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OPEN COMMUNION

SHOWN TO BE

UNSCRIPTURAL AND DELETERIOUS.

BY JOHN L. WALLER, L.L. D.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

BY D. R. CAMPBELL, L.L. D.

AND AN

APPENDIX.

BY THE EDITOR.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A HISTORY OF INFANT BAPTISM.

BY JOHN L. WALLER, L.L. D.

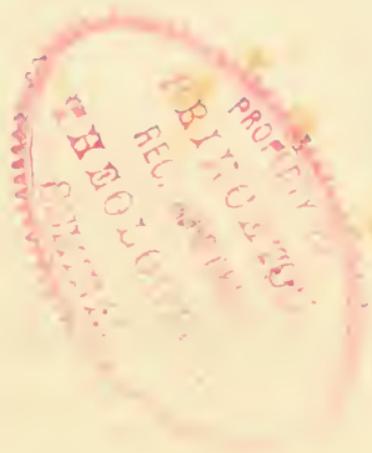
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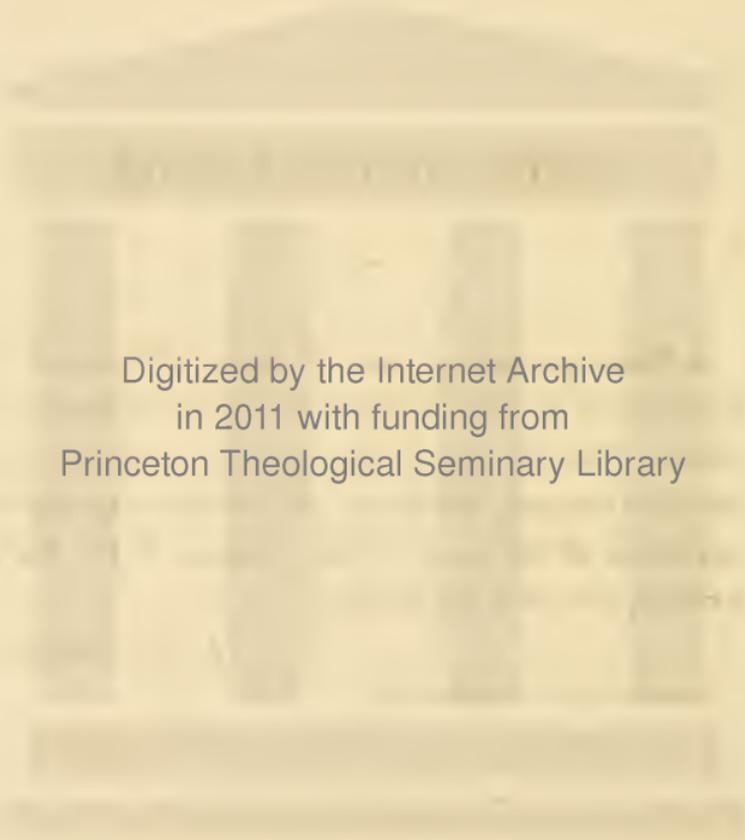


NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

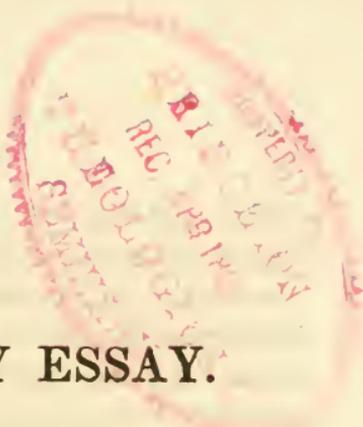
A liberal per centage upon all copies of this work that shall be sold, has been secured to the orphan children of the author. This fact, it is presumed, will, independent of the merits of the book, procure for the publishers an extensive circulation of this, and of other volumes of Dr. Waller's writings, now ready for the press.

J. E. FARNAM.

GEORGETOWN, Ky., October, 1858.



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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

THE leading object of the lamented author of this little volume, was to furnish his own denomination with a succinct defence of their practice in restricting the privilege of sacramental communion to such as belong to their own churches. As collateral justification of this practice, he has also here furnished a refutation of the Pede-baptist view of the questions relating to the subjects and mode of baptism, showing that that view is an innovation on the spirit and teachings of the New Testament. It is but reasonable to believe that had the author himself been permitted to arrange and give the finishing touch to the materials of the work, it would have been, in some respects, at least, more complete and satisfactory. Still, the editor has evidently prepared and arranged the materials in his possession to the best advantage.

The discussion on Communion, is a review of the positions and reasonings of Robert Hall, who held that "each particular Church is to the Universal Church, as a part is to the whole;" and, consequently, that "no Church has a right to establish terms of communion which are not terms of salvation." The erroneusness of these positions, and the false reasonings founded upon them, Dr. Waller has successfully exposed. Nothing farther seems necessary—the overthrow is complete, final.

Able as is this whole discussion, however, had Dr. Waller lived until the present, he would doubtless have taken a much wider range on the communion question. The subject is daily assuming a more imposing and important aspect. The signs of the times indicate that it is destined to become the great line of discrimination between the true and the false—between the real and the nominal followers of Christ. Concentration, union, a second catholic or Universal Church, is the goal to which the growing tendencies lead. The indispensable condition of such consolidation is concession—minor differences, non-essentials, must be kept in the back ground. As the range of the movement widens, as the distinct and diverse elements sought to be combined, are increased, so these non-essentials must multiply until the stock of accepted truth must be small indeed. The process in this direction is already actively at work. The foundations are being silently laid, broad and deep, in the workings and tendencies of such organizations as the British and Foreign Bible Society, the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society; the American Sunday School Union, the American and Foreign Christian Union, and the Evangelical Alliance. This last is not, improbably, the nucleus of the grand Protestant Catholic Church, into which all the sects must finally merge. All of these bodies operate on the principle of ignoring what is rather freely called, non-essentials. And the amount ignored among them, taken altogether, is neither small nor unimportant. In the operation of such bodies, leading minds become accustomed to regard the gain secured by the concession, and the consequent apparent increase of power, as vastly more than the loss sustained in the amount of truth sacrificed. These bodies, moreover, soon become sources of controlling influence, modifying the views and regulating the practice not

only of those committed to them, but through them, of the masses beyond them. Success becomes the watchword—combination indispensable. Men, talent, learning, counsel, money, agency, energy, become the real dependence—truth only secondary. It can easily be accommodated to the varying necessities of the emergency; and men may, by and by, feel as free to legislate in divine, as in secular truth.

This tendency of things has already begun to show a disposition to intrench on the principle of Scriptural Communion. Until recently, Pedo-baptists, to a man, insisted on baptism as indispensable to a place at the Lord's table. There are indications now, however, of a radical change in this particular. The question is already openly and forcibly discussed in Presbyterian journals, whether baptism should be required as a pre-requisite to communion. A well known and vigorous writer maintains the negative, and, evidently, not without the confidence of an existing and increasing sympathy among his brethren. This writer is already prepared to admit the Quaker, an avowed unbeliever in baptism, to the table of the Lord. This is startling and significant, coming from such a source. Many of the Methodist clergy have for years been ignoring baptism as a condition of communion. It has, in some places, become a very common practice among them to urge the duty of communing as a means of conversion. This we regard as a two-fold evil. It first displaces, and then perverts, a sacred institution. Even the "current reformation" seems to hesitate in places whether the sacrifice of baptism might not be a reasonable price for "union," provided it can not be procured at a less cost.

What, then, is the duty of Baptists in the presence of such signs of defection? They have ever been the fast friends of

Scripture truth and Scripture practice. Shall they give way now? May it never be. In the second and third centuries, tendencies, not unlike those now at work, matured into a catholic or general church. It became catholic, however, at the expense of much of the spirit and substance of truth. Against these unhallowed tendencies our ancestors, in the faith, had to raise a warning voice, and many of them proved before the struggle was over, that they could die for the truth. If the present tendencies continue, and the end aimed at is reached, our posterity may not long expect to escape from the like sorrows and sufferings again.

Our duty to continue faithful to our communion principles, becomes urgent from another consideration. Not only is communion sought at the expense of baptism, but also at the expense of doctrines, which, in our view, are essential to salvation. The Pelagian, who denies human depravity, and consequently the renewing agency of the Spirit in regeneration; the Unitarian, the Arian, and the Universalist, who deny the divinity and atonement of the Savior; the believer in baptismal regeneration, in baptismal remission, in sprinkling for baptism, or in no baptism at all; and some, whose system of faith is a compound of all these, are clamorous of general communion at the Lord's table. Such errorists have nothing to lose, but every thing to gain, by such a course. Their cry against restricted communion is a species of popular self-defence. They are anxious to obtain the sanction of those who hold to a faith more pure and consistent than theirs, for their errors. But shall Baptists, a people who have ever received the whole testimony of God, and who have, in every age, experienced much opposition for doing so, be, by any means, induced either to wink at, or sanction in the least, such unscriptural and pernicious

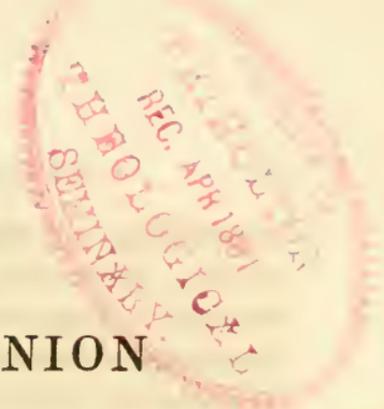
dogmas? Shall they ever surrender the only scriptural position, that the true believer alone, who is immersed upon a profession of his faith, and received into a church of like faith and practice with their own, is a proper subject for the communion table? Never, never! This "old landmark" they will never "remove." They will never "sell" the truth for any considerable expediency.

This little volume, an earnest of others which are to follow, by our lamented brother, will tend to strengthen the people, for whom he so faithfully and so ably labored, both in the truth and practice of the faith in which he, himself, lived and died. May it command a large sale, and be widely and abundantly blessed.

D. R. CAMPBELL.

GEORGETOWN, Ky., November, 1858.

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OPEN COMMUNION

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THE world has all along been disposed to quarrel with the severe simplicity of Jesus and his institutions. To the Jews he was as a root springing out of dry ground, without form or comeliness. There was no beauty in him that they should desire him. Men love pomp and show and circumstance, even in religion. Nay, they would rather endure the greatest torture, perform distant and dangerous pilgrimages, inflict upon themselves any penance, and make any sacrifices, under the delusion that thus they can propitiate the favor of Heaven, than to be saved on the terms of the gospel, which are easy and light.

The Messiah established a kingdom, not of this world. He had no temple made with hands. He wore no sacerdotal nor royal robes. He erected no altar, burnt no incense, offered no beasts, or birds, or fruits, in sacrifice. He instituted no ceremonial pageantry. In this respect he discarded all precedent, rejected all experience, and refused to pander to the tastes and prejudices of mankind. He taught the great truths of his religion, without the symbols and signs which had distinguished the divine institutions of the Mosaic

dispensation, and which imparted great lessons by sensible objects. All the religions on earth gave instructions in the same way. Jesus used no such methods, except in the two ordinances of Baptism and the Supper.

These two ordinances have ever been too simple in the mode of their administration, too plain and specific in their designs, to suit that love of ostentation, and to gratify that thirst for the marvelous and the mysterious, which men delight to find in the visible and to fancy in the invisible. Hence, a pseudo church has invested these institutions, so unpretending in the Scriptures, with an immense parade of ceremonial and awful and even miraculous significance. The Supper, which is our theme, was perverted even in the apostolic age. The Church in Corinth made it a carnal instead of a spiritual feast. Its members did not discern in its symbols a representation of the body and blood of the Redeemer. They converted the cup of blessing into the cup of foul and evil spirits. They ate and drank condemnation to themselves. In the subsequent age it was regarded as a mystery kindred to those of the Eleusinian, and was celebrated with a secrecy that could not be invaded by the uninitiated without profanity and guilt. And when Popery was revealed, the multitude were taught to suppose that priestly mummery changed the bread and the wine into the Son of God, and that they were to be worshipped and honored as the Divinity upon the platter and in the cup. And to this day, blind and superstitious millions, perhaps a large majority of professed Christians, are the deluded victims of this gross folly and idolatry.

It is important that we should observe this ordinance in all things precisely as it was given to us by the Lord. We have no right to add to or to take from it. It derives all its

appropriateness and significancy from the fact of its being instituted by a divine command. Without such a command, to break bread and pour out wine as emblems of the broken body and spilled blood of the Savior, would be as unauthorized as a modern love-feast, and as impious as pilgrimages, or the adoration of dead mens' bones. The whole intent and manner of the Supper are clearly set forth in the Scriptures. These are obligatory. These have the sanction of Heaven. These we may receive and follow. God requires these things at our hands, and nothing more. He that observes more as essential to the ordinance, disobeye and insults Him who ordained the Supper. He virtually charges the Savior with being incompetent or unwilling to perfect his work of mediation—of completing the laws and regulations of his kingdom. If we may improve upon one of the divine laws, we may upon all; and thus, instead of Jesus, be ourselves the law-giver in Zion.

Eloquent declamation from the pulpit, and much eulogium from the press, in behalf of what is denominated Open Communion, have been most prominent in the religious discussions of the present century; yet it never has been shown wherein the Baptists have departed from the strict letter of the law which the Savior enacted for the regulation of his Supper. The Bible is seldom appealed to in this controversy. The advocates of Open Communion have studiously, as a general thing, evaded the law in the case, and have appealed to the prejudices of the masses. The cry of inconsistency, uncharitableness, bigotry, selfishness, &c., are clamorously vociferated; and the million are sought to be swayed by these, rather than by the weightier matters of the law. Now, we intend to examine the pretensions of Open Communion, and to demonstrate that Baptist Close Communion is the Bible Communion.

The Supper was instituted by our Lord the night in which he was betrayed. The Evangelists give this account of its institution. Mat. xxvi. 26, 27: "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Mark xiv. 22-24: "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them, and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many." Luke xxii. 19, 20: "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you." The Apostle Paul thus speaks of the institution, 1 Cor. xi. 23-29: "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, and when he had given thanks, he brake and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death until he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup; for he that eateth and

drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

The design of the ordinance is emphatically declared in these passages, to be, to keep in remembrance the Savior—to show forth his death until he come. Its design has just this extent, and no more, the Savior and the Apostle attest. But more of this hereafter.

The celebrated Robert Hall, in his efforts to justify open communion, employed much rhetoric and great ingenuity to show that, as this institution was established before Christian Baptism, therefore baptism was not essential to its participation. He was an open Communion Baptist, and believed that we ought to invite Pedo-baptists to the Lord's table. But this he knew to be impossible, if baptism is a prerequisite to the Supper. As a Baptist, he regards the baptism of infants as a human invention and a papal relict; and he esteemed sprinkling as a most ridiculous burlesque of a sacred ordinance. Hence he was forced to discard what had always been considered, by all Christians, as settled in the Scriptures, that individuals must be baptized before they come to the Lord's table. To sustain this novel and startling position—a position to the maintenance of which he was forced by the desperate condition of his cause—he enters upon an elaborate argument to prove that the disciples, when the Supper was instituted, had only received the preparatory baptism, or the baptism of John, which was not Christian baptism, and which was superseded and annulled by the baptism ordained in the gospel commission. He concluded, from this, that Christian baptism was not essential to the Supper. We will not pause here to discuss John's baptism. It is not necessary to our argument. We plant ourselves on the commission, and shall contend, in opposi-

tion to all gainsayers, that in the Gospel Commission—the only law in the Bible by which ministers baptize into the name of the Trinity—baptism is placed before the Supper; and that no one can change this order without changing a divine law. The commission, Matthew xxvii. 19, 20, “Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” is the divine directory, commanding, first, to “make disciples of all nations;” second, to baptise them into the name of the Trinity; and third, to teach them to observe what Jesus had commanded. He had now arisen from the dead, and was about to ascend to heaven. Among the things he had commanded, was to observe his Supper—“this do in remembrance of me.” This commission is so plain that no one can misunderstand it. He that comes to the Lord’s table, who is not a disciple, baptized into the divine name, violates the commandment of Him to whom is committed all power in heaven and upon earth. The law is express, positive, and particular; and all Christians, for eighteen centuries, were perfectly united in this interpretation of the law. The open Communion Baptists, less than a century ago, were the first to call it in question. Robert Hall is the only man of any note who ever seriously disputed the settled practice of all Christendom, from the ascension of the Messiah to the present time; and his opposition, although clothed in great vigor and beauty of language, is not remarkable for logical acumen or clear and convincing exposition of the Scriptures. His effort to prove his position, by the assumption that this ordinance was instituted before that of Christian baptism, utterly fails of any valuable purpose in

his argument, inasmuch as we could grant his position, and then demonstrate its utter worthlessness, from the plain and specific requirements of the Scriptures. But enough of Mr. Hall for the present.

We have said, that from the beginning all Christians have concurred in the opinion that, according to the Scriptures, only the baptized disciple ought to partake of the Lord's Supper. It is very certain, that all the accounts we have of its administration in the New Testament, demonstrate conclusively that such was the apostolic custom. On the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 41, 42, we learn that "they that gladly received his word, were baptized, and the same day there were added about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The breaking of the bread was by the baptized disciples. In Acts xx. 7, we read: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow." They were disciples, accustomed to meet together—a Church—that break bread. In 1 Cor. x. 1-4, we read: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual meat; and all drank the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." "Now," argues the apostle, verse 11, "all these things happened unto them for examples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." In other words, let us learn this lesson from this portion of sacred history—let us, who have been baptized into the name of the Father, and

of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, who eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of the Savior, and to show forth his death until he come, take heed unto our ways; for with many of the Israelites God was not well pleased, although, by his own right hand, he brought them out of Egypt, and sustained them by miracle. The apostle clearly regarded it as an ordinance *in the Church*, as is to be inferred from the passages just quoted, and as he emphatically declares in the 11th chapter, 18th verse, where he reproves the Corinthians for the disorderly and disgraceful manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper, viz: "For first of all, when ye come together *in the Church*, [*εν το εκκλησια, in the Congregation*], I hear that there be divisions among you." Again, verse 22: "What? have ye not *houses* [*οικιας*] to eat and to drink in? or despise ye *the Church* [*εκκλησιας, Congregation*] of God?" This settles the apostolic custom. The Lord's Supper was celebrated by members of the Church, and all Church members, in that age, were baptized disciples. And here we might rest this part of our argument; for, with all true Protestants, who regard the Bible alone as their religion, one scriptural precept, or one example of apostolic practice, is enough, and ample to settle every question of the sort under consideration. But, as this is a matter of interpretation, we must defer to precedent, and sustain our position by authority.

And that authority, as before said, is the unanimous opinion of all Christians, every where and in every age, until within the last fifty years, that Baptism must precede the Lord's Supper. Wall, in his *History of Infant Baptism*, speaking of the practice of the ancient Christians, says: "The baptized person was quickly after his baptism admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper. This was always, and in

all places, used in the case of adult persons."* Further along in the same chapter, he says: "Among all the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained that any person should partake of the Communion before he was baptized."†

Justin Martyr, who flourished A. D. 240, in his second Apology, after describing the Supper, says: "And this food is called the *Eucharist*, which it is unlawful for any to partake of, unless he believes the things taught by us to be true, and has been washed in the bath of regeneration for the remission of sins."‡

Lord High Chancellor King, in his History of the Primitive Church, says:

"As for the persons communicating, they were not indifferently all that professed the Christian faith, as Origen writes: 'It doth not belong to every one to eat of this bread and to drink of this cup.' But they were only such as were in the number of the faithful—'such as were baptized and received both the credentials and practicals of Christianity.' That is, who believed the articles of the Christian faith, and led a holy and pious life. Such as these, and none else, were permitted to communicate. Now, since none but the faithful were admitted, it follows that the catechumens and the penitents were excluded; the catechumens, because they were not yet baptized, for baptism always preceded the Lord's Supper, as Justin Martyr says: 'It is not lawful for any one to partake of the sacramental food except he be baptized;' the penitents, because for their sins they were cast out of the church, and whilst excluded from the peace thereof, they could not partake of that peace, but were to be driven therefrom, and not admitted thereto, 'till they had

* Part 2, chap. 9, sect. 15. † Same sect., paragraph 4.

fully satisfied for their faults, lest otherwise they should profane the body of the Lord, and drink his cup unworthily, and so be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' Hence, when the other parts of divine worship were ended, and the celebration of the eucharist was to begin, the catechumens, penitents, and all, except the communicants, were to depart, as Tertullian says thereof, 'pious initiations drive away the profane.'"*

Neander, in his great Church History, speaking of the Lord's Supper, in the early ages of Christianity, says:

"At this celebration, as may easily be concluded, no one could be present who was not a member of the Christian Church, and incorporated into it by the rite of baptism."†

Speaking of the practice of all Christians several centuries later, he says:

"With reference to these two constituent portions of the church assemblies, the catechumens and baptized believers, the whole service was divided into two portions: one in which the catechumens were allowed to join, embracing the reading of the Scriptures and the sermon, the prevailing *didactic* portion; and the other, in which the baptized alone could take part, embracing whatever was designed to represent the fellowship of believers—the communion and all the prayers of the church which preceded it."‡

But we need not multiply authorities. It is a thing made out and conceded without debate, that the Christians everywhere and of every persuasion, in all ages,—a few free communion Baptists alone excepted,—have declared that baptism, according to the Scriptures, must precede the Lord's Supper. The formulas of the different denominations, with-

* American edition of 1841, pp. 242, 243.

† Vol. 1. p. 327, Ind. American edition. ‡ Vol. 2, pp. 324, 326.

out a single exception, place Baptism before the Supper. This is true of Papists, Protestants, Greeks, Armenians, and Ethiopians. It would hardly seem necessary, then, to pause and contest the point with those of our brethren who, to sustain themselves, are forced to confront, in hostile array, the long settled doctrine of the Christian world—who have to trample under foot the creeds and liturgies of all churches, in order to reach the tables of those with whom they wish to commune. But we have no disposition to treat them with contempt. We will, therefore, notice their argument as presented by Robert Hall, their chief captain.

Free Communion Baptists not only reject the doctrine and practice of all Christians, ancient and modern, from the apostolic age until the present time, but they condemn the doctrine and example of the apostles themselves. Says Robert Hall: "The apostles, it is acknowledged, admitted none to the Lord's supper but such as were previously baptized;"* and he had just before declared baptism to be immersion, of which "rational and accountable agents" are "the only fit subjects." He declares that the apostles could not admit an unbaptized person, because such an one in that age "must either have neglected an acknowledged precept, and thus evinced a mind destitute of principle; or, he must have set the authority of the apostles at defiance, and thus have classed with parties of the worst description."† The main question to be adjusted with Free Communion Baptists is, Shall we depart from the precept and example of the apostles? Here is the issue. Mr. Hall attempts to justify this departure. He brings all the force of his logic, all the splendor of his diction, and all the enrapturing beauty of his declamation, to sustain this solitary point. We will ex-

* Hall's Works, Harper's edition, 1838, vol. 2, p. 213. † *Ib.* p. 214.

amine his positions. In subverting them, we bring utter destruction upon the strongholds of free communion as advocated by Baptists.

Before we proceed, it becomes us to pause and check the exultation of our Pedeo-baptist brethren in finding so able an advocate of their principles among the Baptists as Robert Hall. If they will listen, we will turn their joy into sorrow. Mr. Hall is no defender of their views. He mercilessly decapitates their whole system. He abhors from his soul infant baptism. He scorns with infinite disgust sprinkling or pouring as a mode of baptism. He rejects all Pedeo-baptism with a decision as emphatic, and with a disgust as supreme, as he does the other inventions and abominations of Popery. If the question, in his esteem, hinged on the baptismal question, no man more fearlessly than he, would have defended the doctrine of close communion. Nay, as already shown, he does not hesitate to argue, that if Pedeo-baptism had existed in the primitive and pure days of the Church, it would have been spurned by the apostles from communion as a monstrous evil and sin. In a word, he regarded the Pedeo-baptists as *unbaptized*, and as *unbaptized* persons, he was willing to admit them to the Lord's table, scriptural precept and example to the contrary notwithstanding. After stating that the Baptists regard infant baptism as "a mere human invention," he says:

"It is not my intention to attempt the defense of that class of Christians [the Baptists], though their views are entirely in accordance with my own; one consequence, however, necessarily results. We are compelled by virtue of them to look upon the great mass of our fellow-Christians as *unbaptized*. On no other ground can we maintain our principles or justify our conduct. Hence it has been inferred,

too hastily in my opinion, that we are bound to abstain from their communion, whatever judgment we may form of their sincerity and piety. Baptism, it is alleged, is, under all possible circumstances, an indispensable term of communion; and however highly we may esteem many of our Pedo-baptist brethren, yet, as we can not but deem them as *unbaptized*, we must of necessity consider them as disqualified for an approach to the Lord's table. It is evident that this reasoning rests entirely on the assumption that baptism is invariably a necessary condition of communion—an opinion which it is not surprising the Baptists should have embraced, since it has long passed current in the Christian world, and been received by nearly all denominations of Christians. * * *

The wide circulation of this doctrine ought undoubtedly to have the effect of softening the severity of censure on that conduct (however singular it may appear) which is its necessary result. Such is that of the great majority of the Baptists in confining their communion to those whom they deem baptized; wherein they act precisely on the same principle with all other Christians, who assume it for granted that baptism is an essential preliminary to the reception of the sacrament. The point on which they differ is the nature of that institution, which we place in immersion, and of which we suppose rational and accountable agents the only fit subjects. This opinion, combined with the other generally received one, that none are entitled to receive the Eucharist but such as have been baptized, leads inevitably to the practice which seems so singular and gives so much offense—the restricting of communion to our own denomination. Let it be admitted that baptism is, under all circumstances, a necessary condition of church-fellowship, and it is impossible for the Baptists to act otherwise. * * * * The

recollection of this may suffice to rebut the ridicule and silence the clamor of those who loudly condemn the Baptists for a proceeding which, were they but to change their opinion on the subject of baptism, their own principles would compel them to adopt. They both concur in a common principle, from which the practice deemed so offensive is the necessary result.”*

If baptism is a condition of “church-fellowship”—if, without it, no one can be a member of the Church visible, as all denominations teach and believe—then Mr. Hall is the champion of close communion. In other terms, he reduces the Pedo-baptist churches to the condition of the Quakers; he utterly regards them as unbaptized; he unchurches them according to their own creed; he leaves not, of their ecclesiastical structure, one stone upon another; and upon its ruins he proposes to meet in love and celebrate holy communion! The close communion Baptists can not seek to do more than this. They cannot be more severe and unrelenting against the Pedo-baptists than is Mr. Hall. Before his principles, their baptism and even their church existence must fall, ere they can come to the Lord’s table. Are they prepared for this? Do they admit his terms of communion? Far from it. We have shown that their opinions are in direct conflict with his. Rev. F. G. Hibbard, of the Methodist Church, says that the position of Mr. Hall is “an anomaly and absurdity that presents a singular contrast to the characteristic symmetry of Christian theology.”† But more of Mr. Hibbard after a time. We will now notice some of the most important arguments of Mr. Hall in support of a departure from apostolic custom in the admission of unbaptized persons to the Lord’s Supper. On this point we

* Hall’s Works, pp. 212, 213. † On Baptism, p. 175.

have no controversy with the Pedit-baptists. They admit that baptism must precede the supper. Our controversy is with the Free Communion Baptists alone, who depart from apostolic custom and wage war against the sentiments of Christendom. Mr. Hall thus explains the difference of circumstances in the apostolic age and now, to show why none but the baptized should then have been admitted to the Lord's table, and why the unbaptized may be admitted now. When the apostles refused the Supper to any but the baptized, he says:

"It was at a time when a mistake respecting the will of the Supreme Lawgiver on the subject of baptism was impossible; it was while a diversity of opinion relating to it could not exist. * * * * But in declining the communion of modern Pedit-baptists, however eminent their piety, there is really nothing analogous to their method of proceeding. The resemblance fails in its most essential features. In repelling an unbaptized person from their communion, supposing such a one to have presented himself, they would have repelled the violator of a known precept: he whom we refuse is at most chargeable only with mistaking it."*

There is a primary question underlying this specious statement of the case which must be adjusted—Did the apostles act in obedience to the Divine law? was their rejection of unbaptized persons in accordance with "the will of the Supreme Lawgiver?" We assume the affirmative. They were the agents of Heaven to establish the Church. They were clothed with miracle and filled with the Holy Spirit. He to whom was given all power in heaven and upon earth, was with them always. Besides, they "delivered" to the churches respecting what they "received of the Lord," as

3 * Ut Supra p. 214.

Paul said to the Corinthians. Hence the Apostle said to the churches: "Keep the ordinances AS I delivered them unto you." This he spake by the Spirit of God. No apostle, nor angel from heaven, had any right to institute practices and customs in the churches only as they received power from on high. They were the ambassadors of God. They were sent forth of him, to make known his will to a lost world. He had told them, first, to make disciples; second, to baptize them; and, third, to teach them to observe whatever had been commanded. There is not upon record a solitary instance where any apostle departed from this order. On the contrary, throughout the New Testament, wherever they went, we have multiplied instances of their faithful observance of it. The supposition seems almost impious that the apostles required the churches to observe a custom that had no divine warrant. We take it, then, for granted, as a case clearly established, that in administering the Supper only to persons baptized, the apostles acted in accordance with the will of the Supreme Lawgiver. Indeed, they must have acted agreeably to his will, or not according to it. To suppose the latter, is to suggest the probability that they may have acted so in all cases. And who, then, need obey their precepts or walk the paths they trod? Do we not thus cut loose from the New Testament as a guide, and throw ourselves on the ocean of conjecture, without rudder and compass—an ocean without a bottom and without a shore.

If, then, this custom of the apostolic churches was a consequence of a divine law—in obedience to the will of the Supreme Lawgiver—no dictate of human wisdom, no suggestion of human prudence could justify its change. It being a positive law, the reasons of it are known only to God. Such laws we must obey, simply because they are

commanded, and precisely as they are commanded. To depart from the order prescribed, is to violate the law. It being a divine positive institution, the apostles would not have admitted any unbaptized person to the Supper, on any plea of mistake. Mistakes may serve to excuse the person involved in them from the guilt of neglecting duty; but it can furnish no sort of plea for those who are not mistaken. Had a person come to the apostles who had not, and yet who supposed he had, been baptized, they knowing this, would have rejected his application for communion. The divine law would have required this at their hands. They could not act otherwise without violating the order instituted by the Head of the Church, and in contravention of the will of the Supreme Lawgiver. Nevertheless, the person mistaken, with others equally mistaken, might partake of the Lord's Supper, and perhaps be excused by the searcher of hearts. They would have discharged what they supposed to be required of them. The plea of ignorance, we say, might avail in this case; and it certainly would in extenuation. They knew no better. But the apostles would have known, that to admit unbaptized persons to the Supper was contrary to the law. They would, by the admission of the unbaptized, wilfully have disregarded the divine mandate.

And this law is just as binding and as sacred now as it was in the apostolic age. It has never been repealed or modified. Those who know the law have no right to violate it in deference to the mistakes of others. No matter how sincere and satisfied a person may be in his errors, it furnishes no excuse to one not mistaken, for disregarding a divine law. Let us grant, then, all that Mr. Hall can claim by way of premises, and still his conclusion, that because one good man may ignorantly violate a divine law, another good

man may wilfully violate it. Aye, Mr. Hall's logic must even drive him farther. His doctrine is not complete without the monstrous assumption, that it is the DUTY of Christians wilfully to disregard the express command of the Supreme Lawgiver for the accommodation of those who have mistaken that will. Free Communion Baptists know that the Pedo-baptists are not baptized; they know, too, that in the apostolic age unbaptized persons were not admitted to the Lord's Supper; and yet they insist that unbaptized persons ought to be admitted now. But for this they produce no scriptural precept or example. A *mistake* is their sole authority. If one is not mistaken on the mode and subject of baptism, and yet remains unbaptized, Mr. Hall says, "we have no hesitation in affirming that the individual is disqualified for Christian Communion." And because they could not have been mistaken in relation to baptism, he asserts, was the reason why the apostles refused communion to the unbaptized. He clearly substitutes human mistakes for a divine law! Or rather, a divine ordinance may be changed by those who know it, for the benefit of those who are ignorant of it! This would lead him to commune with any other unbaptized persons as well as Pedo-baptists. Indeed, it seems to us, to open the door for all the abominations of Popery.

But why stop with the mistake respecting baptism? Why not extend it to the thousands of other points which divide and distract Christendom? What "damned error" is there which may not boast its sincere and conscientious devotees—individuals who, so far as others are competent to ascertain, are eminently pious and God-fearing men? Who will venture to arrogate to himself so much of the prerogative of God as to say there are no regenerate and truly converted men—men who have a well-grounded hope of salvation—

even among Unitarians, Universalists, Papists, in a word, among the adherents of every creed? Then why deny the Lord's Supper to these? If the rejection of one of the ordinances of Jesus Christ—or of a mistake in relation to it leading to its utter neglect, or to the use of a burlesque substitute—be no barrier to fellowship, why should mistakes on points of theology, many of them confessedly hard to be understood, be magnified into matters of sufficient pith and moment to debar all approach to the Lord's table? If there are any guards to the Lord's table, what are they and where are they, if those be destroyed and discarded which were established by the Redeemer and sacredly maintained by his apostles? But we are not disposed to be more lenient to mistakes than were the apostles. Mr. Hall argues as if there was less excuse for misunderstanding the doctrine and ordinances of the gospel in the apostolic than in the present age. This is sheer assumption. We know from the apostolic epistles, that among professed Christians many startling and damnable heresies obtained. Then the Supper of the Lord was made a drunken revel in Corinth—a church that had enjoyed the teachings of Paul, Peter, and Apollos. They made the cup of the Lord the cup of demons. They did not discern the Lord's body. There were those, too, who denied the resurrection. Others taught justification by works. Others, again, taught that Christians should be circumcised and keep the whole law of Moses. In short, the mystery of iniquity did already work. What abominations had crept into the churches of Asia while yet John lived, the first chapters of the Revelation show. Hence, the position of Mr. Hall, that no one could be mistaken on the subject of baptism in that age, is only a conjecture. It has no support from the Bible. And the assertion is nothing less

than that the Scriptures given by inspiration of God are insufficient for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. It is an impeachment of the benevolence and philanthropy of God to charge that he instituted ordinances for our observance in language so obscure and ambiguous that we could not certainly learn our duty. But the Free Communion Baptists will not assume this. To them baptism, in its mode and subjects, is as clear and as intelligible as if written in letters of light on the archway of the heavens. None of them is so dull that he can not understand it. Indeed, we do not see how the matter could be more plain or palpable. What other words, and phrases, and illustrations could be employed, than those of the inspired pensman, to make the ordinance of baptism more fully understood? Mr. Hall's position is not unlike that of the rich man in the parable—he would have the apostles raised from the dead to correct the errors of Pedobaptists; but if they will not believe the New Testament, neither would they be persuaded though one arose from the dead. A mistake, forsooth! There is no mistake in the case. The Pedobaptists all know that immersion is baptism. They know, too, that a believer is a proper subject of baptism. On these points they entertain no doubts. These things are conceded by all Christendom. No man has ever disputed them. They admit of no discussion. The practice of Baptists furnishes common ground from which the conscience of no Christian repels him, where all can meet in perfect concord and with full assurance of being right. The Pedobaptists can come to this ground without any sacrifice of principle; the Baptists can not leave it without renouncing their allegiance to the King of Saints, and casting away

as worthless what they esteem the righteous requisitions of the sacred Scriptures. And here is the true and scriptural place of communion. If disunion be a sin—if separation at the Lord's table be contrary to the gospel—on the Pedo-baptists must rest all the consequences. They refuse to come to the point where all might meet and fraternize, not because they believe that the Scriptures forbid it, but simply because they prefer what they call a “non-essential” to the union of the body of Christ!

Mistaken as to baptism! It was thirteen hundred years before any portion of the Pedo-baptist world brought themselves fully into this mistake. It was not until 1311, at the Council of Ravenna, that the Pedo-baptists declared affusion to be as good as immersion. This never was declared by the Church of England; but the practice of sprinkling, imported from Geneva, prevailed there against the Rubric, in the reign of Elizabeth. The Presbyterians were the first in the world to prescribe affusion absolutely. Every church allows immersion. Thousands in the Pedo-baptist churches at this day, entered by immersion, because they would enter no other way. A person may repudiate his sprinkling and his baptism in infancy by joining the Baptists, and still retain the fellowship of the Pedo-baptists. Infant baptism is falling into neglect in the United States. By the more evangelical Pedo-baptists it is represented merely as the solemn sprinkling of water in the faces of babes and sucklings, conferring no grace or strength, and worthless to their souls and bodies. Granting the mistake, then, they can not escape just and severe censure for obstinate adherence to customs which they hold in no great esteem, and yet cleave to them even to the schism of the churches.

Mr. Hall, speaking of the immersion of believers, says:

“The evidence by which our views are supported, though sufficient for every practical purpose, is decidedly inferior to that which accompanied their first promulgation. The utmost we can pretend to is a very high probability; the primitive converts possessed an absolute certainty.”*

But the primitive converts possessed no other evidence than we possess. The word of God is perfect. We have a sure word of prophecy. But take the concession—if we have testimony sufficient for all “practical purposes,” why tolerate a mistake to the nullification of the law. Mr. Hall, in his further efforts to evade the force of scriptural precept and example, attempts to show that the circumstances surrounding the apostles were different from those surrounding us, and that the spirit which actuated their conduct was the same which controls Free Communion Baptists:

“The apostles refused the communion of such, and such only, as were insincere—‘who held the truth in unrighteousness,’ avowing their conviction of one system and acting upon another; and wherever similar indications display themselves, we do precisely the same. They admitted the weak and erroneous, providing their errors were not of a nature subversive of Christianity; and so do we. They tolerated men whose sentiments differed from their own, providing they did not rear the standard of revolt by a deliberate resistance to the only infallible authority; and such precisely is the course we pursue. We bear with those who mistake the dictates of inspiration in points which are not essential; but with none who wilfully contradict or neglect them.”†

But it was the business of Mr. Hall to show that they admitted to communion any who did not, from any cause,

* Ut supra, p. 213.

† Ut supra, pp. 215, 216.

comply with a plain and positive law of God. It is confessed they admitted no unbaptized person to the Lord's Supper. We have shown that this conduct was in obedience to a divine law. We can not believe that any amiability of character, that any sincerity in error however deep, would, in their judgments, have furnished the slightest excuse for their deliberate disregard of this law. The violation of a law by one person, no matter from what cause, never authorized its violation by another. The apostles and all the holy men of old were very scrupulous in their observance of the laws of Christ. We have not an example upon record where they justified or excused the slightest disobedience or neglect of the heavenly institutions. They never tolerated any sentiment which led them to disregard the will of the Supreme Lawgiver; nor do we believe they would have regarded infant baptism as a trivial error or an innocent mistake. Mr. Hall seems all along to take it for granted that they would. In this he assumes the main point demanding proof. We utterly deny the assumption. Mr. Hall had surely forgotten the history of infant baptism; a system, the natural and necessary tendency of which was to obliterate the lines of demarkation between the church and the world—to unite church and state—to remove the distinction between those who served God and those who served him not. Infant baptism is the pillar of Popery. That monstrous superstructure of fraud and folly could not survive two generations, if infant baptism did not support it. By that rite, in each generation, not less than one hundred millions of persons become the subjects of the Pope. Millions per annum are kidnapped in their cradles and made the vassals of other churches and creeds, by what Mr. Hall is pleased rhetorically to class among "the points not essential." And for

what reason is infant baptism administered to others? Why, as taught in all Pedeo-baptist creeds, as a sign and a seal of regeneration and salvation—to make the infant a member of the church and an heir of glory, &c. And will Free Communion Baptists presume to tell us, that they are walking in the footsteps of the apostles regarding these things as matters of no serious moment? A rite that carnalizes and secularizes the church; that places regeneration and justification in the act of sprinkling water in the face of an unconscious infant; that upholds Popery, and has deluged the world with blood and irreligion; is this an error “not subversive of Christianity,” and would it be so regarded by the apostles?

With these qualifications we subscribe unhesitatingly to the declamation of Mr. Hall last quoted, respecting the forbearance and toleration to be extended to human imperfection. The Close Communion Baptists go the full limit allowed by the Bible on this subject. No people have exceeded them in kindly feelings and treatment towards those they believed in error. They have always gone with persons of every persuasion just as far as the word of God would let them. They have ever been the fearless and unwavering advocates of religious and civil liberty. Their garments are unstained by the blood of martyrs. But they never believed it right to tolerate a disregard of a divine law, or the neglect of a gospel ordinance. Even in the face of death and persecution the most terrible and unrelenting, have they refused to connive at the subversion of the most distinguishing peculiarities of the New Testament dispensation, by that monster engine of evil, error, and corruption, infant baptism. In this, they have the warrant of Scripture and the approval of heaven. They have in this but obeyed the precepts, to

observe the ordinances as delivered to them, and to contend earnestly for the faith delivered to the saints. Mr. Hall, however, seems disposed to change his grounds. He seems to assume that the Lord's Supper ought to precede Baptism. Speaking of the two ordinances, he says:

“That there is no *natural* connection between them is obvious. They were instituted at different times and for different purposes: Baptism is a mode of professing our faith in the blessed Trinity, the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the dying love of the Redeemer; the former is the act of an individual, the latter of a society. The words which contain our warrant for the celebration of the Eucharist convey no allusion to baptism whatever; those which prescribe baptism carry no anticipative reference to the Eucharist. And as it is demonstrable that John's baptism was a separate institution from that which was enacted after our Lord's resurrection, the Lord's Supper is evidently *anterior* to Baptism, and the original communicants consisted entirely of such as had not received that ordinance. To all appearance, the rites in question rest on independent grounds. But *perhaps* there is a special connection between the two, arising from *divine appointment*. If this be the case, it will be easy to point it out. Rarely, if ever, are they mentioned together, and on no occasion is it asserted or insinuated, that the validity of the sacrament depends on the previous observation of the baptismal ceremony. That there was such a connection between circumcision and the pass-over, we learn from the explicit declaration of Moses, who asserts that ‘no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.’ Let a similar prohibition be produced in the present instance, and the controversy is at an end.”*

* Pp. 218, 219.

A very plain statement of the case will dissipate this specious structure of beautiful words and sentences. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of divine appointment. Being positive institutions, they are to be observed precisely as commanded. If not observed as commanded, they are not observed at all. Positive institutions and sacramental ordinances are not founded in the nature of things, but solely in the pleasure of him who ordains them. He institutes them precisely as he wishes them to be observed. To change or alter them in any respect, is to distrust his wisdom and even to repeal his enactments. Hence the Supper was to be observed by eating bread and drinking wine. We have no right, therefore, to substitute cheese or beefsteak for the former, or milk, or soup, or water, for the latter. A supper in these elements would not be the Lord's Supper; and to celebrate it thus would be to insult the Redeemer by pouring contempt upon his commands. And so of baptism. If it is commanded to be performed in the name of the Trinity, it can not be performed in any other name. If by immersion in water, that is no baptism which is performed by sprinkling or pouring, or when any thing else than water is the element. And if believers are the subjects of the ordinance, then infidels and infants are not. We disregard the law of the ordinance in neglecting or departing from any thing commanded by it. To neglect the law, even by mistaking its import, is no observance of the law. If mistakes were admitted as a justification for departing from the law of a sacrament, then men's erring judgments become the substitutes of the divine pleasure, and human blunders may supercede the commands of Jesus Christ.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper being positive divine insti-

tutions, it follows, that if not observed as commanded, they are not observed at all. And further, as they both are commanded, they are of equal obligation. Mr. Hall, without asserting it to be so, nevertheless seems to give pre-eminence to the Supper. But for this, there is no warrant in reason or revelation. Jesus Christ instituted both ordinances, and he emphatically commands the observance of both. No provision is any where made in the Scriptures for the neglect of either. And if both are to be observed, it is equally clear that they are not to be observed at the same time. One must take precedence. The question is, Which ought to be first administered, according to the Scriptures? This settled, and all urged above respecting "*natural connection*," and John's baptism, and the time of their institution, become trifles light as air. And in answering this question, we must again appeal to the commission and to apostolic practice. By these, we learn that baptism was the first duty of a believer. This is established by the whole tenor of the New Testament. To give it any other place, to put it after any other sacrament or church privilege, is to destroy its whole import and design. In baptism we publicly profess our faith in Jesus Christ; we publicly put on Christ; we are buried into his death, and arise to walk in newness of life; we declare that we are dead to sin, and that our sins are remitted. Hence, in the natural order of things, the Savior directed that after believers were baptized into the name of the Trinity, they should be instructed to observe all things. The apostles so interpreted the commission. It can not admit of any other interpretation. Such, then, is the order of heaven. We can not, we dare not change that order. We have no right to legislate for the church. We should gainsay an angel if he should presume to alter or amend this last great

commandment of the Savior. We will not, because we need not, waste a word in comment upon Mr. Hall's views of John's baptism, "natural connection," &c. We plant ourselves on the commission and on the practice of the apostles, and defy all the fiery darts of the adversary. The gates of hell can not prevail against us.

Indeed, if baptism is not to be observed previous to the Lord's Supper; if, in a word, Mr. Hall's arguments have the specific gravity of a feather, why need we baptize any one? He makes void this law of baptism, by his speculative notions of the Supper. And if men may disregard so much of the commission as relates to baptism, why not that portion of it which requires the gospel to be preached and men to believe? And if the Supper may be observed by those not baptized, why not by those who do not believe? And if the oblivious veil of charity must be thrown over men erring in reference to the command respecting baptism, why not over those who err respecting the divinity of Christ, the nature of his atonement, &c.? Whenever men depart from the law of Christ—whenever they begin to legislate for God—they desert the guidance of heaven, and follow an *ignus fatuus* of earth, involving all in bewilderment and delusion.

Mr. Hall demands that a prohibition be produced from the Scriptures against the unbaptized! And with equal propriety he might demand the production of precept against the communion of Infidels, Unitarians, Universalists, Quakers, Papists, &c. If this demand be legitimate, then none are prohibited the Lord's Supper. But the burden of proof was on him. It was his business to produce authority for the admission of the unbaptized. Until he could do this, he was contending for a practice that had no scriptural warrant. He was acting without law. He was inviting per-

sons to the Lord's table whom the Lord had not invited, and whom he had told no one to invite. The presumption is, if the Lord had wished such to partake, he would have said so. That he has not so done, is manifest to all men. Mr. Hall does not pretend to allege any such declaration. His whole effort is an attempt to apologize for the fact that neither the Savior nor his apostles made any provision for the communion of those who he insists ought to commune. He seems to argue as if he had a right to fill a blank left in the commission and in the acts of the Apostles. The argument, however, is fallacious in the extreme, to insist that because the law does not prohibit, therefore it authorizes—that an act is lawful because the law is silent in relation to it. We have adduced precept and example for communion of the baptized; our work is done. The admission of such to the Lord's Supper is settled. Their scriptural right is established. If Mr. Hall, or any one else, claims that others ought to be admitted, it is our right to demand the authority. We appeal to the law and the testimony. On them devolves the duty of producing a divine warrant for their conduct. They have no more right to ask us to commune with any one without scriptural authority, than has the Pope to require us to kiss his toe or bow in adoration of the host. These things are self-evident to Protestants, and need no proof to sustain them.

Granting, then, for the sake of argument (and we beg leave to say, emphatically, it is only for that reason we do grant it), that in its institution, the Savior administered the Supper to those who had not received Christian baptism; as that was its beginning, it proves nothing. The question is, What directions did he give his disciples when its administration was committed to their hands? The first Supper

was not celebrated in commemoration of the broken body and spilled blood of the Saviour; for then his body had not been broken nor his blood poured out. But is that any reason against the law then enacted, that all future celebrations should be for that purpose? Our legislature grants a charter to a company. In it are enumerated a dozen men who are made a company, and provisions are made to perpetuate that company. It is enacted, that any one who shall contribute one hundred dollars may become a member. Now, although the men mentioned in the charter may never have contributed one cent, that fact could not be urged for the admission of similar persons in future; for the law provides, that to become a member hereafter, one must contribute one hundred dollars. So, no matter whether those who partook of the first Supper were baptized or not, if the commission requires baptism as the first duty of the believer—a duty that must precede the Supper—the question is settled by a divine statute. Why, Mr. Hall might just as well argue, that inasmuch as these disciples never received any thing else but John's baptism—which we have his unsupported affirmation was not Christian baptism—therefore all ought to receive John's baptism, or else no baptism at all! Turn the matter as you will or can—say there is no “peculiar connection” between Baptism and the Supper—that they were instituted at different times and for different purposes—and whatever else the ingenuity of Mr. Hall may suggest or his eloquence embellish—the fact flashes in our face wherever we turn in the New Testament, that to observe these ordinances as established by heaven, the believer must be baptized, and then he may come to the Lord's Supper. So Jesus taught, and so the apostles believed and practiced. Any other order is not from above. It is of man, and not of God.

“Nothing can be more evident,” says Mr. Hall, “than that the whole genius of Christianity is favorable to the most cordial and affectionate treatment of our fellow-Christians. To love them fervently, to bear with their imperfections, and to cast the mantle of forgiveness over their infirmities, is to fulfil the law of Christ.”*

This is most true. Every strict Baptist utters a hearty *amen* to it. It is deeply to be regretted that a departure from this spirit is the most marked feature in the history of infant baptism. But, of course, in extending this forbearance, and in unfolding and spreading this mantle of forgiveness, it is not meant that we ought to violate a commandment of the head of the church, and blot from existence a sacrament of the New Testament—that we should cover up the sins of others by committing sins ourselves. If this be not meant, then it furnishes no warrant for the admission of the unbaptized to the Lord’s Supper, contrary to the positive requisition of the statute of Jesus upon earth.

“The next question is,” continues our opponent, “Whether a formal separation from them [pious Pede-baptists or unbaptized persons] on account of their imputed errors, amounts to what the Scriptures style *schism*?”† And on the next page he answers this question, and charges the sin upon the strict Baptists: “It deserves the serious consideration of our opponents, that are *contending* for that schism in the body of Christ against which he so fervently prayed, so anxiously guarded, and which his apostles represent as its greatest calamity and reproach.”

But Mr. Hall does not believe or charge, that the Baptists, either by mistake or otherwise, fail in their observance of the institutions of the gospel. He even grants and insists that

* P. 220.

† Ibid.

they observe the New Testament order of things. He concedes that our practice is in exact accordance with the command of Jesus and the custom of the apostles. Now, is it not perverting all language and mocking all the proprieties of speech, to call that *schism* which is obedience to Christ and the fellowship of his apostles? He admits that our practice is in accordance with that of the apostles; that, were our days rolled back to the days of the primitive Christians, our action would perfectly agree with theirs; that our custom would produce no schism in the apostolic churches. But he admits the conduct of the Pede-baptists would have produced schism in those days; that the apostles could not, and did not, admit the unbaptized to the Lord's table. He doubtless believed, too, that these holy and inspired men would have looked upon sprinkling as mockery, and the baptism of an infant as impiety. Then the *schism* in the case, by a fair and necessary deduction from his own premises, falls in all the crushing weight of its iniquity upon the Pede-baptists, and not upon the Baptists. For the true test of schism, we must go back to the days when men taught and acted by inspiration. We must appeal to the fountain sources of our religion, ere their waters were corrupted by the wicked inventions and silly superstitions of men. There we go, and we find that the Baptists would be in perfect fellowship with the saints of that age, and that Pede-baptists would not. The Pede-baptists would be separated from them, Mr. Hall being witness. And yet he calls the former schismatics, and the latter he holds up as the sincere and anxious advocates and promoters of the purity of the body of Christ.

If we understand the unity inculcated in the Bible, it consists in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," &c. But Mr.

Hall wants a union by the omission of the "one baptism." He erases that item from the terms of general union as established by heaven. Aye, he charges those who adhere to the "one baptism" as *schismatics*, and claims for himself the championship of union by seeking to obliterate it from the gospel church! Pedo-baptists have no baptism according to our opponent. He would commune with them as "*unbaptized*" persons. He insists that baptism is not essential to communion; and yet the apostle tells us that Christian communion consists in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," &c.! But Mr. Hall has not told us why communion is not as important in baptism as the Supper. If both are divine sacraments, was it schismatical not to commune in the latter, any more than not to commune in the former? Here is the real place to seek communion. Let communion obtain in baptism, and the greatest barrier to communion in the Supper is subverted. And communion in baptism can be effected by the Pedo-baptists without any sacrifice of conscience, as before demonstrated. The exhortations against schisms, so eloquently and so pathetically made by Mr. Hall, ought, then, to have been pressed upon those Pedo-baptists whose piety and purity he so highly commends, and whose affection and fellowship he is so anxious to secure and cherish. He builds his free communion system upon a wrong foundation—his temple is constructed with the bottom upwards—the monument of love and union he has so gorgeously adorned is an inverted pyramid.

"Say," exclaims Mr. Hall, "did the apostles refuse the communion of good men? Did they set the example of dividing them into two classes, a qualified and a disqualified class; and while they acknowledged the latter were objects of divine favor equally with themselves, enjoin on their con-

verts the duty of disowning them at the Lord's table? Are any traces to be discovered in the New Testament of a society of *Purists*, who, under the pretence of superior illumination on one subject, kept themselves aloof from the Christian world, excluding from their communion myriads of those whom they believed to be heirs of salvation?"*

Mr. Hall uses the word "communion" here in the sense of a joint participation of the Lord's Supper. It is never so used in the Bible. This premised, we remark, in reply, First. That the apostles refused to invite all good men to the Lord's table who were not baptized. Jesus had so commanded, and they were not of those who would violate the least of his commandments to please either good or bad men. They chose to obey God rather than man, even in the face of persecution and death. Second. They did separate the baptized from the unbaptized; admitting the former to the Supper, and rejecting all the latter, whether good or bad. Mr. Hall admits this in confessing that they admitted only the baptized. Third. No matter how much they may have esteemed an individual the object of divine favor, their whole lives show that no partiality for persons and no charms of popularity could seduce them into a violation of the laws of their Master, or the utter disregard of the "one baptism." The apostles were just such a "Society of *Purists*" as the strict Baptists, respecting the Lord's Supper. They would not have admitted an angel from heaven without the Lord's authority to do so. They would have suffered any torture, and met the last enemy in his most appalling shape, rather than have violated the laws Jesus had instituted for his kingdom—rather than break down one defense which he had put up to preserve the purity of his table. Fourth.

* P. 222.

The apostles, under "the pretence of superior illumination" on the subject of "one baptism," with which our opponent sneeringly reproaches us, made it a term of Christian communion, and separated themselves from the whole world of those who did not conform to that institution. They loved the word of the Lord more than popularity. They knew their divine Master loved obedience more than all burnt offerings. For this they were reproached, reviled, hated of all men, and grievously persecuted. But they fainted not; nay, they rejoiced because counted worthy of persecution for the Lord's sake.

"The revival or propagation of some particular truth being the avowed object of their union," argues Mr. Hall, in reference to the Baptists, "the members of such a society will almost inevitably attach to it an undue importance; and as their attention will be chiefly directed towards that in which they differ from others, and in which they are conceived to excel, it will be a miracle if they escape a censorious, conceited, disputatious spirit. While their constitution is founded not so much on a separation from the world as from the church, they will be almost irresistibly tempted to transfer to the latter a large portion of the associations and feelings of which the former is the proper object."*

A Free Communion Baptist is, in spirit and feeling, no Baptist at all. He not only discards whatever makes us Baptists, but he can not get along without misrepresenting our system and sentiments, and making it palpable to every one that he cherishes for us feelings of contempt, and loves all others better than those whose name he bears and to whose association he affects to belong. The above extract furnishes a melancholy example in proof of this, in the writ-

* Pp. 222, 223.

ings of the most gifted and the most celebrated free communionist. He ought to have known, that the avowed object of the union of the Baptists was, not the revival and propagation of the primitive baptism solely. Such an avowal was never made by the Baptists. They have ever avowed that their union was founded on the principles of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the head of the church. They believed that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, that the church should be entirely separate from the world, and that they should reject from its government all those rules of prudence which human wisdom had suggested and ordained. Besides, the enmity of Mr. Hall is manifest, in representing the Baptists as separate from the church, simply because they follow Christ, and will not fellowship human institutions to the subversion of the institutions of Christ. What does Mr. Hall mean by "the church?" Is it any one, or is it the combination of all the Pedo-baptist establishments? And if these be the church, where is it that the Baptists separate from them except where the Scriptures bid them separate? Mr. Hall would not sprinkle or pour water on a person in the name of the Trinity. He would not baptize an unconscious babe. In these things, then, he separated from "the church," in his own sense of that term; and in this separation was he not just as wrong and wicked as he represents his brethren to be, for separating from the unbaptized at the Lord's table, as Jesus commanded and the apostles practised? He condemns his brethren in the very thing which he allows. And his conclusion, that the Baptists *must* attach too much importance to baptism, is emphatically contradicted by their whole history. It is notorious that they only give it the same prominence which it has in the New Testament, while

the Pedo-baptists give it much more. The Baptists baptize none but believers; they practice but one mode. Pedo-baptists baptize believers and infants, and they practice three modes. The former teach that baptism is a sign of regeneration and remission of sins; the latter affirm, that it is a sign and a seal of these great blessings to adults and infants, and that by the ordinance a person is made a member of the church and an heir of God. The whole statement of Mr. Hall is in conflict with the truth.

Mr. Hall quotes from the Epistle to the Romans (chapter 14): "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves," &c., and thus comments:

"A moment's attention to the connection will convince the reader that the term *weak* in both passages denotes persons whose conceptions are erroneous, for the inspired writer is not adverting to the different degrees of conviction with which the same truths are embraced, but to a palpable difference of judgment. Thus far the case decided is precisely similar to that under present discussion; our difference from the Pedo-baptists turns on the nature and obligation of a positive institution. The error of which St. Paul enjoined the toleration consisted in adhering to certain ceremonies which had been abrogated; the error with which we are concerned consists in mistaking a ceremony which is still in force. Neither of the ancient nor of the modern error is it pretended that they are fundamental, or that they endanger the salvation of those who hold them. Thus far they stand on the same footing, and the presumption is they ought to be treated in the same manner. Before we come to this conclusion, however, it behoves us to examine the *principle* upon which the apostle enjoins toleration, and if this is

applicable in its full extent to our Pede-baptist brethren, no room is left for doubt. The *principle* plainly is, that the error in question was not of sufficient magnitude as to preclude him who maintained it from the favor of God. * * * If such is the reason assigned for mutual toleration—and it is acknowledged to be a sufficient one—which none can deny without impeaching the inspiration of the writer, it is so conclusive respecting the obligation of tolerating every error which is consistent with a state of salvation, as if that error had been mentioned by name; and as few, if any, are to be met with who doubt the piety of many Pede-baptists, it not only justifies their reception, but renders it an indispensable duty.”*

Strange that a disputant, so able and so adroit as Mr. Hall, did not see that the conclusions of Paul were wholly unlike his own, even granting that they were deduced from the same premises. The apostle, for example, does not urge those who believed it right to eat meat, to eat only herbs in deference to those who believed any other food sinful. Nor did he insist that those who believed one day holier than another, should, as they believed, desecrate the day because others esteemed every day alike. On the contrary, he taught them if they did what they believed to be wrong in such cases, they were condemned. “He that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” His exhortation was, not that they should all eat together, or all observe the same days, for he declares that this could not be without sin; but let them each act according to their conscience, and not one party condemn the other as sinners for merely following their judgments in matters very trivial at best. But not so

* Pp. 223, 224.

argues Mr. Hall. The Pedo-baptists believe that sprinkling water in the face of an unconscious babe, is a fulfilment of the command: "Make disciples of the nations, baptizing them," &c.,—that is, that such a ceremony is Christian baptism. The Baptists believe it is not baptism. Now, Mr. Hall comes, but not like Paul, to urge us to mutual forbearance; but to tell us that the Pedo-baptists are not baptized indeed, but that we ought to treat them as if they were, and consider them as baptized. In other words, we ought to regulate our consciences by theirs! Our convictions of what is right, and what he grants to be scriptural and divine, he would have us cast to the moles and the bats, that we may please those in error! Our doubts will not injure us, as the apostle argues. We may act without faith, and treat as true what we most assuredly believe to be false! What could be more opposite to the apostolic doctrines?

Again: The apostle is arguing in favor of a friendly separation in practice. Mr. Hall quotes him as if he urged them to eat the same things and observe the same days. Paul urged forbearance, but not conformity, to the sentiments of the weak; Mr. Hall insists upon absolute conformity. Paul forbid any action subversive of full and settled conviction, and shows that such action would involve awful guilt; Mr. Hall urges that such an action is a sacred duty, and commends it as divinely amiable in its ends and impulses.

Nor do the conclusions of Mr. Hall, in their consequences, end here. Paul was arguing in relation to matters respecting the observance of which, there was no real obligation. They were matters of indifference—of mere whim or fancy. They had no divine obligation, and involved no precept or practice authorized by divine sanction. Mr. Hall admits

this; and concludes hence, that a divine command should be esteemed as a matter of indifference—that a sacrament of the New Testament ordained by Jesus Christ belongs to the same category with the meats and days mentioned by the apostle as mere matters of whim or fancy! And if this is true of baptism—if baptism into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, may be regarded as a thing indifferent; why, so may the Lord's Supper. It, too, is a positive institution. It can claim no holier origin nor an authority more divine than can baptism. Then why all this ado about the Eucharist? Seeing there is so much controversy about it, why not neglect its celebration altogether? Why not say of it what Paul said of days: if Christians regard the Supper, they regard it unto the Lord; and if they regard not the Supper, to the Lord they do not regard it? Upon his own principles, all Mr. Hall's earnest declamation on the Eucharist, is a most farcical ado about nothing!

But upon what principles can Mr. Hall or any other man insist, that the advocacy and the practice of infant sprinkling is an "error consistent with the state of salvation, and which, consequently, it is our indispensable duty to tolerate? Do the Scriptures any where teach that the violation of any of the commandments of God is a harmless error? Is not the duty to believe and be baptized as sacred and as divine as the duty to observe the Sabbath and to forbear the adoration of images? And how many millions have been involved in awful and guilty delusion by the mummery of infant sprinkling? Multitudes at this day—perhaps much the largest proportion of those who bear the Christian name—believe that the water sprinkled upon them in unconscious infancy, regenerated their souls, made them members of the church and heirs of salvation; and upon this fatal and monstrous

error they are building their hopes for the eternal world of joy and peace. And is it our "indispensable duty" to commune with this delusion? to bid welcome to a system that has sent its untold millions to perdition, and is still leading millions more into certain and eternal destruction—a system that ignores the cardinal truths of Christianity, and teaches its victims that a mere rite performed upon an unconscious infant, does that which the Bible assures us can only be effected by the spirit of grace? The history of the rite shows, that infant sprinkling has, according to its prevalence, been as pregnant in its baleful influences, and as ruinous to the spiritual interests of men, as even idolatry itself. It has not only mislead its millions into fatal and everlasting mistakes, but it has superseded believers' baptism, united church and state, brought reproach upon the kingdom of the Messiah, and filled the world with blood and errors. It is the pillar of Popery. By it whole nations indiscriminately, without any regard to moral character—drunkards, debauchees, liars, swearers, cheats, and knaves, together with the virtuous and the good—are mingled in a common membership, and regarded alike as constituent portions of the true church of God visible upon earth. And are we to be told that it is our "indispensable duty" to commune with all these? And this we must do, upon the principles of Mr. Hall.

Or must we draw a distinction between true and false Pedo-baptism? Must we affect that puritanism so hateful in the eyes of Mr. Hall, and commune with one kind of infant baptism and reject another? If so, what is this but close communion? Mr. H. is careful all the time to speak of the "piety of many Pedo-baptists." He is eulogistic of their zeal for the truth and their reverence for revelation.

And perhaps it is only to such he would extend the emblems of the Eucharist. But why should he stop here? By what authority does he do these things? Having discarded the letter of the commission and the practice of the apostles, and led us to seek another than the light of the Bible as the rule of our conduct, by what rule would he have us observe the Lord's Supper? He must become our lawgiver, and prescribe the conduct we must adopt towards those who may claim admission to the sacred table. Would he admit all who profess the Christian name, and assert their right to partake of the Eucharist? If not, what portion would he exclude? If he would admit only the pious and the good, how are we to ascertain who these are? And then there is such a variety of sentiment on this particular subject. One generation has canonized some as saints, which another generation has loathed and rejected as imposters, enthusiasts, fanatics, or monsters of iniquity. Protestants and Baptists differ immensely in their estimates of Christian character; and even among the most earnest and orthodox opponents of Popery, there does not exist any great harmony of sentiment in relation to this point. The Lutheran, the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Methodist, could never agree upon a standard of Christian deportment. And perhaps the rules which may have regulated Mr. Hall's proceedings, would receive little favor from any other man in Christendom. And we can not tell but he might draw puritanical lines among the Pedo-baptists—separating the precious from the vile—that even the Pedo-baptists would disallow.

Baptists, we again affirm, are not mistaken on the baptismal question. They profess to know and to do the will of God. It is their duty, of course, to be kind and forbear-

ing to those in error on this subject; but it would be criminal in them to encourage even the most amiable and sincere Christian to violate the least commandment of God. They dare not teach men that it is a light thing to disregard a solemn institution of the gospel. They would be recreant to the truth and unfaithful stewards of the manifold riches of Christ, if they were to fellowship the abominations of infant baptism, or in any way sanction the burlesque rite of sprinkling. Sprinkling may, to the unpracticed eye, wear all the innocence and harmlessness of the lamb, but it speaks like a dragon. At this hour it closes the hands of thousands of benevolent Christians, who would, if not hindered, give the Bible to the millions perishing in Burmah. The sacred Scriptures, in languages of the Burmese and other nations of India, have been translated, teaching the heathen the way of life and salvation; but the friends of sprinkling will not aid in their circulation, because in them baptism is rendered by a word signifying immersion. And yet these same persons declare that the mode of baptism is a non-essential, and are wont constantly to fellowship those who have been immersed! So blinding are the influences of sprinkling, that it makes a non-essential more important than the salvation of souls.

Mr. Hall charges us with being inconsistent, because we fellowship the Pedo-baptists in some things, and yet not at the Lord's table. He says:

“In a variety of instances they indulge themselves in those acts of communion with Pedo-baptists which are peculiar to Christians: they frequently make them their mouth in addressing the Deity; they exchange pulpits; and even engage their assistance in exercises intended as a preparation for the eucharist; and after lighting the flame of devotion at

their torch, they most preposterously turn round to inform them they are not worthy to participate. It would be difficult to convince a stranger to our practice that it were possible to be guilty of such an absurdity."*

These censures are as unjust as they are unkind and uncharitable. There is no inconsistency—nothing preposterous or absurd in the instance supposed. The Baptists are wont to cultivate feelings of Christian courtesy and kindness towards all who wear the name of their Master, and especially towards such as manifest his spirit. In a word, they walk with every man in the things of religion, just as far as the Bible permits, and no farther. There is not a hint in the Scriptures that it is not the duty of the Pedobaptists, as well as every man, to pray. Is there any thing absurd or preposterous, then, in Baptists inviting them to pray—to discharge a sacred duty to God and their own souls? And then, too, it is the duty of every man who loves Jesus, and can, to preach the gospel. We are not of those to hinder others from doing good in the name of the Lord because they walk not with us. But rather, if the gospel be preached, no matter if from envy and strife, we ought to rejoice, and we do rejoice, that it is preached. This is in perfect accordance with Bible precept and practice. We have a divine warrant from it. There is not an intimation in all the Bible to deter any conscientious and consistent Christian from laboring with any and every man, when he may do so without violating a divine precept. And we would cheerfully go with such persons to the Lord's table, did not the Lord himself ordain otherwise.

The parallel attempted by Mr. H. is no parallel. There is not the slightest analogy in the cases. The Baptists, in

each case, act in perfect accordance with the Scriptures. To establish the charge of inconsistency, it was incumbent upon him to show that in the matter of inviting pious Pedo-baptists to pray and preach, and engage in similar religious exercises, we annulled a positive ordinance of the gospel and discarded the whole tenor of apostolic practice. But this is not pretended. Then we are consistent, and the charge to the contrary is preposterous and absurd. We take the Bible as the man of our counsel in both cases. Its light illumines our pathway, and walking by it, our conduct must be right, and, consequently, consistent.

But, could this charge of inconsistency be established, it would not follow that unbaptized persons ought to be admitted to the Lord's table. Such admission would nullify the divine law, which makes it imperative that believers should be baptized before entering into the church or enjoying its privileges. The utmost such logic could accomplish would be the discontinuance of those courtesies and of so much of Christian communion as more abundantly obtain among the Baptists and the Pedo-baptist, than among the Pedo-baptists in their associations with each other. It could do this and no more. For, until the right to abolish the law of baptism can be maintained, whether for communion or any other purpose, Mr. Hall utterly fails to make any progress in his cause, except by specious sophistry and sounding declamation. He must show his authority as a nullifier of a divine law—produce his right divine to obliterate from the gospel commission the ordinance of baptism as instituted by him who had all power in heaven and upon earth, or his conquest is a barren heath. And if he may thus “change times and laws” like the prophetic anti-christ—if he may nullify this law—why not all the com-

mandments of the Decalogue; aye, why not discard the Bible, condemn every thing which Jesus commanded, and assume to be the lawgiver and king in Zion? *His* consistency will force him thus far. Baptists walk with the Pedo-baptists as far as the Bible will let them. They go on in friendship and fellowship until they come near to the Lord's table as the Lord himself set it out. It is on the other side of the water. The Baptists go through the water in obedience to the divine command. The Pedo-baptists will not go through the water. Mr. Hall says, that the Baptists ought to turn back, and remove the table from the place where the Lord placed it when he was about to ascend into heaven, to accommodate those who will not go through the water. And because the Baptists will not do this—because they will not alter and change what God has established—Mr. Hall raises the cry of inconsistency and charges that their conduct is absurd and preposterous, because they walk voluntarily with the Pedo-baptists where the Bible tells them to walk, but will not walk where it forbids. May the Lord make them yet more famous for *such* inconsistency. But he charges inconsistency upon the Baptists from another consideration:

“They acknowledge that many Pedo-baptists stand high in the favor of God; enjoy intimate communion with the Redeemer; and would, on their removal hence, be instantaneously admitted to glory. Now, it seems the suggestion of common sense, that the greater includes the less, that they who have a title to the most sublime privileges of Christianity, the favor of God, the fellowship of Christ, and the hope of glory, must be unquestionably entitled to that ordinance whose sole design is to prepare us for the perfect fruition of these blessings.”*

* P. 226.

This is one of those logical fallacies which prove nothing, because they prove too much. We suppose it is acknowledged, that what is here assumed as true of "many Pedo-baptists," may just as well be assumed as true of "many" who never belonged to any religious persuasions, and of "many" who belong to all religious persuasions. Thus not only is the ordinance of baptism annulled, but the church itself is demolished. Persons out of the church—Papists, Armenians, Greeks, and every denomination—have the right to partake of the Lord's Supper if they are supposed to be fit for heaven. Nay, it can not stop here. All except some Pedo-baptists believe, that infants dying in infancy are "instantaneously admitted to glory." As a matter of course, the *consistency* of Mr. Hall must force him into the advocacy and the practice of infant communion! In one word, Mr. Hall opposes that consistency which preserves inviolate every institution of the Lord's house—which will not discard the baptism of believers at any sacrifice of ease, or safety, or feeling; whilst he advocates a consistency which subverts at the Lord's table the ordinance of baptism, obliterates all the landmarks of the church established by Jehovah, and discards all distinctions between truth and error, between those who serve God and those who serve him not in the institutions of his own appointment! The former he calls "party communion;" the latter he dignifies with the appellation of "Christian communion."

Mr. Hall having thus met, as he supposed, the arguments of his opponents, proceeds to enumerate his objections to their practice. "The first effect," says he, page 226, "necessarily resulting from it, is a powerful prejudice against the party who adopt it. * * * * The very appellation of Baptist, together with the tenets by which it is designated,

become associated with the idea of bigotry; nor will it permit the mind which entertains that prejudice to give an impartial attention to the evidence by which our sentiments are supported." Admit all this to be so, and it does not shake the firm foundation upon which we stand. If adhering uncompromisingly to the truth, if walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless, bring upon us reproach and hatred, instead of ceasing from that course, we should rejoice and be exceeding glad. Ours is the great reward promised those persecuted for righteousness' sake. Mr. Hall's position, legitimately pursued, would pour reproach upon the primitive Christians who persisted in preaching Christ crucified, although it was to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. It is one part of the inheritance of the people of Christ on earth to be hated for his sake. This objection only makes more permanent and more powerful our position.

Mr. Hall objects again: "By the stern rejection of the members of all other denominations until they have embraced our distinguishing tenets, what do we propose to effect—to intimidate or convince? We can do neither."* And we propose to do neither. The Supper was not instituted for the purpose of proselyting. The man who partakes of the mystic emblems of the body and blood of the Savior to win the esteem and to secure the approval of Pedo-baptists, mocks a divine institution, and partakes of it not discerning the Lord's body. In celebrating the gospel ordinances, we should seek to observe them as they were delivered to us by divine authority, and to do so with an intent to please God and not man. In approaching the Lord's table, we should examine ourselves and not the Pedo-baptists. We should

* P. 227.

partake in remembrance of the Savior to show forth his death till he come, and not to gain the smiles or the applause of men. And in doing this, we need not *sternly* reject any one. It is not our business to invite or debar any person. The Lord spread the table, and he alone invites, and he alone has the right to debar from coming. His law is the rule which must govern its approach. We are but his servants. We have a right to invite those only whom he invites. In this matter we adhere strictly to the law. If, by our obeying it, any are offended, they quarrel with the regulations ordained by infinite goodness. We neither instituted the Supper nor prescribed its regulations. If any are intimidated or convinced by these things, it is but the necessary result of a divine institution.

Mr. Hall continues to object on the same page: "By this preposterous conduct, we do all in our power to place our Pedo-baptist brethren beyond conviction. Since it is unreasonable to expect, however attractive the ministry, that a pious Pedo-baptist will stately attend where he must despair of ever becoming a member, and of enjoying the privileges to which every serious person is supposed to aspire, he attaches himself as a necessary consequence to a connection in which there is no such impediment, but where he is certain of hearing nothing but what will foster his prejudices and confirm his error."

Such a Pedo-baptist would be a very unreasonable man. He would demand of the Baptists to do what neither he nor any of his brethren ever did, viz., to admit the unbaptized to communion. If he should become disgusted at the Baptists for this, he would necessarily become disgusted with his own brethren; and if he left us on this account, for the same reason he could remain in no other Pedo-baptist

denomination; for Mr. Hall confesses that in this matter we differ not one whit from the Pede-baptists.

But this objection is substantially the same as the other. It proceeds upon the assumption that the Lord's Supper should be celebrated to please and to proselyte the Pede-baptists. And admitting this to be so, what has experience taught in reference to the success of the plan advocated by Mr. Hall and the one opposed by him? Why, the experiment has settled the question against Mr. Hall beyond all controversy. The strict Baptists, in this country especially, are more esteemed by the Pede-baptists than their opposing brethren. And they are far more numerous and prosperous. Hundreds from the Pede-baptists join the former to one who join the latter. In the short recollection of the writer of these pages, several hundred ministers of the various Pede-baptist persuasions have become strict Baptists; while very few, if any, in this country, have joined the other sort of Baptists. Those facts subvert utterly the theory of Mr. Hall. Intelligent and reflecting men among the Pede-baptists charge error and inconsistency upon the Open Communion Baptists; and, hence, throughout the United States, blasting and mildew follow in their footsteps. They do not get over that which they seek after—the applause and affection of their Pede-baptist neighbors. God never will bless those who understandingly connive at the neglect of his commandments.

We have heard quoted what Mr. Hibbard says respecting the course of Robert Hall. Years ago, in our boyhood, we remember to have been present on a sacramental occasion at a Presbyterian church in Jessamine county, Ky. Dr. Fishback and Dr. Blackburn preached at the meeting; two of the most eloquent ministers that ever adorned the Kentucky

pulpit. Dr. Fishback was an Open Communion Baptist. He had but recently separated from his brethren on that question. On the Sabbath, when the Supper was about to be administered, Dr. Blackburn made some remarks on its institution and design. He then extended a very qualified invitation to members of other denominations, and took occasion to remark, that there were some of a certain sect who were willing to commune with the Presbyterians as unbaptized Christians. For himself, he said, he did not thank such persons for their communion. He did not know how to appreciate a charity which would meet them at the Lord's table by unchurching them. Dr. Fishback was then sitting in the pulpit. He did not partake. He told me afterwards that he regarded the remarks as intended for him, and that they were in bad taste and offensive. Dr. Fishback was an able, pious, and eloquent divine. He was one of the most amiable and fascinating men we ever knew. Yet he utterly failed in his open communion. Upon that rock he made a shipwreck of his usefulness. The same is the mournful history of Robert Hall himself. The most gifted and powerful of contemporary ministers in England, his influence was as the Lybian blast upon the Baptist churches of that country. Indeed, Mr. Hall seems to advocate his system because it tends to the ultimate destruction of the Baptist denomination. He says:

“Of the tendency of mixed communion to promote a more candid inquiry into our principles, it is scarcely possible to doubt; whether it would have the effect of rapidly extending the Baptist denomination, *as such*, is less certain. For were that practice universally to prevail, the mixture of Baptists and Pedo-baptists in Christian societies would probably ere long be such, that the appellation of Baptist might be found

not so properly applicable to churches as to individuals, while some more comprehensive term might possibly be employed to discriminate the views of collective bodies. But what then? Are we contending for names or for things?"*

And upon Mr. Hall's theory, of what value are "our principles?" What are they but mere speculative bubbles, utterly and contemptibly worthless for all practical purposes? With him, it matters not whether a believer be immersed into the name of the triune God; or whether a worthless person in helpless babyhood has had some water and oil poured by Papal priest, or midwife, or scullion, upon its forehead and eyebrows; or whether upon the responses of ghostly parents water simply has been poured upon the little head by an Episcopal prelate, priest, or deacon; or whether he has had water sprinkled or poured upon him by a Methodist or a Presbyterian minister; any one of all these things entitles him to membership in the church, according to Mr. Hall. It is our "duty" to recognize any such person, if pious and if fit for the kingdom of glory, as truly and properly a member of the church established by the Lord in the gospel! We ask again, with an apology to our readers for submitting a question so self-evident, if this is not a total surrender of "our principles"—if it is not putting them upon a par with every form of infant sprinkling—if it does not present us to the world in the ridiculous and bigoted attitude of contending for matters of empty form—for a trifle light as air? And what victory can we hope for "our principles," after thus ingloriously surrendering them? And what would such a victory be worth? Who would covet the renown of achieving a phantom, or conquering a barren waste? It is hard to conceive of an attitude more

ridiculous, preposterous, and absurd, than that in which Mr. Hall proposes to place the Baptist denomination. And then how visionary and dreamy his hopes of success. He anticipates great triumph to "our principles," by ingloriously yielding them to his opponents as empty trifles! He is the vanquished general, arrayed in his military costume, with his glittering armor and trenchant sword, riding in the train of his conquerors to whom he has surrendered, and to the lustre of whose achievements his presence lends delightful and delirious applause. He may still affect the feelings and the part of a conqueror; but, like Bajazet in his iron cage, his affectation will but afford mirth and laughter to the victors. Mr. Hall, triumphant in his theory of mixed communion, is Sampson shorn of his strength and bereft of his vision—he is powerless and blind—the scorn and contempt of his enemies. Nor can he hope that his locks may grow, so that in one last blind struggle he may grapple the pillars of his enemies' system, and destroy himself and them by a final and fatal overthrow; for his strength is hopelessly gone.

But let us look at the *modus operandi* of his mixed communion. Baptists and Pede-baptists are members of the same church. A Baptist minister is their pastor. A Pede-baptist member and mother solicits him to sprinkle her infant. He declines, alleging the want of Bible authority. "Why," she replies, "I was thus baptized when an infant, and you have received me into the church, and why can not you prepare my child for reception in the same way? If you can receive those thus baptized, why can you not baptize them in that way?" In vain does he urge her to "a more candid inquiry into our principles?" She can not see why those principles should receive her infant baptism, and deny

baptism to her sweet, precious little babe. She is sure it is just as fit a subject for baptism as herself or any body else; for no mother was ever blessed with an infant more lovely. And then she begins to cry; and suppose her infant should die without baptism—it might be lost—and what sort of a pastor is he who cares nothing for the souls of little children. She is sure that Mr. Sprinkler of the Pedo-baptist church will not be so unfeeling. She will go to him and join his church; that she will. She tells her story to the Pedo-baptists in the church, and they, of course, are awfully shocked at the cruelty of their pastor. Quite a number of the Baptists, especially mothers, can not see what harm it would have done; and they do think the pastor might have been more humane, and gratified the mother. If it did the child no good, it would do it no harm. Were not some of the very best members in the church baptized in infancy? They could not see why their pastors should be more rigid than others. There was Mr. Sprinkler; he would immerse people if they desired to be immersed. They could see no use in such bigotry. So, off goes quite a party to Mr. Sprinkler's church. And perhaps those who remain, seeing the church going down under the Baptist pastor, determine upon a change. He is dismissed, and a Pedo-baptist minister is called in his stead; for only such a minister is adapted to the wants of such a congregation. Such is the legitimate and natural result of mixed communion. It is deadly hostile to the peace and existence of Baptist churches. It is more destructive to them than all the engines of persecution ever wielded against them. It is emphatically suicidal.

Nor is this a fancy sketch. Its original may be found in the history of many Baptist churches that have practiced

mixed communion. Kinghon, J. G. Fuller, and others, in reply to Robert Hall, refer to such instances as the following, in proof of the ruinous consequences of mixed communion to the Baptist cause in England.

John Bunyan was an advocate of open communion. No better and no more gifted minister ever occupied the Baptist pulpit. The necessities of his system forced him, of course, to receive Pedo-baptists as members into his church. As able and as moving as he was in preaching, he did little to build up the cause. He did not succeed even in winning his own flock into admiration of "our principles." Upon his death, a Pedo-baptist minister was called to succeed him. And his pulpit was filled by Pedo-baptists for a hundred years. Then one of his successors changed his sentiments and became a Baptist. But this one, Mr. Symonds, was permitted to retain his pastoral relation, on the condition that he was not to introduce the baptismal controversy into the pulpit, nor even into conversation, unless it was first mentioned by others. He was succeeded by Pedo-baptists. On two occasions, in the early part of the last century, this church refused letters of dismission to members who wished to unite with Baptist churches in London, because they were strict communion churches!

And Mr. Hall commends open communion to the Baptists as the most potent of all instrumentalities to win other denominations over to "our principles!"*

It is beyond all question, then, that open communion annuls the law of Christ, destroys the Baptists, and benefits the Pedo-baptists. Just in proportion, then, as we believe "our principles" worth preserving, we must resist the temptation of falling into this spiritual maelstrom. "Our prin-

* See Howell, p. 220, et. seq.

ciples" are, that the church ought to be wholly separate from the world; that only those who are the children of God by faith are entitled to membership in the kingdom of Christ on earth; that such enter visibly into that church by immersion into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice in religious matters; that the positive institutions of the gospel can not be neglected without great guilt, and that unless observed as commanded they are not observed at all. These principles alone can free the church from unholy contact with the world, emancipate man from the bondage imposed by the union of church and state, overthrow the Popedom and its consequents, and give the Scriptures, faithfully translated in every word and sentence, to all the nations of the earth. Such is the mission of the Baptists. Destroy them, and we stab unto death these works of light, love, and liberty in which we are engaged. And this cry of open communion is the trumpet signal of our enemies and of the foes to our principles, to gather them to the carnival over our destruction. Not love for our fellowship, but hatred of our principles, and fears of our success, elicits these pretences of affection.

Mr. Hall charges that close communion is calculated to beget feelings of bigotry and to cultivate sentiments of severity towards other denominations. Speaking of its advocates, he says:

"Conceiving themselves to be a highly privileged class, as the only legitimate members of his church, they are almost invariably exposed to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think; and founding their separation, not on that which distinguishes the followers of Christ from the world, but on a point in which Christians dissent from each

other, they are naturally tempted to attach superlative importance to the grounds of difference."*

The members of no denomination maintain kindlier relations towards others differing from them, than do the Baptists. This is notorious to all the world. They are the only denomination claiming an existence of three centuries, that have not pursued dissent unto persecution and blood. They, solitary and alone, advocated, against the whole religious world, the doctrine that the conscience should be left free and untrammelled in religion. Their garments are unpolluted by martyr blood. The accusing angel has no record against them for wishing even that their opponents should not be allowed to serve God as they pleased. And better feelings exist between them and other denominations, than between others and themselves. The pious members of all other persuasions, upon leaving their own, are more apt to join ours than any other communion. In the general, the Baptist are the second choice of all other denominations.

Mr. Hall himself has given us the best refutation of his own charges. He admits, and he makes it the subject of his ridicule, that the Baptists acknowledge that many of the Pedo-baptists stand high in the favor of God; that they are truly and really converted; that they are the children of God; that Baptists invite them to pray and preach, and unite with them in songs of praise and other exercises of devotion. For this he tries to fix upon us the charge of inconsistency, and says:

"Nothing is more certain than that the communion of saints is by no means confined to a particular occasion, or limited to one transaction, such as that of assembling around the Lord's table; it extends to all the modes by which

* P. 229.

believers recognize each other as the members of a common head. Every expression of fraternal regard, every participation in the enjoyments of social worship, every instance of the unity of the Spirit exerted in prayer and supplication or in acts of Christian sympathy and friendship, as truly belongs to the communion of saints as the celebration of the Eucharist. In truth, if we are strangers to our fellow-Christians on other occasions, it is impossible for us to enjoy it there; for the mind is not a piece of mechanism which can be set a-going at pleasure, whose movements are obedient to the call of time and place. Nothing short of habitual sympathy of spirit, springing from the cultivation of benevolent feelings and the interchange of kind offices, will secure that reciprocal delight, that social pleasure, which is the soul of Christian communion. Its richest fruits are frequently reserved for private conference, like that in which the two disciples were engaged in their way to Emmaus, when their hearts burned within them, while the Lord opened to them the Scriptures; when they take sweet counsel together as they go to the house of God in company; when they bear each other's burthens, weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice; say, have Christians no mutual fellowship? Is it not surprizing that, losing sight of such obvious facts, our opponents always reason on the subject of communion as though it related merely to the sacrament? In every other particular, they act just as we do."*

Mr. Hall is unjust to his opponents. They do not regard the Lord's Supper as designed to represent Christian communion at all. Leaving out the Eucharist, the above extract presents our views precisely of communion. Our chief

* Pp. 224, 225.

objection to his theory is, that individuals by it draw near each other with their mouths, and honor each other with their lips, while their hearts are far from each other. Surely devils laugh at a manifestation, around the sacramental board, of fellowship between Armenians and Calvinists, Episcopalians and Calvinists, who, perhaps, at intervals few and far between, make this manifestation of communion, when, at all other times, the ears of all mankind are stunned with the clamor of their discord; and whenever they have been permitted, have settled their disputes on the tented field. But enough; the sacrament apart, Mr. Hall concedes that in all other matters of Christian fellowship, the Close Communion Baptists act just as do himself and his adherents. This admission is a triumphant refutation of his own charge, that close communion fosters a spirit of separation in feeling and fellowship from Christians of other persuasions. He is answered and refuted out of his own mouth.

Mr. Hall winds up his objections to close communion with the following proposition:

“In addition to all other reasons for retracing our steps, we may with great propriety allege the spirit of the times, the genius of the age, distinguished as it is, beyond all former example, by the union of Christians in the promotion of a common cause, and their merging their minor differences in the cultivation of great principles and the pursuit of great objects. Instead of confining themselves, each to the defence of his own citadel, they are sallying forth in all directions, in order to make a powerful and combined attack on the kingdom of darkness.”*

But Mr. Hall seems to forget, that the distinguishing feature in the genius of the age, has been produced by the approxima-

* Pp. 229, 230.

tion of evangelical denominations to Baptist principles, which his theory would destroy. Pede-baptism, with many of its advocates, is not now what it was formerly. Many denominations regard only true and real Christians as members of Christ's kingdom on earth, looking upon baptized infants as but quasi members at best; and some of them esteem such no members at all. When grown up, unless born again, unless they give credible evidence of having passed from death unto life, they are regarded children of wrath even as others, as still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity—as baptized infidels. This was not once the case. The time was when evidence of faith and conversion were not required as conditions of membership. The church standards of the Pede-baptists do not now require it; and yet the requisition is made in spite of the standards.

The genius of the age tends to the merging of all Christian denominations into two—into the church party and the evangelical party—into Papists and Baptists. This spirit is at work in all the denominations. Among Episcopalians, it is High Church and Low Church; the former urging their sentiments onward towards Rome, and the latter towards the Baptists. Neither can consistently stop short of one or the other of these points. So they charge one another, and so all the candid must perceive. Among the various branches of Presbyterianism, some advocate the admission, as members in full fellowship, of all who were baptized in infancy and who having arrived at man's estate, are guilty of no immoral conduct; while others insist they must be born again or they have no claim to be received into the church. The Methodist denomination is a smothered volcano. The oppressed and down-trodden laity are discontented with being barred from all the privileges of church membership.

They are not easy under the yoke of vassalage to ministerial oligarchs. The fire is smothered but not extinguished. Its rumblings forbode a fearful eruption. Even among the Papists there is discontent. Parties are forming in spite of the ghostly anathemas of the church. Many are rising up against the monstrous assumption of the Popedom. While others, even in this country, going to the other extreme, are fulsome in their eulogies of the grossest abominations of mystical Babylon. They even denounce religious liberty as heresy; urge the superiority of a monarchy over a republic; maintain the divine right of popes to dispose of crowns, kingdoms, and empires at their sovereign pleasure; insist that the dark ages were the noonday glory of the world; and affirm that the people ought not to read the Bible; and that popular education is a curse and a monster of evil. These facts are significant. And the result is already seen in its effects upon infant baptism. The church party, with more than wonted earnestness, are clamorous for infant baptism, reviving and urging all the ancient superstition in favor of its importance and in proof of its saving efficacy. While the evangelical party are becoming daily more indifferent to its administration and careless of its prevalence. Among these it is rapidly falling into disuse. They do not see why an infant should be solemnly besprinkled in the name of the Trinity, when the whole tenor of revelation, every dictate of reason and common sense, as well as the decisive and emphatic testimony of all history and experience, are conclusive in demonstrating that it is of no benefit whatever either to the soul or body, to the temporal or eternal interests of the infant. A High Churchman in New York, not long since, boasted, that in his own congregation in one year, he had baptized more infants than had been baptized during the same time in the

bounds of several large Presbyterian synods which he specified; and he proved his assertion from the records. The reason he assigned was palpable enough. He believed in baptismal regeneration. He regarded it literally a sign and a seal of the remission of sins. He taught that when an infant was baptized, it became a member of the church—a child of God and an heir of glory. He urged it as a vitally important ordinance. And hence his people observed it, because they supposed it would confer a substantial benefit upon their children. But he charged that the Presbyterians of the synods named had deflected from the letter of their standards and the doctrines of their founders. They held that baptism conferred no change upon the infant's moral or spiritual condition—that it was a mere external rite; and hence, said this churchman, no marvel the ceremony has fallen into disuse, when its ministers have brought it into contempt. Unless they give it vitality—unless they make it of some spiritual efficacy to the soul—unless they insist upon its regenerating power, their people will entirely cease to bring their children to baptism. The churchman was right. Many Presbyterian ministers have weepingly deplored the decline of the custom. They have, by the pulpit and the press, tried to revive it. Church courts have passed resolutions to enforce it; but all in vain. It is a doomed institution. The evangelical current is sweeping it into the oceans of the things that were. It is rapidly passing away. It must fall, ere Popery can fall. It is the chief support of all that most hinders the progress of the gospel. By it is made the mixture of iron and clay—of church and state—in the vision of the prophet. The mysterious stone is smiting it to dust. The Lord will consume it by the brightness of his coming. “Even so, come quickly. Amen.”

And it was the Close Communion Baptists who first moved in those enterprises which shed such peculiar lustre upon the churches of modern times. They founded modern missions. They have done more than all other Christians united for the translations of the Scriptures into the languages of the nations.

These facts militate fatally against the system of Mr. Hall. They show that the best interests of truth—the ultimate overthrow of mystical Babylon—the universal prevalence of the gospel—the rescue and redemption of man from the intolerable thralldom of a pseudo-Christianity, are identified with the maintenance and the triumph of Baptist principles. His system would destroy those principles. Close communion, so called, fosters and sustains them. If, then, a Baptist sincerely loves his principles and believes they were ordained of God, he can not be seduced into a desertion of them by the syren song of open communion. He will not, to please man, offend God by disobedience; but, trusting in the support of the founder of the church, he will persevere in walking in all his statutes and ordinances blameless, being assured that however human policy may seem to conflict, the truth will prevail.

With the Pedeo-baptists we really have no controversy respecting communion. They agree with us that baptism is a pre-requisite to all church privileges—that it is the visible door into the visible church. They hold, too, that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, and, consequently, that it must be preceded by baptism. We are not unapprized of the fact, that a few of the less esteemed Methodist ministers, who have more zeal than knowledge, have, of late years, assumed that the unbaptized, and even the unconverted, may, and in certain cases ought, to partake of the

Eucharist. But it would be unjust to notice them, since neither their church nor the intelligent among their brethren lend any countenance to their proceedings. Their course is an innovation. The discipline which they vowed in ordination to maintain, prescribes Baptism before the Supper of the Lord. It is placed first in their Articles of Religion. It is there declared to be "a sign of profession, and a mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized." We can enter into no discussion with such persons. All that we have said and quoted in proof that Baptism must precede the Supper, applies to their case, with simply this difference, they not only disregard the plain injunctions of the Scriptures, but neglect to hear their own brethren, and depart from the regulations of their own church. To that church we leave the judgment of their conduct.

The quarrel which the Pede-baptists have with us, does not respect our close communion, but our *close baptism*. The evangelical portion of them require faith and baptism as pre-requisites to the Lord's table. We hold that only believers are scriptural subjects of baptism, and that immersion is the only scriptural mode. In their creed they go farther, and maintain that the infants of believing parents, and the infants whose parents are not believers, may, and ought to be baptized; and that baptism is rightly administered by pouring or by sprinkling.

Believing as we do, that the churches planted by the apostles were composed of penitent believers who had been immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we can not, by inviting them to the Lord's table, recognize Pede-baptist societies as gospel churches. Nor can we invite to the Lord's table any other body of

professed Christians, though they may have been impressed, unless they hold to all the essential doctrines of Christianity—the divinity of Christ, the depravity of human nature, justification by faith alone without the works of the law, the final perseverance of the saints, the endless punishment of the finally impenitent, the plenary inspiration of the holy Scriptures. Nor can we, by communing with them, recognize as gospel churches those religious associations that have departed from the pattern of church organization given us by the apostles in the constitution of the first Christian churches. Were a Baptist church to surrender its independency and acknowledge the right of any other church or any ecclesiastical hierarchy, to legislate for it, or to sit in judgment upon its acts, we should regard it as having so far departed from the law of Christ, as to require us to withdraw from its communion. Nor could we invite to our communion individual Christians, however pious they might be, who would retain their membership in such a church. In short, we can not invite into our churches, to unite with us in celebrating a church rite, any whom we could not receive to full membership in the church. Nor can any society claiming to be a gospel church, consistently do this. Yet Presbyterians and Methodists, who would not receive into their churches applicants for admission who should avow and refuse to surrender Baptist views of church polity, complain most piteously, that we do not come into their churches and enjoy the privilege of joining with them in celebrating a rite of their churches! And Reformers, too, who do not regard Presbyterians or Methodists, if unimmersed, as qualified for membership in their churches, are offended because Presbyterians and Methodists will not commune with them! The Episcopalians and the Catholics are more consistent.

The inquiry respecting the propriety of holding sacramental communion with our neighbors of "the current reformation," is one of more difficulty, in the estimation of some, than that respecting the Pedo-baptists. But to our mind the path of duty is very plain and obvious. The Reformers do not regard the Baptists as members of the church of Christ. They proclaim us to be schismatics or sectarians. They affirm that we have built upon another foundation than the Sacred Scriptures—that we are one of the daughters of mystical Babylon. Hence their chief work has been to reform us and to construct us into a veritable church. They call upon us to forsake our evil ways and to follow them in the paths which they honor with their footprints. And whenever they can get a Baptist to join them, they rejoice more over him than over ninety and nine wicked persons who need repentance. If they regard ours as churches of God, then they are guilty of egregious wrong in producing schism in the body of Christ, which they everywhere attempt, and which in many cases they have but too successfully accomplished; and if they do not regard ours as churches of God, then they can not, according to that Bible which they profess so dearly to reverence, wish sacramental communion with us. According to the first supposition, they are too sinful for our fellowship; and according to the last, we are too sinful for theirs. Either way, and intercommunion is wholly out of the question—is but the communion of light and darkness.

In many of the reformed "congregations," too, are persons who have been excluded from the Baptist churches for sundry misdemeanors and immoralities, and yet have been taken into the brotherhood of the reformation without any regard to our feelings or discipline in the premises. This,

our readers will bear witness, is no mere fancy supposition to serve a purpose. Such examples, unfortunately, exist too abundantly. Do not Baptists, then, in fellowshipping such at the Lord's table and as true church members, proclaim, to all intents and purposes, their own want of ecclesiastical existence—that to them belong none of the rights and privileges of a Christian church? Is it not an admission that they have no scriptural right to receive and exclude members? Is it not, in short, an acknowledgment, as palpable as it is humiliating, that everything which the reformed “proclaimers” have preached and published respecting our sectarianism and our kindredship to the papal harlot, is just and true? As matters now stand between ourselves and the Reformers, it would be far better for us to become members with them than to commune with them. That would be more consistent and manly. It is better and more honorable to surrender our cause than to betray it. Let us be open enemies rather than traitors.

For many of the Reformers, individually, we cherish the kindest Christian feelings; but when we are called upon to recognize them as a body, the case is materially altered. To say nothing further respecting their course as a denomination towards us, in declaring that we are not churches of Christ, and openly waging a war of extermination upon us, we are told by their founder, “that all sorts of doctrine, by almost all sorts of men, are proclaimed under the broad banners and with the supposed sanction of the begun reformation.” This is high authority, and comes from one who had every opportunity to ascertain the truth in the case, combined with every inducement to speak only what he did know, and to testify only what he had seen. Indeed, the author of the remark just quoted, seems to have very little

relish for this strange mixture himself, and has more than once given vent to expressions of unmixed loathing and disgust respecting it. He regards its existence as a stench in the nostrils of all intelligent and respectable Christians. We should wait, therefore, until our reformation fishermen, who have been dragging their net through the murky waters of mystical Babylon, and have confessedly gathered every kind, shall sever the good from among the bad, before we, in indecent haste, seek sacramental union with them. We have enough unworthy members of our own, without running in hot haste to embrace those of other denominations. And if we must fellowship the "all sorts of doctrine" proclaimed under the banners of reformation, can we discard those of Universalism, Unitarianism, or any other of the myriad *isms* which are the dark spots in the sky of modern Christendom?

In conclusion, it is our hope to convince all Free Communion Baptists, if this article should fall into the hands of any such, of the inconsistency of their course, and of the mistakes into which they have fallen. The following propositions, we think, have been demonstrated:

I. THAT THE PRINCIPLES OF FREE COMMUNION BAPTISTS ARE CONDEMNED BY ALL THOSE WITH WHOM THEY PROPOSE TO COMMUNE—THEY STAND ON A PLATFORM CONDEMNED BY THE ENTIRE WORLD.

II. THAT FREE COMMUNION BAPTISTS ARE DUPES AND VICTIMS, BLINDLY LED INTO THE BETRAYAL AND SURRENDER OF GREAT FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH.

III. THAT FREE COMMUNION BAPTISTS VIRTUALLY SUBVERT THEIR OWN ECCLESIASTICAL EXISTENCE.

IV. FREE COMMUNION BAPTISTS DEGRADE THE SUPPER OF THE LORD, BY ALLOWING THOSE TO PARTAKE OF IT

WHOM THEY DEEM UNWORTHY OF THEIR ASSOCIATION IN THE CHURCH.

V. FREE COMMUNION BAPTISTS PERVERT THE DESIGN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER—MAKING IT A TEST OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, INSTEAD OF A MEMORIAL OF HIS DEATH.

VI. FREE COMMUNION BAPTISTS ENCOURAGE THOSE THEY BELIEVE TO BE IN ERROR TO PERSIST IN THAT ERROR.

VII. FREE COMMUNION BAPTISTS ARE INSISTING UPON A PRACTICE WHOLLY UNCALLED FOR. The Baptists have enough to do to attend to their own communion. Few of them ever commune with all their brethren of the same faith and order in their own vicinage; and, as a general thing, the members of other denominations, most clamorous for free communion, very seldom practice what they insist upon.

A P P E N D I X .

BY THE EDITOR.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S declaration against open communion, and his reasons for restricting the partaking of the "loaf and the cup" to immersed believers, as set forth in his "Christian System," published in 1839.

DECLARATION.

"As for myself and my brethren, I never believed, taught, or practiced what is called 'open communion.'"—*Millennial Harbinger*, Nov., 1858.

REASONS.

"Christians are persons pardoned, justified, sanctified, adopted, saved."—*Christian System*, p. 64.

"As the disciples of Christ are declared to be in a pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved state, they are the only persons in such a state; and all others are in an unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost state. *When, then, is a change of state effected, and by what means?*

"We are constrained to admit that a change in any one of these states necessarily implies, because it involves, a change in all the others. Every one who is *pardoned* is justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved, and so every one

that is *saved*, is adopted, reconciled, sanctified, justified, and pardoned."—*Christian System*, p. 196.

"That it is not faith, but an act resulting from faith, which changes our state, we shall now attempt to prove.
 * * * * That faith by itself neither justifies, sanctifies, nor purifies, is admitted by those who oppose immersion for the forgiveness of sins. * * * * If they admit that faith, apart from the blood of Christ, can not obtain pardon, they admit all that is necessary to prove them inconsistent with themselves in opposing immersion for the remission of sins, or immersion as that act by which our state is changed.
 * * * * The Apostle Peter, when first publishing the gospel to the Jews, taught them that they were not forgiven their sins by faith, but by an act of faith—by a believing immersion into the Lord Jesus. * * * * They inquired of Peter and the other apostles, *what they ought to do to obtain remission*. They were informed, that though they now believed and repented, they were not pardoned; but must '*reform and be immersed for the remission of sins.*'
 * * * * This act of faith was presented as that act by which a change in their state could be effected; or, in other words, *by which alone* they could be pardoned."—*Christian System*, pp. 202, 203.

"It [immersion] necessarily becomes the line of discrimination between the two states before described. On this side, and on that, mankind are in quite different states. On the one side, they are pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved; on the other, they are in a state of condemnation."—*Christian System*, p. 201.

"All Christians are members of the house or family of God, are called and constituted a holy and royal priesthood, and may, therefore, bless God for the Lord's table, its loaf,

and cup—approach it without fear and partake of it with joy, as often as they please in remembrance of the death of their Lord and Savior.”—*Christian System*, p. 318.

Mr. Campbell's argument abridged is this: The Lord's Supper is for *Christians* only; Christians are those who have been pardoned, justified, sanctified, adopted, saved; the apostles taught the Jews at Pentecost, that it was not by faith, but by an *act* of faith—by a believing immersion, that they could be pardoned, justified, sanctified, adopted, and saved; that, before immersion, even a penitent believer is in a state of condemnation—unpardoned, unjustified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost, and, consequently, not Christians; and that, therefore, unimmersed persons, not being members of the house or family of God, may not approach the table “without fear and partake of it with joy.”

How any one holding Mr. Campbell's views, as above written, can welcome to the Lord's table immersed persons, or how, if he be a preacher of the gospel, he can conscientiously refrain from warning the unimmersed of their unfitness to partake of the “loaf and cup,” it is not our province to explain. Baptists agree with Mr. Campbell in maintaining that none but immersed believers in Jesus Christ have a right to come to his table, because only such are fit for membership in his visible churches, and because the Supper was ordained by him to be a church ordinance; but they believe his theory of the plan of salvation to be unscriptural and pernicious. Thus believing, they can not, by inviting Reformers to their communion, recognize their congregation as gospel churches.

In the “Millenial Harbinger,” of November, 1858, Mr. Campbell denies that he has ever believed in baptismal remission. To the declaration already quoted, he adds:

“Nor have I ever taught baptismal remission.” For an exposition of his views he refers his readers to his “Christian System,” from which work we have extracted his argument in support of restricted communion. The passages already quoted seem to us to teach the doctrine of baptismal remission; but as Mr. C. affirms that he has never taught this doctrine, we shall be excused for making a few more extracts from his book.

“The propositions now proved and illustrated, must convince all, that there is *some connection* between immersion and the forgiveness of sins. * * * * Nothing remains, but that it be considered, what it is in truth—the accompanying sign of an accompanying remission; the sign and seal, or the *means* and the seal, of *remission then granted through the water*, connected with the blood of Christ by divine appointment, and through our faith in it.”—*Christian System*, p. 240.

“Down into the water you were led. Then the name of the Holy One upon your faith and upon your person, was pronounced. You were then buried in the water under that name. It closed itself upon you. In its womb you were concealed. Into the Lord, as into the water, you were immersed. But in the water you continued not. Of it you were born, and from it you came forth, raised with Jesus, and rising in his strength. There your consciences were released; for there your old sins were washed away.”—Page 247.

“He [Cornelius] was immersed, and unto the kingdom of God he came. He was then saved. You need not ask, how or why these things are so. Do as Cornelius did, and then you will think of it in another light.”—Page 249.

“As well, as reasonably might you pray for loaves from

heaven, or manna, because Israel ate it in the desert, as to pray for pardon, while you refuse the remission of sins by immersion."—Page 251.

"The Master knew that to wait for health before we went to the physician—to seek for warmth before we approached the fire—to wait till we ceased to be hungry before we approached the table—was not reasonable. And, therefore, he never asked, as he never expected, any one to feel like a Christian before he was immersed, and began to live like a Christian. * * * * Arise, then, and be immersed, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."—Page 254.

"Christian experience can never be enjoyed by any human being previous to his faith, repentance, and baptism."—*Millennial Harbinger*, Nov., 1858.

PEDO-BAPTIST CONCESSIONS.

Although it is certain, as has been shown by Dr. Waller in the foregoing discussion of the terms of church communion, that all Pedo-baptist denominations have required baptism as a pre-requisite to admission to the Lord's Supper, very few of their writers have been candid enough to affirm, what they know to be true, that Baptists are *consistent* in limiting their invitations to the communion table, to immersed believers. Of such unkind treatment Baptists have had much reason to complain. They have been represented as "ignorant," "illiberal," and "bigoted," by Pedo-baptist authors, and by editors of Pedo-baptist periodicals, who had not honesty enough to admit what they will all acknowledge when pressed to the point—that the only question to be

discussed by them and us, in order to settle the terms of communion is, *What is Christian baptism?*

It is gratifying to witness, occasionally, a disposition to do us justice in this respect. The late Dr. Griffin, formerly President of Williams College, Mass., and one of the most talented and erudite of the Congregational clergy of New England, in his celebrated letter on communion, says:

“I agree with the advocates of close communion on two things: 1. That baptism is an initiating ordinance, which introduces into the visible church. Of course, where there is no baptism, there are no visible churches. 2. That we ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, and, of course, are not church members, even if we regard them as Christians. Should a pious Quaker so far depart from his principles as to wish to commune with me at the Lord's table, while he yet refused to be baptized, I could not receive him; because there is such a relation established between the two ordinances, that I have no right to separate them; or, in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the church.”

The Baltimore *Christian Advocate*, an organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, holds the following language:

“That a good man may be a firm believer in the necessity of adult immersion, we do not, for a moment, doubt; and that they who do believe this, should decline communion with the unbaptized, is reasonable and consistent. To be offended with the refusal of these to commune with us, is absurd; to reproach them for it, unkind and unjustifiable.”

The *Boston Recorder*, Congregationalist, in a late issue, says:

“If we receive people to the communion without baptism,

we shall practically treat baptism as a nullity, and contribute to its being wholly abandoned."

"If our Baptist brethren," said Dr. Beecher, "are right on the mode and the subjects of baptism, they are right on the question of communion."

Rev. F. G. Hibbard, of the Genessee Conference, in a "Treatise on Infant Baptism," published "for the Methodist Episcopal Church," remarks:

"The Baptists, in passing the sweeping sentence of disfranchisement upon all other Christian churches, have only acted upon a principle held in common with all other Christian churches, viz., that baptism is essential to church membership. * * * * Of course they must be their own judges as to what baptism is. It is evident that, according to our views of baptism, we can admit them to our communion; but with their views of baptism, it is equally evident, they can never reciprocate the courtesy. And the charge of *close communion* is no more applicable to the Baptists than to us, inasmuch as the question of church fellowship with them is determined by as *liberal* principles as it is with any other Protestant churches, so far, I mean, as the present subject is concerned—*i. e.*, it is determined by valid baptism. * * * * They [Open Communion Baptists] have held to exclusive immersion, and at the same time have held to Catholic communion, or communion with persons who have not been immersed—an anomaly and absurdity that present a singular contrast with the characteristic symmetry of Christian theology. * * * * It is far less responsible, in our estimation, to hold that baptism may be administered by sprinkling or pouring, than to hold fellowship, at the Lord's table, with persons we do not believe have received Christian baptism."—Page 174.

Such utterances as these—and the number might be multiplied—are honorable exceptions to the general rule. Let our Pedito-baptist brethren generally exhibit a like spirit of candor; let them cease to reproach us for not doing what they themselves would scorn to do; let them, instead of denouncing us as *illiberal* and *bigoted*, admit that we are consistent, but wrong in reference to baptism; let them show that we are *illiterate*, by demonstrating that *baptizo*, in Greek, means *to pour* and *to sprinkle*, as well as *to immerse*—that all lexicographers, ancient and modern, are wrong in not thus defining the word—that Calvin, and Luther, and Beza, and Melancthon, and Doddridge, and Chalmers, were mistaken in supposing that Christ was immersed in the Jordan, and that the apostles immersed their disciples; let them show us scriptural authority—either precept or example—for baptizing infants on the faith of parent or sponsor; let them endeavor to *convince* us that we are in error, either from misrepresenting the Holy Scriptures or in receiving them as our only rule of faith and practice; let them thus, in the spirit of their Master, address themselves to the task of reclaiming us from the error of our ways, and they will command our respect, even if they should fail to convince our judgments.

It by no means follows, however, that Baptists could commune with Pedito-baptist churches, even if they should be persuaded that infant sprinkling is valid baptism. Baptist churches would withhold church fellowship from any Baptist church that should set aside and ignore, or ascribe saving efficacy to either Baptism or the Lord's Supper. Should any Baptist church tolerate in its members a persistent refusal to observe the Lord's Supper, or a persistent refusal to permit their believing children to be baptized until they

should have arrived at a specified age, such a church would thereby forfeit all claim to be regarded by other Baptist churches as in *good standing* in the denomination, and would be treated accordingly. But Pede-baptist churches do tolerate in their members these very things. In their confessions of faith they affirm that *infant baptism* is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ; and yet they permit their members to treat it as if it were a human invention—to trample it under their feet as they would the sacrament of “Extreme Unction” or the “Mass.” The Presbyterian Church, though solemnly affirming, in its “Confession of Faith,” that “baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ,” and “by Christ’s own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world,” and that “the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized,” and that it is “a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance,” does tolerate in its membership those who both contemn and neglect it. Whatever may have been their practice half a century ago, they do not now exclude members for the “great sin” of neglecting or refusing to have their infants baptized. And could Baptists consistently exercise less “charity” towards their own than towards Presbyterian churches?

Again. Should any Baptist church establish a rule requiring its members, or any portion of them, to defer communion until a specified number of years after their baptism, such a church would be regarded, by other Baptist churches, as subverting the order of God’s house, and would be treated as a disorderly church; and, should said church persist in enforcing the rule, the certain result would be the withholding of church fellowship from it by all regular Baptist churches.

But Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians, do this when they require their baptized members to abstain from the communion until they are old enough "to discern the Lord's Supper"—that is, until they can understand the significance of the ordinance. Why not withhold *baptism* also, until the subject is old enough to understand its significance? Infant baptism and infant communion were not thus severed from each other in the earliest history of infant church membership.

Suppose, again, a Baptist church should receive applicants for membership on a sort of probation for six months; should, during this period, admit them to the communion of the church, as a means of grace; and at the expiration of the six month, should admit them, by baptism, to full membership, without satisfactory evidence of conversion; could regular Baptist churches consistently fellowship such a church? Surely not. With what propriety, then, can Baptist churches extend to Methodist churches an invitation to the Lord's Supper, whilst, at the same time, they refuse to commune with a Baptist church for practicing a Methodist custom? Baptist churches are independent, acknowledging allegiance to no earthly tribunal, and claiming no ecclesiastical power, singly or associationally, to prescribe rules for each other. As the members of a single church withhold church fellowship from one of their own number whilst not in "good standing," and suspend him from church privileges until restored, so they refuse to commune with any church whose faith or whose organization is essentially unevangelical. The system of probationary membership in the Methodist Church is thus commented upon by the Rev. Dr. Pierce of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South:

“If things are to continue as they now are, we must cease to receive seekers into the probationary membership of the church. Else we will accumulate such a mass of members, without the benefits of spiritual regeneration, as to bury the spiritual power of our once pure form of godliness under a mass of attractive formalism, which will make Methodism a gorgeous exhibition of mere outward ceremonies.”

It is charged by our opponents that we confine the communion to *Baptist* churches. This is not true. The usual formula of invitation—if any invitation be extended—is this: “All members in good standing in churches of the same faith and order with us, are invited to seats with us at the Lord’s table.” This invitation embraces all churches, of whatever *name*, that are of the same *faith* and *order* with Baptist churches. If the Congregational churches would cease to practice, what they do not require—viz., affusion and infant baptism—and recognize the immersion of believers as the only scriptural and valid baptism, the terms of our formula of invitation would include them, and they would still be “Congregational” churches. As they now are, we regard their *faith* as evangelical; but their admission of infants to church membership places them beyond the scope of our invitation. The same may be said, perhaps, of the *faith* held by the Presbyterian and the Methodist churches; but their unscriptural forms of church government, as well as their infant membership and their substitution of sprinkling for baptism, exclude them from the terms of the invitation to the Lord’s table, as extended by Baptist churches. On the other hand, the faith of the Reformed or “Christian” churches—that the penitent believer is “not saved by *faith*, but by an *act* of faith, immersion into the Father, and

the Son, and the Holy Spirit—excludes them from our communion, though they practice, as we do, only adult immersion for the Christian baptism.

Has it never occurred to our Presbyterian brethren that they act inconsistently in communing with Baptist churches? If they do not regard communion as a test of Christian fellowship, as they certainly do not, how can they recognize as *evangelical* a church that is guilty of the “great sin” of “contemning and neglecting” infant baptism, which their Confession of Faith (p. 144) affirms to be “a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ—which sacrament is, by Christ’s own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world?” Would they invite to their communion a denomination of professed Christians that should wholly neglect the observance, among themselves, of the sacrament of the Supper? However orthodox, in other respects, such a church might be, would our Presbyterian brethren regard and treat it as a gospel church whilst it persistently refused to permit a sacrament of Christ’s church to be observed within its own body? If not, how can they consistently or conscientiously regard and treat Baptist churches as evangelical, whilst the latter “contemn and neglect,” and repudiate as a *human invention*, a solemn ordinance of the New Testament “ordained by Jesus Christ?” Or, does *immersion* wash from the garments of Baptist parents the stain of this “great sin” which *affusion* can not remove from the garments of Pedo-baptist parents? Or, can it be that, in spite of the solemn avowals of their Confessions of Faith, their Catechisms, and their Disciplines, the “membership” of Pedo-baptist churches have so little faith in the divine appointment of the “sacrament” of infant baptism, and are, consequently, so blinded to the “great sin” of

“neglecting” it, that their ecclesiastical judicatories dare not enforce its observance?

The history of American Pedo-baptist churches (the Episcopal, perhaps, excepted) indicates an alarming decadence from the elevated position occupied by them, on this subject, fifty years ago. Then the Christian parent who persistently refused to bring his infant children to the “baptismal font” of his church was excluded from its communion; and the pastor who did not see to it, that all the lambs of his flock were seasonably brought into the fold by baptism, where, “by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto,” was deemed unworthy of the sacred office of a bishop of the church of Christ.

A Boston correspondent of the *Journal of Commerce* thus wrote in 1855:

“In one of the oldest churches in this State there had not been, a few years since, an instance of infant baptism for the seven preceding years. Last year there were seventy Congregational churches in New Hampshire that reported no infant baptism. This year, ninety-six churches, or about one half in the State, report none. If this indifference continues, the ordinance will become extinct in the Congregational churches.”

The *New York Independent*, edited by an association of Congregational clergymen, thus complains of the neglect of this “sacrament” among their churches in New York:

“In some cases it is affirmed that this neglect has spread so widely, and has become so habitual in the absence of a pastor, or through his tacit consent to the omission, that the instances of baptism among the children of church members

are the exception rather than the general rule, and that the efforts to revive it meet with coolness or opposition. The members of such churches doubt the propriety of administering the ordinance to any but adults, and in their own practice conform to their convictions."

The confidence of our Pedo-baptist brethren in *sprinkling* for baptism, is, in like manner, becoming weaker and weaker, and baptisteries are beginning to be required in some of their churches for the accommodation of the increasing number of applicants for *immersion* among them. But as there is no conceivable reason why one who regards *sprinkling* as scriptural baptism, should prefer *immersion*, the current history of American Pedo-baptist churches unmistakably indicates a gradual but certain progress towards Baptist views and practice in reference to the "*mode*" as well as to the subjects of Christian baptism. The barriers to open communion are thus being removed by their own hands; and we are encouraged to hope that the period is not far distant, when all Christians will be seen standing, side by side, on the Bible platform—ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM.

Among the Baptist churches of the United States, but very few practice open communion—in Kentucky, probably not one. In the British American provinces open communion, until recently, was, perhaps, the general rule among Baptist churches. But the pernicious effects of this unscriptural practice has become so obvious, that the utter extinction of Baptist principles was foreseen to be the inevitable result of its continuance; and our Baptist brethren there have returned to the scriptural rule, and they are now experiencing its conservative and vitalizing power. A correspondent of the *Christian Watchman*, writing from Montreal, says:

“In Canada we have been dreadfully troubled with this vexed subject, and our experience ought to warn the Baptist churches in the States to have nothing to do with open communion, for if they do, assuredly their power and the influence of their testimony in favor of the New Testament teaching on the subject of the ordinances will be greatly weakened. We are getting rid of it in Canada; though originally many of the churches were established upon this baneful principle, yet its evil effects have been so manifest, that there is only one Open Communion Baptist church east of Kingston, and one or two west of it, and none of them in a very flourishing condition.”

HISTORY
OF
INFANT BAPTISM,
BY
REV. J. L. WALLER, LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

A HISTORY of Infant Baptism, designed as a defence of the rite, was put forth early in the last century, by William Wall, Vicar of Shoreham, Kent, in England. This work has obtained great celebrity; and its author received the thanks of the clergy of England in convocation assembled, and also the honor of Doctor of Divinity's degree from the University of Oxford—so many were the obligations under which the Pedo-baptists felt themselves laid by his defence of their favorite doctrine! No Baptist has ever undertaken a history of the same subject. For some years past our reading has led us to the investigation of the rise and spread of Infant Baptism, and we have been called upon by brethren in different quarters of the United States to prepare its history. This we propose now to do, in a review of Dr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism; traversing his grounds and examining his conclusions, and also presenting other proofs and arguments calculated to lead the mind to a pro-

per appreciation of the subject, and of the great issues involved in its adjustment.

Infant Baptism is intimately associated with interests of vital importance to the purity, harmony, and efficiency of the Redeemer's kingdom, and to the dearest and most sacred rights and privileges of man. By it millions of the human family every year are initiated into churches and made vassals to systems and establishments without their knowledge and consent. By this rite, all the national churches of the world have been sustained; and it is the means by which the Pope of Rome has marked and claimed as his subjects and slaves the millions that have composed his dominions. If Infant Baptism be all that is claimed for it by the great majority of its advocates, then the visible church of Christ is no longer a "congregation of faithful men." It ceases to be "a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such manner as they judge most acceptable to him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls." Infant Baptism teaches that individuals are born members of the church! Religious privileges are claimed to be hereditary, descending by the sanctions of divine law from parents to their children; and, consequently, that membership and all the rights in the house of God are inherited by children as they inherit temporal estates! Dr. Miller, in his work on Baptism, published by the Presbyterian Tract and Sunday-School Society, says:

"Can it be, my friends, that when the stem is in the church, the branch is out of it? Can it be that when the parent is in the visible kingdom of the Redeemer, his offspring, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, have no connection with it? It is not so in any other society that the

great moral Governor of the world ever formed. It is not so in civil society. Children are born citizens of the State in which their parents resided at the time of their birth. In virtue of their birth they are plenary citizens, bound by all the duties, and entitled to all the privileges of that relation, whenever they become capable of exercising them. From these duties they can not be liberated. Of these privileges they can not be deprived, but by the commission of crime. But why should this great principle be set aside in the church of God? Surely it is not less obvious or less powerful in grace than in nature. The analogies which pervade all the works and dispensations of God are too uniform and striking to be disregarded in an inquiry like the present."—Page 8.

Moral character, then, has nothing to do necessarily with the pre-requisites of citizenship in the gospel kingdom; and hence, at this hour, according to Infant Baptism, almost all the inhabitants of the civilized world are actual members of the visible church of Christ!

This rite, too, is supposed to confer far greater and more enduring blessings than mere membership in the church militant. The great majority of Pedeo-baptists contend, that infants dying unbaptized will be driven away into everlasting punishment—that by baptism their souls are regenerated and their sins forgiven! Hence in some of the nominal Christian nations, it is a penal offence against the State for parents to neglect the baptism of their children. In others, it is made the duty of the magistrate to take by force of arms, and to have baptism administered to, the children of such parents as conscientiously believe this rite to be a human invention. A great number of persons have been put to death for opposing Infant Baptism; and everywhere,

by the great mass of professing Christians, the Baptists are regarded as wickedly callous to the spiritual interests of their offspring, and for many ages they were esteemed as unworthy of life, and were pursued and persecuted as monsters of impiety; and even *now*, on the continent of Europe, they are suffering imprisonment and confiscation of goods—inflicted by Protestants! The baptism of an adult is rarely, if ever, performed by the majority of those who profess to have received a commission from the Lord *to disciple and baptize the nations*. Comparatively few persons are now baptized upon their own profession of faith; the overwhelming mass are baptized in infancy.

For the reason of these opinions and practices, we look in vain to the Scriptures. In them, the church of the Redeemer stands exalted by the moral grandeur of its membership and the benign spirit of its principles. How, then, became the beauty of the gospel so marred? This question history alone can answer; and the annals of Infant Baptism, written in lines of blood and folly, will reveal many of the mournful causes of those corruptions, and superstitions, and persecutions, which have brought reproach upon the name and now hinder the triumphs of our holy religion. History will vindicate the Bible from the suspicion of giving birth to the abominations, practical and theoretical, which we have mentioned, and demonstrate that they are the hideous production of ignorance and error, of darkness and perdition.

Let us not be suspected of ascribing the sentiments and practices alluded to above to *all* the adherents of Infant Baptism. Far from it. There are whole denominations who baptize infants, but who loathe and detest many of these things, looking upon them with a contempt as sovereign and supreme as our own. But among such, Infant Baptism

is little else than the solemn sprinkling of water in children's faces in the name of the Trinity. True, they call it *dedication to God, giving the seal of the covenant*, and by other pompous and high sounding appellations, which mean very little, if any thing at all, when fully explained, and are calculated rather to provoke a smile than any serious remark. These denominations do not believe that baptism regenerates infants, or in any way improves their moral condition, and the most they can plead in behalf of the rite is, that it can do no harm, or, that it binds parents to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; as if that were not an obligation independent of all ceremonial observances, as binding from the birth of the first infant to the present time, as it was possible to be made by the cords of parental affection and the mandate of the Almighty—as if Baptists were not as much bound by the requisition, and could not as well observe it, as the Pedo-baptists! But history proves that this system of Infant Baptism is a *novelty*, that its advocates are few and comparatively modern; and that except in the naked article, *that infants should be baptized*, this system can claim but little affinity, as it bears scarcely any resemblance, to that great tree of Infant Baptism whose roots have been striking downwards for centuries, and whose branches have shut out from nations the sunlight of the gospel. We are to judge of Infant Baptism, not by its exceptions—by the *few* who are entitled to some degree of credit for decency and propriety of sentiment in their reasons for its administration—but by the mass of its defenders; and especially ought its merits to be determined by reference to those ages and countries where it flourished almost without an opponent in all the pride of its strength.

An argument for the truth of Infant Baptism has been

derived by Dr. Wall from its general prevalence; and a distinguished advocate of the system has recently said, that "this rite has commanded the firm belief of almost the whole of Christendom in all ages; not of the ignorant and superstitious only or chiefly, but of the wise and good—of those who have taken the Bible as their only infallible rule of faith and practice. The overwhelming mass of those who have diligently sought to know their duty, as connected with this interesting subject, have understood the Scriptures to teach, that the children of believing parents ought to be baptized. The exceptions to this are less than one to a thousand. The opposers of this doctrine, compared even with Protestant Christendom, are a mere handful. Now, if the Bible be a plain book, easily to be understood on all important points, how could the great majority of Bible readers believe that it taught what it does not? How unaccountable has been the infatuation of almost the whole Christian world, on the supposition that this doctrine is false and absurd."*

Whenever it is fairly shown that a doctrine has *always and everywhere* been received as scriptural by the mass of pious, intelligent, and careful readers of the Bible, we frankly confess that it presents to our mind a most powerful presumption of its truth; and whether adduced by Papist or Protestant, we feel no disposition to disparage its force. The Bible was given to be read and understood by men, which would not be true if the great majority of its most careful and critical readers—unswayed by other motives than to learn what it teaches and to obey what it enjoins—were wholly to mistake its requisitions in relation to one of the most important ordinances of the gospel. If it were

* Dr. Riee, in his Debate with Mr. Campbell.

made to appear, then, that there has been perfect unanimity among the Pedo-baptists, present and past, in their affirmations respecting the Bible authority for Infant Baptism; or even if it were shown, that there had been a *general* concurrence of views among them on this subject, we should regard their cause as presenting a most formidable front to the boldest opponent, and, for one, we should almost tremble to raise a finger against it.

But have the Pedo-baptists uttered one voice in relation to Infant Baptism? Have they all testified the same things? Have their declarations respecting the scriptural warrant for their practice been uncontradictory and harmonious? *No*—*emphatically, NO!* God has confounded the language of the builders of this moral Babel, and every variety of speech—confused, discordant, and contradictory—has been uttered upon the subject. Some of them say, that Infant Baptism is taught in the Bible; others, that it is not, that tradition teaches it. Those who contend that the Scriptures authorize it, can not agree where the passages in its favor are to be found; and if we take all their statements in the case equally worthy of credit, then all the authority for it in the word of God, is a *vagrant* warrant, constantly wandering from place to place in the Bible, and never to be overtaken by turning over its leaves! No Pedo-baptist has ever adduced a passage sufficiently obvious to satisfy the consciences of his brethren. Every text of Scripture ever brought to prove this doctrine, has been shown by Pedo-baptists themselves not to prove it at all! **WE CHALLENGE THE PRODUCTION OF ONE EXCEPTION.** With their own hands they have pulled down their own temple, not leaving one stone upon another. They have torn up its very foundations. Indeed, until the days of the great Genevan Reformer, the Pedo-baptists with

united voice testified, that the Scriptures required a profession of faith and repentance of every candidate of baptism; and not even the most helpless infant was admitted to the ordinance without a solemn renunciation of the world and avowal of faith in Jesus Christ, made by it through its sponsors. If the testimony of the religious world, therefore, proves any thing, it proves that the Bible teaches, that professed believers are the only proper subjects of baptism. So the great mass of Christians do now and have ever declared. This was a point undisputed, until the days of John Calvin.

The advocates of Infant Baptism find great difficulty in fixing upon the period of its commencement. It is a matter on which a great diversity of sentiment exists. They agree only in affirming, that the point of time when the foundations of this system were laid is to be found somewhere in the long lapse of ages intervening between the call of Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and the third century of the Christian era, when certain Africans were laboring to engraft upon the institutions of the New Testament the wildest vagaries of superstition. All Pedeo-baptists agree that baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ; yet not one of them pretends that the most eagle optics with which any man was ever blessed, are adequate to the perception of Infant Baptism in the writings of the apostles and evangelists, if these writings be examined without extraneous helps. They are constrained to confess that infants and baptism are distinct words, no where joined together in the New Testament. GOD HAS PUT THEM ASUNDER. Hence the most lynx-eyed Pedeo-baptists have to obtain lights outside of the New Testament to enable them to perceive even an apparition of their doctrine on its sacred pages. Some obtain their lights on this, and some on the

other side of the apostolic age. One party tells us that Infant Baptism was general in the third, or at least in the fourth century; that history gives no account of its origin this side of the apostles; and, therefore, it must be taught in the New Testament! But another party, aware that this is enchanted ground, and conscious if such reasoning be admitted, it would clothe with divine sanction all the most important mummeries and inventions of the papacy, utterly reject it; and passing nearly nineteen centuries beyond the apostles, on the plains of Mamre, they create such a flood of refulgence in favor of their doctrine out of the command of God to Abraham in relation to circumcision, as to feel that they need no light whatever from the New Testament. Hence they not only admit the silence of the New Testament, but rejoice in that silence! Dr. Miller, in the tract before cited, says: "Instead of our Baptist brethren having a right to call upon us to find a direct warrant in the New Testament, in favor of infant membership, we have a right to call upon them to produce a direct warrant for the great and sudden change which they allege took place. If it be, as they say, that the New Testament is silent on this subject, this very silence is quite sufficient to destroy their cause, and to establish ours."* How wonderful the ear that catches the sounds of silence! How sweet to one blessed with such a rare possession, must be the music of stillness, echoed by the hills of nonentity! To such persons, of course, the silence of the New Testament is as the voice of many waters in favor of Infant Baptism!

But Dr. Wall seemed to think that the days of Abraham were too remote to suit the exigencies of Infant Baptism. He and a host with him appear to be of opinion, that rays

emitted from such a distance fall too feebly upon the New Testament to impart much light or heat to their favorite system. Hence they travel down the pathway of centuries, and fix upon an indefinite point of time subsequent to Moses and anterior to the Messiah's advent, *when* some one first perpetrated the folly and wickedness of baptizing a proselyte to the Jewish religion; and by means of this human invention, they fancy that they are able to see Infant Baptism practised by John the Baptist, the apostles, and all primitive ministers, and from them spreading out over all nations, through all generations, to the present time! But this theory has one capital defect at least—*it has no foundation!* Proselyte baptism, before the days of Messiah, did not exist. But more of this hereafter. In this practice, according to Dr. Wall, was laid the foundation of Infant Baptism. With that, then, is our first business; and we are content to commence the history of Infant Baptism with it, and leave the issue with the candid of every persuasion.

CHAPTER II.

The Scriptures say nothing of Infant Baptism—The Commission of Christ the law of Baptism—That the question turns upon this law, confessed by Dr. Wall—Dr. Wall concedes that from the Bible alone we can not learn Infant Baptism—Derives it from Jewish proselyte baptism—The nature of that baptism—Dr. Wall's argument upon it—Predicates Infant Baptism on a Jewish custom and not on the Commission—His illustration by substituting circumcision shown to be illogical—Jewish proselyte baptism could not prove Infant Baptism, even if it existed—Proved not to have existed in the days of the Savior's incarnation—The writers adduced as witnesses not worthy of credit on such a point—Eminent Pedo-baptists deny the existence of such a custom—Prof. Stuart and Dr. Owen quoted as denying it.

THE historian of Infant Baptism can gather no materials for his subject from the New Testament. That rite has the sanction of neither precept nor example in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. The gloom and the silence of the grave brood over it. This is confessed on all hands, as might be shown from the writings of the most distinguished Pedo-baptists. But we discard the concessions of opponents on such a question. This is a point which every one can settle for himself. The Bible is in the hands of the people; they can examine and see that not one word is said about the baptism of infants in all the Scriptures. Every minister who gives this rite to unconscious babes professes to act by the authority of the great commission—"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of 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 always, even unto the end of the world." Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. This passage is

all the authority in the Scriptures for the use of the solemn and awful name of the Trinity in baptism, and all who baptize infants use this name in their ministrations. The true question is, *Does this commission authorize the baptism of infants?* If it does not, the minister who baptizes an infant in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, acts without divine warrant, and performs as much an act of will-worship as if he baptized a bell in this name. But if this commission does warrant Infant Baptism, then the inference may legitimately be drawn that it was practiced by the apostles and their co-laborers, although no instance of their having done so may be upon record. The commission, then, must settle the controversy.

Dr. Wall so understands the matter; and hence his first business is to show that the commission allows Infant Baptism. This he attempts to infer from Jewish proselyte baptism. He admits that the commission, independent of extraneous proof—of proof derived outside of the Bible—does not favor Infant Baptism. In his Preface, he says:

“Forasmuch as the commission given by our Savior to his disciples, in the time of his mortal life, to baptize in the country of Judea, is not at all set down in Scripture; only it is said, that they baptized a great many, and the enlargement of that commission given them afterwards, Mat. xxviii. 19, to perform the same office among all the heathen nations, is set down in such brief words, that there is no particular direction given what they were to do in reference to the children of those that received the faith; and among all the persons that are recorded as baptized by the apostles, there is no express mention of any infant; nor is there, on the other side, any account of any *Christian’s* child, whose baptism was put off until he was grown up, or who was baptized

at man's age: (for all the persons that are mentioned in Scripture to have been baptized, were the children of heathens, or else of Jews, who did not believe in Christ at that time when those their children were born :) and since the proofs drawn by consequences from some places of Scripture, for any one side of this question, are not so plain as to hinder the arguments drawn from other places for the other side, from seeming still considerable to those that have no help from the history of the Scripture times for the better understanding of the rules of Scripture; it is no wonder that the readers of Scripture, at this distance from the apostles' times, have fallen into contrary sentiments about the meaning of our Savior's command, and the practice of the apostles in reference to the baptizing of infants."*

Here it is conceded, that the commission furnishes no authority for Infant Baptism, and that if we were to derive proof alone from the Scriptures, the baptism of infants could not be established; and hence Dr. Wall urges the necessity of seeking other lights in order to ascertain the mind of the Spirit on this subject. In his Introduction, he says:

"Now our Savior's law concerning baptizing all the nations, is, as I showed in the preface, set down in Scripture in very short and general words; and many people of later times have doubted whether it is to be understood to reach to the baptizing of infants or only of adult persons. All that have any doubt, ought to learn, as well as they can, what was the state of the Jewish religion as to baptism, at and before that time when our Savior gave his order for baptizing all the nations; and what we must suppose the apostles did of themselves already know concerning its being proper or improper for infants, which it might not be so needful for

* Pp. 29, 30.

our Savior to express in his new direction to them. And also they ought to learn as well as they can, how the first Christians did practice in this matter; whether they baptized their infants or not."*

With respect to the practice of professed Christians subsequent to the apostolic age, we make no remark at present: that will receive attention in due time. The existence of baptism among the Jews prior to and at the time of John and of Jesus, and independent of them, is the matter now in hand. If that furnishes no aid in our interpretation of the commission, then this resource of Infant Baptism is cut off, and the whole scheme, according to Dr. Wall, must crumble to dust. Dr. Wall asserts, and attempts to prove, that long before John came baptizing, a custom prevailed among the Jews of baptizing proselytes. That is, when one from the heathen wished to profess the Jewish religion, if a male, he was initiated by circumcision, immersion, and bringing a sacrifice; if a female, by immersion and bringing a sacrifice. The rule in relation to infants was: "Any male child of such a proselyte, that was under the age of thirteen years and a day, and females that were under twelve years and a day, they baptized as infants at the request and by the assent of the father or the authority of the court; because such a one was not yet the son of assent, as they phrase it—*i. e.*, not capable to give assent for himself, but the thing is for his good. If they were above that age, they consented for themselves." †

From this custom, Dr. Wall argues as follows:

"Now this gives great light for the better understanding the meaning of our Savior, when he bids his apostles 'go and disciple all the nations, and baptize them.' For when a

* Pp. 2, 3.

† Introduction, p. 17.

commission is given in such short words, and there is no express direction what they shall do with the infants of those who become proselytes, the natural and obvious interpretation is, that they must do in that matter as they and the church in which they lived always used to do.

“As now at this time, if an island or country of heathens be discovered, and a minister be sent out to them by the bishops of the church of England, who should say, ‘Go and convert such a nation, and baptize them;’ he would know, without asking any question, that he must baptize the infants of those who, being converted, offered them to baptism; because he knows that to be the meaning and the custom of that church or bishop by which he is sent. And, on the contrary, if any one were sent from a church or congregation of anti-Pedo-baptists, with a commission of the same words, ‘Go and convert such a nation, and baptize them;’ he would take it for granted that he must baptize none of their infants, because he knows that to be contrary to the meaning and custom of the church that sends him.”*

This concedes that infants could not be baptized by the commission, but by the custom which existed when the commission was given. The commission itself requires that disciples should be baptized, and, of course, not infants; so, by the commission alone no one would baptize infants. And Dr. Wall represents that those who bear this commission, obtain authority for Infant Baptism not from it, but from the custom. Hence, he argues, that a missionary of the Church of England, sent out by this commission, would baptize infants, not because the commission told him to do so, but because the custom of his church required it. The apostles, then, by a law to baptize disciples, did not baptize

* Introduction, pp. 21, 22.

infants. If they baptized infants at all, they derived authority not from the law of the Savior but from a tradition of the Jews. This is Dr. Wall's position. Infant Baptism is derived from a Jewish custom, and not from the commission to baptize. It is not of heaven, but of men.

Dr. Wall further argues:

"But if they would put this case: suppose our Savior had bid the apostles *go and disciple all the nations*, and (instead of baptizing, had said) circumcise them; an anti-Pedo-baptist will grant, in that case, without any more words, that the apostles must have circumcised the infants of the nations as well as the grown men, though there had been no express mention of infants in the commission."*

But an anti-Pedo-baptist will grant no such thing, Dr. Wall. The conclusion is illogical and far-fetched. A command to circumcise disciples no more includes infants than a command to baptize disciples. The term disciple can not be made to mean an infant, by merely putting circumcise before it. The man who went out under a law to circumcise disciples only, could never circumcise infants by that law. If he circumcised infants at all, he must have done so by some other law, or else wholly without law.

But granting the existence of the custom in the days of John the Baptist and of Jesus, still Jewish proselyte baptism bears not the slightest resemblance to Christian baptism. The Almighty never gave proselyte baptism to the Jews. It was a human invention—a foolish tradition—sheer will-worship—an impious institution. It is nowhere intimated in the Scriptures that Christian baptism was borrowed from this silly and wicked tradition; as silly and wicked as the baptism of bells and the festival of the ass among the

* *Ut supra.*, p. 23.

Papists. And why suppose that Jesus borrowed only the baptism of infants from this superstition? Why did he not adopt the whole custom? If Infant Baptism, as now practiced, is right by this custom without any warrant of law, why any command to baptize at all? The custom could have established the baptism of adults as well as of infants. And why should we construe the law by this custom to favor Infant Baptism merely? We should take the whole custom or none. Why then baptize children born of baptized parents, or whose ancestors had been baptized, seeing that this tradition of the Jews positively forbid their baptism? And why dispense with the sacrifice required of male and female? Surely these were as much parts of the custom—as sacred and as obligatory—as that of the baptism of infants.

But, according to Jewish proselyte baptism, neither John nor the disciples of Jesus should have baptized the Jews. No Jew could receive this baptism; it was to be administered only to heathens proselyted to the Jewish religion. John was sent of heaven to violate this custom, for he was sent expressly to baptize Jews. The Savior, before his crucifixion, sent out his disciples, and ordered them to disregard this tradition, for he sent them to baptize Jews only. In his great commission, he commanded Jews as well as Gentiles to be baptized; thus proving by this last solemn command, as he had proved in his prior conduct, that he utterly contemned this human invention—that he, and not weak and superstitious Jewish rabbins, was the lawgiver in Zion. It is a strange inference, then, to conclude that he expected his disciples to practice Infant Baptism in obedience to a custom which he had taught them constantly to violate and despise.

But there was no such custom existing when the commission was given. No writer within several centuries of the

birth of the Savior mentions it. There is no allusion to it in the Bible. Josephus, although a Jew, and one who wrote extensively of Jewish customs, knows nothing of its existence. Philo makes no mention of such a custom. And on such a question as this, are we to disregard the silence of contemporary writers, and implicitly follow the testimony of men who affirm of matters centuries after they transpired—and men too who have testified to the most improbable falsehoods? We will quote from Dr. Gale some matters which these Jewish retailers of old wives' fables relate, with the same gravity of narration that they relate proselyte baptism. They relate the following story:

“David, the king, in digging the foundation, found a stone laid over the mouth of a pit, on which was inscribed the proper name of God; this he caused to be taken up and placed in the holy of holies. And the wise men, fearing lest some over-curious young men might learn this name, and by the power of it cause great disturbances in the world, made, by their magic art, two brazen lions, which they set at the door of the holy of holies, one on the right hand and the other on the left; that if any should enter in, and learn this secret name, the lions, as he came out again, should, by roaring, strike him with such terror and confusion, as to cause him entirely to forget the name he had learned. [Now Jesus] left the upper Galilee, and came privately to Jerusalem, and entering into the temple, learned the holy letters, and writ the incomprehensible name on parchment; and first uttering the name as a charm that he might not feel pain, he cut a gash in his flesh, and put into it the parchment which contained the mysterious name, and then immediately pronouncing the name again, the flesh was perfectly healed up as at first. As he came out, the brazen lions set up their

roar, and frightened the name quite out of his mind. Upon which he went immediately without the city, and, opening the flesh, took out the hidden parchment, and by these means again learned the powerful name. After this, he went into Bethlehem Judea, the place of his nativity, and began to cry with a loud voice, &c. * * * * Upon this, some asked him, saying, Show us by some sign or wonder that thou art God. To whom he answered, saying, Bring hither a dead body and I will raise it to life. With that they fell to digging up a grave with all expedition; and finding nothing but dry bones, they told him, We have found here only the bones. Well, bring them here into the midst, says he. And when they had brought them, he fitted every bone to its place, covered them with skin, and flesh, and nerves; and the body became alive, and arose and stood on its feet; and the whole company saw the wonder, and was amazed. * * * * Bring hither a leper, says he, and I will heal him. And when they brought one to him, he in like manner healed him by the incomprehensible name; which when they that were with him saw, they fell down before him, and worshipped him, saying, *Thou art indeed the Son of God.*

“One of the wise men proposed to the rest, if it may be thought fit, let one of us also learn the name, and thereby be enabled to do these wonders as well as he. The Sanhedrim approved the advice, and decreed, that whosoever should learn the name, and thereby discover and expose Jesus, he should receive a double reward in the other world. Then one of the wise men, whose name was Judas, stood up, and said, I will learn it. * * * * Jesus said, Does not Esaias prophesy of me? and my great forefather David likewise says of me, *The Lord said unto my Lord, &c.*; and

again, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* And now I will ascend to my Father who is in heaven, and I will sit at his right hand; and this will I do before your faces, but thou, Judas, shalt never come there. Then Jesus immediately pronouncing the mighty name, a sudden wind arose and carried him into the air, where he remained between heaven and earth. Judas, in like manner pronouncing the name, was also carried up, and so they both flew about in the air, to the great amazement of all spectators. But Judas again pronouncing the name, falls on Jesus, designing to cast him down headlong; while Jesus also pronouncing the name, endeavored to cast down Judas, and thus they continued struggling together," &c.*

But enough: these silly and wicked falsehoods sufficiently evince the credit due to the testimony of such writers. What man, who honors the institutions of the gospel, will seriously plead to have attached to them a rite, the existence of which rests upon the testimony of such witnesses as these?

But some of the most eminent Pedo-baptist scholars and divines wholly deny that proselyte baptism existed in the days of John the Baptist and the Savior. Professor Stuart winds up an elaborate examination of this subject by saying:

"In fine, we are destitute of any early testimony to the practice of proselyte baptism, antecedently to the Christian era. The original institution of admitting Jews to the covenant, and strangers to the same, prescribed no other rite than that of circumcision. No account of any other is found in the Old Testament; none in the Apocrypha, New Testament, Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, Joseph the Blind, or in the work of any other Targumist, excepting pseudo-

* Reflections on Dr. Wall, pp. 255-7.

Jonathan, whose work belongs to the seventh or eighth century. No evidence is found in Philo, Josephus, or any of the earlier Christian writers. How could an allusion to such a rite have escaped them all, if it were as common, and as much required by usage, as circumcision?"*

The great Dr. Owen says: "The opinion of some learned men about the transferring of a Jewish baptismal rite (which, in reality, did not then exist), by the Lord Jesus, for the use of his disciples, is destitute of all probability." We might quote numerous other great names; but these may suffice. It is enough that the witnesses relied upon lived too many centuries from the times of our Savior to testify to the existence of the rite then, and that their testimony on any subject is suspicious and can not impart complete satisfaction as to its truth.

We have demonstrated that, admitting the existence of Jewish proselyte baptism, it could establish nothing respecting Christian baptism; and we have proved also that such a rite did not exist when Christ gave his commission to his apostles. So that, any way, Infant Baptism can derive no support from this wicked and superstitious custom. Yet without this rite, according to Dr. Wall, no proof can be derived from the New Testament in favor of Infant Baptism; and with it, it is equally clear, not a shadow of foundation is furnished to Infant Baptism! Thus crumbles the main pillar in the superstructure of the great champion and historian of Pedo-baptism!

* On Christian Baptism, p. 69.

CHAPTER III.

Proselyte baptism does not explain the commission—The baptism of John and of Jesus unlike proselyte baptism—The Jews did not bring their infants to John to be baptized—Proselyte baptism did not require the Jews to baptize their infants—No proof that the Savior borrowed his baptism from the Jews, and the position that he did, proves too much—It is confessed by Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Wall that Infant Baptism is derived from tradition, and confirmed by the “silence” of the Bible—John the Baptist baptized no infants—The disciples, before the great commission, did not baptize infants—And yet Dr. Wall relates it as history that John and the disciples did baptize infants!

It has been shown that Jewish proselyte baptism can not furnish any aid in our interpretation of the commission given by our Savior to disciple and baptize the nations; that the Jews were not wont to baptize proselytes previous to and during our Lord’s incarnation; and that, granting the existence of such a superstitious custom, it is wholly incredible to suppose that John the Baptist and the apostles borrowed Infant Baptism from it, seeing they wholly disregarded it by constant violation. And this custom aside, where else may we derive aid to learn the import of the commission? Dr. Wall answers:

“The baptism indeed of the nations by the apostles ought to be regulated by the practice of John and of Christ himself (who by the hands of his disciples baptized many Jews), rather than by any preceding custom of the Jewish nation; if we had any good ground to believe that they did in the case of infants differ or alter anything from the usual way. But we have no kind of proof that they made any such alteration.”*

* Page 27.

But Dr. Wall wholly failed to prove the existence of the custom. And the baptism of John and of Jesus did differ from Jewish proselyte baptism. By the latter, no Jew was to be baptized: John baptized only Jews. The apostles, by the first commission, were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and under that commission they baptized only Jews. They, therefore, were sent expressly to do what, by the law of proselyte baptism, could not be done, viz., *to baptize the Jews*. John baptized a great many Jews; and Jesus, by his disciples, baptized more than John. How, then, could Dr. Wall say, that "we have no kind of proof that they made any alteration" in this custom? Did his prejudices put out the eyes of his understanding? But we will proceed in the examination of his reasoning:

"There is no express mention indeed of any children baptized by him [John]; but to those that consider the commonness of the thing (which I have here shown) for people that came to be baptized to bring their children along with them, that is no more a cause to think that he baptized no children, than one's minding that in the history of the Old Testament there is some five hundred years together without the mention of any child circumcised, is a cause to think that none were circumcised all that while."*

We can readily conceive it possible that the Jews observed the law of circumcision during the five hundred years alluded to. God had commanded them to do so, and he has nowhere charged them with disobedience in this particular. But what analogy is there between such a supposition and the assertion that John, who was sent of God to baptize, borrowed his practice from an act of will-worship—a wicked and foolish superstition? Because the Jews obeyed a divine

* Pp. 27, 28.

law, does it follow hence that the harbinger of our blessed Savior observed a tradition of the Jewish elders? But we have seen he did not observe it; that, even admitting its existence, he habitually violated it. But Dr. W. proceeds:

“And whereas it is said of the multitudes that came to John, that they *were baptized by him confessing their sins* (which confession can be understood only of the grown persons), that is no more than would be said in the case of a minister of the Church of England—going and converting a heathen nation. For in a short account which should be sent of his success, it would be said that multitudes came and were baptized, *confessing their sins*; and there would need no mention of their bringing their children with them, because the converting of the grown persons was the principal and most difficult thing, and it would be supposed they brought their children of course.”*

Yes, they *might* “suppose” they brought their children, but they could find no ground for such a supposition in the language of the communication; for it is admitted that the “confession can be understood only of the grown persons.” The supposition would be mere idle conjecture, or at least conjecture wholly independent of the letter of the minister. The concession of Dr. Wall is this: that the New Testament states that John baptized adults only—that he baptized those who confessed their sins, “which confession can be understood only of the grown persons;” and we can only “suppose” he baptized infants by what the writers of Jewish fables and traditions have said about proselyte baptism! Adult Baptism is taught in the sacred Scriptures; Infant Baptism by a doubtful tradition! It is enough for our purposes, that it is here confessed that we can not even “sup-

pose," from any record of the New Testament, that John baptized infants. If he baptized infants, it is not in proof. God did not command him to baptize them; and no competent witness, whether Jewish, Pagan, or Christian, has ever testified that he did baptize them. But he quotes Dr. Lightfoot as saying:

"I do not believe the people that flocked to John's baptism were so forgetful of the manner and custom of the nation, as not to bring their little children along with them to be baptized."*

But it was not the custom of the *Jews* to bring "their little children along with them to be baptized." By the custom of proselyte baptism, no Jew or his children were to be baptized. Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Wall both bear testimony to this. It was one from among the heathen proselyted to the Jewish religion, who, according to their showing, was the subject, with his children, of this traditional rite. No Jewish writer pretends to the existence of any custom requiring the baptism of the Jews and their children. This argument, therefore, recoils. The Jews would not have brought their little children with them to be baptized. They had no such custom. To have done so would have violated their traditions. They could not be proselyted to their own religion, and, consequently, could not receive proselyte baptism. Had John proposed to administer proselyte baptism to them and their children, it would have been the grossest insult. It would have been to brand them with heathenism. It would have been asking them to nullify their tradition, and to submit to what their custom emphatically disallowed. Here is the dilemma of Dr. Wall and Dr. Lightfoot: If proselyte baptism did not exist in the beginning of the gospel

of Jesus Christ, then John did not baptize infants; and if it did exist, John did not practice it, for he baptized no Gentiles, but only Jews, who could not be baptized according to the custom, and, therefore, he did not baptize infants! And what is true of John, is true of the disciples before the resurrection of their Lord! Thus these great doctors are buried in the ruins of their own favorite fortification!

But Dr. Lightfoot argues still further. He feels that Infant Baptism can not stand without this prop. He says:

“If baptism and baptizing infants had been a new thing, and unheard of until John the Baptist came, as circumcision was until God appointed it to Abraham, there would have been, no doubt, as express command for baptizing infants, as there was for circumcising them. But when the baptizing of infants was a thing commonly known and used, as appears by incontestible evidence from their writers, there need not be express assertions that such and such persons were to be the subjects of baptism, when it was as well known before the gospel began that men, women, and children were baptized, as it is to be known that the sun is up, when,” &c.*

Dr. Lightfoot is right in the position that baptism, if not instituted before, must have been instituted at the time of the Savior, by express command. A command for one thing is no command for another and a different thing. The command of God to the Jews to circumcise their infants does not afford the slightest ground to infer that Jesus commanded his ministers to baptize infants. Dr. Lightfoot, we repeat, thus far reasons like one learned in the Scriptures. But proselyte baptism was never commanded—it was never instituted properly, Dr. Lightfoot being witness. Besides, his position proves too much for his purposes. If it was not

* Page 29.

necessary to command the baptism of infants, why was it necessary to command the baptism of any one? Why would not the custom avail without a command for the baptism of adults as well as of infants, seeing that he contends that their baptism was known and used too? And if there was no need of a precept, why was a precept given? If infants were baptized among the Jews, so were men and women; and if the former may be baptized by the custom without precept, so may the latter. There was no more necessity for a law to baptize adults than to baptize infants.

But Dr. Lightfoot illustrates his position further; and we continue our quotations, that this support of Infant Baptism may appear in all its strength:

“Suppose there should at this time come out a proclamation in these words: Every one on the Lord’s day shall repair to the public assembly in the church. That man would *dote*, who should in times to come conclude that there were no prayers, sermons, psalms, &c., in the public assemblies on the Lord’s day, for this reason, because there was no mention of them in this proclamation. For the proclamation ordered the keeping of the Lord’s day in the public assemblies in general; and there was no need that mention should be made of the particular kinds of divine worship there to be used, since they were both before and at the time of the said proclamation known to every body, and in common use.”*

Very true; and he would equally *dote*, who should contend that a proclamation simply requiring every one to repair to the public assembly in the church, enjoined and required “prayers, sermons, psalms,” &c. A proclamation to observe the Sabbath is not a proclamation for singing psalms. This,

* Pp. 29, 30.

if done at all, must be done without authority from the proclamation. So the Savior's proclamation to baptize disciples furnishes no authority for the baptism of infants. Authority for that must be derived elsewhere; and, according to Dr. Lightfoot, it is derived from a stale Jewish tradition; for he thus applies the case supposed:

“Just so the case stood as to baptism. Christ ordered it to be for a sacrament of the New Testament, by which all should be admitted to the profession of the gospel, as they were formerly to proselytism in the Jews' religion. The particular circumstances of it, as the manner of baptizing, the age of receiving it, which sex was capable of it, &c., had no need of being regulated or set down, because they were known to every body by common usage.”*

It is not in proof that Christ ordered Jewish proselyte baptism to be for a sacrament of the New Testament. Dr. Lightfoot begs the question. So important a fact as this can not be assumed—it ought and must be proved. There is not the slightest foundation for it in any ancient writer, Jewish or Christian, sacred or profane. Besides, as we have seen already, there is no similarity between the two rites, for the Lord commanded his disciples to do what proselyte baptism forbid to be done. And the apostolic commission does prescribe the character of persons to be baptized. They are disciples: *make disciples, baptizing them*, are the words of the law. But let us hear Dr. Lightfoot once more:

“It was therefore necessary, on the other side, that there should have been an express and plain order that infants and little children should not be baptized, if our Savior meant that they should not. For since it was ordinary in all ages before to have infants baptized, if Christ would have

* Page 30.

had that usage to be abolished, he would have expressly forbidden it. So that his and the Scripture's silence in this matter does confirm and establish Infant Baptism forever.'*

An ordinance of the New Testament confirmed and established by the silence of the Savior and the Scriptures! Such sophistry is too gross to be expected from so great a man as Dr. Lightfoot. But his cause betrayed him. He loved Infant Baptism with intense affection, and hence clung to it to the injury of his powers of perception. On any other subject, he would have shrunk appalled at the monstrous position, that all the customs of the Jews were sanctioned by the Savior, except those he expressly and plainly abolished, and that they were perpetuated and enjoined by his *silence!* And yet this is the plain import of the last passage quoted. If the silence of Scripture ratifies one Jewish custom, it may ratify all; and it is our duty forthwith to enter upon an investigation of the Jewish traditions and customs in existence during the days of the Savior's incarnation, and of which he is silent, for they are as much confirmed and established of heaven as the baptism of infants. There were thousands of rites and customs of the Jews of which the Scriptures make no mention, and which, according to this logic, it is our duty to regard as sacred and divine! We can bring no "express and plain order" of the Savior against them, therefore, like Infant Baptism, they are confirmed and established through all generations of the gospel church by the awful voice of his "silence!!" Dr. Lightfoot, on any other subject, would have taken a different position. He would have asserted the obvious and common sense principle, that we should receive as sacred no Jewish customs

except those expressly sanctioned and ordered in the Scriptures.

It is clear, then, "that the baptism of the nations by the apostles ought to be regulated by the practice of John and of Christ himself (who by the hands of his disciples baptized many Jews), rather than by any preceding custom of the Jewish nation; because we have good grounds to believe that if the Jewish nation had any custom of baptism at all, John and the Savior wholly disregarded it, practising altogether a different baptism." Thus Dr. Wall advises; and to the examination of baptism as instituted by divine authority and existing before the commission was given, we now turn our attention. We wish to ascertain the state of baptism as it existed by the appointment of heaven previous to the command, "Go, and disciple all nations, baptizing them," under which all gospel ministers now profess to act.

John the Baptist was sent of God to baptize. His baptism, unlike the traditions of the Jews, was of heaven and not of men. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and was sent to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." His baptism was unto repentance. He baptized the people, "confessing their sins." He required that they should bring forth fruits meet for repentance. He baptized professed believers—"John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." Acts xix. 4. He baptized professed disciples—"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John," (John iv. 1)—that is, *than John made and baptized*. So he made disciples and

baptized them. He baptized no infants, unless he had a baptism *not* "unto repentance," which did not require a confession of sins; unless he baptized some who were not made disciples, and without saying to them, they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. But he had but one baptism. The Scriptures nowhere intimate that he baptized more than one class of subjects. If he baptized infants, the Scriptures have failed to leave an intimation of the kind, as is confessed on all hands. He could not have baptized them by a baptism unto repentance. To have baptized them at all, he must have had another baptism, which he had not, so far as we have any testimony to conduct us to conclusions. So far as the Bible, then, furnishes us any light upon the subject, we may set it down as undenied, that John baptized no infants. Dr. Wall and Dr. Lightfoot pretend to no authority from the Bible in support of their position that John baptized infants, except its "silence." To them the "silence" of the Savior and the Scriptures is the voice of God in thunder-tones engrafting upon the institutions of the gospel a human invention.

The apostles, previous to their receiving the commission, were sent by the Savior to preach the gospel and to baptize. In this work they had successfully and extensively engaged among the Jews to whom they were sent. Their labors were more blessed than even those of the zealous and devoted Baptist: "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee." John iv. 1-3. The baptism administered by the disciples under the first commission, it is evident from this

passage, corresponded, in its main features, to the baptism administered by John. Like him, they made disciples and baptized them. They did not baptize any other class of subjects, so far as we can learn from the divine record; and we have no other guide to direct our investigations. If we leave this, and venture upon a sea of conjecture, we may as legitimately infer that they baptized bells or dead persons, as that they baptized infants. When we desert the light of the Scriptures, in a search of this nature, we are enveloped in darkness as fearful as that which prevailed in that long night of Egypt when no man knew his brother—we venture forth on a tempestuous ocean without a bottom or a shore. We know from the Scriptures that they baptized disciples; but we can not know that they baptized any others, for there is no proof, human or divine, that they did.

But Dr. Wall, in writing the history of Infant Baptism, gravely takes it for granted that John, and Jesus, by his disciples, baptized thousands of infants! He tells us that the Jews who flocked to John's baptism at Jordan and at Enon must have brought their young children with them to be baptized; and that they brought them also to the disciples for the same purpose! But he quotes no author that testifies to the fact. Even the Jewish rabbis, whom he presses into his service, fail him as witnesses on this point. He draws on his imagination for his facts, and, in the face of the plain and positive declarations of Scripture, asserts that Infant Baptism was the common practice of John and of the blessed Savior! **THIS IS THE HISTORY OF INFANT BAPTISM!** It is sheer fiction. Its foundation is vapor. It is built of dreams.

We have now seen the state of baptism, as it existed among those divinely authorized to administer it, up to the

giving of the great commission. In our next chapter we shall commence at that point, and endeavor to ascertain from it whether it furnishes any authority for baptizing infants in the awful and solemn names of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER IV.

The apostolic commission—It is not to be explained by *circumcision*—No allusion to infants in the commission—It commands the baptism of disciples or believers only—It requires baptism into the name of the Trinity, which is applicable only to disciples—It requires the baptized to be taught the commandments of Jesus—It makes the same requisition of all—All nations to be made disciples—“To make disciples” can not include infants—Not made disciples by baptism—Infant damnation not to be inferred—Even infant church-membership does not prove Infant Baptism—The apostles baptized according to the commission—Lydia’s household—The jailor’s household—Household of Crispus—Of Stephanus—No Infant Baptism in the New Testament.

HAVING shown that there was no such custom as Infant Baptism among the Jews previous to the giving of the apostolic commission, and that neither John the Baptist, nor Jesus, by his disciples, baptized any infants, we now enter upon the examination of the commission itself, and the practice of the apostles under it. From what we have already said, it must be evident to all, that we have a right to demand, according to the concessions of Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Wall, a law as expressly enjoining the *baptism*, as of old was given for the *circumcision*, of infants. But we care not to avail ourselves of the concession. We do not need it. We plant ourselves upon the great commission, and maintain that it does not authorize the baptism of infants, and, therefore, that no minister can by it baptize an infant. The commission of the Savior to his apostles reads thus: “ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH: GO YE, THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE H^C 7 GHOST; TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS

WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. AMEN." Mat. xxviii. 18-20. The word "teach," occurring in the first instance above, is translated from a word (*mathe-teuo*) which signifies *to make disciples or scholars*. This is universally conceded. The command is, then, "*make disciples, baptizing them.*" Those to be baptized, according to this commission, are *disciples, persons taught in the school of Christ, believers*. This is further evident from the substance of the commission as recorded by Mark: "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." Mark xvi. 15, 16.

Dr. Wall and Dr. Lightfoot, as we have seen, did not pretend that the apostolic commission authorizes Infant Baptism. Their dependence for authority was upon a Jewish tradition. This they supposed would shed light upon the design of the commission; but we have proved that this supposition has no foundation. Other Pedo-baptists appeal to the law of circumcision, and contend that inasmuch as by divine law, the male infants of the Jews were circumcised, therefore all the infants of believing parents ought to be baptized. But the premises and conclusions are too far asunder for any rational purpose. The law requiring the circumcision of infants of eight days old, and the law requiring the baptism of disciples or believers, can never, by any legerdemain of logic or learning, be converted into one and the same law. And the very fact that the Pedo-baptists alluded to, appeal to the law of circumcision, given nineteen centuries before the commission, is demonstration as strong as text of Holy Writ, that they know that there is no war-

rant for Infant Baptism in the commission. If they could find their doctrine in the last instructions of the Savior to his disciples, they would never appeal to the language of God to Abraham nineteen hundred years before that time. They plead the law of circumcision, and not the apostolic commission, in support of their practice. This is to surrender the commission. This is to concede all that we contend for—*that the commission has nothing whatever to do with infants.* We could grant Infant Baptism in the place of circumcision, and still successfully maintain that this would be another baptism, wholly distinct from that commanded by the commission; and that the subjects of it, when they became believers or disciples, would be called upon, by their solemn obligations to the head of the church, to be baptized in the name of the Trinity. Their being baptized by a law binding by reason of descent, would not release them from a law binding by reason of faith and discipleship. To baptize according to the law of circumcision, would not be the same as to baptize according to the law of the Savior in the commission. The former would be administered by virtue of a natural birth, of descent simply from an earthly parent; the latter, by virtue of a birth from above, and of relationship to the great head of the church. The commission commands the baptism of believers or disciples; now this can not be nullified by baptism of infants. He that is baptized in infancy can not obey this law until he is baptized as a disciple. This is as plain as the sun in the heavens. Until this commission be repealed, the command of the Son of God to every disciple is, *Be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* So if we were to grant Infant Baptism by the law of circumcision, still our opponents would gain nothing to their cause; for by it they can never escape the

solemn obligation resting upon every disciple of Jesus, imposed by his last and solemn injunction, to be baptized in his name. Infant Baptism is not believer baptism, and can never supersede it.

Who can look at the commission, and imagine for a moment that it has the slightest allusion to infants? We care not for circumcision, nor Jewish proselyte baptism, nor any thing else that the minds of men may fancy to have existed at the time among the Jews; we defy the ingenuity of men and devils to torture the slightest allusion to infants out of the apostolic commission. The eleven disciples to whom it was addressed could never have understood him to refer to infants. They had never seen the Jews baptize any infants; for, as we have demonstrated, the Jews had no such custom. They never saw John the Baptist baptize an infant, for his baptism was unto repentance; and he said to those he baptized, that they should believe on him that should come after him—that is, on Christ Jesus. *He made disciples and baptized them.* They had, by the command of the Savior, preached the gospel to the Jews; and although they baptized great multitudes, yet they baptized no infants. *They made and baptized more disciples than John.* And their Lord did not change the subjects of baptism in his last instructions to them; but he sent them into all the world to do what they had hitherto done in the narrow precincts of Palestine, viz., TO MAKE DISCIPLES, *baptizing them.* It is impossible, then, that they could understand him to have reference to infants—that they could imagine that he meant to instruct them to baptize parents because they believed, and infants because they believed not—that parents were to be taken into the kingdom voluntarily, and their infants by stratagem.

The commission not only commands that they should be made disciples, that they should be believers before baptism, but that they should be baptized *into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Prof. Stuart says: "The word baptize may be followed by a person or a thing (doctrine) which has *eis* before it. In the first case, when it is followed by a person, it means, 'by the sacred rite of baptism to bind one's self to be a disciple or follower of a person, to receive or obey his doctrines or laws'—*e. g.*, 1 Cor. x. 2, 'And were baptized into (*eis*) Moses;' Gal. iii. 27, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into (*eis*) Christ, having put on Christ;' Rom. vi. 3, 'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into (*eis*) Christ, were baptized into (*eis*) his death;' 1 Cor. i. 13, 'Were ye baptized into (*eis*) the name of Paul;' verses 14, 15, 'I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say I baptized into (*eis*) mine own name.' Or it means, to acknowledge him as Sovereign, Lord, and Sanctifier—*e. g.*, Mat. xxviii. 19, 'Baptizing them into (*eis*) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;' Acts viii. 16, 'Only they were baptized into (*eis*) the name of the Lord;' Acts xix. 5, 'When they heard this, they were baptized into (*eis*) the name of the Lord.'"* And so Greenfield, in his lexicon of the New Testament: "To be baptized to any one, [*is*] to bind one's self to honor, obey, and follow any one." To the same point we might quote Robinson, Schleusner, and a host of other eminent lexicographers and critics; but let these suffice, since, so far as we know, this interpretation is not disputed. But infants can not be baptized *into* the name of the Lord. They can not bind themselves to receive and obey his doctrines and laws. They can not profess any

* Letter to Dr. Fishback.

thing, and of course are never baptized upon a profession of obedience to the will of God. But this is required by the express letter of the commission; then by the commission they can not be baptized. You might, with as much propriety, baptize a bell, or an image of the Virgin Mary, into the name of the Trinity! Who has required it at your hands?

But it is further evident that the commission has no allusion to infants, from the fact, that the baptized are to be *taught to observe whatsoever Christ has commanded*. This supposes that the subjects of the commission are capable of being instructed into the obedience of all the ordinances of the church militant. Of course this can not allude to infants. They are incompetent to receive any such instruction. In no way, then, can infants be comprehended in the commission.

There can be no excuse for misunderstanding this commission. No language can be more plain—none less invested with ambiguity. He that runs may read. It enjoins the baptism of disciples or believers. It knows no others. No minister with this commission in his hands would baptize an idolater or an unbeliever. He would require him to renounce idolatry and believe in Jesus. And what the commission requires of one, it requires of all. It has reference to character—to *disciples* or *believers*—and not to age, or sex, or color. If, by the commission, you may baptize an infant that is not a disciple and not a believer, you may, with the same propriety, baptize an adult that is not a disciple and not a believer. What the commission requires of one, it requires of all. It knows no distinction, and makes no difference. It either requires faith and discipleship absolutely, or it does not. If it *does*, then it furnishes no war-

rant for Infant Baptism, for infants can not believe, they can not be made disciples. If it *does not*, then adults are not required to profess faith, or to be disciples. This is self-evident, and defies every effort at evasion.

But some have said that the command extends to *all nations*: and are not infants, it is asked, included in that phrase? Certainly they are; and so are drunkards, and liars, and swearers, and whoremongers, and infidels, and atheists, and idolaters, and every wicked and abominable person upon the face of the whole earth; and if the phrase "all nations," includes infants, so it does the others, and there is just the same warrant for the baptism of the one as the other—that is, *no warrant at all!* But such objectors have paid very little attention to the language of the commission. If the command is to baptize all nations, it is also to *make disciples* of all nations, and to *teach* all nations to observe the ordinances of Christ. They must be made disciples, then baptized, and then taught the other duties of religion. This is the divine order. Man has no authority to change it. It is as permanent as the heavens. And by it, neither infants nor infidels can be baptized, but disciples or believers only. The objection vanishes as the mists of the morning before the sun in his strength.

But Dr. Wall intimates, but with great hesitation, as if conscious of treading upon enchanted ground, that the commission, in commanding the baptism of *disciples* or "*prose-lytes*," intended infants as well as adults; for the Jews, he says, were wont to denominate their baptized infants *prose-lytes*. Were this even so among the Jews (which, however, we have shown to be wholly destitute of proof), still we would not recede one inch from our position. *Matheteuo*, "to make disciples," never can imply infants. Every lexi-

con upon earth will tell you that it necessarily involves instruction, and presupposes one that can be taught. The connection in which it stands, as already proved, enables the plainest Christian, with the Bible in his hand, to put to silence and to shame the most giant defenders of the opposite opinion. The term *disciple*, every where in the New Testament, is used in a sense utterly incompatible with infants. Any one can test this by means of a concordance and the common version of the Scriptures. It shocks all propriety of speech and all common sense, to call an unconscious babe a *disciple* or *learner*. It would be folly to waste time in exposing a position so monstrous and absurd. We would feel about as well employed in refuting the papal legends respecting the exploits of St. Anthony with the fishes, or of St. Patrick with the frogs and toads of Ireland! The criticism is crushed by the weight of its own absurdity.

Dr. Wall argues, that the Jews made infants disciples or proselytes *by baptizing them*; and hence he and others have argued that infants may be included in the commission, since it enjoins that disciples be made *by baptizing them*. This means that a person can be made a *believer* by baptizing him; for a believer and a disciple are the same in the Scriptures. Aye, much more: this criticism teaches that an infant may be made a believer in Jesus, a disciple of the Lord, by baptism. Now, it is possible that the superstitious Jews were capable of perpetrating such supreme nonsense as this; but we protest against its being imputed to the Savior. He never uttered such puerile nonsense. But if persons are made believers or disciples by baptizing, why require faith of adults in order to their admission to the ordinance, seeing they would receive faith by being baptized? And let us carry out the doctrine; and since the thing may be done, let

us look at the results of its operation: an infidel, by being baptized, becomes a believer in Jesus! Idolaters and Jews, as was done by order of some of the Roman emperors and of Charlemagne, being taken by force and baptized, become disciples! Those infants in Germany who, not long since, were torn from the arms of their Baptist parents, and baptized by order of the civil magistrate, were made disciples of Christ! The untold millions of the unconverted now living and that have lived, who were baptized in infancy, were all made, in their baptism, disciples or believers! And a Turk, a worshipper of Juggernaut, or of Boodh, would become a disciple by simply baptizing him! We should really be ashamed to look one of our intelligent readers in the face, if we were seriously to set about a refutation of such a criticism. It must work out its own destruction in every well regulated mind. It is conclusive proof that Infant Baptism is worse than old wives' fables, when it is compelled to seek such defences, and resort to such subterfuges. If infants are made disciples by baptizing, they are made disciples also by teaching; for the command is, *baptizing them, teaching them*. No one can be a disciple without teaching. An untaught disciple is a contradiction. An adult, as all agree, must be a believer before baptism; and if a believer, then a disciple, for a believer who is not a disciple can not exist. And what is true of adults, is true of all by the commission. This we have abundantly proved. Let us look, then, at the absurdity of this criticism from another point. It is universally conceded that an adult should be a believer before baptism; and yet he is not a disciple until baptized! That is, he is a believing non-disciple!! A singular species in the moral kingdom! But a baptized infant is a disciple but not a believer; and this introduces to our admiring eyes another

moral monstrosity—a disciple who believes not! Oh, the follies of Infant Baptism! Your name is legion!

Again it is said, that if infants, because they are not believers, must not be baptized, then it follows, that because they believe not, they must be damned! That if want of faith debars them from baptism, it debars them from salvation! But these are false conclusions from our premises. Nothing of the sort follows from what we have said. The commission knows nothing of infants. As it says nothing about them, of course it teaches nothing respecting their salvation, their damnation, or their baptism. Who ever quoted the commission to prove infant salvation? And how could such a doctrine be even inferred from it, seeing that it says nothing whatever about them? But if infants are in the commission, then we say, they must believe, or be lost; for what it says to one, it says to all its subjects, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” But infants can not be put into the commission without interpolation of God’s word. They are, therefore, neither saved nor condemned by the commission. With the same propriety we might have a bell presented to us for baptism, and be told, if you deny it baptism by the commission, then you must hold that bells are lost; and whoever heard of the damnation of a bell?(!) But we can not be shaken by such appeals. The commission says nothing of bells or of infants. It knows only disciples or believers.

But it is contended by some of the advocates of Pedit-baptism, that infants were in the church before the Savior’s incarnation, and that the commission does not put them out of the church! Granting this to be so, still our position is untouched. We contend that the commission does not put them in the church—that it does not authorize their bap-

tism—that it provides in no way for them. It neither puts them in nor out of the church. The ingenuity of the prince of darkness can find no allusion to infants in the commission. We care nothing for infant membership, so far as this controversy is concerned. That may be as true, as we know and can prove it to be false and unscriptural, and still it would not prove that the Savior commanded the baptism of infants when he told his apostles to *make disciples, baptizing them*. Our Presbyterian brethren, who are the authors of this argument, do not, indeed, initiate infants into the church by baptism. Their doctrine is, that the infants of believers (and they baptize no others) are born members of the church. They can not baptize an infant that is not in the church. Their Larger Catechism says: “Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized.”* Their Confession of Faith tells us, that the baptism ordained by Jesus Christ (and by this reference is had to the commission) is *for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church*, and of course can have no allusion to the baptism of infants, who are not admitted into the church by baptism, but are in the church previous to the reception of that rite. By their own showing, no persons can be admitted into the church, “till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him.” So infants are not baptized by the commission, our opponents being witnesses. It is the baptism of infants by the commission, and not their membership by

* Ans. to Quest., 166.

birth, which is the matter in hand. The commission certainly turns no one out of the church; nor was it ever given for the baptism of church members. A law to baptize disciples is not a law for the admission of infants into the church. This is self-evident; it is also conceded by the standards of the Presbyterian church. It is superfluous, then, to waste ink in its proof.

It is clearly evident, then, that infants can not be baptized by the commission. This was the great law under which the apostles and primitive ministers acted in their administrations of baptism. The Acts of the Apostles show that their plan was to make disciples, then to baptize them, then to teach them to observe all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded. Every where, we read that he that believed was baptized. Every church that they organized was composed of disciples or believers, and not of believers *and their children*. There is not the remotest allusion to an infant in any baptism recorded in the Bible. Our Pedeo-baptist friends have searched in vain for a passage of Scripture which mentions their practice. They all concede that there is no *express* precept or example to favor it in the Bible. As the apostles were governed solely by the commission, in all their baptisms, of course they did not baptize infants. If the age and character of their subjects were in no case recorded, we would know that they were disciples or believers, because they were authorized to baptize no others in the name of the Trinity. In this way, we could meet and confound our opponents respecting the several cases of household baptisms mentioned in the New Testament. The household of Cornelius is the first that is mentioned. True, we have the clear testimony of the inspired penman that they were all disciples before baptism. It is written concerning them:

“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” But would we not have been compelled to conclude from the commission, even if this had not been written, that they were disciples or believers? Most assuredly, unless we were prepared to charge upon the apostle a most flagrant violation of the last instructions of his divine Master.

And so with the vaunted case of the baptism of Lydia and her household. That case is thus recorded: “And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down and *spake unto the women who resorted thither*. [And the commission says, *preach the gospel to every creature*.] And a certain woman, named Lydia, of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul. [She was *made a disciple*.] And when she was baptized [and the commission commands the baptism of *disciples*], 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.” Acts xvi. 13-15. There is no controversy respecting the baptism of Lydia. It is confessed on all hands that she was baptized agreeably to the commission; the only question of inquiry is respecting her household. Who composed her family we are not told; and Pedo-baptists, eager to find something to favor their cause, have imagined it was made up of infants! But one thing is certain, if her family were baptized by the same law that she was, then they were *disciples* or *believers*; and if they were not baptized by this law, by what law were they baptized? That nothing is said about their faith or discipleship signifies nothing, if it be true that they were

baptized according to the commission. We are just as certain that John baptized the people in Enon, *confessing their sins*, as that he thus baptized in Jordan, although the Scriptures are silent upon the subject; because his baptism was unto repentance, and the law governing it required a confession of sins. Even Pede-baptists do not hesitate to believe that Gaius, whom Paul baptized at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 4), was a believer before baptism, although it is not so stated any where in the New Testament. And why? Because, say they, the commission requires faith of adults, and Gaius was an adult. But we have shown that the commission knows nothing of any subjects of baptism except disciples or believers—that its requisitions of every one are the same; and that, consequently, every one baptized according to the commission, is a disciple or believer. We grant that it is not said that Lydia's family believed, nor is it said that she believed for them—that they were baptized upon her faith or the faith of godfathers or godmothers. Baptists suppose that they believed for themselves; but Pede-baptists suppose that Lydia or some of her friends believed for them. The Baptists predicate their supposition upon the fact that the apostles did not disregard the commission, and hence did not baptize those who were not disciples or believers; but the Pede-baptists presume that Lydia's household were baptized by a law which did not require personal faith or discipleship, but by a law that allowed of faith and discipleship by proxy! The simple question then, is, **BY WHAT LAW WERE THEY BAPTIZED?** If by the commission, then they were disciples or believers; for it authorizes the baptism of no others, and is wholly silent respecting vicarious discipleship, or faith by imputation. And what other law for baptism besides the commission has God ordained? If there is any law for the

baptism of those who believe by proxy, or who have their parents' faith imputed to them, then we demand its production. We deny its existence. This would be another baptism, wholly distinct in its character from that ordained in the commission. But there is but "one baptism."

We have, indeed, ample testimony that Lydia's household was not composed of infants; for it is recorded in the 40th verse of this chapter, that Paul and Silas "entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the *brethren*, they *comforted* them and departed." They were "brethren," capable of being "comforted," and of course not infants. But we do not need this testimony; for if it had never been given, we would plant ourselves upon the commission, and quench all the fiery darts of our adversaries. Our feet would be upon a rock that could not be moved. The apostles did not violate the commission. They were faithful servants of their divine Master. You command your servant to go and collect in a certain house, twelve boys of not more than ten years of age; he goes, and after a time returns, and says, "the boys are in the house;" would you not understand him to mean that he had obeyed your orders? and would you not expect to find twelve boys of not more than ten years of age in the house? Jesus sent his apostles to preach the gospel, *to baptize disciples*; and they report that they baptized certain persons at Philippi; and we know, if they did what they were commanded, that the persons baptized were disciples. This is too plain a proposition—it is too common a principle of every day life, to need further illustration. All must feel its force, and the most ingenious can not evade its point.

Those who adduce the household of Lydia to sustain Infant Baptism have a great work to perform to make it

subserve their purposes. They must prove not only that she had infants, but that they were baptized upon her faith, or upon the faith of sponsors, which no one has ever done. Indeed, it is a task which the most strenuous advocates of Infant Baptism have never undertaken. Had Lydia any children? It is nowhere said that she had. If she had children, were they infants? The Scriptures are silent on this point. If she had infants, did she bring them with her several hundred miles to Philippi? If she did, it is not in evidence. But admitting all these things, is it in proof that they were baptized upon her faith, or the faith of sponsors? Why then should this case ever be adverted to in proof of Infant Baptism? It can prove nothing for it, even if we had not the positive testimony of the apostolic commission against it.

The inspired writers, as if foreseeing that in the latter days an improper use would be made of the household baptisms which occurred in the apostolic age, have been careful to show that they were in exact accordance with the instructions of the Savior, or at least that there were no infants in them. The case of the Philippian jailer and his household is in point: Paul and Silas "spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house [preached the gospel to them]. 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." Acts xvi. 30-34. This was apostolic practice. The households they baptized were believers or disciples, as the Lord commanded. Again we read: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hear-

ing, believed and were baptized." Acts xviii. 8. Here is another household of disciples or believers.

Paul says to the Corinthians: "I baptized also the house of Stephanus." 1 Cor. i. 16. The faith of this household is not mentioned any more than that of Lydia's; and yet it was not composed of infants, for in another part of the same epistle, Paul says: "Ye know the house of Stephanus, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." 1 Cor. xvi. 15. Did these persons believe by proxy? Were they baptized on vicarious faith? Or can any one doubt that their baptism was in accordance with the commission—that they were made disciples and baptized?

We deem it unnecessary to pursue this subject further. Our opponents admit that the New Testament sheds no light upon their cause. They represent it as an opaque body, and try to irradiate it by throwing upon it the light of the Old Testament, or of Jewish superstition. But this we have shown to be insufficient—their light comes from too great a distance, and falls short of the object. The fact which all must concede, that baptism in the apostolic age was administered according to the commission, renders abortive every effort to prove that Infant Baptism then prevailed. And hence Dr. Wall, in his History of Infant Baptism, pretends to find no instance of its practice by the apostles or primitive ministers. The utmost that he attempts to prove is, that inasmuch as the Jews baptized the infants of proselytes, therefore, it is possible that John the Baptist and the apostles might have baptized infants! And such reasoning, which has no foundation in truth or sound logic, he was forced to substitute for history. He could not find the first instance of Infant Baptism in all the apostolic age, and

hence his history of that period is sheer fancy and conjecture. The whole New Testament record of baptism is that of disciples or believers. It gives no law for its administration to any others, and it relates the baptism of no others. If others were baptized, it should have been recorded, that the man of God might, from the Scriptures, be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. If it was right to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, then our Savior would have said so when he sent his ministers into all the world, to preach the gospel to every creature. But in the absence of both of these, where there is neither New Testament precept nor example, we can not receive any thing as an ordinance of the gospel church.

CHAPTER V.

HITHERTO we have walked in the light. We have had a sure word of prophecy to conduct us to conclusions. We have sat at the feet of masters divinely inspired to teach us every good word and work. Celestial splendor has illumined our pathway. We traversed the early history of the church, conducted by apostles and other holy men, full of the Spirit of God. But we have now to depend upon other guides. The light of inspiration no longer shines upon us. Men as fallible as ourselves, their minds directed only by the uncertain and unassisted guidance of human reason, are now to be our leaders. We no longer remain disciples. We can not, and dare not, yield implicit credence to whatever our new masters may choose to utter. We stand boldly in their presence, feeling that they are men as liable to err as ourselves, and resolved to receive nothing that they may tell us is from God, which is not to be found in the Scriptures. We are sure that whatever the Almighty esteemed important to communicate to man, he has given us in his holy word. The Bible contains every line and syllable written by inspiration; and by means of the Scriptures, "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." We scorn as an imposter every man that has lived since the days of the apostles, who professes to come with a new message from heaven. Though all men since the "amen" was affixed to the Revelation should tell us that Infant Baptism should be practiced as a divine institution, although not commanded

in the Bible, we should disregard their mandate. Aye, we would gainsay an angel from heaven, if he brought to us any other doctrine than that which is delivered in the Scriptures. God speaks to us in the Scriptures, and whatever is not in accordance with his word, whether spoken by men, angels, or devils, is unto us as the idle wind. To his will we bow with the utmost submission; but to the will of man on matters pertaining to the soul's salvation—to the kingdom of the Son of God—we give place by subjection, no, not for a moment!

We premise, then, that no matter who defends Infant Baptism this side of the apostolic age—no matter how early nor how many its defenders—it must be proved by the Scriptures. Those proofs, we claim the perfect right critically and carefully to examine: if they are sufficient, we will bow down to them; if they are not, though urged by some one who flourished centuries ago and was famous for his zeal and knowledge, we shall reject them and cast them from us without the slightest hesitation. Falsehood, though as old as time, is but falsehood. Besides, God addresses himself to all men. It is the duty of all to search the Scriptures. He has not instituted an order between himself and us, to think for us, and to learn for us our duty from his word. The privilege of interpreting the Scriptures for ourselves, we will resign to no one alive or dead, of ancient or modern times. We may invoke their assistance, but we must ultimately determine for ourselves. Of course, then, when an individual alleges that a doctrine or practice is according to the Scriptures, he must show it; if he speak not according to the law and the testimony, no matter how near the apostles he lived, we regard him not.

In passing from the writers of the New Testament to

those that succeeded them, we are astounded at the change! It is as if an individual had gone from Goshen to Egypt during that long night when no man knew his brother. "While in other cases such a transition is usually quite gradual," says Dr. Neander, "in this case we find a sudden one. Here there is no gradual transition, but a sudden spring; a remark which is calculated to lead us to a recognition of the peculiar activity of the divine Spirit in the souls of the apostles."* We envy no man his independence or strength of mind, who submits himself to be tamely led by the opinions of the apostolic fathers. The Papists and Puseyites, who contend that the Scriptures can not be understood without the aids of these and similar writers, manifest as much simplicity as those who would assert the necessity of taper light amid the dazzling radiance of the noon-day sun. It will be necessary to give many specimens from the writings of the fathers in the progress of our researches, and our readers can judge for themselves as to the validity of the claim to pre-eminence in divine knowledge, set up for them by the advocates of prelacy and papacy in this age. We pause now to present one extract from Clement of Rome, the most eminent of the *Patres Apostolici*. He is speaking of the resurrection, and says:

"Let us consider that wonderful type of the resurrection, which is seen in the eastern countries—that is to say, in Arabia. There is a certain bird called a phœnix; of this there is never but one at a time, and that lives five hundred years. And when the time of its dissolution draws near, that it must die, it makes itself a nest of frankincense, and myrrh, and other spices, into which, when its time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But its flesh, putrefying, breeds a

* Church History, p. 407.

certain worm, which, being nourished with the juice of the dead bird, brings forth feathers; and when it is grown to a perfect state, it takes up the nest in which the bones of its parent lie, and carries it from Arabia into Egypt, to a city called Heliopolis; and flying in open day in the sight of all men, lays it upon the altar of the sun, and so returns from whence it came. The priests then search into the records of the time, and find that it returned precisely at the end of five hundred years. And shall we then think it to be any great and strange thing for the Lord of all to raise up those that religiously serve him in the assurance of a good faith, when even by a bird he shows us the greatness of his power to fulfil his promise?"*

This is a mere specimen. Absurdities more gross abound in the writings of others, now commended to us as our necessary guides in the work of rightly dividing God's word! And are the Christians of this age asked to bow submissively to the instructions of such babes in knowledge? Are we to be insultingly told, that our minds are inadequate to understand the Scriptures, unless possessed of the instructions imparted by the victims of such monstrous fables?

Of the writings of the immediate successors of the apostles, but few have escaped the ravages of time. The writings of only five, called "Apostolic Fathers," are claimed by the learned to have come down to us, viz., Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas, and Hermas. And it is much debated whether we have indeed the writings of these men, or of impostors and pretenders who assumed their names—a fraud of general prevalence and considered quite innocent, a few centuries subsequent to the apostolic age. It is generally conceded that most of what bears the names of some of

* 1 Corinthians, section 12.

these fathers, is not theirs; while some small pieces are believed by a majority of the learned to be authentic. These latter we shall consider and quote as genuine. The providence which has suffered so little to escape destruction, was prompted perhaps by a foresight of the mischievous uses that would be made of them, and to lead the church of Christ to depend alone upon that volume which is able to make us wise unto salvation.

But while we refuse, emphatically, to follow with blind faith whatever the apostolic fathers may say; while our feelings—prompted alike by reason and religion—revolt at such servileness, we are far from rejecting their writings as wholly unworthy of attention and credit. Although to minds endued with Christian knowledge, as all minds in Christendom might be now, many of their mistakes as to the meaning of the Scriptures must appear puerile and even contemptible; yet all will recognize much gospel truth irradiating their pages, making them appear bright indeed, when contrasted with the ebon nonsense of pagan superstition and Jewish tradition. Their writings are valuable, too, as furnishing us the means to ascertain the secret springs to that mass of corruption and monstrous mistakes, which for so many centuries brought reproach upon the name of our religion. And many allowances, too, should be made on account of their education, and for their want of being thoroughly indoctrinated in the Christian religion. The early training of the mind—the principles it first imbibes—will ever retain an influence. That influence may be weakened, it may be subdued, and even imprisoned and bound, but it can never be utterly destroyed.

The *Patres Apostolici* were trained in the schools of heathen philosophy or of Jewish rabbinicalism. The religion

amid which they were reared, was gross materialism. The gods of the heathen, at whose shrines the million bowed, were "gods whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust." They were beings or *creatures* possessed of the parts and passions of men; while the masses looked upon the material of which their idols were composed—the wood, the brass, the silver, or the gold—as endowed with intelligence, and capable of hearing and answering their supplications. And the Jews, too, had corrupted the purity and simplicity of their original institutions. They observed the law with a confident expectation, that by rites and ceremonies merely, they would become righteous in the sight of God. The fathers had learned that the kingdom which the Lord Jesus set up, was not of this world—that it came not by observation—that it consisted not "in meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"—and that God was a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. To combat the errors of their education, and to subvert the *materialism* which was hurrying so many around them, through folly and superstition, to an eternal overthrow, they ran to the opposite extreme, and advocated an *idealism*, which led them into the wildest theories of interpretation.

And the schools of pagan philosophy furnished them with fellow-champions against the grovelling doctrine of the materialists. Many learned men among the heathen were compelled, by good sense, to rise up and condemn the follies and frauds of the prevailing religion. Former theories were falling rapidly before their attacks. Some were opposing wholly, and others were re-modeling only, the systems of religion, time-honored among them. The exterminator and the reformer used the weapons of idealism in support of

their sentiments, and thus the learning, the wit, and the eloquence of the world were brought to bear in one united assault upon the materialism which had so long prevailed, and it was rapidly falling before the attack. The apostolic fathers, unused to the Christian armor, readily availed themselves of the weapons so ingeniously and successfully wielded by the philosophers, and in the exercise of which they had been trained from their infancy. The simple truths of the gospel, so mighty in the hands of the apostles, were discarded as inadequate to meet the giant form of error, stalking in horrid strides over the nations; and the Christian champion entered the lists against him, brandishing the weapons of this world—the theories and speculations of a vain philosophy! It was David in the armor of Saul. In their encounter with the enemy—in attacking and defending—we discover the want of fitness and adaptation in their weapons.

Some of the philosophers, as we have said, in opposing the sensualism of the times, believed it necessary to vindicate the propriety of religion. They were unwilling that every altar should be thrown down. They wanted the moral courage to charge folly upon all the past generations of men. Hence they affirmed that the prevailing religion was once strictly spiritual, but had degenerated into sensualism; and that a *reform*, and not an overthrow, was all that was called for. To establish this startling proposition, required all their ingenuity; but the sophistry of the schools was sufficient to answer their purposes. They assumed that all the forms of religion were originally adopted solely as symbols of spiritual things—as hieroglyphical representations of a pure idealism—and were resorted to by some unknown philosophers, in ages of which no record existed, for the

benefit of the masses. This enabled Porphyry to defend the use of images, pretty much as the Papists do:

“By forms perceptible to the senses the ancients represented God and his powers, and they imaged the invisible by the visible, for those who had learnt to read, in images as in books, a writing which treats of God. We can not, therefore, wonder if the most ignorant can see in statues nothing but wood and stone, just as those who are ignorant of the art of writing can see nothing but stone and monuments, nothing but wood in tables, and nothing but a scroll of papyrus in books.”*

The effort of this class of philosophers was to impart vitality to the pagan religion by a refined spiritualization. In this respect, they were imitated by the fathers relative to the rites of the Old Testament. The fathers looked upon Christianity as the realization of the philosophers' dreams—as the true *idealism* sent of heaven to subvert the materialism which had disgraced the pagans and led astray the Jews. But they were met at the outset by numerous Jewish doctors, appealing to the Old Testament, and alleging that the rites and ceremonies established there, and which of themselves purified the soul, plainly taught that the extreme idealism then so popular was not countenanced by the word of God. The fathers met and answered this objection, by applying those rules of interpretation used by the Platonists in defence of the pagan worship. They spiritualized the rites of the Old Testament. This, in their judgment, was necessary in order to establish the divine original of that Testament. They asserted that the religion of the New Testament was adapted to the principles of the true philosophy, and that Judaism was only a symbol of it, and capable

* Neander's Church History, p. 21.

of the same spiritual meaning. In the following "Fragment," imputed to Clement of Rome, who is usually placed at the head of the *Patres Apostolici*, you will see how far he was infected with the idealism of the age:

"For the Lord himself being asked by a certain person, when his kingdom should come? answered, When two shall be one, and that which was without as that which is within; and the male with the female, neither male nor female. Now, *two are one*, when we speak the truth to each other, and there is, without hypocrisy, one soul in two bodies. *And that which is without as that which is within*;—He means this: he calls the soul that which is within, and the body that which is without. As therefore the body appears, so let thy soul be seen by its good works. *And the male with the female, neither male nor female*;—He means this: he calls our anger the male, our concupiscence the female. When, therefore, a man is come to such a pass that he is subject neither to the one nor the other of these (both of which, through the prevalence of custom, and an evil education, cloud and darken the reason), but rather, having dispelled the mists arising from them, and being full of shame, shall by repentance have united both his soul and spirit in the obedience of reason; and then, as Paul says, there is in us neither male nor female."

We will present a few specimens from Barnabas, to show the mode of spiritualizing the Old Testament. He says:

"Forasmuch then as our Savior was to appear in the flesh, and suffer, his passion was hereby foretold. For thus saith the prophet against Israel: Wo be to their soul, because they have taken wicked counsel against themselves, saying, Let us lay snares for the righteous, because he is unprofitable to us. Moses also in like manner speaketh to them:

Behold, thus saith the Lord God: Enter ye into the good land of which the Lord hath sworn to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, that he would give it to you, and possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey. Now, what the spiritual meaning of this is, learn; it is as if it had been said: Put your trust in Jesus, who shall be manifested to you in the flesh. For man is the earth which suffers; forasmuch as out of the substance of the earth Adam was formed. What, therefore, does he mean when he says, into a good land flowing with milk and honey? Blessed be our Lord, who has given us wisdom, and a heart to understand his secrets. For so says the prophet: Who shall understand the hard saying of the Lord? But he that is wise, and intelligent, and that loves his Lord. Seeing therefore he has renewed us by the remission of our sins, he has put us into another frame, that we should have souls like those of children, forming us again himself by the Spirit.”*

“And therefore the Scripture again speaks concerning our ears, that God has circumcised them, together with our hearts. For thus saith the Lord by the holy prophets: By the hearing of the ear they obeyed me. And again: They who are afar off, shall hear and understand what things I have done. And again: Circumcise your hearts, saith the Lord. And again he saith: Hear, O Israel! for thus saith the Lord thy God. And again the Spirit of God prophesieth, saying: Who is there that would live for ever, let him hear the voice of my Son. And again: Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth! because the Lord has spoken these things for a witness. And again he saith: Hear the word of the Lord, ye princes of the people. And again: Hear, O children! the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Wherefore he has

* Section 5.

circumcised our ears, that we should hear his word and believe. But as for that circumcision, in which the Jews trust, it is abolished. For the circumcision of which God spake, was not of the flesh. But they have transgressed his commands, because the evil one hath deceived them. For thus God bespeaks them: Thus saith the Lord your God (here I find the new law), sow not among thorns; but circumcise yourselves to the Lord your God. And what doth he mean by this saying? Harken unto your Lord. And again he saith: Circumcise the hardness of your heart, and harden not your neck. And again: Behold, saith the Lord, all the nations are uncircumcised (they have not lost their foreskin); but this people is uncircumcised in heart. But you will say, the Jews were circumcised for a sign. And so are all the Syrians and Arabians, and all the idolatrous priests, but are they therefore of the covenant of Israel? And even the Egyptians themselves are circumcised. Understand, therefore, children, these things more fully, that Abraham, who was the first that brought in circumcision, looked forward in the Spirit to Jesus, having received the mystery of three letters. For the Scripture says, that Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men of his house. But what, therefore, was the mystery that was made known unto him? Mark, first the eighteen, and next the three hundred. For the numeral letters of ten and eight are J. H. And these denote Jesus. And because the cross was that by which we were to find grace, therefore he adds three hundred; the note of which is T (the figure of his cross). Wherefore, by two letters, he signified Jesus, and by the third his cross. He who has put the engrafted gift of his doctrine within us, knows that I never taught to any one a more certain truth; but I trust ye are worthy of it."*—*Section 10.*

“But why did Moses say, Ye shall not eat the swine, neither the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the crow, nor any fish that hath not a scale upon him? I answer, that in the spiritual sense, he comprehended three doctrines that were to be gathered from thence. Besides which he says to them in the book of Deuteronomy, And I will give my statutes unto this people. Wherefore it is not the command of God that they should not eat these things; but Moses in the Spirit spake unto them. Now the sow he forbade them to eat; meaning thus much: thou shalt not join thyself to such persons as are like unto swine; who, whilst they live in pleasure, forget their God, but when any want pinches them, then they know the Lord; as the sow, when she is full, knows not her master, but when she is hungry, she makes a noise, and being again fed, is silent. Neither, says he, shalt thou eat the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the kite, nor the crow; that is, thou shalt not keep company with such kind of men as know not how, by their labor and sweat, to get themselves food, but injuriously ravish away the things of others, and watch how to lay snares for them, when at the same time they appear to live in perfect innocence. * * * * * Moses therefore, speaking as concerning meats, delivered indeed three great precepts to them in the spiritual signification of those commands. But they, according to the desires of the flesh, understood him as if he only meant it of meats. And, therefore, David took aright the knowledge of his threefold command, saying, in like manner, ‘Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly;’ as the fishes before mentioned, in the bottom of the deep in darkness. ‘Nor stood in the way of sinners,’ as they who seem to fear the Lord, but yet sin, as the sow. ‘And hath not sat in the seat of the scorers,’ as those birds who sit and watch that

they may devour. Here you have the law concerning meat perfectly set forth, and according to the true knowledge of it."*

These examples might be greatly multiplied; but these are enough for our purpose, which was simply to show the extremes to which opposition to materialism carried even good meaning men, leading them most grossly to pervert the Scriptures, and to contemn the plainest principles of common sense.

But the apostolic fathers found that baptism was manifestly enjoined in the Scriptures, and was every where practiced by all Christians. How was this ordinance to be adjusted to their idealistic system? They were not prepared to reject it (as some afterwards did) for the accommodation of their doctrine. The obligation to observe the ordinance could not be denied or evaded by them; and how did this comport with their ultra notions respecting a purely spiritual religion? They did not long hesitate. Indeed, they felt in no dilemma. Their system of interpretation was omnipotent. It was adequate to the removal of any difficulty, no matter how great. They retained the ordinance, but relaxed nothing of their doctrine, by assuming that baptism was a great mystery—a pure idealism! It was not what it seemed to be to vulgar eyes! It was a spiritual pool—a laver of regeneration! All the great mysteries of our faith and salvation met and mingled in it! It was the spiritual door into the ineffable kingdom of the Savior! It was necessary to salvation; it comprised the Spirit of God and the blood of the Redeemer! They did not esteem it a symbol. Their religion had no symbols—all these had been abolished by

* Section 9.

Jesus, in blotting out the handwriting of ordinances! But we will quote them to this point:

“Let us now inquire whether the Lord took care to manifest any thing beforehand concerning water and the cross. Now, for the former of these, it is written to the people of Israel how they shall not receive that baptism which brings to the forgiveness of sins; but shall institute another to themselves, that can not. For thus saith the prophet: Be astonished, O heaven! and let the earth tremble at it, because the people have done two great and wicked things: they have left me, the fountain of living waters, and have digged for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. Is my holy mountain Zion a desolate wilderness? For ye shall be as a young bird when its nest is taken away. And again the prophet saith: I will go before thee, and will make plain the mountains, and will break the gates of brass, and will snap in sunder the bars of iron; and will give the dark, and hidden, and invisible treasures, that they may know that I am the Lord God. And again: He shall dwell in the high den of the strong rock. And then, what follows in the same prophet? His water is faithful: ye shall see the king with glory, and your soul shall learn the fear of the Lord. And again he saith in another prophet: ‘He that does these things shall be like a tree planted by the currents of water, which shall give its fruit in its season. Its leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth it shall prosper. As for the wicked it is not so with them; but they are as the dust which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, neither the sinners in the council of the righteous: for the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and the way of the ungodly shall perish.’ Consider how he has

joined both the cross and the water together. For thus he saith: 'Blessed are they who put their trust in the cross, descend into the water; for they shall have their reward in due time; then,' saith he, 'will I give it them.' But as concerning the present time, he saith, their leaves shall not fall; meaning thereby, that every word that shall go out of your mouth, shall through faith and charity be to the conversion and hope of many. In like manner doth another prophet speak: 'And the land of Jacob was the praise of all the earth,' magnifying thereby the vessel of his spirit. And what follows? 'And there was a river running on the right hand, and beautiful trees grew up by it; and he that shall eat of them shall live for ever. The signification of which is this: that we go down into the water full of sins and pollutions, but come up again bringing forth fruit; having in our hearts the fear and hope which is in Jesus by the Spirit. 'And whosoever shall eat of them shall live for ever;' that is, whosoever shall hearken to those who call them, shall live for ever."*

"Please him under whom ye war, and from whom ye receive your wages. Let none of you be found a deserter; *but let your baptism remain as your arms, your faith as your helmet, your charity as your spear, your patience as your whole armor.*" †

"Hear, therefore, why the tower is built upon the water; because your life is and shall be saved by water. For it is founded by the almighty and honorable name, and is supported by the invisible power and virtue of God." †

"And I said unto him: I have even now heard from certain teachers that there is no other repentance beside that

* Barnabas, Section 10.

† Ignatius to Polycarp, Section 2.

‡ Hermas, Vision 3.

of baptism, when we go down into the water and receive the forgiveness of our sins; and that after that, we must sin no more, but live in purity. And he said unto me, Thou hast been rightly informed."*

"He answered, What dost thou ask? Why did these stones come out of the deep, and were placed into the building of this tower, seeing that they long ago carried these holy spirits? It was necessary, said he, for them to ascend by water, that they might be at rest. For they could not otherwise enter into the kingdom of God, but by laying aside the morality of their former life. They, therefore, being dead, were nevertheless sealed with the seal of the Son of God, and so entered into the kingdom of God. For before a man receives the name of the Son of God, he is ordained unto death; but when he receives that seal, he is freed from death, and assigned unto life. Now that seal is the water of baptism, into which men go down under the obligation unto death, but come up appointed unto life. Wherefore to those also was the seal preached, and they made use of it, that they might enter into the kingdom of God. And I said: Why then, sir, did these forty stones also ascend with them out of the deep, having already received that seal? He answered: Because these apostles and teachers, who preached the name of the Son of God, dying after he had received his faith and power, preached to them who were dead before, and they gave this seal to them. They went down therefore into the water with them, and again came up. But these went down whilst they were alive, and came up again alive; whereas those who were before dead, went down dead, and came up alive; through these therefore they received life, and knew the Son of God. for which cause

* Hermas, Command 4.

they came up with them, and were fit to come into the building of the tower, and were not cut, but put in entire, because they died in righteousness, and in great purity, only this seal was wanting to them."*

Thus we see the first step in error in relation to baptism, the cause of which we have given, and all can readily perceive. But this was only the *first* step; the apostolic fathers did not go far enough into error to reach Infant Baptism. Over their writings, on this subject, the same silence reigns, as over those of the New Testament. They make not the slightest allusion to such a custom. The eagle eyes of Dr. Wall could discover no support for his cause in any thing that they have said. He does not produce from them the first particle of proof to sustain his darling system.

It is not our purpose, in this chapter, to cite other authorities than these fathers. With them we leave our readers for the present. We have taken but the first step from the apostles. We have but entered the threshold of that gloom which sat for centuries, dark as the pall of death, upon the minds of Christendom. We must, however, penetrate further and group longer in the darkness, before we find Infant Baptism. We have passed over the first century, and have entered considerably into the second, and Infant Baptism is still invisible. True, we begin to see the workings of that system—of that mystery of iniquity, which ultimately developed it; but the institution itself is yet unborn. Our readers should note, too, the lamentable degeneracy in doctrine already too manifest. Great ravages were committed upon the simplicity of the faith; monstrous absurdities, as our readers have seen, were already

* Hermas, Similitude 9.

advanced and vindicated; but others still more startling are to appear. A still darker cloud must hover in the moral heavens; wilder whims and fancies must possess the minds of professing Christians, and then the era of Infant Baptism begins.







