the ceremonial precepts,) to the end that, as the great Head, in whom all things were to be gathered in one, he might unite these distant parties to each other; and that he might make out of *both, one church*, formed, as new creatures, according to the image of God by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and formed together for Gospel worship and new obedience, and equally partakers, *by a new constitution* under him, of all the blessings that pertain to the kingdom of grace in this world, and the kingdom of glory in that which is to come. In this manner he has brought about an entire harmony and friendship between *believers of all nations among themselves as one spiritual body*, they being united by *faith and love to him*, and to *one another* in and through him." This is an admirable description of the Gospel church. But how it consists with the doctor's notion of infant membership elsewhere expressed, it is hard to conceive. The *new constitution* which he admits the church is placed under, manifestly excludes the membership of infants.

In addition to these passages, the reader is referred to John, viii. 39; Romans, ix. 6, 7, 8, 24, 25, 26, 27; Heb. xii. 11, 12; Gal. iii. 26, 27, 28, and v. 6; and I. Pet. ii. 9, 10.

Infants, therefore, are not to be baptized on the ground of their membership in the Gospel church; because it does not exist.



CHAPTER XVI.

The argument in favour of Infant Baptism from Ecclesiastical History, examined and shown to be insufficient and inconclusive.

I SHALL be brief in my remarks on the subject of this chapter, partly because I should otherwise transcend my limits, and partly because I consider the scriptures as the proper source of proof, and seeing we do not find infant baptism there, it ought to be rejected, though we should find ever so much in its favour in the records of uninspired men. It illy becomes those who allow the scriptures to be a sufficient, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice, when they fail to prove a point from them, to resort to church history. There is manifestly too much stress laid upon this argument in the present case.

That there is mention made of the baptism of little children in ecclesiastical history, as early as the forepart of the *third century*, and claimed as a tradition from the apostles, will not be denied, although the *first* of the fathers who makes decided mention of the practice, viz. *Tertullian*, manifestly opposed it. His words are these, viz. "The delay of baptism may be more advantageous, either on account of the condition, disposition, or age of any person, especially in reference to little children. For what necessity is there that the sponsors should be brought into danger? Because either they themselves may fail of their promises by death, or be deceived by the growth of evil dispositions. The Lord indeed says, do not forbid them to come to me. Let them therefore come, when they are grown up—when then can understand—when they are taught to what they are to come. Why should this innocent age hasten to the remission of sins? Men act more cautiously in worldly things, so that divine things are here intrusted with whom worldly things are not. Let them know how to seek salvation, that you may appear to give to one that asketh."

Some testimonies, *previous* to this, are attempted to be produced, but none of them are so explicit as to be relied on. And as to this, although it recognises the practice of baptizing little children, it surely does not give it countenance; but the

author clearly dissuaded from it. He certainly reasons very much like an Anti-Pedobaptist. His mode of speaking implies that the practice was of *recent date*: neither does it decidedly acknowledge the existence of infant baptism *in the sense* afterwards adopted. It rather appears to convey the idea that some began to baptize children at *too early an age*, although *not strictly* upon the faith of their parents. The parents, *as parents*, are not spoken of as having any thing to do in the case; but *sponsors* were provided to *answer for the children*, because they were *too young* to give the requisite answers *themselves*. This all looks as though, from a false view of the necessity and benefit of baptism, they began to encourage applications from children *before they were capable* of a regular profession of their faith; and to remedy their *incapacity*, *sponsors* came forward to *answer for them*. And from this arose, at length, the practice of baptizing *mere infants* upon the account of their parents.

Venema, who was a learned writer, says, as quoted by *Pengilly*, that "Tertullian has no where mentioned Pedobaptism among the traditions or customs of the church that were publicly received and usually observed." The inference from which is, that no such tradition, or custom, was then publicly received and generally observed, although the above quotation implies that the practice of baptizing children at too early an age, without proper evidence of faith, began to prevail.

The next writer who speaks of this practice is *Origen*, who flourished a little after Tertullian, i. e. in the former part of the third century, who says, that "the church received a tradition from the apostles to give baptism to little children also." Here again the proof is not decisive that *mere infants* are meant who were baptized on the faith of their parents. The terms *little children*, may mean no more than *very young* persons, baptized upon their own account, though *improperly*, as above stated, for the want of the requisite qualifications; and afterwards he might have been understood to mean *mere infants*.

After *Origen*, *Cyprian*, who lived about the middle of this century, speaks more definitely of infant baptism; and subsequently, *Austin*, who lived in the fifth century, when no one doubts that the practice, as now understood, generally prevailed.

In relation to the early introduction of infant baptism, *Bishop Taylor*, as quoted by *Pengilly*, affirms that "there is no pretence of tradition that the church in all ages did baptize all the infants of Christian parents. It is more certain that they did not do it always, than that they did it in the first age. St.

Ambrose, St. Hierom, and St. Austin, were born of Christian parents, and yet not baptized until the full age of a man and more." He says further, "that there is a tradition from the apostles to do so, (i. e. to baptize infants,) relies but on *two witnesses*, Origin and Austin, and the latter having received it from the former, it relies wholly on *one single testimony*, which is but a pitiful argument to prove a tradition apostolical." He says, moreover, "that it was not so, (i. e. not an apostolical tradition,) is but too certain, if there be any truth in the words of Ludovicus Vives." This last writer lived in the sixteenth century, and is quoted by Dr. Gill as saying, that "formerly no person was brought to the holy baptistery, till he was of adult age, and when he both understood what that mystical water meant, and desired to be washed in it, yea, desired it more than once." And in reference to the Waldenses, he further says: "I hear, in some cities of Italy, the old custom is in a great measure preserved."

This is one among many testimonies, that the ancient Waldenses, who were witnesses for the truth in the dark ages of popery, practised believers' baptism only.

I am sensible that in opposition to these testimonies, writers of eminence might be quoted who maintain that infant baptism was affirmed to be received as a tradition from the apostles by men who lived at so early a period of the Christian era, that they must have known whether the fact were so or not.

But this merely goes to show what is asserted by the ablest judges to be the fact, that when we undertake to survey the period in which the first mention is made of this practice, we are involved in absurdity and doubt. The testimonies concerning many of the transactions of those early ages, are vague and contradictory. Besides, many of the writings of the early fathers are lost—others have been interpolated and corrupted by transcribers and translators. Moreover, most of those whose testimonies are relied on were tinctured with a vain philosophy and the reigning superstition, which were carried so far as to maintain that it was even right to deceive to promote the good of the church, so that their testimony in the case should be received with caution.

It is no decisive evidence that the practice in question was truly apostolical because it is mentioned so early and claimed as such, and because there was not more express mention made of the opposition which must have been raised against its introduction, if it had been an innovation. For the introduction was gradual, probably in the way already stated. Also, *at*, and *previous*, to the period alluded to, the sentiment prevailed that

water baptism was necessary to salvation, and that it had the virtue of washing away original sin, and of procuring divine forgiveness. This would naturally induce the belief that it could not have been the design of Christ to exclude infants therefrom, and consequently from salvation. And hence they would at length venture to confer what they conceived to be *so great a benefit* upon the children.

The difficulty arising from there not being more express mention made of opposition to this practice, is by no means insurmountable. It has already been shown that Tertullian did make opposition to it—besides, if there had been *no record* of any opposition, the case would not have been *peculiar*. For there is *no record* of any opposition being made at first to the practice of *infant communion*, introduced about the same time with *infant baptism*, and manifestly on the *same ground*, viz. *its being essential to salvation*. It is evident that this practice prevailed for a season, but who *introduced* it, or who *opposed* it, we are not told. A tradition was also claimed in those early times in favour of *Episcopacy*; but we cannot ascertain its particular origin any more than in the case of infant baptism. Accordingly Bishop Prideaux says, that “Pedobaptism rests on no other divine right than Episcopacy.” Yet many Protestants reject the latter because they do not find it in the Bible; and for the same reason we should reject the former. Besides, there is no notice taken of any opposition being made, at first, to the admission of *sponsors* in baptism, nor of the person, or church, that *first introduced* them. Nor have we any account of the origin of the *difference* which then prevailed in regard to the proper time of keeping *Easter*. All we know of the case is, that such a difference existed, and was the occasion of warm disputes between the eastern and western sections of the church.

The want of information respecting the *introduction* of these several articles, or respecting the *opposition* which was raised against them, will go to relieve the difficulty pertaining to the introduction of infant baptism, by placing all on the same ground.

Although there is nothing very express on record, in opposition to infant baptism, at the time the first mention is made of it, except what has been quoted from Tertullian, there are subsequent accounts of this opposition, which show that the date of it may be carried much further back than many are willing to acknowledge.

Doctor Gill affirms, that “there were many and great debates about infant baptism at the first of the reformation, years before the affair of Munster.”

He says, the Bishop of Arles in Provence wrote to Pope In-

nocent the third, under whom the Lateran council was held in 1215, that "some hereticks there had taught, that it was to no purpose to baptize children, since they could have no forgiveness of sins thereby, as having no faith, charity," &c.

Further; that "there was a people called German hereticks, or publicans, who came into England from Gascoigne in the year 1166, or a little before, who asserted that infants are not to be baptized, till they come to the age of understanding. These were headed by Gerbardus and Dulcinus."

Also, that St. Bernard, in a letter to the Earl of St. Gyles, in 1147, brings the following charge against Henry, from whom the people denominated Henricians were called, viz. "the infants of Christians are hindered from the life of Christ, the grace of baptism being denied them." And that, about the same time, the same author, in his treatise upon the Canticles, notices a people called Apostolici, (probably the followers of Henry,) and charges them with saying that infants are not to be baptized." He says, "they laugh at us for baptizing infants."

Further: The Doctor says, that Peter D. Bruis, and Henry, his follower, both opposed infant baptism. That Peter, the abbot of Clugny, who wrote against them, charges them with saying, that "infants are not baptized, or saved, by the faith of another; but ought to be baptized and saved by their own faith; or that baptism without their own faith does not save; and that those that are baptized in infancy, when grown up, should be baptized again; nor are they then re-baptized, but rather rightly baptized." Dr. Wall allows that these two men were Anti-Pedobaptists, and their followers were very numerous.

Doctor Gill further states, that Evervinus, of the diocess of Cologne, wrote a letter to St. Bernard, in 1140, giving an account of some hereticks lately discovered in that country, concerning whom he says: "They condemn the sacraments except baptism only, and this only in those who are come to age, who they say are baptized by Christ himself, whoever be the minister of the sacrament. They do not believe in infant baptism, alleging that place of the gospel, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

That "Bruno and Berengarius, about the year 1035, opposed infant baptism."

That Deododwin, Bishop of Liege, in a letter to Henry I. king of England, says, "There is a report come out of France, and which goes through all Germany, that these two do maintain that the Lord's body (the Host) is not the body, but a shadow and figure of the Lord's body, and that they do disannul lawful

marriages ; and, as far as in them lies, overthrow the baptism of infants."

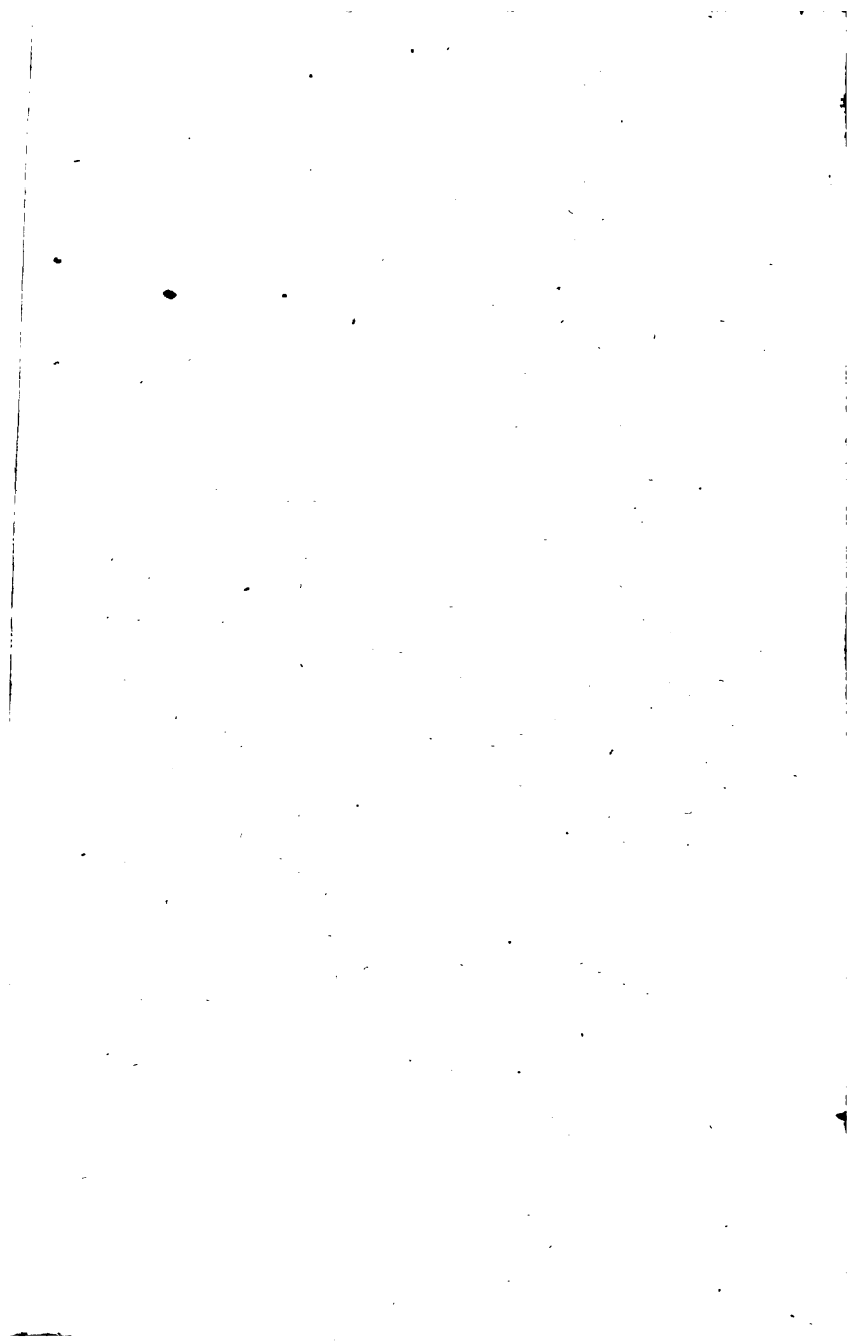
And that "Gundulphus and his followers, about this time, opposed infant baptism." Dr. Milner admits that "this people objected particularly to the baptism of infants, because they were incapable of understanding, or confessing the truth." They are said to have been considerably numerous in Flanders and elsewhere, and they were condemned in a council held at Arras in 1025.

It appears, also, that the Lollards in England were opposers of infant baptism ; for it is said they maintained "that infants be sufficiently baptized if their parents be baptized before them."

Yea, it appears from the concession of Dr. Mosheim, a learned Pedobaptist, in his Ecclesiastical History, that the origin of this opposition to infant baptism cannot be fixed at any period short of that of the apostles. He says: "The true origin of that sect which acquired the denomination of Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of Mennonites, from that famous man to whom they owe the greatest part of their felicity, is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, and of course, is extremely difficult to be ascertained." He further says: "It may be observed, in the first place, that the Mennonites are not entirely mistaken when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, Petrobrussians, and other ancient sects who are usually considered witnesses of the truth in the times of universal darkness and superstition. Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland, and Germany, many persons who adhered tenaciously to the following doctrine, which the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites had maintained, some in a more disguised, and some in a more open and publick manner, viz. that the kingdom of Christ, or the visible church he established on earth, was an assembly of true and real saints, and ought to be inaccessible to the wicked and unrighteous, and also exempt from all those institutions which human prudence suggests to oppose the progress of iniquity, or to correct and reform transgressors. This maxim is the true source of all the peculiarities that are to be found in the religious doctrine and discipline of the Mennonites ; and it is most certain that the greatest part of these peculiarities were approved of by many of those who, before the dawn of the reformation, entertained the notion already mentioned relating to the visible church of Christ."

This is virtually admitting that the Waldenses were anciently Anti-Pedobaptists, or at least many of them. This also is capable of other proof. Of course, the opposition to infant baptism is carried back to the *seventh century*, for that is the period in which these people "fled into the valleys." This view of the subject is corroborated by the testimony of Reinerous Sacco, as quoted by Mosheim's translator, in a note, vol. iii. p. 316, "who lived about eighty years after Peter Waldo, (i. e. in the twelfth century,) and who persecuted these people, and speaks of them as a sect which had flourished above *five hundred years*, (which term carries us back to the seventh century.) Nay, he mentions authors of note who make their antiquity amount to the apostolick age."

It is evident, therefore, that infant baptism has been long and faithfully opposed—*opposed* as well as *maintained*, by eminent men—men that have forsaken all for Christ: and that no period short of the apostolick age can be assigned when this opposition first commenced. Although the baptism of infants, or, at least, of small children before they could give a reason of their hope, began to be practised in the forepart of the third century, and subsequently, for a long time, appears to have generally prevailed, it does not appear that it has ever been practised *universally*. There is reason to believe there have always been opposers to it, when it has been carried to its greatest height. And as to the practice of the truly primitive church, I have abundantly shown from the scripture records themselves, that it was altogether *against it*, and *in favour only of the baptism of believers*.



CHAPTER XVII.

Containing remarks on Female Communion, and the Change of the Sabbath.

MANY allege that the foregoing view of the nature of positive institutions, and the demand which has been made for an explicit warrant in the case of infant baptism, will lead to the exclusion of females from the Lord's table, and to the denial of the change of the Sabbath.

In regard to the first, it is plead that there is no explicit warrant for the admission of females to communion; but that their right is based merely on inference and analogy—the same kind of proof which is offered in the other case. This statement, however, will be found, on examination, to be incorrect.

An explicit warrant is a plain and positive expression of the will of Christ in the institution itself which contains the duty, or a plain apostolick example in relation to the case.

And such a warrant is manifestly furnished in regard to female communion. For,

1. The order to attend upon the supper was given to *disciples* without regard to sex. Our Lord manifestly brake bread to the twelve, at first, not as *apostles*, nor as *ordinary ministers*, nor as *men* in distinction from *women*; but as *disciples*. The occasion was one on which he was present, with his own particular family, which consisted of the twelve, for the purpose of celebrating the passover according to custom. To these, merely in the character of *disciples*, he brake the symbolick bread, saying, "Do this in remembrance of me." This command obviously includes other disciples—yea, all others, down to his second-coming, without regard to sex. "In Christ, there is neither *male* nor *female*;" but all "are *one*."

2. It is perfectly obvious that this ordinance was celebrated by the *whole church* of Jerusalem, which consisted of *males* and *females*.

That it consisted, in part, of *females*, appears from the consideration that the assembly on the day of Pentecost was *promiscuous*; that, agreeably to the prophecy of Joel, referred to on

that occasion, Acts, ii. 17, 18—the Spirit was poured out upon “God’s sons and daughters, servants and handmaids;” that “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved,” without regard to sex; and that “believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes, both of men and women.” So that here is positive proof that women belonged to that church as well as men, being alike baptized upon a profession of their faith. And it is expressly said, that “all that believed were together;” and that “they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Here, then, the proof is positive, that women partook of the supper, in common with men. It is plainly recorded, that they believed and were added to the Lord; and that all that believed were together, and continued in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread. The proof is just as express for *female* as for *male* communion.

3. There were women, also, in the church of Samaria: Acts, viii. 12. “For when the Samaritans “believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” The communion of that church, also, must have included *females* as well as *males*.

4. There is both an *express order* to the church of Corinth, as a *body*, consisting of *males* and *females*, to celebrate the supper, and an *express record* that they did so.

That this church consisted of women as well as men, appears from I. Cor. x. 34, 35: “Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak. If they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”

The order to that church to observe the supper is in chap. xi. 23. “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, &c. The pronoun *you*, includes the church collectively, *females* as well as *males*, for of such it consisted. And the order was to the *whole church*. Hence the institution itself, as repeated and enjoined by Paul, contains an explicit warrant for female communion.

Besides, the apostle says, chap. x. 16, 17, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.” Here, therefore, is a plain and positive record, that the Corinthian church did *all* partake of the supper. It is.

just as obvious that the females partook of it as it is that the males did. They are included in the pronoun "we," and in the adjective "all," as it is evident at first sight.

The proof, then, is explicit, that there *were women* in that church—that the *church collectively* was ordered to attend upon the supper; and that *they actually did so*. Besides, the last clause of the last cited passage, viz. "we are all partakers of that one bread," includes all other Christians, so that the case of that church was not peculiar.

It is said, indeed, verse 28, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup;" but this does in no measure restrict the privilege of communion to *males*; for the word *anthropos*, (man,) is here, as in many other places, evidently used as a name for the *species*, and not to *distinguish a man* from a *woman*.

In view, therefore, of all this, the warrant for female communion is, properly speaking, *explicit*, and not based upon inference and analogy.

Let such testimony be brought in the case of infant baptism, and it will suffice.

But in relation to that subject, as we have seen, all is silent. There is not so much as a plain and necessary inference from scriptural premises in support of it.

In regard to the change of the Sabbath, I would remark, that this is a *moral* duty, in part, at least; and, therefore, the subject will admit of proof by way of inference and analogy. So far, at least, as the institution respects the keeping of a *seventh* part of time *holy*, it is of a moral nature; otherwise it would not have been inserted in the moral law, but have been placed in the ceremonial. It being, therefore, a *moral* precept, the above kind of proof may be brought in relation to the change from the seventh to the first day of the week. There are now the same reasons for observing the *latter*, which there were anciently for observing the *former*.

2. The example of the Apostles and primitive Christians, is in favour of this change. The first day of the week was observed by them as a day of religious worship, and breaking of bread. It is, hence, denominated the Lord's day in distinction from other days, which is a plain intimation of the change.—Moreover, it was particularly distinguished and honoured by Christ's appearing thereon to his disciples after his resurrection.

There is reason, also, to conclude that the apostle Paul alludes to this change, and to the *New Testament Sabbath* in Heb. iv. 9: "There remaineth therefore a rest (in the Greek, *Sabbatismos*, a *Sabbath*) to the people of God."



PART II.

THE DIFFERENT MODES OF ADMINISTERING THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM IN USE AMONG THE CHURCHES SHOWN TO BE VALID.



CHAPTER I.

Containing an examination of the Greek word, baptizo.

THE question at issue, is not whether immersion be a valid mode of baptism. This no one disputes. But whether it be the only valid mode, or whether the other modes in use, viz. washing, pouring and sprinkling, are not valid also. My object is to show that these modes are valid, as well as immersion. And to that end, I will commence with an examination of the Greek work, *baptizo*; the word used in the institution.

This word signifies "to immerse, to wash, or to wet." Therefore, if we keep within the proper scope or meaning of this term, the baptism, if otherwise correct, is valid. In regard to the action of baptizing, the apostles were directed to do what this word imports. If therefore it signify washing in general as well as immersion, then any kind of washing, by a proper officer, in the name of the Trinity, is baptism.

That *baptizo* signifies to wash, or to wet, as well as to immerse, we have the testimony, in the first place, of the best lexicographers.

It is rendered into Latin, "*mergo, lavo*," the English of which is, (in the infinitive mood,) "to immerse, to wash, or to wet." Washing, then, is one of its significations. The Greeks used it to denote both immersion and washing in general. The import was not confined to immersion, either in classical writings or common conversation.

If, therefore, washing comes within the proper import of this

term, it is a valid mode of baptism, whether the subject be applied to the water, or the water to the subject.

When it is admitted that *baptizo* means to immerse, many seem to think it is proved that this is the only valid mode of baptizing. There is great account often made of this admission, as though it decided the whole controversy.

But in truth it proves no more than that immersion is a valid mode of baptism, without affecting the validity of other modes.

Take this admission, which is made by many learned Pedo-baptist authors, apart from what they further say respecting the import of *baptizo*, and it would, indeed, appear to have great weight; because it would represent them as yielding the ground to the Baptists, and as contradicting their own practice.

But these authors have immediately added, that it signifies also *to wash, to wet, or to cleanse*. It is unfair, therefore, to quote only a part of their testimony, viz. so far as it contains an admission that this Greek term means *to immerse*, while they maintain in the same connexion, and with equal plainness and confidence, that it means also *to wash, or to apply water in any mode*. From a *partial* quoting of the testimony of these authors, (which I am sorry to say is frequently done,) one would be ready to think the cause of immersion triumphant. Whereas, when it is quoted entire, it yields no support to that cause: i. e. it affords no proof that immersion is the only valid baptism.

These authors admit no more than every one admits who is acquainted with the subject, viz. that *one* of the meanings of *baptizo* is *to immerse*, while he maintains that it signifies also *to wash or to cleanse in any mode*.

I am willing to allow the Baptists every thing which can be reasonably claimed from the import of this word. And this I have already done. It signifies *to immerse, to wash, or to wet*.

But this admission does not determine in which of these senses it is used when it pertains to the ordinance of Christian baptism. The word may be oftener used to denote *immersion* than *washing*; but this will not prove that it means immersion, exclusively, when applied to this subject. There is nothing in this circumstance which necessarily restricts its import to immersion. It may notwithstanding, when applied to this ordinance, be used in the *other* sense, and this may be sufficiently indicated by the circumstances of the case. At any rate, it plainly *includes* the *other* sense, so as to determine that washing in any mode is baptism as well as immersion.

It is plead in favour of the *first* rendering of this term, that it is a derivative from *bapto*, the meaning of which is *to dip, to*

plunge all over in water; consequently, that this also means to immerse, and that only.

But this conclusion will not follow, allowing the truth of the premises. For the very circumstance that *baptizo* is a derivative from *bapto*, shows that its import is less. The full meaning of the root, or *primitive word*, is not ordinarily retained in the *derivative*. Allowing, therefore, that *bapto* means to *dip exclusively*, we cannot justly infer that *baptizo* means also to *dip and nothing else*: but the natural inference is, that its common signification is something *short of dipping*. To *wash in any mode*, is a meaning which well suits a *derivative from bapto*. Accordingly, some of the best writers have said that the *proper meaning of baptizo is to wash in general*, and that it *only signifies to immerse*, as that is *one mode of washing*.

The inconclusiveness of this argument is still more evident, from the circumstance that *bapto itself* does not invariably mean to dip. In Daniel, iv. 33, it plainly signifies to *wet*, or to *sprinkle*; for it would not be proper to say that Nebuchadnezzar was *dip't in the dew of Heaven*; but he was "*wet with it*," as the passage is rendered, or the dew was *distilled upon him*.

The common meaning, however, of *bapto*, is to *dip*. But it is never applied to the ordinance of baptism. The Saviour has employed a term of more extended, or general import.

That *baptizo* signifies to *wash* as well as to *immerse*, appears, in the second place, from the use of it in the Scriptures, when applied to other purifications than that of baptism. The translators have rendered it in this sense; and a careful examination of the several passages will show that they have rendered it correctly.

The first is Mark, vii. 4: "And when they come from the market, except they wash, (in the Greek, '*ean me baptisontai*,' i. e. except they *baptize*,) they eat not: and many other things there be which they have received to hold as the *washing* (in the Greek, '*baptismous*,' baptisms) of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." The translation in both cases is manifestly correct, except in the latter, the word, "*baptismous*," should have been rendered in the plural, *washings*. In the first clause, reference appears to be had to the custom of *washing hands*, or at most to the *washing of the more exposed parts of the body*. And in the latter, to the *different methods of washing or cleansing the articles described*. The word being *plural*, denotes different methods of applying water, or the applying of it in any mode. And the *tables*, from their size and peculiar construction, could not have been immersed in water without great inconvenience, as every one must see who is acquainted with

the customs of those times. These tables were evidently *washed* by applying water to them.

Again, Luke xi. 37, 38: "And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat; and when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled *that he had not first washed*, (in the Greek, '*oti ou protou ebaptisthe*,' i. e. *that he was not first baptized*,) before dinner." The occasion for wonder here, on the part of the Pharisee, was evidently our Lord's not having washed his hands before dinner; and not his not having been immersed, "for the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands *oft*, (or, *with the fist*, as it is when strictly rendered,) eat not."

Another passage in which "*baptizo*," in a substantive form, is used in the sense of *washing*, is Heb. ix. 10: "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and *diverse washings*, (in the Greek, '*diaphorois baptismois*,' i. e. *diverse baptisms*) and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." Here is a plain allusion to the various ablutions appointed by the law, some of which were performed in *one* mode, and some in *another*: some were performed on a *part* of the body, and some on the *whole*. Yet they are all called *baptisms*, which shows conclusively that *baptizo* denotes *washing in general*, and is by no means confined to the sense of *immersion*.

Moreover, it would be absurd to speak of *different immersions*, when *immersion* is but *one simple act*, especially as the word, *diaphorois*, here used to qualify "*baptismois*," denotes, not simply "*diverse washings*," but *different sorts*, or *kinds of washings*. But to speak of *different sorts* or *kinds of dippings*, would be grossly absurd. The terms are, therefore, rightly translated, *diverse*, or *different washings*; which is a plain proof of the correctness of the above definition of *baptizo*.

Again: this word appears to be used in this sense, I. Cor. x. 1, 2: "Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized (in the Greek, *ebaptizanto*) unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The baptism received in this case was manifestly not an *immersion in water*; but merely a *washing, wetting, or sprinkling*. They were neither *plunged into the cloud nor into the sea*. They were no more than *washed or wet* with rain from *the one*, and with sprays from *the other*. Hence, in evident allusion to this baptism of the congregation of Israel, David says, Ps. lxxvii. 16, 17, "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, they were afraid, the depths also were troubled. The clouds *poured*

out water, the skies sent out a sound : thine arrows also went abroad."

Again; he says, Psalms, lxxviii. 9: "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary." These passages explain the *baptism in the cloud*. It was by rain therefrom; which probably took place "when the pillar of the cloud went from before their face and stood behind them." In passing over their heads, that it might come between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, (see Exodus, xiv. 20.) it *distilled* upon the latter a *refreshing rain*: whence they are said to have been "baptized unto Moses in the cloud." And they were baptized also unto him "*in the sea*," not by being *immersed* in it, for "they went through the midst of it on dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left;" but by a *mist*, or by *sprays from the sea*.

Again; our Lord says, Luke, xii. 50: "I have a baptism (in the Greek, *baptisma*) to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" It is much more natural to understand the term here to mean *washing, wetting, or bathing*, than *immersion*. For we are told that during his agony in the garden, "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground;" and while on the cross, the blood issued from his wounds and *overspread, or bathed* his body.

Again; we are told, John, iii. 25, 26, that "there arose a question among some of John's disciples and the Jews about *purifying*; and they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." This dispute about *purifying* being illustrated, or defined, by an allusion to Christ's *baptizing*, shows that *purifying* and *baptizing* mean the same thing. The subject which agitated some of John's disciples, in as much as they were zealous for their master's interest and honour, was *the baptism* performed by Christ, and its *acceptability* with the people. If, therefore, we can determine how this *purifying* was performed, we shall be assisted in determining the *mode* of baptism. One thing is certain respecting this purifying, viz. that it was not necessarily, or invariably, performed by *immersing the whole body* in water. This appears from the size of the vessels made use of for the purpose, which was not sufficient for immersion. See John, ii. 5: "And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the *purifying* of the Jews, containing *two or three falkins* apiece." The purifying, then, might have been, yea, must have been, in some instances at least, performed in some mode

short of immersion. It was a mere *partial washing, or bathing*—the washing of the face, the hands, or some other part of the body. Baptism being here represented as being the same with purifying, must have been, or at least might have been, something short of a total immersion.

CHAPTER II.

Containing an examination of the Greek word, "louo," as used to denote the ordinance of baptism.

THE application of "*louo*," (the appropriate meaning of which is *to wash*) to the ordinance of baptism, tends to confirm the preceding remarks. This term, in its different declinations, is several times employed to denote *the action of baptizing*. And its import is as broad as that of the English term, *wash*, which describes an action performed by putting a person or thing into the water, or by applying the water to either, in any mode whatever; although it usually denotes some degree of *friction or rubbing*. When a person is said to be washed, no more is commonly or necessarily implied than the washing of the exposed parts of the body, or some one of them. Hence our Saviour said, in reply to Peter's request that he would *wash not only his feet, but his hands, and his head*, "He that is *washed*, needeth not save *to wash his feet*, but is *clean every whit*."

The application of *louo* to the ordinance of Christian Baptism, shows that *baptizo*, when applied to the same, is used in the sense of *to wash* rather than that of *to immerse*. *Immersion*, then, is not *essential* to the *validity* of the ordinance, because *washing* may be performed in *other modes* as well as in *that*.

One of the passages in which *louo* is so applied in the form of a substantive, is Eph. v. 25, 26: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the *washing of water* (in the Greek, "*to louro tou hudatos*") by the word." There can be no doubt that Christian baptism is the thing here referred to, and described. There is no other application of water in use in the Christian church to which it can be understood to refer; and it must be obvious to every one, that the *significant* and *expressly appointed* ordinance of *baptism* is meant. This is an outward cleansing representing the inward by the Holy Ghost, and it is here denominated simply a *washing with water*. From which it is evident, that the leading idea of baptism is a *washing or cleansing*, a *purifi-*

tion, or a *putting away the filth of the flesh*—a significant ceremony which the Lord has seen meet to appoint and continue in the church, as a *publick badge of discipleship*, and an *outward representation or symbol* of the purifying work of the Spirit through the instrumentality of the word. It does not, of itself, save; but it is simply an act of obedience—an appointed and significant purification. *Immersion*, then, is evidently not essential, but *washing* in any other mode is alike valid.

Another passage in which *louo* is applied to baptism, is Heb. x. 22: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies *washed* (in the Greek, *leloumenoi*) with pure water." *Leloumenoi* is a participle from *louo*, which, as before observed, means to *wash in general*.

Christian baptism is here again undoubtedly referred to, and is expressly represented as a *washing*, which affords another conclusive testimony that *baptizo*, when applied to this ordinance, is used in the sense of *to wash*, rather than that of *to immerse*. Any application of water which may be termed a *washing* or *cleansing*, is a real baptism, though in ever so small a degree.

Again: A similar application is made of *louo* in the form of a substantive, in Titus, iii. 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the *washing* (in the Greek, *loutrou*) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." "The *washing* of regeneration" probably denotes *baptism*, a "*being born of water*," as regeneration itself is called, in the next words, "the *renewing* of the Holy Ghost." The latter expression would be a tautology if the former denoted regeneration itself. Baptism is probably meant by the *first phrase*, and if so, it is called a *washing*.

And provided *regeneration itself* is denoted by this phrase, it is manifestly called a *washing* in *allusion* to the *washing used in baptism*; so that, in either sense, *baptism* is represented as a *washing*.

A similar application is made of *louo*, I. Cor. vi. 11: "And such were some of you; but *ye are washed*, (in the Greek, "*apelousasthe*," which is compounded of *apo* and *louo*,) but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The words, "but ye are *washed*," evidently relate to *baptism*, and are the same as to say, "but ye are *baptized*." For if we should say they denote the *inward change*, or *purification*, the next words, viz. "but ye are *sanctified*," would be a *mere tautology*.

But even if we should say he means the same *inward* cleans-

ing by both phrases, it will be evident, from the manner in which this is expressed, that the *outward* cleansing by baptism is a *washing* too.

Again; Ananias said to Paul, Acts xxii. 16: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and *wash away* (in the Greek, *apolousai*) thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Here baptism is also represented as a *washing*. Not that it does *really wash away* sin, but only *representatively* or *symbolically*, or it is an *open expression* and *testimony* of that faith in Jesus whereby we obtain the remission of sins and are *washed in the fountain of his blood*. At any rate, the sense of *washing* is plainly attributed to *baptism*.

This sense is again attributed to it in John, xiii. 10: "Jesus saith unto him, he that is *washed* (in the Greek, "*a leloumenos*") needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." In whatever way this passage is explained, the leading idea of baptism is a *washing*.

Seeing, therefore, that *lavo* is applied in so many instances to the ordinance of baptism, this is a strong argument in favour of understanding the word *baptizo* in the sense of *to wash*, rather than that of *to immerse* when it is applied to express this ordinance; especially as it does *itself* evidently *bear this rendering*, and is *so employed* and *rendered* in several passages of scripture, as we have seen.

Hence the mode of *immersion* is included in its signification only as it is one form of washing, while *washing*, in any other mode, is equally *valid*.

Could it be even proved that the apostles *generally*—yea, *universally* performed baptism by *immersion*, this would not prove that no other mode is valid. The form of applying *water* is a mere circumstance which does not affect the validity of the ordinance. If the apostles practised *immersion only*, this would show that it is the *preferable* mode; that no other is so proper and expressive; but it would not absolutely nullify other modes.

Because, the word *baptizo*, used in the commission, admits of a greater latitude of meaning, both as used in the scriptures and in the classicks; and because *lavo*, a word which appropriately means *to wash*, without determining the mode, is applied to the same ordinance. And therefore, if we keep within the *proper scope* of these terms, we perform a *valid baptism*. We are bidden to teach and baptize; and if to baptize be to *immerse*, or *to wash with water* in any mode, then if we do either, we execute the commission.

But it is far from being decisively proved that the apostles practised immersion, and that only. We have not found such proof from either of the words used to express this ordinance, nor shall we, by the examination of any other declaration or circumstance pertaining to the subject.

CHAPTER III.

The figurative import of baptism examined.

THE Baptists make considerable account of the *figurative import* of baptism. It is considered as representing a *death, burial, and resurrection*, or, at least, a *burial and resurrection*; and hence *immersion* is regarded as the *only valid mode*.

This view of the subject is grounded principally upon two passages. The first is Rom. vi. 4: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The other is Colos. ii. 12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

In regard to the application of scripture figures, it must be remarked that great care and prudence are required, lest we make them mean more than the author intended. By giving them *too literal* an interpretation, many gross errors have obtained in the church in successive ages.

It is of considerable importance to the right understanding of these passages to ascertain what is referred to by being buried with Christ, or what burial of him is meant. Is the allusion made to his *baptism*, or to his *burial in the tomb* subsequent to his crucifixion? The argument from this source in favour of immersion, seems to point us to his baptism, taking it for granted that he was buried in the water, and maintaining that the primitive Christians are said to be "buried with him," by being baptized in the same mode. But if we duly examine the subject, we shall find that the allusion is to his burial in the tomb, and not in the water. - "Know ye not, says the apostle, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized *into his death*. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up *from the dead* (not from the water) by the glory of God, we also should walk in newness of life." The words, "that like as Christ was raised up *from the dead*," show conclusively that the reference

is made, not to his baptism, but to his burial in the tomb. Our being buried with Christ does, indeed, imply that he was buried; not in the water, but merely in the tomb. The concluding clause of the passage from Colossians teaches the same thing. "Through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him *from the dead*."

The question, then, before us, is, in what sense are we said to be buried with Christ in his tomb which was hewn out of a rock, *by baptism*, and risen with him from the same? Baptism, it will be observed, is not itself a burial, but rather the cause which produces a burial. "Buried with him *by baptism*," or "*in baptism*." If baptism be merely the cause, and the burial the effect, these passages do not determine the mode of administration. A *figurative burial*, which is the effect, may be produced by baptism in any other mode, as well as in that of immersion. The whole effect of baptism is represented to be a death and burial unto sin, and a resurrection to newness of life.

Hence, if the baptism intended be outward baptism, the meaning must be that we hereby signify and profess to be dead and buried to sin, as Christ died *for sin*, or that we profess to be crucified to the world and separated from its lusts, like as a person who is dead and buried is, thereby, separated from living men; and that we profess also to be alive unto God through Jesus Christ. Moreover, we hereby profess to ground all our hopes of purification, pardon, and happiness, upon the death, burial and resurrection of Christ—to have communion with him therein—and to derive spiritual quickening, purification and nutriment therefrom, through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. We are also hereby brought under the highest obligations to walk in newness of life.

Now, it is manifest that all this may be signified and professed by *one* mode of baptism as well as by *another*.

If it be allowed, that one mode is *more striking*, and *more expressive* of these things than another, any mode of applying water answers the *great design*, because it is an *outward purification*, in receiving which we profess our faith in Jesus, who was crucified, and buried, and is risen again for our justification and salvation.

But if spiritual baptism be referred to in these passages, (and there are several considerations in favour of this interpretation,) then the above effects, or consequences, are *really produced*.

I would here remark, that Christ expressly promised to "baptize his disciples with the Holy Ghost." It is also said, "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks." And Peter speaks of a baptism distinct from

“the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” viz. “the answer of a good conscience towards God.”

Inasmuch, therefore, as there is a spiritual baptism *common to all believers*, and as this is vastly the most important kind of baptism, the apostle may be reasonably supposed to refer to this in these passages. Especially, as there are effects attributed to it which can be strictly affirmed of no other: viz. a death unto sin, and a resurrection to spiritual life.

Besides, in connexion with the passage quoted from the epistle to the Romans, the apostle speaks of a *crucifixion* also; but it is not the crucifixion of the *literal body*, but of the “*old man*,” or *body of sin*. The burial spoken of, therefore, may be naturally understood to belong to the old man too, the same body which is crucified with Christ; (seeing that a *burial* is consequent upon a death.) In that case, spiritual baptism must be the thing referred to.

This interpretation is further sustained by the apostle’s speaking in connexion with the passage quoted from Colossians of “the circumcision made without hands,” which indicates that the inward change and purification wrought in the hearts of Christians by the Holy Ghost is the thing intended by being buried with Christ in baptism.

We cannot, therefore, infer any thing conclusively from these passages in favour of immersion as the only valid mode. It will no more follow that we must be immersed in water because we are said to be buried with Christ in baptism, than it will that our bodies must be *literally crucified*, or that something must be performed upon them resembling a crucifixion, because we are said to be *crucified with him*. Again; it will no more follow that immersion must necessarily be the mode, than it will that the ordinance must be administered in the *form of planting*, because we are said to be “*planted together in the likeness of his death*.”

We must not be *too literal*, as before observed, in the application of figures, lest we run into the grossest absurdities. Their obvious design is to teach and impress some spiritual truth, or idea; but not that every feature in the representation or image is to be applied to that truth, or idea; or that we must always have, in all respects, something answerable to the figure in that which is intended to be described.

The *spiritual idea* intended to be described in these passages is that of a *death to*, and *separation from sin*, and a *recovery to holiness*, which is *really produced* by the baptism of the Spirit, and *explicitly professed*, by outward baptism, whatever be the mode.

Allowing the latter to be meant, viz. a baptism with water, it is by no means necessary that we should have a form of baptism answering in all respects to this idea. Or if it were, it would be difficult to determine whether, on the whole, *immersion* would be a more perfect representation of it than *washing* in some other mode.

The operation of the Spirit in producing the spiritual renovation, is commonly denoted by "his being shed forth," "or poured out," or by "his coming upon" the people of God, and not by their being immersed into him. In conformity to this representation, Christian baptism appears to be the thing referred to by the prophet Isaiah, chap. lii. 15, in these words: "So shall he *sprinkle* many nations;" and by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxvi. 25, in these words: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." These predictions both relate, unquestionably, to gospel times, and Christian baptism appears to be the thing referred to. Consequently, they decidedly favour the practice of applying water to the subject, and not of applying the subject to the water, as in immersion.

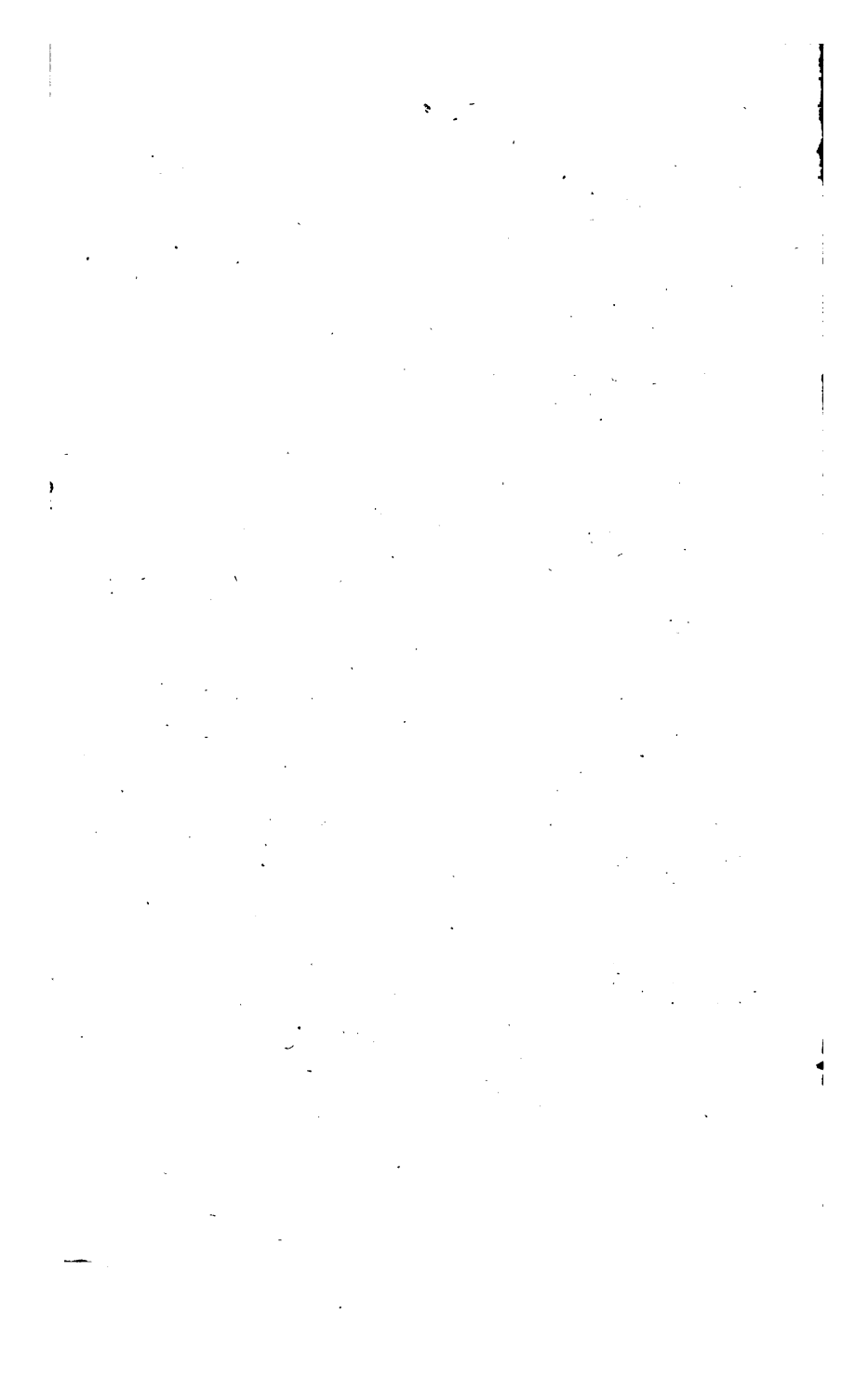
There is another passage urged with much confidence in favour of immersion as the only valid mode. It is Eph. iv. 5: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

It is contended that water baptism is here meant, and that there being but *one baptism*, implies that there is but one mode.

It is by no means clear that water baptism is the one intended. There are weighty reasons for supposing the apostle refers to the spiritual baptism, which is emphatically *one*—the common blessing and privilege of all the children of God. In that case it proves nothing in favour of this mode.

But, allowing that water baptism is meant, it will not be necessary to consider immersion as essential to the *oneness* of the ordinance. The baptism may be emphatically *one*, though the water be applied in different ways. All which is necessary to its being *one* baptism, is that it should be administered to a proper subject by the sole authority of Jesus Christ in the name of the Trinity with the use of water. It is not said there is *one mode* of baptism, but simply *one baptism*. And if this be administered as just described, it is with obvious propriety denominated *one*, though performed in different ways: as there is *one Lord's Supper*, too—*one simple ordinance*, designed to commemorate the dying love of Christ; and its *oneness* is not affected by the circumstance of its being received in an upper room, as at the first, or in a meeting house, school house, or private house, or in the open air, or in the posture of sitting, stand-

ing, or kneeling ; or by the circumstance of coming to a table, or by that of the elements' being carried round to the different seats, or by its being administered on Friday, as at first, or on the Sabbath, or on any other day of the week. These things evidently do not affect the oneness of this ordinance ; neither do the different applications of water in baptism affect the oneness of that ordinance.



CHAPTER IV.

The circumstances attending the Administration of Baptism considered.

THERE are several circumstances connected with the performance of this rite in the primitive ages favourable to the mode of immersion; and there are several, also, which are unfavourable to it; but nothing, in either case, which is decisive.

As belonging to the first class of circumstances, we may notice the people's being baptized "in a river;" their "going down into and coming up out of the water;" and John's "baptizing in Enon because there was much water there."

In regard to the people's being baptized *in a river*, I would observe that they might have been baptized therein by *washing*, *pouring*, or *sprinkling*, as well as by *immersion*. Christ might have been baptized in the river of Jordan in either of these modes. To be *washed* in that river, although the application of water was made only to a part of his body, might have been very naturally the mode.

But, it will be inquired, why did they repair to this river for baptism, instead of fetching the water from it, or from some other fountain, seeing but little water was required in any other mode except in that of immersion? I will answer this question by asking another. Why did the women mentioned in the xvi. chap. of Acts repair to the river's side where prayer was wont to be made? or why was prayer wont to be made there? This place could not have been selected for the purpose of *baptism*, because the ordinance was not known among them till Paul came there and preached. The selection, therefore, was evidently made for its pleasantness and convenience. So in the other case. The banks of Jordan afforded a pleasant and convenient place for a field-preacher to labour in like John the Baptist. And then it would be very natural to baptize the converts *in* or *at* the river. There is no mention made *here* or *elsewhere*, of their going from the place of preaching to obtain baptism. This place, therefore, might have been selected because of its pleasantness and convenience for preaching, and the

accommodation of the multitudes in other respects than that of baptism. Besides, the great number who applied for baptism made it convenient to go to the river itself, especially as the preaching took place on its banks. Moreover, it might have been thought preferable to go to a river or fountain of water, when convenient, and take the water from thence, or to wash therein, because it was considered as more fully and strikingly representing the fulness of the gospel provisions, than the bringing of water in a vessel.

As to the circumstance of their going down *into* the water, and coming up *out* of it, I would remark, that allowing they actually did so, it will not prove *immersion* to be the *mode*. Going into the water was not baptism. For the baptism was *subsequently* performed, as it is clear from the case of Philip and the eunuch. Whether in that case, or in any other, the subject was *immersed*, or washed in some part of his body, or had water applied by *pouring* or *sprinkling*, we are not informed. And we must not be wise above what is written. If, indeed, *baptizo* meant *only to immerse*, it would be clear that the subject was *immersed*, but as it does not merely mean this, the manner of the baptism is undecided from the circumstance in question. To go into the water for the purpose of *washing* is not at all unnatural.

Besides, it is well known by all that have access to the scriptures in the original Greek, that the prepositions translated "*into*" and "*out of*," might have been correctly rendered *to* and *from*. They are often so rendered. The preposition "*eis*," is rendered *to*, or *unto*, nearly as many times in the New Testament as it is *into*. The preposition "*apo*," which is translated "*out of*," in Mat. iii. 16, and Mark, i. 10, is translated "*from*" more than *five times* as often as it is "*out of*." And the preposition "*ek*," which is translated "*out of*" in Acts, viii. 39, is also translated "*from*" oftener than "*out of*." So that from the ordinary use of these prepositions, the balance of evidence is in favour of rendering them "*to*" and "*from*," instead of "*into*" and "*out of*." If, then, these words might have been as properly, or more properly, translated *to* and *from*, then all which is necessary to be understood from the record is, that they went down *to*, and came up *from*, the water. It may seem strange that these Greek terms were thus indefinite, and that they will admit of being rendered either way. But such is the fact. The connexion, however, will ordinarily show how they are to be understood, where it is important to know the precise meaning. Besides, the evil arising from the indefinite import of "*eis*," which may be rendered either *to*, *into*, or *unto*, was re-

medied, when a real entrance into a thing or place was to be clearly denoted, by *doubling* the preposition, i. e. by using it *singly*, and also *compounding* it with the verb.

When the subject, therefore, is fairly understood, the circumstance under consideration is of no real weight to prove *immersion* to have been the *primitive mode*.

In respect to the circumstance of John's baptizing in Enon because there was much water there, I would remark, that the reasons already assigned for his baptizing *in* or *at* the river of Jordan, will apply to this case also. This place might have been selected for other purposes than that of immersion, allowing it to have been strictly a place of much water.

But the Greek terms, "*hudata polla*," literally rendered, are *many waters*, and therefore may simply denote a place of many rivulets, or springs of water, which rendering, it is said, is favoured by the geography of the country.

But if the present rendering is retained, the passage does not conclusively prove that *immersion* was the *mode*, though it is a circumstance which, if not counteracted by other considerations, might naturally lead to that conclusion.

These are the most material circumstances in favour of the mode of immersion, and they are *all*, evidently, *inconclusive*.

The circumstances, on the other hand, which are *unfavourable* to that mode, and corroborative of the *general sense* which I have given of *baptizo*, are the following, viz.: The improbability that the multitudes which were baptized by John and by the apostles, were provided, under the circumstances of the case, with proper change of apparel for such a mode. A constant miracle, or that which, at least, would have been very little short of a miracle, would have been required to sustain John, day after day, up to his waist in water, to baptize in this mode; and yet we are told that he "did no miracle." Also, it can hardly be supposed, that under the benign reign of the Prince of Peace, so great an inconvenience as the mode of immersion implies under certain circumstances, viz. those which existed when such multitudes were baptized by a single individual, or a few individuals, and that without their having any previous notice, or very little previous opportunity to prepare. The inconvenience of baptizing a few individuals, at this day, in this mode, when the thing is understood beforehand, is allowed to be *not very great*. And, indeed, were it *ever so great*, it ought to be performed in this mode if the candidate is not *otherwise satisfied*. But under the circumstances attending baptism in many cases, in the primitive ages, the inconvenience was great. And it would be highly inconvenient in many cases which

might be stated in our own day. Another circumstance unfavourable to immersion, is the little time afforded, on the day of pentecost, and the want of accommodations for the baptism of the three thousand. Another such circumstance is that of the jailer and his family being baptized in the *outer prison*, (for it appears plain from the record that they were baptized there) in the dead of the night. And again; there is no mention made in all the New Testament history of baptism, of their going *from the place of preaching to administer this ordinance*. If the preaching was held by the side of a river, they were baptized *in or at* the river; if *in* the temple, (for aught appears,) they were baptized *in* the temple; if *in* a jail, they were baptized *in* the jail; and if *in* a private house, they were baptized *in* the house.

This last circumstance is decidedly unfavourable to *immersion* as the *mode*, or certainly as the *only mode*.

Indeed, if it were *commonly* and *ever so clearly* related, that after the preaching and conversions that took place, the preacher and converts repaired to a river or fountain of water for the purpose of baptism, this, though a circumstance *favourable to immersion*, would not have been *decisive*, as I have already shown; because they might have repaired thither to be *washed, sprinkled, or poured upon*, conceiving that a *plenitude of water* would more strikingly represent the *plenitude of divine grace*, and the *atoning merits* of Christ, than a *little*, and therefore have preferred taking the fluid directly therefrom, to taking it from a small vessel. There are various instances, in these days, of people's going to a *river, lake, or pond* to receive baptism, without being immersed. So that such a circumstance, had it existed, would not have been *conclusive* in favour of *immersion*. But the truth is, it *did not* exist. We are no where informed of their going *from* the place of preaching *to* a river or fountain to obtain baptism. So far as appears, the converts were uniformly baptized *in the place* where the *preaching* was held, or the other means were used that were blessed to their conversion. This, therefore, is a strong circumstance in favour of the *more general* signification of baptism.

Although neither this nor any other circumstance is *conclusive against* immersion, so the circumstances before mentioned are not *conclusive in its favour*. For aught appears from the several circumstances attending the administration of baptism in the primitive ages, it might have been performed in *either* of the beforementioned modes.

CHAPTER V.

Containing an examination of the argument in favour of Immersion from Ecclesiastical History.

MANY have asserted with confidence, that immersion was the mode ordinarily practised in the early ages. Dr. Wall, an eminent writer and a strong Pedobaptist, allows that "the whole church practised immersion for thirteen hundred years after Christ, except in the case of the clinicks," i. e. persons of *feeble health*, and hence labours to bring the church back to that mode of administration. I believe his testimony is as strong as any which can be found. It is one upon which the Baptists place great reliance. And yet it will be perceived that even this author, after a diligent research, does not affirm that *immersion* was *invariably* practised in those ages; nor does he offer any thing to show that it was considered *essential to the validity* of the ordinance. Instead of this, he brings satisfactory proof from the writings of the early fathers that it *was not* so considered, but that other modes of applying water were viewed as constituting a real baptism. This was decidedly his own opinion.

Allowing, therefore, that this, and other similar declarations of ecclesiastical writers, contain the *real matter of fact*, all which they prove is, that immersion was considered the most significant mode, and, therefore, preferable to any other, when the health and circumstances of the subject would permit.

All appear to allow, that the *Clinicks* were baptized in some mode *short of immersion*. And this shows conclusively that *immersion* was not deemed *essential* to the validity of the ordinance; and, therefore, the early practice of the church, allowing it to be as above stated, does not prove the position which is taken by the Baptists.

We should, however, beware of placing too much confidence in the testimony of Doctor Wall, or any other writer, respecting the ancient practice of baptizing, *ordinarily, by immersion*. For many things are affirmed of the practice of the church in the ages subsequent to the time of the Apostles, which are not found

in the Bible ; and, for that reason, ought not to be received.— The Baptists, in particular, ought to beware of relying too much on what the above mentioned Doctor says about the mode of baptism in the early ages ; for he tells us with equal confidence, that the whole church, with few exceptions, for many centuries, practised infant baptism. This part of his testimony they reject, because they find no scriptural warrant for the practice. The other part, then, should be regarded with caution, and not adopted, unless it decidedly comports with the Bible. Under these circumstances, it is, *in itself*, of little consequence to show what the Apostolick practice was. If we leave the Scriptures, and follow the traditions of men, we shall be involved in great darkness and inconsistency.

It is far from being proved from the New Testament records, that immersion was *exclusively*, or *even prevailingly* practised in the apostolick age ; much less that it was considered essential to the validity of the ordinance.

It is possible that immersion was introduced *subsequent* to the times of the Apostles, under the notion that it was more expressive and emphatick, or that it would more effectually wash away sin. For it is manifest, that after the lapse of two centuries, or more, many began to attribute an improper influence to this ordinance ; supposing that it did really cleanse from sin, and was connected with immediate forgiveness ; and that it was, moreover, essential to salvation. In this view of the case, *much water* would naturally be preferred to a *little* ; and, hence, immersion might have been introduced in this way, without having the sanction of apostolick practice. Why might not this have been thus introduced, as well as many other things that then obtained, which were manifestly not scriptural, and which the great body of evangelical Christians reject ?

It does, indeed, appear, from the best accounts which we have of the transactions of the church from about the commencement of the third century to that of the thirteenth, that immersion was commonly the mode of baptism ; but I cannot find that, during that period, it was, at any time, considered *essential* to the validity of the ordinance, or that it was, at any time, practised *uniformly*. Those who speak most positively merely say, it was practised “ *in the ordinary use.*” But this ordinary use, for the reasons above stated, might have been an innovation.

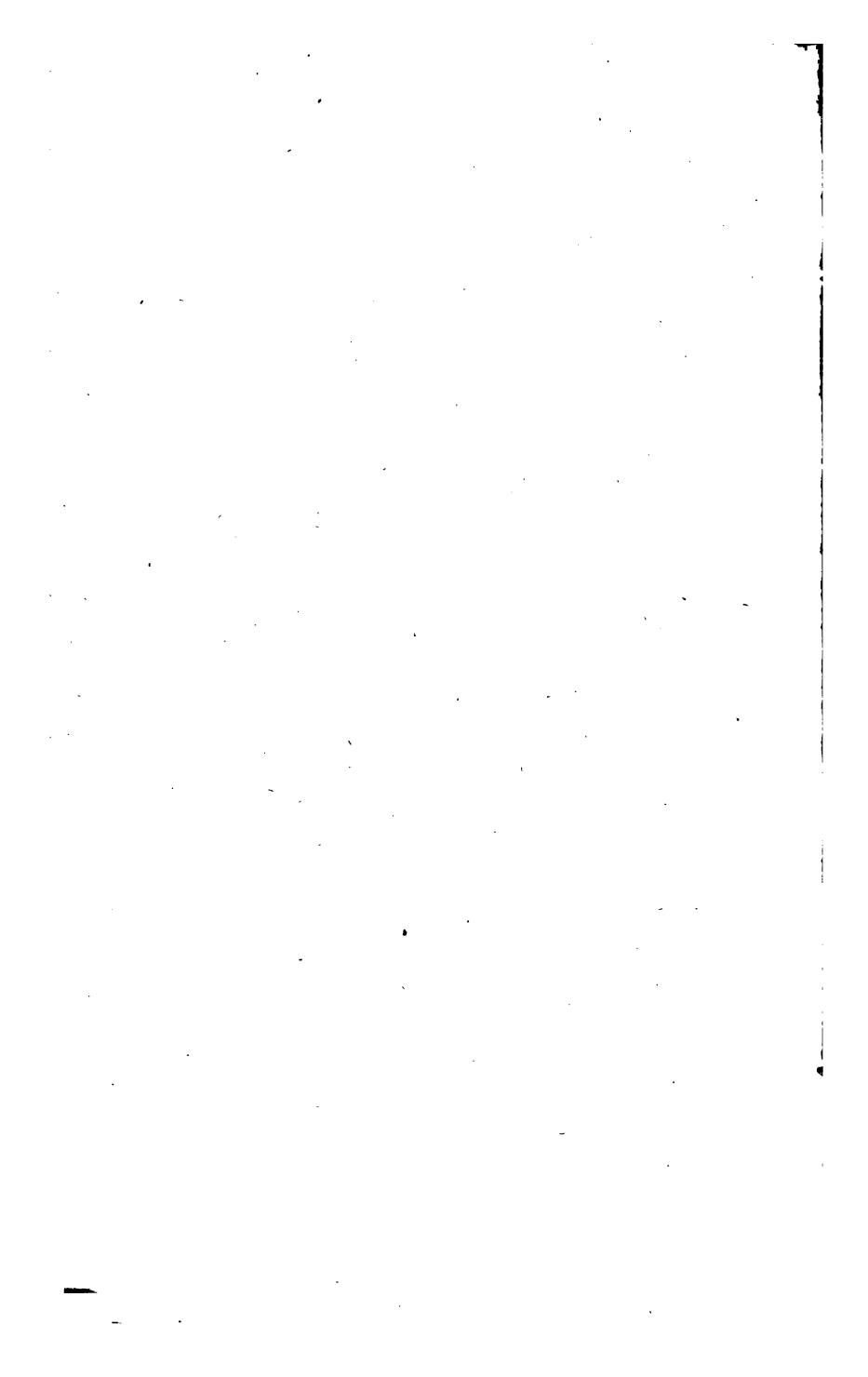
The earliest account extant of the manner of Christian baptism, after the age of the apostles, is that which is given by Justin Martyr, in the second century, in his apology to the Emperour, Antoninus Pious, in the following words, viz. “ And we will declare after what manner when we were renewed by

Christ, we devoted ourselves to God: lest omitting this we should seem to act a bad part in this declaration. As many as are persuaded, and believe the things taught and said by us to be true, and promise to live according to them, are instructed to pray, and to ask, fasting, the forgiveness of their sins of God, we praying and fasting together with them. After that they are brought where water is, and they are regenerated in the same way of regeneration as we have been regenerated; for they are *washed* in water in the name of the Father and Lord God of all, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit." In this account, the leading idea attributed to baptism is a *washing*, rather than that of immersion. He does not say they were *immersed* in water, but *washed* in water.

But as to the true import of baptism, I would rely mainly upon the testimonies which have been produced from the Scriptures. And as long as they do not appear to make the mode of immersion *essential*, we may safely conclude that it is not so. *Washing* in general comes within the import of *baptizo*, and is indeed, the *principal*, or *leading idea*, expressed. Baptism is much oftener and much more clearly represented as a *washing* than as a *burial*. Indeed, it is never *directly* called a *burial*, though Christians were said to be buried with Christ by baptism, but, here, it is rather the cause of a burial than the burial itself. But baptism is plainly and repeatedly represented as a *washing*. *Washing* is actually one of the meanings of the word used in the institution. Besides, the *action of baptizing* is several times denoted by *another term (louo)* which properly signifies *to wash*. *Washing*, then, in any mode, is valid baptism.

Even sprinkling is a *small* degree of *washing*, *wetting*, or *cleansing*, and, of course, *valid*; though it is not so significant, and does not so properly come within the *true import of baptizo*, as a *real washing*, or the *application of water* with some degree of *friction*.

Immersion, also, is a *washing* in a *larger* sense than *sprinkling*. But it is not so *properly* a *washing*, as the applying of water with friction, or rubbing. Yet it is a *valid* baptism, and truly a *significant* mode; and I am not prepared to say that it is not the *most significant*; but I can see no grounds for considering it *essential*, and it is here that the point at issue lies.



CHAPTER VI.

Concluding arguments in favour of the validity of all modes of Baptism.

It may be further observed, that the reason of the thing shows that the validity of baptism does not consist in the *quantity of water* used, nor in the *mode* of applying it.

One mode may, indeed, be more significant than another, and on that account may be *preferable*; but the different modes in use among the churches all tend, essentially, to represent *the same thing, a renovation or cleansing* by means of the death of Christ, and through the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit; and, hence, it appears unreasonable, and arbitrary, to select *one* of them only, and say that *all the rest* are *invalid*.

Baptism is, at most, only an *outward purification*. It has no *inherent* influence to wash away sin. Its virtue, therefore, does not consist in the *quantity* of water used; but in the *answer of a good conscience*, which may be possessed in the use of *different* modes.

Again; the gracious King of Zion does not appear to make any difference in his treatment of those ministers and churches who do not practise immersion, and those who do. He continues the light of evangelical truth as clearly, in the *former*, as in the *latter*; pours out his spirit *as copiously* upon them; dwells in their hearts *as richly*; communes with them at his table *as freely*; blesses and prospers them *as evidently*; and acknowledges them, every way, as his, with as much "*power and demonstration of the Spirit.*"

Hence we have the testimony of God's providence, and the seal of his Spirit, to the truth of the foregoing doctrine. Certainly, the Lord does not make any difference in the numerous revivals of religion with which the world is blessed, between those *who do not immerse* and those *who do*: to say the least, none that will operate *against* the former.

And this furnishes evidence that both belong to his Kingdom; *the former* as truly as *the latter*, and that the *mode* of their baptism is as *valid*.

Surely, the abundant blessings bestowed upon those who *wash, pour, or sprinkle* in baptism; the *honour* which the Lord puts upon their ministers and ordinances; his *readiness* to own and bless them as his people; and the *wide-spread and lasting success* which attends the word preached by and among them, furnishes *living testimony* which is entitled to high regard, that they have a true form of baptism; that they are a conspicuous and precious portion of Christ's visible kingdom; and that this dispute *about the form of applying water in baptism ought to be relinquished.*

When Peter was called to an account by his Jewish brethren for "going in unto the uncircumcised Gentiles, and eating with them," he justified himself by alleging that God gave unto them the like gift to that which was bestowed upon the Jews, pouring out his Holy Spirit upon them, and "purifying their hearts by faith." And "what then," said he, "was I, that I could withstand God?"

In like manner, God's pouring out the like gift upon those who *do not* immerse, to that which he bestows upon those who *do*, is a proper and ample vindication of the *liberal* ground taken in this work.

PART III.

OPEN COMMUNION WITH ALL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS ILLUSTRATED AND DEFENDED.



CHAPTER I.

The Subject Explained.

It is not my design to teach and defend communion with all who assume the title of Christians; but with all who exhibit the essential characteristics of Christians—with those churches and members of churches who are regarded as the true followers of Christ.

There are some that call themselves Christians who are so defective in principle and practice as not to deserve the name. Simply professing the name of Christians is not sufficient to entitle any to Christian fellowship.

But those churches and members of churches that profess the essential doctrines of the gospel, and maintain so much uprightness of walk and conversation as to give evidence of piety, are entitled to the privilege of communion, and ought not to be rejected from the table of the Lord.

It is not my intention to point out very minutely what parts of Christian doctrine must be believed, and what degree of Christian practice must be maintained, to constitute the character of evangelical Christians. Every church or class of Christians must be allowed the privilege of judging in this matter for themselves.

Some may set the criterion of judging higher than others. Christians may discover their imperfections, either in being too strict or too lax in regard to judging of the qualifications of those

who claim to be their brethren, and desire communion. Although they are bound to form their opinion of the Christian character of others according to the rules and marks which are furnished by the scriptures, they may, in some instances, fail of judging correctly. Christian charity and fellowship may be extended to some who do not give the requisite evidence of being the disciples of Christ, and withheld from others that do.

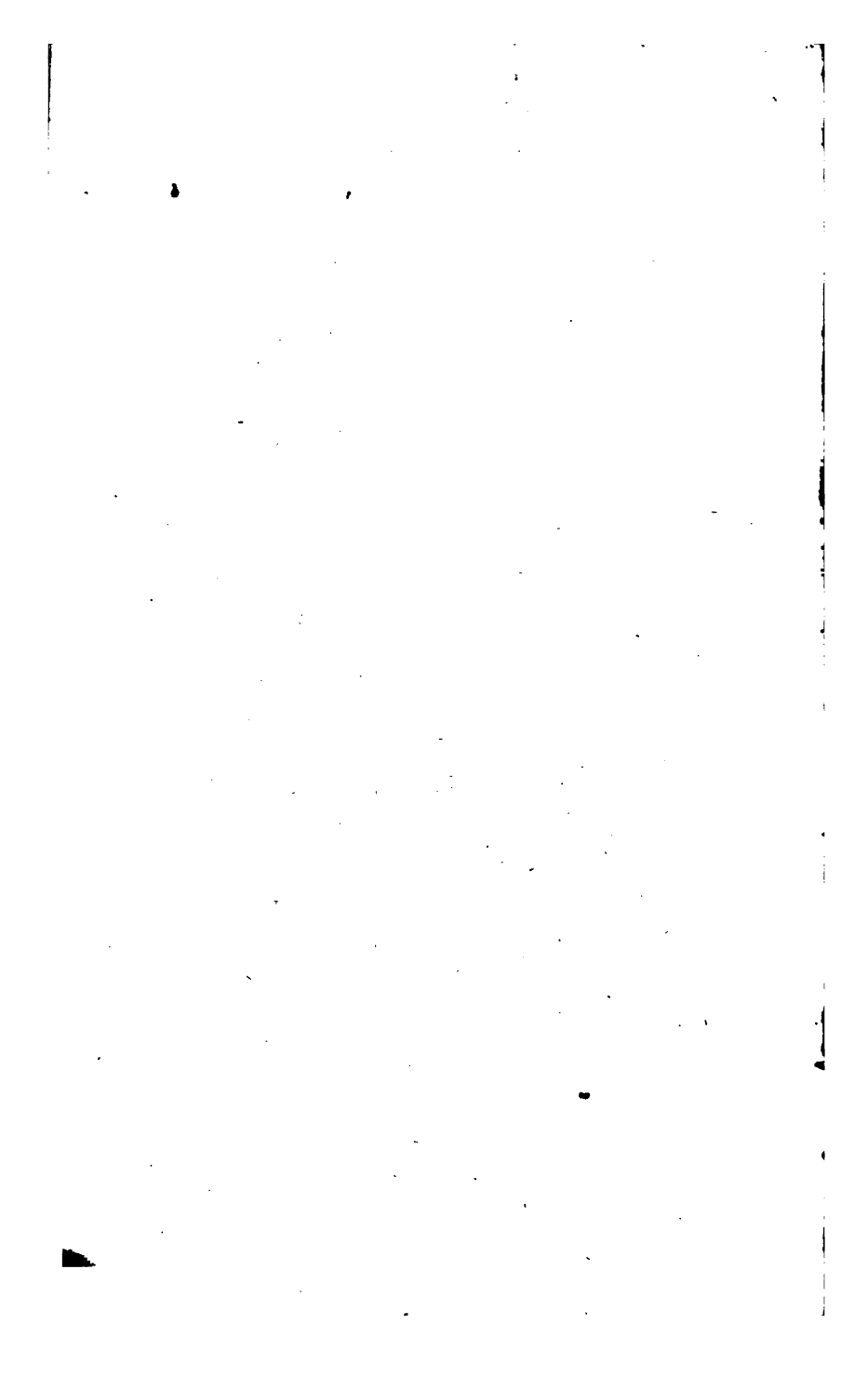
But for Christians to act consistent with themselves, and with the principle now advocated, they should admit to their communion such churches and members of churches as they deem evangelical; i. e. as being the true churches and members of Christ. Although they may see defects both in the principles and conduct of these brethren, yet as they are not so gross as to preclude the idea of their being Christians, they ought to admit them to their communion. If they exclude such from the table of their Lord, they are not open communionists in the sense now plead for.

In defending open communion as now explained, I do not mean to be understood to say that it is not expedient, while Christians are divided in opinion, as at present, to maintain separate societies. This may be, and probably is, expedient, and most for the edification of all. Christians may be more useful and happy in being associated in separate churches, according to their respective opinions on the subject of religion, than to be formed with these discordant views into the same church. Nevertheless, while embodied in these separate societies, they may hold communion with one another, as opportunity presents, and in this way manifest their mutual love, and their oneness in Christ. Frequent occasions offer for their communing together, and they should unquestionably be more frequently sought than they are. Every church ought to invite their Christian brethren of other churches who may be present at their communion seasons to come and partake with them; and individual Christians ought to accept of the invitation, and also to apply for admission to this privilege when Divine Providence places them in circumstances to enjoy it. This is the *true doctrine of open communion*.

If any refuse to acknowledge those as Christians who actually give the scriptural evidence of being such, and reject them from communion on that ground, they are doubtless chargeable with an error; but it is a different one from that which consists in rejecting *acknowledged* Christians from communion. In the former case, although there is an error committed in not admitting of actual evidence of piety, there is a consistency between the belief and practice of these Christians; but in the

latter case there is not. Because *acknowledged* Christians are debarred from coming to their Master's table.

When the Christian character and standing of other Christians are once admitted, we are bound to receive them to our communion. This is what the doctrine of open communion implies, and what I shall undertake to defend.



CHAPTER II.

Containing the argument for Open Communion founded on the Christian experience and character.

THE fact that our Christian brethren of other churches and denominations, are acknowledged to be the disciples of Christ—members of the same visible church with ourselves, and heirs of the same kingdom, at once determines their right to eat bread with us at the same table.

Possessing this character, and being viewed in this light, they are, from the very nature of the case, entitled to Christian charity and fellowship. To this case the following words of Christ directly apply, John, xiii. 34, 35 : “ A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another : as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” Also, the following clause in the institution of the supper, Luke, xxii. 19 : “ This do in remembrance of me.” It is obvious that these commands are obligatory upon all the friends of Christ ; the *last*, as truly as the *first*. And the ordinance of the supper being an act of *communion*, the friends of Christ, as far as they have opportunity, are manifestly bound to attend upon it *together*, in remembrance of their common Lord and Redeemer. This precept, especially in connexion with the command for brotherly love, carries *open communion* upon the very face of it. How preposterous it must be for Christians to acknowledge one another *as brethren*, and yet *refuse to eat together at the same table* ; especially, as this is the Lord’s table, and not theirs. How can they love one another, as Christ has loved them, and yet refuse one another Christian communion ? The admission, by the members of one church, that those of another are Christians, is, at once, an acknowledgment that they are bound to obey the above order of Jesus, as truly as themselves, and that in obeying it they are equally accepted of the Lord. This consideration, then, manifestly opens the door to celebrate it *together*, provided Providence furnishes the opportunity. Nothing can be plainer. The master whom they serve is a *common* master and Saviour. Their duty and privileges are *common*. Of course, the celebration in ques-

tion should be *common*. Being *fellow disciples*, they should approach the board of their Lord *together*. Surely, the one class should not say to the *other*, you may not come to the Lord's table *with us*. It is, indeed, *your privilege* to come, and the Lord will receive you ; but *we* cannot. You must have a *separate* table. We verily believe *you are Christians* ; and we esteem and love you *as such* ; and we expect to go to *heaven*, and eat the *marriage supper* of the Lamb *with you* ; but, as the case is now, we cannot participate of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our common Saviour *with you here*. If you will have *our* company at the table of Jesus, you must adopt *our* particular views, and join *our* church, or denomination ; otherwise, you must stand *by yourselves*, and we *by ourselves*.

Now, how palpably inconsistent is this ! Here are *Christians*, redeemed by the *same blood* ; renewed by the *same Spirit* ; children of the *same heavenly Father* ; believers in the *same Lord Jesus* ; all living upon the *same forfeited bounty* ; *one body* in Christ, and members, *one of another* ; animated by the *same hope* ; and heirs of the *same everlasting kingdom* ; and, yet, they cannot come to the *same table together* ! O absurdity in the extreme ! O prejudice and bigotry ! what have ye done ?

In addition to the above precepts for brotherly love, and the celebration of the supper, we have the following injunction of the inspired Paul, which most aptly and pointedly relates to this case : Rom. xv. 7, " Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Here, the rule which is to regulate the intercourse and fellowship of Christians with one another, is that of Christ's having received them ; and all should be done to the glory of God. They are bound by the high and sacred authority of the risen and exalted Jesus, to receive one another, as he also hath received them. The consideration that our brethren are received *of Christ*, at once determines it to be *our duty* to receive them *too*—to admit them cheerfully to *our fellowship*, as both *we* and *they* enjoy *his*. It binds us to welcome them to *all Christian privileges*.

Here, the peculiar and blessed principle on which open communion rests is stated and explained. It is the *love of Christ* to *all* his people, and *his own example* in receiving them to communion and favour. The order to receive one another is *peremptory* ; and the motives to obedience unspeakably *tender, forcible and endearing*. How it is possible for this principle to be overlooked, it is hard to conceive.

In this passage there is an important duty enjoined upon Christians ; an endearing example introduced to enforce it ; and the high and dignified end to be aimed at declared. This

principle, or rule of conduct, will remain as long as the example which we are required to imitate remains, and there are Christian brethren to receive.

Nor can it, with any consistency, be said, that this rule relates, merely, to something *short of a mutual participation of the supper*, and that we have obeyed it, when we have acknowledged our brethren as Christians, and conversed and prayed with them, although we expressly decline being guests with them at the table of the Lord. For it is manifest that Christ receives both us and them to be guests with him at his own table; and, hence, if we do not commune with one another, we do not receive *one another* as he hath received us. Has the Lord granted us the privilege of communion at the supper?—Then we must allow it to *them*—we must permit *them* to come and eat with us; or we, manifestly, do not receive *them* as he hath received us. As they are the children of God as well as we; and as we are received by Christ to this blessed privilege; so they must be received by us.

This receiving of one another plainly relates, not only to the less distinguishing privileges of the gospel, but to the high and peculiar privilege of coming around the board of Christ, and commemorating his dying love. Therefore, we must practise open communion, or we do not copy his example. It is so perfectly obvious, that professing evangelical Christians cannot refuse communion with one another in this ordinance, and yet receive one another as Christ hath received them, that a mere child can see it. The closing of the door to communion by one class of Christians against another, is a palpable and grievous violation of this rule.

“Is not the bread which we break,” says the apostle Paul, “the communion of the body of Christ? And is not the wine which we drink, the communion of the blood of Christ?”

Then, how obviously ought we all to be partakers thereof, together, after the example of the primitive Christians.

In concluding this chapter, therefore, I repeat the declaration, that the foundation for open communion, in the sense plead for, is laid in the work of *regeneration*—in the *forming of the hearts* of men to the *faith and love* of Christ, whereby they become *Christians*. “By one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles; whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit.” And being thus *one in Christ*, we ought to be of *one communion*.



CHAPTER III.

Containing the argument for Open Communion, based upon the principle that the mode of baptism is not essential.

One of the main pillars of the close communion system is, the opinion that there is no valid baptism except by immersion. This is that, in particular, which separates the two great bodies of Christians, denominated Baptists and Pedobaptists; or which divides a very great portion of them.

Some of the denomination of Baptists are in favour of *open communion*; but, in this country, most of this class are what are termed *free-will Baptists*. The *Calvinistick* Baptists generally hold to *close communion*, i. e. they do not receive any to the Lord's table except those of their own faith and order. Although they agree in the great leading doctrines of the gospel with Pedobaptists—particularly with Presbyterians and Congregationalists, they *will not commune* with them.

And they justify their practice, upon the ground that baptism is a prerequisite to communion, and that there is no valid baptism except by immersion. They say they cannot, consistently, commune with Pedobaptists, because they have not been baptized.

This bar to open communion is removed, at once, by showing that immersion is not essential to the validity of this ordinance.

This is what I have attempted to do, and think I have fully done, in the second part of this work, to which the reader is referred. It is unnecessary to repeat the arguments there adduced.

The validity of the different modes of baptism in use among the churches being established, the principle of open communion is easily defended. For, although some difficulty may arise on account of the baptism of *infants*, which I shall endeavour to remove, the great objection in regard to the mode of administration is completely answered. None ought to be debarred from the table of the Lord, because they have not been immersed. To commune with Pedobaptists, who have simply been *washed, poured upon, or sprinkled*, is not communing

with *unbaptized* Christians ; but with those who have been duly *baptized*, so far as *the mode* is respected. No objection, therefore, can lie, from this quarter, against open communion with all evangelical Christians. And if this be a true principle, it is of high importance that it should be understood, and defended. The reader is earnestly requested to consider *candidly* and *impartially* what hath been advanced under this head.

Respecting the above-mentioned difficulty arising from the performance of baptism in infancy, I would remark, that this does not pertain to *all the members* of Pedobaptist churches ; but, merely, to those who have received *no other* than infant baptism. Many of the Pedobaptists have received baptism in *adult age* upon their own profession of faith. These, therefore, may, upon the principle now stated, be received to communion without hesitation.

The baptism performed in infancy is manifestly *premature*. It cannot be considered as a *complete* gospel baptism, or as a submission to the ordinance according to *the direction* of our Lord, and according to *its manifest design* and *end* ; although I am not disposed to consider it a mere nullity.

The *action* of the officiating minister is, in itself, valid, though performed upon an improper subject. It is a kind of half-way baptism ; or, to speak more correctly, it is a baptism *prematurely performed*.

Hence, those Christians that have received no other than *infant baptism*, are not to be considered altogether in the light of *unbaptized* persons, and precluded, *on that account*, from the communion ; but as persons *baptized before* they were duly qualified, and *before* they were duly called upon to make a profession of their faith.

Nevertheless, if their consciences are satisfied with their infant baptism, and they do not feel the obligation of coming forward personally to the ordinance, they ought not to be debarred from communion on account of this defect in their baptism.

The difficulty now stated is not peculiar to the scheme which I have adopted. It belongs to the scheme of Pedobaptists in respect to those baptisms which were performed upon the plan of the half-way covenant, as it is commonly called, and to those performed upon the plan of the indiscriminate administration of the ordinance. According to the prevailing views of Pedobaptists in this day, especially of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, there was a very material defect in those baptisms, viz. the want of faith in the parents by whom the children

were offered. And very many have scrupled the validity of their baptism on this account. Yet such baptisms have generally been considered valid by Pedobaptists. Few ministers, if any, have consented to re-baptize on account of this want of faith in the parents.

If, therefore, they are consistent in allowing the validity of those baptisms, where the faith of the parents, which they hold to be required to give a right to the baptism of the children, is *wanting*, they cannot charge any inconsistency to my view of the baptism of infants, although their own faith, which I hold to be requisite to give them a right to the ordinance, is wanting. The cases are manifestly parallel. I do not admit the baptism to be *full and perfect* where *the faith of the subject is wanting*. Neither do *they*, upon their scheme, where the faith of *the parents is wanting*. Therefore, if they can consistently admit Christians to communion notwithstanding the *latter* defect, it is manifest that I can admit them notwithstanding the *former*.

If, however, those who have been baptized in infancy upon the faith of their parents, are convinced, when they come to years of understanding, and are brought to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that it is their duty to be *baptized again*, upon their *own faith*, they ought to be admitted to enjoy the privilege. The defect above noticed is an adequate reason for repeating the ordinance. And it cannot be justly considered as treating the subject lightly, or as profaning the name of the Lord, to perform baptism anew *in the manner directed*, when it is discovered that it was *not so performed* at first.

When I first became enlightened to see that believers are the only proper subjects of Christian baptism, it was not clear to me that the ordinance ought to be repeated, notwithstanding this deficiency. But, after due consideration, I perceived that believers ought not to be precluded from offering themselves in baptism, because their parents, through misapprehension, had previously offered them.

Baptism is evidently a duty which cannot be duly discharged *by proxy*. It is a matter in which the subject is to act *in person*, and *for himself*; openly submitting to the command of Christ, and receiving the badge of discipleship.

It is a *privilege*, also; a *precious* and *peculiar privilege*, of which the subject ought not to be deprived by means of the mistakes and traditions of men.

Moreover, it is a duty *so plain*; *so positive*; and *so natural*, under the constitution of the gospel; and *so intimately connected* with the putting on of Christ, that the Spirit of God is wont *to incline* the hearts of believers to *obey it*. I will not say he

does this in *all* cases ; but he does in *multitudes* of cases, and, I believe I may say *commonly*. It is one of the *first* things which are wont to occupy the minds of the newly converted, especially when they contemplate the subject of following Christ by an *open profession* of religion. Very many of those who are called from among Pedobaptist congregations, and who have been baptized in their infancy, have a desire to be baptized *on their own faith*. This desire is often expressed, and ministers are conversed with upon the subject ; and much pains are required to convince them that their *infant baptism will do*. It is frequently a long time before the desire to be baptized is *repressed*, and in various instances the mind is *never wholly relieved*.

Besides the instances of this kind which are known, many are secretly tried upon the subject, and do not make their difficulties and desires manifest, because they conclude it will be unavailing : that there is no relief in their case, except they withdraw from the churches with which they would wish to be connected, and join in close communion, which they are not willing to do.

And this desire among believers *to be baptized*, and these embarrassments which grow out of the usages of Pedobaptist churches, are evidently *increasing*. The more the Holy Spirit is poured out, and converts are multiplied, and the more the light of evangelical truth breaks in upon the world, the greater the number of persons who wish to come forward, *upon their own profession*, to Christian baptism : and, at the same time, the greater is *the aversion to close communion*.

This is a subject which is exciting deeper and deeper interest in every direction. There are multitudes who know not how to get by this gospel institution. And yet they regard all that are born of God as their brethren, and cannot be fettered with close communion. That undue limiting of Christian love, sympathy and fellowship to one's own sect or party which is so lamentably prevalent, is not a feature of the *young convert*. He loves all that love Jesus Christ. It is not till he is trained to *human systems*, and loses, in a degree, the *simplicity* of his *first love*, that he learns to adopt the *Shibboleth* of party.

Now, this early desire to be baptized upon an open profession of faith which exists among the converted, is manifestly the fruit of the operation of the Spirit of Christ. And it ought not to be repressed, because the subjects, in many instances, have been prematurely brought forward by their parents in the helpless age of infancy, of which transaction most are wholly unconscious.

CHAPTER IV.

Containing the argument for Open Communion, based upon the right and privilege of private judgement.

IT is a plain principle of the word of God, that Christians have the right of examining and judging *for themselves*, in matters of religion. One has no right to *dictate* to the conscience of another.

It is not meant, that every one has a right, in *the sight of God*, to form his own opinion of *his truths* and *precepts*. In that respect he is bound to construe things rightly, and really to know his Master's will. But the right of private judgement, which is plead for, pertains to us in regard to our *fellow Christians*. We may labour to instruct and convince others, and they, in their turn, to instruct and convince us; but *neither* have the right of exercising dominion over the faith of *the other*. "Who art thou," says Paul, "that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth, or falleth." The solemn truth that each of us shall give an account of himself unto God, forbids the idea that *others* may judge *for us*, or prescribe *to us* in matters of religion.

Therefore, in the case before us, one class of believers have as good a right to determine what constitutes a valid baptism as another. If *the one* come forward and say that they have been baptized into Christ, and are otherwise entitled to Christian charity, they are to be admitted to communion by *the other*, upon this declaration, although they have not been baptized according to their views of the institution. The *latter*, having no right to exercise dominion over the faith of the *former*, are bound to receive them upon the principle that, in their own opinion, they have been baptized, and that the right of judging in the case *for themselves*, is one of which they *cannot be divested*. If they should be refused the privilege of coming to the table, this would be, at once, exercising a lordship over their consciences, which is not admissible.

Should it be said that this principle will oblige us to receive all who apply for communion, however gross their opinions or conduct may be; I would reply, that it will not, for this

reason : we are bound to receive none to our charity and fellowship, but such as appear to be Christians : and the opinions and conduct of some may be so perfectly at variance with the truths and precepts of the gospel, as to forbid the idea of their being Christians. In that case they are not entitled to communion.

Those differences among Christians which are to be borne with, respect merely such things as are not essential—i. e. such as may be differently viewed without destroying the Christian character, and excluding the hope of salvation.

And *here*, I say, the right of *private judgement* is secured, and is *very sacred*. And the responsibility rests on each one *personally*. So that even if others should prove to have been in an error, our receiving them to Christian fellowship, upon the principle stated, *will not implicate us*. *They, alone*, are answerable.

Should it be further said in support of the practice of close communion, that we are commanded to “withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly,” I would reply, that “withdrawing,” in this passage, manifestly means the same as *excommunication*—the same kind of treatment which is denoted by the following expressions : “Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican ;” “note that man and have no company with him that he may be ashamed ;” and “with such an one, no, not to eat.” And, therefore, the disorderly walking intended cannot be the minor errors and faults of Christian professors ; but those which are gross, and which, if persisted in, destroy the Christian character. If we were to withdraw from others for every thing defective in their principles, or practice, there would be an end to Christian communion in this world : “for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.” Why should the Baptists withdraw from the Pedobaptists, because they have not, in their opinion, been regularly baptized, when, allowing that they are right in this opinion, they have other defects themselves, as great as this ? Let it not be said that the passage alluded to relates particularly to church order, and not to sins and errors in general. For it cannot be reasonably supposed that a breach of church order is a worse evil than any other, and, consequently, to be treated with marked disapprobation. It is, manifestly, as disorderly, in the sense of this passage, to break the Sabbath ; to be worldlyminded, uncharitable and selfish, and to exclude those whom Christ receives, as it is to fail of practising the right mode of baptism, or to administer this ordinance to improper subjects. Why, then, should the command to withdraw be restricted to

a breach of church order. There is, obviously, no reason for this restriction. The rule will apply *equally* to all kinds of unchristian conduct; but will not oblige the churches to excommunicate their brethren for *slight errors* and *misdemeanors*; but for those, only, which are *gross*, and which *strike at the very foundation* of the Christian character; although they should admonish one another daily for their lesser failings.

CHAPTER V.

Containing the argument for Open Communion, based upon the consideration that although baptism was manifestly intended to precede, in the order of nature, the commemoration of Christ's death in the ordinance of the supper; it does not appear that we have a warrant to insist upon it as an indispensable prerequisite in all cases.

SHOULD the two last mentioned grounds of open communion fail in the opinion of any, this, for aught appears, might be taken as the last resort. None, however, will understand me as giving up *either* of those grounds, or as considering them, in any wise, suspicious; for they appear to be sound and good: but all may not regard them in that light. If, therefore, there be any remaining ground for open communion which those may take who cannot adopt either of the others, it is important that it should be fairly exhibited. For the sake, therefore, of relieving this class, it is stated, that it does not appear that we are warranted to insist on baptism, in all cases, as an *indispensable prerequisite* to communion. It is, indeed, plainly commanded. It is, moreover, a badge of discipleship, and a regular door of entrance into the visible church; and, consequently, it is, *in the order of nature, prior* to communion. Nevertheless, it does not appear that it is, in all cases, of such *absolute and indispensable necessity*, that none may be admitted to communion except such as are considered regularly baptized.

The ground now stated, is the one which some who conceive immersion to be the only valid baptism, do actually take: and although open communion may be maintained upon *other and better* grounds, as I have already shown, this is inexpressibly better than *close communion*. The principle of open communion with all evangelical Christians is so evidently agreeable to the general structure, spirit and design of the gospel, that it must have some valid reason, or reasons, to support it, whether we are able to discover them or not. And, if we should fail to assign the true and proper reason, or reasons, it surely cannot be wrong to receive those whom Christ receives himself; for the apostolick rule, before mentioned, binds us to receive one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. This, at once, settles the principle of open communion, as above explained.

Hence, those brethren who regard immersion as the only valid baptism, may receive to their communion, under certain circumstances, such as they consider *unbaptized Christians*.

There is manifestly a wide difference between the cases of those who believe immersion to be the only valid baptism, and yet apply for communion without it, and of those who do not believe this mode essential, but have submitted to the ordinance in another form, and verily believe themselves duly baptized. To admit the former to communion without baptism, would be tolerating them in the neglect of a known and acknowledged duty, which would be inconsistent; but in the latter case, the neglect is not wilful, allowing these persons to be in an error: for they do verily believe that they have complied with the order of Christ. Therefore, such may be received to the Lord's table by those who cannot regard them as regularly baptized. They ought not to insist that they should be immersed, or otherwise be debarred from Christian communion. If they are judged to be fit subjects in every other respect than their not having been immersed, and they are willing and desirous to obey the Lord in the ordinance of the supper, although they feel not their obligation to be plunged in water, they ought to be received. The right of admission is one which they enjoy as the children of God and heirs of the kingdom.

Let it not be said, here, that no uncircumcised person was permitted to eat of the passover; and therefore no unbaptized person should be permitted, under any circumstances, to eat of the Lord's supper, for the institutions are different; therefore the rule in the former case will not apply in the latter. And this argument ought never to be plead, especially by those who regard the Lord's supper as, in no measure, a substitute for the passover. The institutions are not only different, but both *positive*; and, hence, each rests on *its own basis*. We cannot rightly argue from the *one* to the *other*, any more than in the case of *circumcision* and *baptism*.

And when we come to consider the institution of baptism, *by itself*, where do we find it asserted that *no unbaptized person*, under any circumstances, shall eat of the Lord's Supper? I have not found any such prohibition.

I have, indeed, found that the kingdom of Christ consists of a select company of disciples, and that these were directed to be initiated by baptism; but I have not found that no one may be permitted to obey Christ's order to attend upon the supper in remembrance of him, who is considered as not having submitted regularly to baptism. Although he be viewed as not

having come into the visible church by the appointed door, but as having, through misconception, entered some other way, shall he, for this, be refused the children's bread, when all perceive him to be one of their number, and that Christ has received him? In a judgement of charity, he has entered the *invisible church*, through the *appointed door*, which is *not baptism*, but *Christ himself*. He has believed on him for justification, and been horn of the Spirit, which is inconceivably more important than to be born of water. Shall he, therefore, be refused the bread of his God and Saviour, and turned out of doors, because he is considered as not having entered the *visible church* by the *appointed medium*, or by submitting to be *immersed*? This would seem to be making a greater account of the outward baptism than of regeneration itself.

And the rejection of the brother from communion in this case is the more inconsistent, because he verily believes himself to be baptized, and to have come into the church in the way appointed.

We can hardly suppose a case in which a person would deem it his duty, if properly instructed, to come to the Lord's table, without submitting to baptism in *some form*. There are indeed a few cases, it is said, in the Methodist denomination, of persons being admitted to the communion without any baptism whatever. But this, one would think, must be owing to the want of a due consideration of the subject.

It is possible, however, for a person to conceive it his duty to celebrate the Lord's supper, and yet, after being instructed, have no conviction of the duty of baptism. Should such a case happen, it would be more consistent with the general principles of the gospel to *receive* him, than to *reject* him. But what might be admissible in such an extreme case, could not be reasonably plead as a rule in common cases.

The cases which ordinarily occur are those of persons who have received what *they* call Christian baptism; but it not being by *immersion*, the *brethren now alluded to* cannot consider it valid. Nevertheless I say, they may and ought to receive them to communion. Both baptism and the Lord's supper are commands binding on *all the children of God*. It is, therefore, unreasonable to debar a particular class of them from the *latter*, because they appear to have misapprehended their duty respecting the *former*.

It is, indeed, said, John, iii. 5, that "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," in which passage, reference appears to be had both to baptism and regeneration. But it cannot be the meaning that no.

person, under any circumstance, can go to *heaven without water baptism*; nor that no person can enter the *visible church without being born of the Spirit*; but that both these qualifications are requisite to a regular and approved standing in the gospel church. Although a person cannot enter the kingdom of glory without being born of the Spirit, it is evident that he can enter the visible church without it. Accordingly, we read of one in the parable of the marriage of the king's son, who came into the house without a wedding garment, and of foolish virgins who took no oil in their vessels with their lamps, as well as of wise virgins who did.

If, therefore, notwithstanding this declaration, a person can enter the *visible kingdom of God in this world*, without being born of the Spirit, which is the most essential qualification, he may enter, for aught appears, without the other qualification: i. e. he may be admitted into the society of saints, and be numbered with them, especially if he appears to be born of the Spirit, *without receiving what is deemed a regular baptism*. Admit that he *ought to be baptized by immersion*—Christians ought to do many things which they do not do, and yet their Christian character is not annulled.

No one *ought to enter the visible church without regeneration*; yet some, as it has been observed, *do enter without it*. Yea, some enter, and are allowed to enter into some churches, without so much as making a *profession of regeneration*! Simply the obligation, therefore, to enter by regular baptism, will not preclude the possibility of entering without it. Through mistake on the part of the applicants, or on the part of the minister and churches, members may be received who have not all the qualifications demanded. Yet, notwithstanding they have not entered in the *way and manner prescribed, in all respects*, they are to be considered *as in*; and while they walk worthy, they should be retained as members, and be admitted to all the privileges of members.

The passage under consideration, as it respects the necessity of baptism, can mean no more than that baptism is an *appointed badge of discipleship*, and a *regular door of entrance into the church*. It contains a rule of duty which Christians are bound to observe.

Yet, it will not follow that a person cannot, through mistake as to the nature of this precept, come into the visible church without duly obeying it, and be consistently allowed to partake of the supper in remembrance of Christ. It does not appear that we are to regard baptism in all cases indispensable to communion. But those who exhibit the essential marks of disci-

pleshship, and desire to be admitted to the supper, although their manner of entering the church is regarded as defective, ought to be received. The spirit of the command is answered in this case, if the letter is not. We ought not to debar our brethren from *one* ordinance and privilege, because they, through mistake, exclude themselves from *another*. But being children, they should have a place among the children, and be allowed to eat at their father's table.

Although, therefore, I am fully persuaded that evangelical Christians, in whatever way they may have been baptized, should be admitted to communion, on the ground that any mode of baptism is valid; and that this is the true ground of admission, in connexion with the evidence of their piety—ground which *can*, and *ought* to be defended: and that if any, however, are not satisfied with this ground, they should receive their brethren, though not baptized according to their views of the subject, upon their own declaration that they are baptized, because they have the right of private judgement in the case: yet, if any deem both these grounds inadequate, they may receive their fellow Christians to communion on the principle last stated; viz that we are not warranted to insist on baptism, *in all cases*, as an *indispensable prerequisite* to communion. If the defect in question, allowing it to be real, will not, under the circumstances stated, exclude them from *heaven*, and does not exclude them from the fellowship of *Jesus* in this world, it ought not to exclude them from the fellowship of their *Christian brethren*. They have the *essential* prerequisite, a new heart, or appear to have, and, therefore, must be admitted.

Especially, does the duty of open communion appear to be binding, when we take into consideration the whole subject as it has been exhibited, and give to the several reasons which have been assigned their just weight.

I have shown that the foundation for this practice is laid in the renovating work of the Spirit, by which Christians are brought into the same spiritual family.

That water applied, in any form, in the name of the sacred Trinity, is valid baptism.

That all Christians have the right of private judgment, and none ought to lord it over the consciences of their brethren; and therefore, they ought to receive one another to communion on their respective testimony as to their baptism.

And, that those who cannot consider any other baptism valid except immersion, and cannot be satisfied with either of these grounds, may receive those who have not been immersed, upon the principle, that baptism is not an indispensable prerequisite to communion in all cases.

So that in every view of the subject, the duty is manifestly obligatory. There are reasons in favour of it which are adapted to the particular views and circumstances of all Christians. If one class of Christians cannot admit their brethren to communion on *one* of the above grounds, they can on *another*. So that the cruel bars, which have been so long kept up, ought to be taken down.

It is truly a sore evil that Christians should withhold fellowship from one another. It is one of the greatest stumbling blocks which are laid before the world. It is a constant occasion of reproach, and of triumph, on the part of the enemy.—There is something so unnatural in it—so contrary to the alleged spirit of Christianity—so inconsistent with the representation that Christians are one in Christ—so different from the descriptions which are given of the church, at first, when “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul”—so contrary to that special precept of Jesus that his disciples should “love one another”—so perfectly at variance with his own example—and so ruinous in its tendency; that every observing mind must see the absurdity of it, and every tender-hearted Christian must bleed and mourn. How can any, that truly prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy, be content with such a state of things? How can ministers and Christians look on, with indifference, and, instead of seriously labouring to remove the evil, rather lend their influence to increase it, being content that some little thing—some mode, or tradition, should be the occasion of keeping them apart, and of presenting them in hostile array against each other?

Why is not the subject more thought of? Why do not Christians labour more assiduously to remove this reproach from the church of God? Why do not the ministers of the gospel, especially, make more powerful efforts to bring about an union among Christians? The work belongs more eminently to them than to others; inasmuch as they are leaders of the church, and as their own discordant views are the principal means of keeping the bars up.

Painful as the truth is, it is owing more to the stand which the ministers of the gospel have taken, and to the influence which they exert, that this evil exists, than to any thing which pertains to the churches. Only let “the watchmen see eye to eye,” and their flocks would readily unite in Christian communion.

Therefore, it becomes them, especially, to examine the subject, and to break down the separating wall. It becomes them to weep over the desolations of Zion; to be deeply affected:

with the subject of these alienations and collisions, and of this defaced beauty of the church; and to arise and labour with one accord, for the introduction of a better state of things.

Let them candidly and soberly meet the existing evil; examine it minutely; and see what can be done. And let them diligently apply the means of reformation—the healing remedies which are required; and never rest, till the object is gained—till evangelical Christians are of *one heart* and of *one soul*; and till they walk together in the due *order* and *fellowship* of the gospel.

The present is, on various accounts, a favourable time for both ministers and private Christians to labour in this cause.—There are many indications in Providence favourable to efforts of this kind. There is already a more liberal feeling among the different churches than there was formerly; revivals of religion are more frequent and powerful; and “the set time to favour Zion” seems to be rapidly approaching, when the knowledge of Jesus shall fill the whole earth. Moreover, many are extremely tried on the subject of close communion, and are anxiously looking for the period of its removal; and the example of open communion is already worthily set by those missionaries of different denominations which have gone to heathen lands. I believe it is a well authenticated fact, that Baptist and Pedobaptist missionaries commune together on the shores of India. (And, surely, they would make a forbidding appearance among the heathen, if they did not.) And if ministers and members of these respective denominations can commune together *there*, why not *here*? Why not in *every part of the world*?

Moreover; there is an increased spirit of inquiry prevailing, and knowledge is increasing; and former customs and prejudices are giving way. Many things which once seemed impracticable have been achieved; and small, but well-directed efforts, have eventually met with astonishing success. There are also great overturnings both in the *moral* and *political* world.

Now all these things evince the present to be an *important period* for Christian effort. The interest of the church should be regarded with more intense feeling than has heretofore been possessed; and all should labour more assiduously to remove the stumbling blocks; to cast up the way; and to restore the church to her primitive purity.

The principle which I have advocated is, unquestionably, desirable. Every humble follower of Christ would be delighted to see the church *one*: he can but long to see the time when all that love our Lord Jesus Christ can consistently sit down *together* and commemorate his dying love, and when they shall truly regard and treat one another as brethren.

Believing that the true principles of open communion have been stated and defended in this work, it is my ardent desire and prayer that the effort may be successful; that it may be the means of exciting more attention to the subject; and of calling forth the labours of more able pens; that each denomination will duly examine the points of difference between them, and remove them as far as practicable, by renouncing each its own errors; that minor differences which, in this imperfect state, cannot be wholly removed, may be borne with so as not to break their fellowship in Christ; and that there may be a continual advance in doctrinal purity, and practical godliness in the church, until the whole earth is filled with the glory of our common Lord.

And, here, I must take the liberty to state, that it is manifestly the duty of the friends of the system which has been illustrated, to come out, and take a more firm and decided stand than heretofore.

It may not be their duty to *secede* from their respective churches, provided they can have their *just influence* therein, and be permitted to *labour* in the cause of reformation; and, provided their *continued* connexion with them will best advance their *individual* and the *publick interest*.

But, it is manifestly important that the light should not be hid.

These brethren have an equal right of speaking and acting, in regard to what they believe to be truth and duty, that others have, and they are under the same obligations to the Redeemer to make his will known, and to correct whatever is amiss.

The portion of the churches who imbibe the preceding views, is very considerable, and they have been silent long enough, and long enough satisfied with mere toleration. It is time that their voices were heard in defence of *believers' baptism* and *open communion*.

The period has, manifestly, arrived, when every friend to this cause should declare himself as such, and openly and firmly defend it. How are the evils of infant baptism and close communion to be put away, except by a strenuous and united effort of those who see them to be unscriptural, relying on the blessing of God? Shall their being placed in a delicate situation deter them? Shall the fear of displeasing their brethren of the opposite opinions, or of making a breach in the churches, or of incurring loss, inconvenience, opposition and reproach, keep them from bearing testimony in the case? What would have become of the church, if such motives had kept the friends of reformation from advocating it openly and boldly? If we are to make no attempt at reformation but what can be done *quietly* and *peaceably*—without *hurting the feelings* of brethren, and

without *making any divisions*, depend upon it, we shall never do any thing of consequence. Was ever any material error corrected without a struggle? Was ever any attempt made at reformation, either in doctrine or practice, but what met, from some quarter or other, with opposition and reproach? How was it with Luther and Calvin? How was it with the Dissenters in England? How was it with Edwards, Bellamy, and others in our own land, who laboured to reform the errors introduced into the church, in regard to the qualifications for the Lord's Supper, and in regard to the half-way covenant plan of baptizing children? All these reformers were opposed; yea, opposed with *concert and determination*.

It does not appear to be the intention of Providence that truth should prevail over error *without a conflict*. If reformers should wait till the church generally should admit their plans, without opposition, they would never proceed at all in any case of material importance.

But, in order to success, error must be attacked boldly, with the expectation that it will be defended to the last. The point or points of reformation must be plainly stated, and faithfully supported, and pressed, and all consequences be left with God.

The several considerations, therefore, just stated, should not deter the friends of the cause herein plead, from exerting, and coming out boldly. Believing these doctrines to be important, they should prepare to support them, and claim the *natural, civil, and Christian* right of being heard in their defence.—While all hard and uncharitable feelings and opprobrious epithets should be carefully avoided, they should speak *clearly and persuasively*; *gird on* the harness; and advance *coolly and resolutely* forward, whatever may oppose. They should avoid injuring the feelings of brethren, or disturbing the publick peace, as far as may be consistent with advocating the truth; but they must not conceal the knowledge which they have of the Redeemer's will; nor forbear to labour, vigorously and unitedly, to put away the aforesaid evils; and to break down the middle walls of partition between the friends of God.

I repeat the observation, that the period has come to defend the scheme illustrated and advocated in this work. Already the number of its friends is very considerable, who are spread abroad through the land. Why should they keep any longer *concealed*, or remain *inactive*, and *under bonds*? Why should they forbear to show *their* opinion, when others of the opposite class do not hesitate to show *theirs*, and to maintain it with all their strength? Must they keep in the dark, and continue to weep in secret over these evils, till their brethren permit them.

to come forth, and till they will consent to make no opposition to their plans of reformation? Must the multitude, who this moment desire gospel baptism, without consenting, either to the baptism of infants, or to close communion, be obliged to be deprived of the privilege of this ordinance, or be impelled forward where they do not feel free to go? Must the many who, though baptized in infancy, have an ardent desire, and feel strong impressions of the duty of being baptized on their own faith, be left to grieve and lament, because they cannot have the privilege, and, at the same time, be allowed to retain the right of communing with all evangelical Christians? Or, shall the foregoing system of reformation be openly advocated by its friends, and measures be prudently adopted to carry it into effect? No candid and enlightened mind will hesitate to say that the latter is the true course. Even our opposers will acknowledge the consistency of this course, or be obliged to condemn their own.

What if the cry of breaking covenant and disturbing the peace of the church is raised? What does it amount to? Is it to be supposed, that the instrument called a *church covenant* binds Christians to walk with the church in their *errors*, and to make no efforts to *correct* them? Or, if these efforts *fail*, that they must, at all events, *continue* their relation to the church, or be liable to the charge of *breaking covenant*, and of *causing divisions and offences*? Or does it, merely, bind us to walk with the church so far, only, as they follow Christ, not prohibiting us from reforming errors; but requiring us to do it when we discover them? And, if we cannot peaceably and profitably remain in our respective churches, does it not manifestly allow us to ask to be *dismissed*, and, if this is denied, to *secede*?—Surely, “a brother or a sister is not in bondage in such a case.”

We may even be the innocent occasion of “divisions and offences,” provided we do not believe, or act, “contrary to the doctrine which we have learned,” i. e. contrary to the blessed doctrine of Christ.

Therefore, none ought to be deterred from coming forward in this cause, firmly believing it to be the cause of God and truth, because of any connexion which may exist between them and other churches of different sentiments. Coming out on the side of truth, is no breach of a church covenant; for we did not, and could not, bind ourselves to do wrong, or to forbear to do right.

Therefore, I would make a solemn appeal to the *enlightened understandings*, the *Christian sympathies*, and the *benevolent wishes* of this class of Christians, and admonish and entreat

them to come to the help of the Lord, and to "show themselves men." The cause is too precious, and involves interests that are too dear, to permit it to lie buried and unplead.

You are called upon, my brethren, to claim only a common privilege with that of your other Christian brethren, and to discharge a similar duty to what they all deem binding on themselves, viz. labouring for the defence and purity of the gospel.

Come forth, then, with *warm, cheerful, and united* hearts, and labour *faithfully*, and leave the *event* with God. Who can tell but the Lord will regard and bless; and though our efforts may appear as diminutive and inefficient to our opponents, as those of Nehemiah and the Jews did, when rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, to Sanballat and Tobiah, the work, like theirs, may eventually prosper.

And to the ministers and churches both of the Baptist and Pedobaptist denominations, I would respectfully observe, that if the points which have been discussed have been supported from scripture, it is of high importance that you should respectively receive conviction, and adopt this plan of reformation and union. I do not aim any opposition to *you*, but to your *respective errors*. I assure you of my affectionate regard to you *as ministers and as Christians*. But believing that you have adopted either *the one or the other* of the errors which have been pointed out; I am under indispensable obligation to expose them. And I invite your candid attention to my remarks and reasons. I claim no regard to any thing that I have said, further than it is based on the truth.

But if the scheme is true, you are bound to adopt it; and each denomination to give up *its own* errors, and meet *the other* on the *middle ground*. You will not fail to see that if this scheme be true, its adoption will, at once, wholly relieve the subject of communion and Christian and ministerial intercourse.

May you, therefore, be enabled respectively to examine and to understand it, and, if it comports with the scriptures, to adopt it; and, henceforth, to become *one in affection and practice*, as you belong to *one Lord*, and are animated by *one hope* of the high and heavenly calling.

To readers in general, who have not yet adopted the foregoing scheme of baptism and communion, I would earnestly recommend a patient and candid investigation of the subject; a diligent comparing of every thing with the scriptures; and fervent prayer for divine direction. And as you receive the light, walk in it, ascribing all the glory to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE END.

