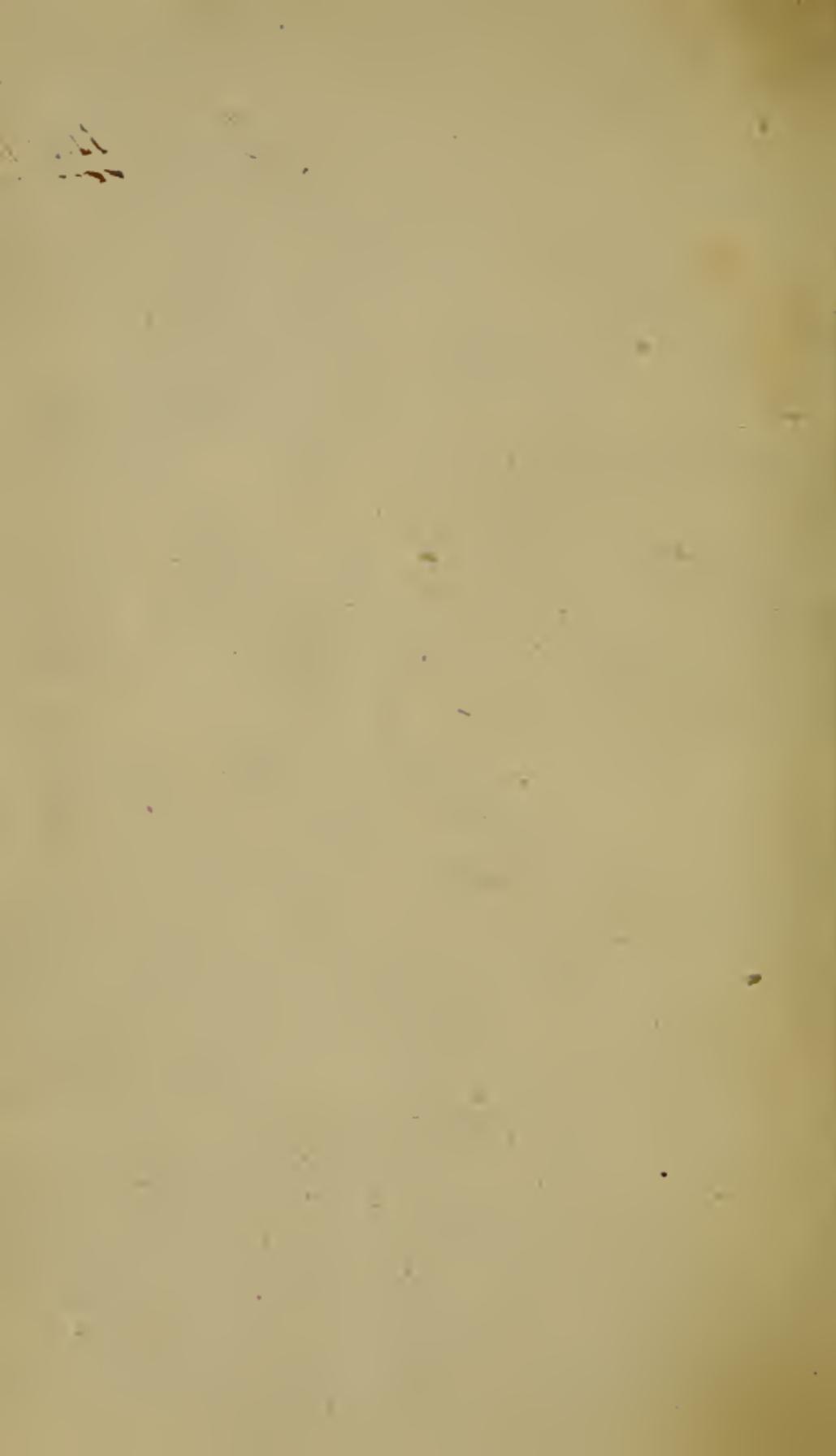




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PLEA FOR PRINCIPLES;

OR,

The Baptists and the Ordinances.

BY

GEO. W. ANDERSON,

PASTOR OF THE LOWER MERION BAPTIST CHURCH.

“Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.”

Philadelphia:

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THE FOR MOTHERS

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This volume has been stereotyped, and thus perpetuated, by Deacon NATHAN L. JONES and HORATIO G. JONES, Esq., of the Lower Merion Baptist Church, near Philadelphia.

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A PLEA FOR PRINCIPLES.

THE ordinances of the Church of Christ are precious institutions. They are fitted, when duly observed, to refresh and strengthen the believer, and to impress the hearts of those that are without. The Baptists, in every era of their long and eventful history, have loved and cherished these ordinances, and have always sought to observe them in their original form and spirit. They deeply regret that their conscientious efforts for so good an end, should call down on them the censures of their brethren. They can affirm, in all truth and sincerity, that they do not willingly make the sacred ordinances of the Church of Christ an occasion of separation

from those whom they esteem very highly as sincere believers in Christ.

Why then this separation? Whence this difference between them and their brethren? Why do they not conform their practice to the practice of other disciples of their common Lord? These are questions that may naturally and properly be asked. And it becomes the duty of the Baptists to give a kind and fraternal reply. Let such be our attempt in this little work.

The Baptists deem it necessary in all religious practices to be governed by fixed and established principles. They have therefore made careful search; and as the result of their inquiries, they have been led to adopt certain fundamental principles which they believe to accord with the dictates of sound reason, and the teachings of the Word of God. Their practice they believe to be the necessary result of these principles which they hold. And, without doing violence to their

consciences, they could not reject principles which they think to be correct; nor adopt practices which these do not fully sanction. If they are in the wrong, then, when they differ from other disciples of Christ, it must be because they have incautiously admitted some wrong principle; or, from correct principles, have unconsciously deduced some wrong practice. They are, however, always open to conviction; and will ever have reason to be grateful to those who, speaking the truth in love, point out what false principle they have adopted, or what correct principle they have misapplied. It is only by a kind and candid consideration of fundamental principles, and of the connection between principles and practice, that real unity in the truth can be secured. They would, therefore, earnestly invite their brethren in the Lord to a fraternal examination of the principles on which they act, and of the process by which their practice is deduced from these principles.

BAPTISM.

Principle I. It is the duty of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, to keep his ordinances in strict accordance with his command.

This principle recognizes the supreme authority of Christ, as the head of the church. It forbids any disciple, or any number of disciples, whether gathered together as a church, a council, an association, or a convention, to alter or modify in any degree what he has commanded. It prescribes to the disciple the duties of inquiry and obedience; inquiry to know the will of the Lord; obedience to do precisely what he has enjoined, without change or modification. He who faithfully carries it out will search diligently for the precise mind and will of his Lord. He cannot consider such an inquiry a vain and unprofitable one. It may be,

sometimes, a long and difficult task that is imposed; but he will not shrink from it. Amid the multitude of footprints in the sands around him, he may need to pause long before he can distinguish between those which men have made, and those which have been left by the blessed feet of the Son of God. But, if he is to follow in those steps, he must prolong his search until he finds what he has sought. Then may he move as rapidly as possible onward, treading with safety and with joy in the way his Saviour has marked out.

In this the Baptists have the authority of the most eminent jurists. Blackstone, after defining what is necessary in the promulgation of a law, says: "But when this rule is in the usual manner notified, or prescribed, it is then the subject's business *to be thoroughly acquainted therewith.*"* This thorough and accurate knowledge of the law is what the

* N. Y. Edition, 1822, Vol. I., p. 46.

Baptists have always held to be obligatory upon the disciples of Christ.

This principle demands the bowing of the disciple's will entirely to the will of the Lord, the first and most important lesson to be learned in the school of Christ. He may not ask what is most easy or grateful to himself, or what will be most pleasing to his relatives or friends. All of his own preferences, as well as those of his nearest and dearest friends, will be put aside; and his constant aim will be to keep the ordinances as the Lord himself has commanded. How very appropriate the teaching and enforcing of such a lesson at the very commencement of the young Christian's course! How desirable that the sovereign authority of Christ should be deeply impressed at that early stage, when the mind is open to the influence of truth, when the affections are warm, when the impressions that are made are likely to be so permanent. A Christian will be weak

or strong in proportion to the thoroughness with which he has learned the lesson of prompt, thorough, implicit obedience to Christ.

But, if we are thus to keep the ordinances as the Saviour has given them, we need to know precisely what he requires. This leads us to the consideration of another principle.

Principle II. It is possible to ascertain the precise meaning of the commands of the Saviour; otherwise, they would not be binding upon us.

It were surely cause for deep regret, were each of the followers of Christ to be left to guess the meaning of the commands of his Lord. How little of uniformity, then, we could hope for, in Christian conduct. Unity of practice, so difficult to attain under any circumstances, would then be utterly hopeless. Each one would guess according to his own preconceived notions, or his peculiar

inclinations, and there would be no means of deciding upon the correctness of the practice which any might adopt.

It is difficult to understand how obedience can be secured, or how it can be rendered, to a command that is obscurely expressed or imperfectly comprehended. When the sea is angrily hissing, and the wild wind shrieking around the laboring ship, the captain on deck may issue his command to the sailor aloft. If, however, the noise of the warring elements prevents the sailor from catching the important word, he could not surely be counted worthy of praise, because he begins to busy himself about what he vaguely guesses to be the meaning. Far better to descend to the deck and learn precisely what is required, than loose the sail when it ought to be furled, or furl it when it ought to be loosed. Or, to change the figure, a father from beyond the sea has sent to his son a letter of special instructions; but it comes to

his hands with the words so dimmed and obscured by the damps of the voyage, that he is unable to determine precisely what it means. If he is wise, he will not rush headlong to the performance of what he merely guesses to be his father's wish. He will rather, much as he regrets the delay, defer all action in the matter, till another letter from abroad shall make his father's wishes clear.

The Baptists cannot think that there need be any hesitancy in regard to the commands of Christ. They cannot believe it to be impossible to know precisely what acts the Lord would have his disciples perform. There was no battling of angry elements, to prevent the great Captain of our salvation from making his voice distinctly heard by those to whom the commands were at first addressed. And no unfriendly damps have blurred or obscured the meaning of those words which he has sent across the sea of

ages, to tell us what he would have us do. The meaning of his commands, to those who caught the words that issued from his lips, must have been perfectly clear and distinct. Nor has the lapse of years changed in the slightest degree the original import of the command, or laid any serious difficulty in the way of those who are willing honestly to seek until they find it.

In the giving of a law it may be justly taken for granted that the lawgiver means to be understood. Blackstone says: "It is incumbent on the promulgators to do it in the most public and *perspicuous manner*; not like Caligula, who, according to Dio Cassius, wrote his laws in a very small character, and hung them up on high pillars, the more effectually to ensnare the people."* Laws which emanate from righteous lawgivers are designed for a rule, not for a trap, as

* Vol. I., p. 45.

were those of the infamous Caligula. In order to serve as a rule, it is necessary that the terms in which they are expressed should be perfectly intelligible to those who are called to obey. And the permanent obligation of the law supposes that thus it must always be possible to determine with accuracy its original import. The moment it ceases to be intelligible, that moment its authority is at an end.

The celebrated jurist, Pothier,* applying the civil law to contracts that are helplessly ambiguous, says, that contracts thus obscure have no binding force, and that the person who contracts the obligation must be discharged. On the same principle, a law that is hopelessly obscure, has no binding power, and no person can be held responsible for obedience.

The Baptists regard the Lord Jesus Christ

* See Smith's Law of Contracts, p. 421.

as a *righteous* lawgiver who meant to be understood, and, therefore, gave a command which he presumed to be perfectly intelligible. They regard him as a *wise* lawgiver, who has chosen terms that were, and ever will be, fully adapted to make known with precision his very mind and will. They, therefore, cannot avoid the conclusion, that his people, in the faithful use of the means that lie within their reach, may attain to a certain knowledge of the precise import of his command.

It would seem to be scarcely necessary to lay much stress on what approaches so nearly to a self-evident truth. But the different phases of the long controversy that has been waged in regard to the ordinances of the house of God, show that it needs to be distinctly presented, and its claims specifically urged. The possibility of assured certainty in regard to the meaning of the doctrines and duties of the sacred Scriptures, it

becomes us to recognize fully, and to maintain with constant vigilance. Without such a certainty, the people of God can raise no effectual barrier against the inroads of those who would make war upon all that is venerable in doctrine or in practice.

If then the meaning of the commands of the Lord may be clearly and distinctly ascertained, how shall we proceed in order to its discovery? This question prepares us for the introduction of a further principle.

Principle III. The meaning of the Saviour's commands must be sought by the application of the ordinary established principles of interpretation to the words in which they are conveyed.

A large proportion of the business of life is carried on by means of written language. In consequence of this, there is a constant necessity for deciding on the meaning of laws and contracts, and other written documents. To

meet this constant necessity, it becomes important to seek out certain fixed, unalterable principles of interpretation. Without such principles, binding on all who have the task of interpreting laws, and contracts, and documents, endless discord and confusion would arise. The law which forbids a certain thing to-day, might be made to sanction it to-morrow. The contract which one of the parties supposes to mean one particular thing, the other might decide to mean a something widely different—perhaps the very reverse. There would be thus no authority to law, and nothing binding in contracts. In short, all kinds of communication, by means of written language, between man and his fellow-man, would be rendered unsatisfactory, if not absolutely useless.

By the application of these ordinary fixed principles are to be interpreted all books and documents, of whatsoever kind, in which words are used for the conveyance of

human thought. They are to be employed in the interpretation of the sacred Scriptures; and in order to the discovery of the true meaning of those precious words, they must be steadily and faithfully applied. The sacred Scriptures, while often treating of truths that lie far beyond the reach of the human reason, nevertheless call constantly into play a human instrumentality—written language. It is only by means of this instrumentality that its truths can find access to the human mind. It follows, therefore, that the meaning of the sacred books must be sought by the application of the same principles of interpretation that conduct us to the true meaning of other documents. Without the application of the ordinary, fixed rules of interpretation, the Bible might be made to teach what any man wished it to teach; and the refutation of theological errors would be rendered an entirely hopeless task. The Word of God would thus be

stripped of all its authority, and all its influence as a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Dr. Planck says: "Whoever is not conscious of having conducted his interpretations according to such rules, [according to fixed rules], cannot certainly think of attempting to defend or to oppose the correctness of an exposition. * * * * We ought, in one word, to have such rules as both can and must be regarded, generally, as true and binding. So long as such principles are applied as are admitted by one party only, and rejected by others, it is impossible to unite in the true meaning of Scripture, because it is impossible for the one party to convince the other of the truth of their interpretations, or to show the falsehood of the opposite."*

The views of the Baptists on this point

* Edinburg Ed., p. 132.

harmonize with those of all the ablest Reformers, who have striven to disencumber the theology of the Scriptures from the false interpretations which the adherents of the Romish Church have heaped upon it. The fundamental rule of Wickliffe, Tyndale, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and the other leading Reformers, was ever the same as that enunciated above. It is thus expressed in the words of Melancthon: "The sense of Scripture is one, certain and simple, and is everywhere to be ascertained in accordance with the principles of grammar and human discourse." "It was only such a vigorous and general movement as the Reformation," says Dr. Fairbairn, "a movement basing itself upon the true sense of Scripture, and perpetually appealing to that for its justification,—which could break the trammels that had so long lain upon men's minds in this respect, and recall sincere students of Scripture to the simple grammatical sense of its

words."* To the Baptists it has ever seemed important to adhere without wavering in the interpretation of commands, as well as of doctrines, to this principle, which gave energy and vigor to the Reformation. It is regarded by them as the only safeguard against the return of all the errors which the Reformers assailed and banished. They have been led to seek for, and faithfully apply, rules of interpretation which have thus done such noble service in the cause of God, and which have secured the unqualified sanction of the highest legal and literary authorities in the world.

Principle IV. In the interpretation of documents, each word should be taken in its primary, ordinary, literal signification; and we should never depart from that, unless the context makes it absolutely necessary;

* Hermeneutical Manual, p. 68.

and then the departure should be as slight as possible.

The principle here presented is applicable to the interpretation of all kinds of documents. A firm adherence to it is necessary, in order to refute the arguments of those who hold to error, in doctrine or in practice. It is constantly acted on in our courts of law. And in their inflexible adherence to it is to be found our only security for the faithful performance of contracts, or for the uniform and equitable administration of law. A case such as frequently occurs, will show the manner in which the principle is applied, and aptly illustrate its importance.

A merchant in Ohio writes to his agent in Philadelphia, to send him ten pieces of blue-black cloth. He receives in due time ten pieces of cloth; but finds, on examination, that the color is a jet-black or an invisible green. He refuses to receive them, or to pay for goods which, he insists, he has not

ordered. To secure payment, the agent brings an action against him, and it is carried before the court. His lawyer pleads on the trial that the merchant wanted ten pieces of dark cloth, which his client had sent him, supposing that he was not so narrow-minded as to make any difficulty about the petty difference of a shade or two. The essential thing, as it seemed to him, was a dark-colored cloth—the precise shade was non-essential. He further states, that the particular shade which had been forwarded was much more readily found, and much cheaper than the blue-black; and that thus, by a justifiable departure from the precise letter of the order, his client was both consulting his own convenience, and promoting the real interests of the merchant. There he rests his case; and on these grounds he asks for a verdict in favor of his client.

But notwithstanding his nice distinction between essentials and non-essentials, the

court would decide that this was a question with which an agent had no right to intermeddle—that his single duty was to ascertain and to send what his correspondent had ordered. And while all due credit might be awarded to him for his desire to promote the merchant's interest, the Court would be under the necessity of informing him that the only proper way to manifest that desire would have been to abide by the literal meaning of the words, "blue-black cloth." He would be either absolutely non-suited, or the verdict would be given for the defendant.

For the correctness of such a decision, reference may be made to "The Law of Contracts," by John William Smith, Esq. The common sense, practical rule which has been adopted, he says, "we find thus tersely expressed in *Mallam vs. May*, 13 Meeson and Welsby's Reports, 517, by the Court of Exchequer: "*Words are to be construed according to their strict and primary acceptation,*

unless from the context of the instrument, and the intention of the parties to be collected from it, they appear to be used in a different sense, or *unless in their strict sense they are incapable of being carried into effect.*"* Blackstone says: "Words are generally to be understood in their *usual and most known* signification; not so much regarding the propriety of grammar, as *their general and popular use.*" "Where words bear either none, or a very absurd signification, if literally understood, we must deviate a little from the received sense of them."†

For the correctness of this principle in the interpretation of literary, as well as of legal documents, we have the authority of able writers. Ernesti directs us, "not readily to depart from the literal signification * * *i. e.*, not to depart from the literal sense unless in cases where the literal sense is tame, ridiculous, or contradictory."‡

* Am. Edition, pp. 421-2.

† Pages 59-61.

‡ Edinburgh Ed., Vol. I., p. 136.

Dr. Planck says: "We should seek, in the first place, the literal sense of every passage to be interpreted, as it must be afforded, either by the general usage, or by one which is peculiar to the writer. But why this must be sought first, is a point which need not be explained to any one; for every man's natural sense will tell him why, and will also instinctively bring him first to this means of exposition."*

This principle seems to the Baptists, as well as to Dr. Planck, to commend itself to the common sense of men. And they feel themselves bound to apply it faithfully in the interpretation of the commands of their Lord. They do not deem themselves at liberty to sit as judges to decide what the law ought, or what it ought not to require. They regard themselves as subjects, not judges of the law. It appears to them to be their first business to use all diligence to ascertain the literal meaning of the

* Edinburgh Ed., p. 137.

words in which the command is given. When that is once determined, then the work of interpretation is ended, and the duty of obedience begins.

Application of the preceding principles, in order to determine what is to be baptized.

It is well known that the Baptists uniformly demand the immersion of the candidate for baptism, and that they never recognize any thing else as a fulfillment of the law of the Lord. We come now to show how they are led on, from the principles they hold, to the practice they have adopted.

It is conceded by all that the Saviour has given the command to be baptized. As faithful servants, and especially as grateful disciples, we wish to obey the Lord. In order to obey, it is necessary, according to the first principle, to keep the ordinance as he meant it to be kept. We are led to seek with earnestness for his meaning, because, according to principle second, we hold it to

be possible to ascertain precisely what he required. In order to determine his meaning in the law of baptism, we are taught by principle third to apply the ordinary rules of interpretation, just as we do when we wish to ascertain what truths he taught in the Sermon on the Mount, or in any of his discourses to his disciples, or to others. According to principle fourth, that meaning will be found when we have ascertained the primary, common, literal meaning of the word in which the command is expressed.

The important word in the law of baptism is the Greek word "*baptizo*." Two inquiries demand our attention.

1. What is its primary, ordinary, literal meaning?

2. Is it necessary, in order to give an intelligible sense to the command, to depart from this primary signification?

If, on due examination, it should be found that the primary, ordinary, literal meaning

of the word gives a clearly intelligible sense to the command, then it will not concern us especially to inquire what other meanings may belong to the word, or may have been foisted upon it by the ingenuity of commentators.

In order to determine the meaning of the word, it will be necessary to quote the opinions of several learned lexicographers and scholars. These quotations shall be taken from members of different religious denominations. None of them, however, are Baptists, or liable to the suspicion of a design to favor their peculiar views. The Baptists have never felt themselves under the necessity of making dictionaries of their own in order to justify their opinions or their practices. They take the Lexicons of the Greek language prepared by scholars of other denominations, and find in them all that is necessary for settling the primary meaning of this important word.

LIDDELL & SCOTT'S GREEK LEXICON.—
“Baptizo, 1. *To dip repeatedly.* Of ships, *to sink.* Passive voice, *to bathe.* 2. *To draw water.* 3. *To baptize, N. T.*”

This is from the second English edition of this great work, by two scholars of the Church of England. In the first edition they inserted as a second meaning, “2. *To pour upon, to drench.*” This, however, in their second edition, from which our quotation is taken, they entirely withdrew. In the American edition, however, the American editor has retained this meaning, which the learned authors saw fit to discard. Of course, even had it been retained by them, it could not affect our inquiry. According to the fourth principle, we seek only the primary, ordinary, literal meaning. That is explicitly given.

DR. ROBINSON'S LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.—“Baptizo. A frequentative in form, but apparently not in signification

To dip in, to sink, to immerse. In Greek writers, spoken of ships, of animals, of horses, sinking in a marsh; also, of men, or [of men] partially to the breast. Also, *to dip in a vessel, to draw water.*"

DONNEGAN'S LEXICON, London Edition.—
"Baptizo. *To dip, immerse, submerge, sink ships, and frequently, to sink, viz., to descend.*"

DR. J. PICKERING'S LEXICON.—"Baptizo. *To dip, immerse, submerge, plunge, sink, overwhelm; to steep, to soak, to wet.*"

DUNBAR'S LEXICON.—"Baptizo. *To dip, immerse, submerge, plunge, sink, overwhelm, to soak. Passive. To be immersed, to be drenched with wine.*"

GREENFIELD'S LEXICON OF NEW TESTAMENT.—"Baptizo. *To immerse, immerge, submerge, sink; in N. Testament, to wash, perform ablution, cleanse: Mark vii. 4; Luke xi. 38; to immerse, baptize, administer the rite of baptism: Mark i. 4, and elsewhere.*"

Other Lexicographers might be quoted.

But these will suffice. They are all accessible to the English reader. From a comparison of these authorities, it appears that the word is a frequentative in form; that is, that it denotes the repeated doing of a thing. Hence Liddell & Scott give it the meaning "*to dip repeatedly,*" and Donnegan "*to immerse repeatedly.*" According, however, to Dr. Robinson, it is a frequentative only in form, but not in signification. He, therefore, merely gives as its meaning "*to dip in.*" All agree that the action denoted is the same, *to dip*. This is the point to which our inquiry is directed.

It will also be noticed that Greenfield says, that in the New Testament it means "to wash." So also do Dr. Robinson and Dunbar, whose language, however, we have not deemed it necessary to quote. The Baptists think that any person can satisfy himself of the incorrectness of this, by attempting to substitute "wash" for the word baptize,

wherever it is found in the English New Testament. The learned authors, doubtless, had they expressed their views in full, would have removed the present objection to their phraseology. It would be more accurate to say that the word may sometimes, whether in the New Testament or elsewhere, be freely translated by the word wash. This is admissible, however, only when the context shows that the object was dipped in pure water, and was consequently cleansed by the process. In the whole range of Greek authors, from the earliest appearance of the word, until the time of the Saviour, the primary, ordinary, literal meaning of *baptizo* is fixed and unalterable. And the Baptists, in common with many of the ablest scholars of other denominations, can see no necessity for assuming a special signification in the books of the New Testament. That invariable meaning is, to immerse, or some other word equivalent to it.

But our second inquiry must be, whether, on examining the law of Baptism, it is necessary to depart from that primary meaning, in order to make an intelligible sense. Let us insert the word "immerse" in the law which Christ gave to his disciples; and the passages will read as follows, a reading as plain, and as easily understood, as we could reasonably demand.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

This is clear and intelligible, and according to our principles we can ask no more. Yet we may pursue our inquiry further, and it will be found that in every passage in the New Testament, where the words baptize, baptized, baptizing, or baptism are em-

ployed, they may be readily translated by the words immerse, immersed, immersing, or immersion. In no single case is there any necessity for departing from the primary meaning of the word. Since this is so, the path of duty would seem to be plain and clear before the humble and obedient disciple of Christ. No matter what success himself or others may have in finding particular passages, in which it may possibly have a modified meaning, it cannot be consistently allowed to influence, in any degree, his practice. He is concerned only to know the mind of Christ. The mind or will of Christ would seem unquestionably to be, that all who love and trust in him should take that literal meaning as their guide, and should be immersed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Baptists are often censured for their firm adherence to the conclusion which we have shown to result inevitably from their prin-

principles. Will their Lord censure them for carefully using these principles in order to ascertain his will; or deem them over-scrupulous because they cannot consent to change or modify an ordinance which they are fully convinced that he himself has established? They know no better principles to guide them in their search for his will. They know no better proof of honest allegiance and ardent love than to keep his own precious ordinance, according to the mind and will of their gracious Lord. They leave their judgment with him. He will not err in the decision that he makes.

INFANT BAPTISM.

Why do the Baptists deem this solemn ordinance of no authority, and wound the feelings of their brethren who practice it as an ordinance of God? The answer to this we shall endeavor to give in all kind-

ness, and this will bring into view a further principle which the Baptists hold.

Principle V. An ordinance which has been established by a direct command, can never be set aside by one for which a command equally clear and direct cannot be shown.

A wise lawgiver will never enact two laws that necessarily conflict with each other. Every law is the expression of the will of him who enacts it. If he wills his subjects to do one particular thing, he surely does not will them, at the same time, to do another thing which must prevent the doing of the former. If, therefore, the baptism of believers and the baptism of infants necessarily conflict with each other, they cannot both be ordinances of the Lord's appointment. It becomes our duty to ascertain which of them has the sanction of the divine command, and which of them rests its claims on lower, or questionable, authority. When

this has been determined, the one that is commanded must be faithfully observed; the one that lacks the same authority should be disregarded. It may be sustained by many and plausible inferences; but no number of inferences, however plausible they may be, can avail when weighed against the authority of a positive command of the Lord.

An illustration of this principle, directly to our purpose, is furnished by the sacred Scriptures in the history of the man of God, who was sent from Judah to prophesy against Bethel.* He had been strictly commanded by the word of the Lord to eat no bread and drink no water, in the place to which he was sent. Having performed his mission, and successfully resisted one temptation to disobey the word of the Lord, he departed on his journey homeward. An old prophet of Bethel, however, who had heard of his mission, rode after him and urged him to

* 1 Kings, 13.

return. He refused again, as he had done before. But when the Bethelite proclaimed himself a prophet also, and stated that an angel had bid him follow in his course and bring him back, he consented to return. Here was a case in which a something of doubtful authority came in conflict with the direct command of God. On the one hand was the positive command of the Lord to the prophet himself; on the other, the word of the old prophet of Bethel, and the message which he said, he bore from the angel. A clear judgment would have discerned on which side duty lay; an obedient spirit would have followed the explicit command. The situation was a trying one to a weak mind and a wavering heart. The prophet disobeyed, and the punishment which he had merited speedily came upon him. And by this example, men in all succeeding generations are taught this important lesson: A DIRECT COMMAND OF GOD CAN ONLY BE SET

ASIDE BY ANOTHER COMMAND EQUALLY EXPLICIT FROM HIM.

The foregoing remarks will aid their brethren in the examination of the position which the Baptists have assumed in regard to the rite of infant baptism. Three things seem to them to be unmistakably true.

1. The baptism of believers is clearly and explicitly commanded.

2. No clear command is given for the baptism of infants.

3. The two ordinances are in direct conflict, one ever tending to supercede the other.

The reasons which lead the Baptists to regard these propositions as true, may be briefly presented.

1. The baptism of believers is generally conceded to have the authority of a distinct command for its observance. It is contained in the commission given by our Lord to his apostles. By combining the testimony of

Matthew and Mark, in regard to that commission, we find that its full import may be thus expressed: Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, preaching the Gospel to every creature, baptizing those who believe, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.

This is universally conceded to enjoin upon the apostles the duty of baptizing believers; and, as it has often been justly remarked, the command to the apostles to baptize those who exercise faith, implies necessarily the duty of believers to submit themselves to the rite. By the commission, however, the administrators of the ordinance are charged with the care of its observance; they are taught both, what is the act, as we have already seen, and who are the subjects. In regard to the directness and explicitness of this command, the Baptists are happy to

have the concurrent opinion of most, if not all of their fellow disciples.

Lest we should seem to overlook any of the opinions of Christian brethren, it will be necessary to glance at one interpretation of the commission which some have advocated, and show why it has never commended itself to the judgment of the Baptists. It is thought by some that the apostles were commanded to make disciples by baptism; as though their commission had read: Go ye into all the world and make disciples of every creature, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. By virtue of the command, as thus understood, some few, perhaps, are led to baptize infants, in order to make disciples of them.

The Baptists have never been able to adopt this view of the commission, for the following, among other reasons.

It does not require faith in order to bap-

tism; and therefore it is as proper to make disciples of men and women as of infants, by the administration of the rite. If all nations are to be made disciples by such a summary process, then the first duty of a missionary to a heathen nation would seem to be to baptize both old and young. Then Francis Xavier, and the Jesuits that followed in his footsteps, were right when they administered the rite with such profuse liberality.

It does not require faith; then we must suppose that the apostles went beyond the command of their Lord, when they made faith in him a prerequisite to the administration of the ordinance. One instance of this demand for faith is clear and explicit, and may justly be taken as proof of their general practice. "If thou believest with all thy heart," said Philip to one who asked for baptism, at his hands, "thou mayest." As the Baptists search the records of the doings of these early servants of the Lord, and ex-

amine the letters which they penned so full and rich in their instruction to the churches, they find no single instance of a believer on whom the duty of baptism was not speedily urged, and not one single example of a person baptized without a profession of his own faith in Jesus Christ.

They cannot then extend the commission to embrace any that have not faith; they must regard it as a solemn command of the Lord to baptize all believers, after they have come to exercise precious faith in him.

2. No clear command is given for the baptism of infants.

If there be any undoubted authority from the Lord for the observance of infant baptism, it is competent for those who have found it to publish their discovery. If such there be, the Baptists have sought it in vain, although they have searched with care, and have often asked their brethren to aid them in their inquiry. They search the sacred

Scriptures—the Christian's only rule of faith and practice, and find therein no trace of a written command. They peruse with care the books in which their brethren explain and defend the rite; but no command is presented. They ask for the grounds of its observance, only to find that its most zealous friends are not agreed among themselves on this essential point. Dr. Chalmers points them to the Abrahamic covenant: "It"—*i. e.* the passage in Rom. iii. 15, which refers to the Abrahamic covenant—"seems to contain in it the main strength of the scriptural argument for infant baptism." Dr. Moses Stuart replies: "The Abrahamic covenant furnishes no ground for infant baptism." Several churches—among them the Romish Church—baptize infants in order to bring them into the church; others—including those technically called Reformed Churches—baptize them because they were born therein. Many learned writers find their

main reasons for the observance of the rite in the wide acceptance which, they say, it found with the churches immediately after the age of the Apostles. But the Chevalier Bunsen, whose authority will outweigh scores of others, affirms with confident assurance: "It was utterly unknown to the early church, not only down to the end of the second, but even to the middle of the third century."

In the absence, then, of any specific command for the rite of infant baptism, and in the perfect chaos of opinions as to the grounds of its observance among its friends, the Baptists see an ample justification of the conclusion to which they come, that it has no divine authority. It appears to them that the baptism of believers is like the positive command of God himself to the prophet of Judah, and the baptism of infants like the word of the old prophet of Bethel, and of his fabled angel visitor. They think

themselves called upon by the example of the prophet of Judah to exercise a sounder judgment, and a more implicit obedience than he.

It seems, moreover, to the Baptists, that their brethren themselves do not regard the baptism of infants as equal in authority with the baptism of believers. They will not, as we are informed, receive into their churches a professed believer who refuses to be baptized. They cannot countenance such palpable disobedience to a direct command of the Saviour. But when he has once submitted to that command, and has been received into the fellowship of the church, he may or he may not bring his infant children to be baptized. His neglect may be long-continued, systematic and open, yet few are the churches that would put him out in consequence. It is not the design of the Baptists to draw any invidious inferences from this well-known fact; or to make any

ungenerous use of it. They only refer to it to justify their own conscientious course. They admit that the neglect of the direct command forms a sufficient reason for refusing to grant a person admission to the church; but they cannot see why a steadfast refusal to observe another command, that is equally binding, does not constitute an adequate reason for putting him out. It is true that their brethren sometimes publish to the world their conviction, that "those who refuse or neglect the baptism of their children, *not only sin against Christ by disobeying his solemn command*, but they also deprive both themselves and their children of great benefits."* Yet even such strong language, from a friend of strict discipline, does not come coupled, as we might have expected; with a proposition to have them subjected to the discipline of the church because of their neglect. From such facts the Bap-

* Miller on Infant Baptism, p. 42.

tists are justified in their inference, that their brethren themselves do not believe the baptism of infants to rest on equal authority with the baptism of believers. They may speak, as in the quotation above, of a "solemn command," but it is not seemingly regarded as a *direct* command, like that which the ascending Saviour gave to his disciples on sending them out into all the world.

3. The two ordinances are in direct conflict, one ever tending to supersede the other.

It is not assumed by the Baptists that no two ordinances can be in force at one and the same time. They see no conflict between the ordinance of Baptism and that of the Lord's Supper. They are separate and distinct, occupying entirely different ground, with different ends in view. It is only when two ordinances both claim possession of a common ground, that they come in conflict the one with the other.

The baptism of infants comes into conflict

with the baptism of believers; because those who have been baptized in infancy, and continue to acknowledge the validity of this rite, are thereby prevented from being baptized on a profession of their faith in Christ. In the case of all such persons, infant baptism puts aside the baptism of believers. They perhaps rarely pause to ask whether the ordinance which the Saviour enjoined is binding upon them. So far as its influence now extends, infant baptism prevents the observance of that sacred and impressive ordinance which the Lord has established; and should it ever come to secure universal sway, it would cause the Saviour's law to fall into utter neglect.

The reality of this conflict is also seen in the embarrassment which it causes in certain cases. It is no uncommon thing for those who have been baptized in infancy, when they grow up to years of understanding, and come for themselves to hear and believe the

Gospel, to desire to be baptized on a profession of their repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Such an one may be fully convinced that to be thus baptized is a positive duty; he may long to obey what he believes to be the command of his Saviour; but no strength of conviction in his mind, and no urgency of desire in his heart, can secure him the privilege at the hands of those who baptized him in his years of unconsciousness. If he finds his convictions of personal duty too strong to be put down by the arguments that are brought to bear upon him, and feels his desire too powerful to be repressed by the influences that are gathered about him, he must adopt either one of two courses. He must either go to the Baptists, or to some of the few exceptions among the ministry of the churches with which he has been associated, and ask for the baptism of a believer at their hands; or if he shrink from this, he

may live on, leaving the duty unperformed, often troubled, often uneasy, but neglecting still obedience to the ordinance which he has been convinced was commanded by the Saviour.

Thus, in the case of many, their baptism in infancy tends to hinder and embarrass them when they subsequently come to wish for believers' baptism; while, in the case of others, it prevents them from ever asking whether it is not the will of the Lord, that they should be baptized upon a profession of their faith in him. Thus it tends ever to diminish the number of those who receive the baptism of believers. And if the time should ever come, when all who are born into the world shall be baptized in infancy, then the baptism of believers will be utterly abandoned, known,—if known at all,—only in the pages of the New Testament and of ecclesiastical history.

It is sometimes, however, argued that the

baptism of infants does not conflict with that of believers, because they are binding on two different classes of persons. The baptism of believers is binding on all who have not been baptized in infancy; the baptism of infants belongs to the children of believers. It is said that, as they are not designed for the same class of persons, there can be no conflict between them.

It seems to the Baptists, however, that there are two valid objections to this view, ingenious though it undoubtedly is.

1. The Scriptures speak of "one baptism"; by which is doubtless meant, one in regard to subjects, one in regard to the prerequisites and one in regard to the end and design. But, if the supposition which we are considering be correct, there are two baptisms, differing entirely from each other in all these three particulars. The Baptists cannot, by any fair process of reasoning,

combine these dissimilar rites into the one baptism, of which the apostle speaks.

2. If the baptism of infants was designed to be practiced by all Christians, then, as we have already remarked, in the advance of the Gospel, the baptism of believers will be ever administered to smaller numbers, until it ceases at length to be anywhere observed. Its place will thus be wholly occupied by the baptism of infants. The baptism of infants, according to this view, would be the permanent ordinance, while that of believers only subserves a temporary purpose. If such be the case, it seems strange to the Baptists, that in the New Testament so much is said of that ordinance which, in its nature, is only temporary; while that which is to be perpetual is not once mentioned, nor even remotely hinted at. Certainly no similar case can be found in which the temporary takes precedence of that which is permanent.

For these weighty reasons they deem it necessary to put aside the supposition that the two ordinances are of equal authority—a position which, as we have seen, few of their brethren practically hold—and designed to be binding at the same time on two different classes. Ingenious as it may appear, it will not bear the test of a careful examination.

If our course of remarks is conclusive, we are led to the following results: infant baptism ever tends to banish the baptism of believers from the churches—that rite which has no direct divine authority, ever tends to put aside the ordinance which has the direct and explicit authority of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

The Baptists feel compelled to exalt the command of their Lord above every thing that cannot show an equally high authority. They think that the principle by which they are guided is eminently adapted to honor

their Lord, and to secure a just regard for his authority. They think themselves bound, therefore, by this principle, to ignore the baptism of infants, and stedfastly to claim for all believers the privilege of obeying, without fear or embarrassment, the command of their Lord to be baptized on their own, personal profession of repentance and faith.

They are sometimes placed in circumstances of special delicacy in following out their principles. Application is frequently made for baptism at their hands, by those whom fond parents have brought to the rite in their infancy; as also by those who, in riper years, have submitted of their own accord to what they then believed to be the rite that Christ commanded. If they refuse such applications, they withhold the Saviour's baptism from those for whom it was designed. Yet if they administer the ordinance according to his command, they must

treat as a thing of no efficacy, or authority, that which, to the fond heart of some christian parent, or to the minds of christian relatives and friends, has always appeared a sacred and solemn ordinance of God. They recognize it as the part of christian courtesy to treat with respect the opinions and often the prejudices and errors of brethren. Yet the necessity of honoring their Lord is always paramount with them. They think themselves, bound to honor him by a careful observance of the commands that he has given. The disciple of Christ, unless he loves him more than father or mother, or brethren or friends, is pronounced by the Lord himself, unworthy of him. And he has also said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." They would be wanting, therefore, in faithfulness to Christ, were they to allow the erroneous opinions and prejudices of brethren to stand in the way of implicit obedience to the acknowledged law of their

gracious Lord. They are sorry to incur the censures of brethren. But to their Lord they stand or fall; they leave their judgment with him. He knows how honestly they have striven to know, and how stedfastly they have endeavored to do, what he has commanded. Their brethren may deem them separatists, because they stedfastly follow principles which must ever hold their ground until the day for the triumph of principles arrives. But it is a small matter to be judged of men, and censured by them, if the Lord will condescend to recognize the honesty of their intentions, and the purity of their motives, and to speak his gracious approval of their course.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Of all the charges which have been brought against the Baptists, none has been urged with more persistency than their so-

called want of charity, in excluding from the table of the Lord so many of their christian brethren. It is under the name of exclusion that their practice is too generally spoken of. Many persons do not see the injustice of this language. Yet, it is certainly possible to draw a clear distinction between not inviting to the table, and positively excluding therefrom. The latter is at least the harsher, perhaps the harshest form of expressing the fact. The Baptists might perhaps be justified in suggesting that, in speaking of them and their practices, their brethren should not use a harsher form of expression, while a milder and more courteous form lies directly at their hand. They claim that their practice, in regard to this ordinance also, is dictated by no unkind and uncharitable feeling toward their brethren; but results necessarily from a correct scriptural principle, one which they hold in common with the wisest and best of their brethren.

Principle VI. Since the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was established by Christ, those only whom he designates can properly be invited to participate.

It may not be amiss to give a brief sketch of the means by which we attain to a knowledge of the Lord's will, in regard to this sacred ordinance.

It was first established by the Saviour on the night in which he was betrayed. But there were present on that occasion only his apostles. How is it shown that the duty enjoined upon this small band becomes incumbent on all the churches of Christ? It would seem to be necessary, in order to prove its universal obligation, that we should have something more clear and definite than what we find in the brief narratives of the Evangelists. Accordingly, we find that the apostle Paul furnishes us with the steps by which we advance to the conclusion that this precious ordinance, first given to the apostles,

was designed for all the churches of Christ. We find it in the epistle to the church at Corinth. "For I have received," he says, "of the Lord, that which I delivered unto you." 1 Cor. xi. 23. He then proceeds to give them certain rules for the proper observance of the ordinance, and certain cautions against its abuse.

We may notice, in this language of the apostle:—

1. That he had received what he taught from the Lord Jesus Christ, and that all which he prescribes had therefore the full weight of the divine authority.

2: That the ordinance, with the rules for its observance, was given to the *church** at

* The Baptists are often asked how they find a scriptural argument for the admission of women to the Communion table. If it were as easy to establish the right of infants to baptism, they would doubtless soon adopt the ceremony. The proof is suggested by the above facts. The ordinance was given to the church at Corinth by the apostle, from the Lord. It was to be observed when they came to-

Corinth, for their joint participation therein. It was not a rite to be observed by each one singly, but when they came together.

3. That it was not to be observed without due thought and proper qualifications on the part of each member of the church.

It is from the example and word of the Lord, explained and enforced by his own chosen apostle, that we derive our knowledge of the ordinance, and our authority for the manner of its observance.

From the fact that this ordinance is often called the *Lord's* Supper, it is sometimes argued that the Baptists ought to invite all who love the Lord to participate in its privileges. They, however, find in this very fact, that it is the Lord's table and not their

gether—all jointly participating. That there were wives, and widows, and other sisters in that church the apostle himself has informed us. See 1 Corinthians, 7th chapter. The conclusion is sufficiently clear; the proof deduced directly from the sacred Scriptures.

own, a powerful motive for guarding against any invitation that is not in strict accordance with his will. Were it their own table, then, they might justly extend the invitation as far as their feelings prompted. Then, if they narrowed their invitation, they might with more propriety be taken to task. But as it is the Lord's table, they have no right to make any rule, either for the admission, or for the exclusion of any. They are in so sense law-makers. They are the subjects of the law of Christ, bound to invite all whom he invites, equally bound not to enlarge the invitation which he has given.

In the following propositions we have the concurrence of all, except perhaps a small proportion of our brethren.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper belongs exclusively to the churches of Christ. It was given to them for their spiritual growth, in remembering their Lord, and for the promotion of his sacred cause, by show-

ing forth his death until he comes. Its sweet and precious privileges pertain to none outside of the churches of his saints. Of course, an invitation should be given to all who have been received into his churches, in the way that the Lord has prescribed; and no invitation can be given, by his authority, to any who have not been thus received.

All who have been received into his churches in the way that the Lord has prescribed—such, and only such, are the persons to be invited, by the authority of Christ, to come to the Communion table.

The Baptists have striven ever to abide by that rule; yet they do not invite many persons whom their brethren, who profess to be governed by the same, are accustomed to ask. How does it happen, that while they and their brethren both hold by the same rule, they differ so widely in their practice? Here we are brought face to face with the real point at issue between the

Baptists and their brethren—Who have been received into his churches in the way that the Lord has prescribed? This is the question around which all the conflict should gather. Their brethren often make side issues, but this is the point to which all inquiry should tend. Upon the answer which is given to this question, the character of the churches of Christ depends. Are they to be composed, according to the will of the Lord, of believers alone, or are unbelievers, also, to have part and portion therein? They do the Baptists great injustice, who represent the points for which they plead as trifling non-essentials. Few questions of deeper interest, and of more far-reaching importance, can be agitated by the disciples of Christ. Was it the design of the Lord that his churches should be kept as spiritual bodies, or did he contemplate the admission thereto of those who never professed to believe with all their heart in him? When

their brethren come to a full agreement with the Baptists on this momentous point, then they will also agree as to the proper persons to come to the Communion table. Then this long controversy will end, and we shall have a real union—a union in the truth.

In our preceding remarks we have gone on, step by step, from principle to principle, and these are the conclusions to which we have arrived.

The disciple of Christ is commanded, when he comes to exercise faith in the Son of God, to be baptized in his holy name. It is an act that is to follow, not to precede his faith.

To be baptized, according to the meaning of the Lord, is to be immersed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Those only who have made a credible profession of their faith in the Son of God, and have been immersed upon that profes-

sion, in his holy name, have been received into his churches in the way that he has prescribed.

In the principles that they have adopted, the Baptists have the sanction of the highest authorities in the world. They have not been led to their adoption by any unfriendly feeling toward their brethren. They have labored to divest themselves of all feeling except a desire to know the mind and will of their Lord. They claim, it is true, the exercise of their own reason and judgment in the adoption of principles, and in their application, in order to deduce their practice. But in this they do not differ from their brethren. The right and duty of all men to search for principles, and to apply their principles when found for the shaping of their practice, is a truth which they have labored, and suffered, and died to uphold.

So long as they believe their principles to be true, and their own application of them

legitimate, they cannot consistently vary their practice. It surely should not grieve their brethren that they abide with strictness by their principles. It cannot be the part of christian kindness to ask another to forsake a course which principle enjoins, or to adopt a practice which principle forbids. Their brethren would have just grounds for censuring the Baptists were they to go beyond the teaching of the Lord, and invite to the Communion table those who lack the qualifications that he has prescribed.

The ties of kindred and friendship are dear and sacred, and within their own appropriate limits may justly be allowed to control our actions. But the tie by which the disciple is bound to kindred and friend, must always be held as subordinate to that which binds him to his Lord. He need not cease to love his relatives and friends when he becomes a follower of Christ. He will rather love them with a truer, deeper love.

But a higher love must always be given to Christ, if he would not place himself among the number of those whom the Saviour has declared to be unworthy of him. If then the Baptists do not invite all of their christian relatives and friends to the Communion table, it is not that they love them less, but that they love the Saviour more. They would raise no barrier in the way which he has not erected; nor would they dare to throw down a barrier which he has raised. They are accustomed to invite all who have repented of sin, have believed in Christ, have been baptized in accordance with his command, and are living consistent christian lives. Do the sacred Scriptures warrant a wider invitation? Do their brethren themselves give one that is more full and comprehensive?

But do not the Baptists deny to their brethren, if not in words, at least in fact, the name of Christians? By no means. They

esteem them very highly as believers in Jesus Christ. They rejoice in all their christian graces, and all their christian usefulness. But it would scarcely be consistent for them, because of the christian graces or christian usefulness of their brethren, to alter or modify the teachings of their Lord. It is those who believe and are baptized whom the Lord invites. There must be both the inward character and the outward act. Their brethren, themselves, require not only the evidence of Christian character, but also what they can accept as the external act of baptism. Both, in their esteem, are necessary. The Baptists ask no more. They would fain hope, therefore, to secure from their brethren full confidence in their professions of christian regard, even though they cannot invite those, whom they regret to look upon as unbaptized, to the Lord's table.

Such, in brief, are the principles which

dictate, from first to last, the practice of the Baptists. If their brethren deem the principles which they hold to be erroneous, or think that any of their principles are misapplied, it is competent for those who have wisdom and learning to point out wherein their error lies. To point out any error which they have held, will be the most effectual means of leading them to seek for other and better principles, or for a better mode of applying those that they hold. It has been their aim, as a denomination, to seek out carefully, and to maintain with unshaken firmness, the truth as it is in Jesus. They would gladly accept of the aid which their brethren may be able to give them, in finding that which they have not yet discovered. They long and pray for the triumph of correct principles, and their supreme sway in all that pertains to religious truth and scriptural practice. Men pass away, but principles live. Correct principles are the safeguard of the cause

of Christ, and ever tend to the glory of God.

In defense of their principles, the Baptists have had many trials to bear. Burnings and banishment, fines and imprisonment, scourgings and mockery, have all been among the familiar incidents of their lot. Their firm adherence to their principles in the midst of such trials of faith and patience, are matters of history. They have had ample opportunity to learn patience by the things which they have suffered. Nor have they altogether failed to profit by the stern discipline to which they have been subjected. The work which they have performed as pioneers in the cause of religious freedom, and religious effort, bears ample testimony to this. Yet they would not ask that this same stern discipline may be prolonged. They long for the coming of that day when they may serve God in peace and quietness, according to the teachings of his

own sacred word. They hope that the day may soon come when, throughout the whole world, as well as in our own land, the hand of persecution may be stayed. They would also hope that, in our own country, while their brethren meet them with arguments, as hard as the overthrow of their errors may demand, they may be exposed no longer to the reproaches and odium which they think their honest effort in all things to follow the laws of their Lord has little merited.

THE END.

THE ANCIENT LANDMARKS.

OR,

BELIEF AND BAPTISM

BEFORE COMMUNION.

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BELIEF AND BAPTISM BEFORE COMMUNION.



WE propose to submit, for your consideration at the present time, a few reasons *why our churches should adhere to the practice of inviting to the Table of the Lord only those persons whom they believe to be the baptized and orderly followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

At a time when, in consequence of our views on this subject, we are constantly assailed with the charges of exclusivism and illiberality by Christian brethren with whom we love to co-operate in prayer and other efforts intended to advance the Kingdom of Christ, it is proper for us to review the reasons for our practice. If these be found sufficient let us maintain with renewed zeal

the rules by which we have heretofore been governed. But if we have been defending a position which a maturer and more searching investigation discovers to be untenable, let us as honest people abandon it, and relieve ourselves from the imputations under which we have so long labored.

I. Our first reason for restricting these invitations to the persons whom we have designated is, that the *practice accords with the law and the testimony of the Holy Scriptures*: We mention this as our first reason, because we hold it to be the foundation on which all arguments, entitled to our respect on this subject, must be built. Whatever may be urged in favor of the practice by other considerations, we should not insist upon its retention unless it be enforced by the command of Jesus Christ and the practice of the Apostles. It especially becomes us, dear brethren, who profess to discard all merely human traditions and superstitions, to inquire, when seeking the truth on this subject,

What is taught in the Sacred Oracles? and to cleave only unto that doctrine which has been delivered by "holy men of old, speak- as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

1. Let us begin our inquiries on this head with the institution of the ordinance. It can be shown, beyond a reasonable doubt, that all the persons who participated on this occasion had been previously baptized. The administrator certainly had submitted to the ordinance. There is not the like mention of the baptism of each of the apostles. It would be unreasonable to expect records which would embrace those particulars of their history which, from the circumstances of the case, may be very properly taken for granted. We believe that they were baptized:

(1.) Because a rite which their leader deemed so important, that he submitted to it in his own person, could not have been neglected by any of those whom he recognized as his followers.

(2.) Because those who baptized many of

the converts of the Lord, must themselves have been baptized.

(3.) Our Lord would not, after his ascension, send forth men to "baptize all nations" who were living in the neglect of that which he enjoins on others.

(4.) As some of the apostles had been baptized by John, and as the disciples made by the personal ministry of the Saviour were baptized, *all* of his apostles must have been baptized.

(5.) When an apostle was to be elected in the place of Judas, one of the qualifications of the candidate for the vacancy was (we may justly conclude), that he had been baptized; and reference is made to this qualification in such terms as to carry with it the strong implication that they had all been baptized. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, *beginning from the baptism of John*, . . . must one be ordained," &c. Acts i. 21, 22.

(6.) If a requisition was laid upon the converted Saul to be baptized before he could enter upon his work, a similar requisition must have been laid upon the other apostles.

(7.) When our Lord was preparing to receive baptism from John, he said: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." We cannot suppose that he would have chosen, as the depositaries of a most important trust, those who were willfully neglecting their duty with regard to this righteousness.

Can there be, then, a reasonable doubt, that the first Supper was celebrated by a baptized company? Whether you choose to call it John's baptism, or Christian baptism, it is the baptism which God appointed; and all present on this memorable occasion had submitted to the divine command.

2. The terms of the Great Commission show that baptism precedes the Supper. This is the law by which we are to be governed on this subject. (See Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16.) By this charter we are

directed, 1. To make a proclamation of the Gospel; 2. To administer baptism to believers; and 3. To instruct the baptized in their duty to Christ. If we suppose, as we have sufficient reason for doing, that the Lord's Supper was one of the things to be taught the baptized converts, then we find the Commission clearly establishing baptism as a prerequisite to the Lord's table. It will not do to say that the Commission prescribes no particular order in which we are to proceed. This argument would prove too much. For if we are at liberty to make a transposition and to teach men to observe the Supper before they had been baptized, we might by the same liberty transpose a little further, and administer baptism before there had been a profession of faith. But as no one among us will, we presume, deny that faith is an indispensable preliminary to baptism, so no one ought to dispense with baptism as a prerequisite to the table of the Lord. The order of the Commission, reported in the

same way by both the Evangelists, is not a matter of accident, but of design, and should be conscientiously observed by all who love the great Lawgiver. We most cordially concur in the views of Baxter, that "The paramount law of the great Institutor, the Commission, is not like some occasional historical mention of baptism, but is the very command of Christ, and purposely expresseth their several works in their several places and order. Their first task is, by teaching, to make disciples, which Mark calls believers. The second work is to baptize them. The third work is to teach them all other things which are afterward to be learned in the school of Christ. To contemn this order is to renounce all rules of order; for where can we expect to find it, if not here?"*

3. The practice of the apostles shows that they understood baptism to be the first duty of every believer, and therefore antecedent to the Supper. Any one who will

* Quoted in "Howell on Communion," p. 49.

read the Commission, and observe the action of the apostles under this law, must be struck with their constant adherence to the order which their Divine Master enjoined. On the day of Pentecost, "when they heard this (*i. e.*, Peter's discourse), they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Here then we have, 1. The preaching of the Gospel; 2. The belief of the hearers; 3. Their baptism; 4. Their participation of the Lord's Supper; being one of those things which they were taught after their compliance with the preliminaries of faith and baptism. All this is in exact conformity with the terms and the order of the

Commission which Peter had received from his divine Master. Again, "Philip . . . preached unto him Jesus. . . And the Eunuch said, See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . And he baptized him." Here again we have the same order rigidly observed. Philip first preaches Jesus to his hearer. The latter then expresses his belief. Next he is baptized. Was the practice of Philip an undesigned coincidence with that of Peter, or did it spring from the same interpretation of the Commission? Who can doubt that they understood the *order* to be authoritative?

When Ananias addressed the converted Saul, he did not first direct him to commemorate the sufferings and death of his Lord; there was a duty which took precedence of this requisition. He must be buried in the same watery grave in which

his Saviour had been laid. He had already heard and believed the Gospel. In those memorable words which entered his soul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," Saul had heard a sermon from the skies. When his belief followed this preaching, there came the command: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Having been baptized, the same Jesus who had preached the sermon under which he was converted, teaches him, among the many things which he learned, that he must celebrate his sufferings and death. And when he writes to the Corinthians, enjoining this duty upon them after they had been baptized, he can speak with effect, when he says: "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night on which he was betrayed, took bread," &c. Here we see the Son of God co-operating with his apostles in carrying out his own commission in

the order in which he delivered it. Paul hears, believes, is baptized, and learns that he is then to "show in the Supper," the "Lord's death, till he comes," and so teaches the churches.

And when this Saul, afterward a minister of the Cross, hears from the jailer the anxious cry—"What must I do to be saved?" he first directs him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As the next step he does not receive the Supper, though this would have been much more convenient, in the judgment of some of our friends, than what was required, but he is baptized; and one act of obedience in this case follows another so rapidly, that we see the close proximity in which Paul placed belief and baptism.

But perhaps some may say: Granted that the apostles invariably administered baptism before communion, their example in this particular, is not binding upon us. We answer: When the apostles acted officially, they acted under divine direction,

and their conduct and teaching, when so acting, are invested for us with all the authority of law. It is, in fact, Jesus speaking to us through his servants, and illustrating by their teaching and practice his own requisitions. Why do we feel safe in saying to every inquirer after life, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"? Because an inspired apostle once gave this direction to an inquirer. Why do we resist the doctrine of celibacy, as held by the Romish church? Because an apostle has pronounced marriage to be "honorable in all." Why would we feel no hesitation in excommunicating a person charged with the offence for which the apostle recommended excision to the Corinthian church? Because we hold his directions to them to be inspired, and therefore incumbent on us. No one questions that the instructions of the apostles on these subjects are rules by which we must be governed; and when we find these apostles uniformly

insisting on baptism before believers are invited to approach the table of their Lord, we should hold this rule to be as obligatory upon us as though we had an express command, in every instance, from our great Lawgiver.

4. The incidental references to baptism in the Epistles confirm what we are taught by apostolic practice, viz.: That the first visible act of homage which believers paid to Christ was baptism. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul addressed them in these terms: "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides I know not whether I baptized any other." The question in this passage assumes that every one connected with the Corinthian church had been baptized. Paul does not ask, "Have you been baptized?" but taking this as granted, he inquires whether they had been baptized in his name. Next, he

mentions several persons whom he had baptized, and though he is not advised of the baptism of other members, his language implies that they had all submitted to this ordinance. Who, in reading this Scripture, can resist the conclusion that the church of Corinth was composed of believers who had been baptized in the name of Christ? Now it was to those who had paid the act of homage which baptism implies, that the apostle delivered the command of his Lord respecting the Supper, "This do in remembrance of me."

In the Epistle to the Galatians we find this language: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." All the members of the church in Galatia must have put on Christ. They must therefore have all been baptized. But when did this symbolical putting on of Christ occur? Was it before or after they partook of the Lord's Supper? If after they had received the Supper, why is the fact

ignored? Why is the apostle so careful to mention the second rite whilst he omits the initiatory ordinance of the Supper? As baptism was the putting on of Christ, surely we may conclude that the symbol was indicated so soon as the faith symbolized existed in the heart. The putting on of Christ was the act by which they proclaimed their allegiance to the Son of God. This of course would very naturally and properly take precedence of all those acts which are prescribed for those who have taken the oath of allegiance.

The interpretation which we have now given of the Commission, and of the practice of the apostles, is accepted by the Christian world at large. Though some now deny that baptism is a prerequisite to communion, there has heretofore been very great unanimity among our Pedobaptist brethren on this subject. Those who deem us so exclusive, recognize, in the standards of their churches and in the opinions of their ac-

credited expositors, the necessity of baptism before communion. "In the very depths of the Romish apostasy," says Mr. Booth, "and since the Reformation, both at home and abroad, the general practice has been to receive none but baptized persons to communion at the Lord's table." Says Dr. Wall, (History of Infant Bap., Part 2, Chap. 9), "No church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. Among all the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained that any persons should partake of the communion before they were baptized."

In the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church we have these words: "Let none be received into the church until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized." In the Order of Confirmation in the Episcopal Prayer-book, baptism is a prerequisite to confirmation, and confirmation is a prerequisite to the Supper.

According to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith: "Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church." The Lord's Supper is an ordinance "in the church"; hence, an ordinance for those whom Presbyterians believe to be baptized. It would be easy to quote from standards and individuals in corroboration of the view which is now presented. The limits prescribed for this paper forbid. We submit, in addition, only the testimony of Dr. Griffin, a learned and eminently useful minister of the Congregational Church. "I agree with the advocates for close communion on two points: 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; in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the church."

Thus, from the "law and the testimony" as understood both by ourselves and by Pedobaptist commentators, submission to the ordinance of baptism is an indispensable preliminary to an orderly participation of the Lord's Supper. If this point be made out, (and we humbly conceive that it is established beyond successful assault), it is not really necessary for us to add any thing more. Having a "thus saith the Lord" for our practice, we may submit quietly to whatever of opprobrium it may involve. Though it cuts us off from a sacramental fellowship with multitudes whom we believe

to be the children of God, and whose zeal in the service of our common Lord awakens our constant admiration and gratitude, and though it constrains us to dwell in a painful isolation, making us the "sect which is everywhere spoken against," yet we must adhere to that rule which we honestly believe to have been prescribed by our Lord and his apostles. "Let it be admitted," says the gifted Hall, "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." The hypothesis of this writer is, we humbly conceive, estab-

lished. "Baptism is, under all circumstances, a necessary condition of church-fellowship." It is therefore impossible for Baptists to invite to the Lord's Supper those who have not complied with the Lord's preliminary.

II. The next reason which we offer for adhering to our practice on the subject in question, is because, in so doing, we bear our testimony against those who depart from the scriptural law of baptism, both as to its mode and subjects. Holding baptism to be a prerequisite to the Supper, it is plain that, if we invite those who have not been immersed on a profession of their faith to partake, we recognize something else besides immersion to be baptism. Most of the members of Pedobaptist churches have not, in our view, been baptized; many others have not received even that which they hold to be baptism, on a profession of their faith—the rite having been administered at an age so tender that it made no impression on their minds. To invite such persons to the Lord's

table, would be in effect, to say, We believe that you have complied with the terms of the Commission and with the practice of the apostles—an assertion which no Baptist could conscientiously make. In withholding our invitation, we express the convictions that their custom of adopting infants into the church, by what is termed baptism, is without a warrant in the Word of God; and that their refusal to submit to the baptism which Christ appointed, disqualifies them for a scriptural participation of the Supper.

If our Pedobaptist brethren should say, this surely is magnifying the rite of baptism into very great consequence; can the question of the application of water in a particular way, whether before or after believing, be a matter of so much moment as to produce a separation at the communion table, of those who are the regenerated friends of Jesus? We answer, that we make no more of this ordinance than did our Divine Exemplar—we dare not make any thing less.

If he deemed it so important as to submit to it, in his own person, and that in a particular way, and when he was in the full maturity of his powers; if that baptism was hallowed and made forever memorable by the first simultaneous appearance of the whole Godhead, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, to men; if the Son of God gave this ordinance so conspicuous and well-defined a place in his valedictory charge to his apostles; and if these apostles invariably enjoined baptism on those who believed; and if the rite be so important that they deem the fact of its observance worthy of especial record in so many instances; it is not easy for us to magnify it into an undue consequence, so long as we only insist upon it as the first duty of all who "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Nor do we lay a greater stress upon this ordinance than do our brethren who differ from us as to the circumstances. We would respectfully ask, What Pedobaptist confession of faith ignores it?

We have seen that it is mentioned in the standards of their churches. Which one of these churches, in practice, dispenses with it as a matter of too trivial a nature to be insisted upon? The truth is, that in their estimate of the ordinance, they attach to it a value greater than that which we accord. We are satisfied if it be administered to believers—they administer that which they regard as baptism to *unbelievers*—to persons at an age when belief is an utter impossibility.

If our brethren with whom we differ on this subject should say, We have submitted conscientiously to what we believe to be baptism, and we therefore claim our place at the table; we answer, That it is Christ's table, and we have no authority to invite there any other persons than those whom we believe to have complied with Christ's conditions. We rejoice, dear brethren, in the evidences of piety which you exhibit; we love to hold spiritual communion with those

whose lives abound in so many good works: but Christ has not taught us how we may hold sacramental communion with those who remain, in our view, unbaptized. It is painful to us not to meet you at the table; we esteem you for your works of faith, and labors of love, but we love the Lord Jesus Christ more. Loyalty to his commands, devotion to the truth as it is in Jesus, compel us to withhold our invitations to the Supper. By this act we say to you, We believe, in the matter of baptism, you include subjects for which you have only the commandments of men, and are satisfied with an administration which the Scriptures do not recognize.

III. Another reason for our position is found in the fact that we thus express our dissent from the practice of those churches who do not insist upon repentance and faith as a condition of admission to the table of the Lord. That multitudes of our brethren who have not complied with the other pre-

liminary on which we have insisted, possess, notwithstanding, the fundamental requisites of which we now speak, we rejoice to believe. But at the same time there are churches in which satisfactory evidences of spiritual regeneration are not required as terms of admission to the Lord's Supper. In some of these churches, all that is required after the baptism of the candidate in infancy, is his confirmation by the proper officer. This rite introduces him into full communion. Many of those who are thus introduced do not even profess to be converted. That we do not speak harshly on this subject, appears from the testimony of Archbishop Whately, who says: "Confirmation is too often so mistaken and perverted, as to become an empty and unmeaning form, or a dangerous snare." ("Charges and other Tracts," Lond. 1836, p. 93.)

Says Dr. Smyth, an eminent minister of the Presbyterian church, when speaking of this prelatial rite of confirmation, ("Conf.

Examined," p. 115), "As to any serious belief in the necessity of regeneration as a prerequisite qualification, they dream not of it. They have been taught, as Bishop Mant words it, to 'believe in baptismal regeneration, and that there is no other regeneration,' and they now therefore confirm their belief that there is no other, by becoming communicants while impenitent and unconverted."

So, again, it is well known that there are other churches in which persons are invited to the Lord's Supper, that they may be converted by the ordinance. In the terms which they prescribe for admission to the Supper, though baptism may be specified, there is no distinct intimation that the candidate must have experienced the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

To invite such persons to the communion-table, with our principles, is to say to them, "We believe that you have been converted when thanks were returned for your regeneration in bapt'ism, we believe you passed

from death unto life: in connecting yourself with a Christian church, you became a Christian." We are not prepared to encourage their error; we are not prepared to sanction a violation of that law which, (as we have seen), requires belief and baptism to be antecedent to communion; and as we spread the table, we must throw around it the fence which the Lord Jesus has constructed, and say: "This is for baptized believers in his holy name."

IV. The last reason which we assign for adhering to our practice is, that by such a course we advance most effectively, under the Divine blessing, those great principles for which we contend. If we believe our practice with regard to church communion to be scriptural, we should be obliged to conform to it, whether our views be acknowledged by multitudes, or by a very limited number of adherents. But when the policy we adopt is obviously the most favorable for the dissemination of those doctrines which

are taught in the Word of God, this surely supplies an additional reason why it should be faithfully observed. It has often been said that, if restricted communion were abolished, our principles would achieve a much more speedy triumph. But the question of success or of defeat should not affect our action. We have but one inquiry—What is right? What is according to the “law and the testimony”? Better is it for us to fail whilst clinging to the *truth* than to triumph (as men count triumph) whilst submitting to an error.

But facts demonstrate that our views have always been most successful when we have adhered most uncompromisingly to the practice of inviting to the table of the Lord only those whom we believe to be scripturally qualified. If we institute a comparison betwixt the United States, where strict communion prevails, and Great Britain, where to a great extent our brethren recognize mixed communion, we shall discover that

our principles have progressed much more rapidly in the former than in the latter country. *e. g.*: In the year 1850, the number of communicants in the United States, of Baptist churches holding our views on the communion question, was 754,652. In Great Britain and Ireland, the total number of Baptists is reported, in the same year, to be 132,719. From this statement, copied from the Baptist Almanac of 1850, it appears that the number of Baptists in the United States is nearly six times as great as their number in Great Britain and Ireland. Difference of population does not account for the difference; for at the time of the comparison, the population of the European countries was a little greater than that of our own country. Nor is the disproportion explained by the earlier introduction of Baptist principles into this country. In this respect Great Britain has enjoyed a decided advantage. Nor can any thing be assigned in the different governments of the countries as an *adequate* expla-

nation of the fact, though we believe our government to be most favorable for the spread of a spiritual Christianity. We believe the chief cause to be that which has been mentioned. Nor are we alone in this judgment. After a fair statement of the relative advantages and disadvantages which the denomination has experienced in both countries, Prof. Curtis well concludes, in view of the superior progress of our churches in the United States, that, "under God, this has originated in their assuming an independent and uncompromising basis; their churches being formed, not on Robert Hall's plan of mixed membership, but upon that derived from the apostolic practice of making baptism a prerequisite to membership in their churches."

In our own country, our Free-will Baptist brethren practice open communion. Does this promote their prosperity? Let us see. In 1844 the whole number of Free will Baptists in the United States, was 50,634.

In 1858 they report 50,312. Thus it appears, that in the course of fourteen years, instead of increasing, they have really declined in number. (See Baptist Almanac.) It will not do to say that this decline is due to their Arminianism; for our Methodist brethren, who agree with them in this view, do not appear to have been much hindered on this account. But whilst the mixed communion Baptists of our country have lost 322 members in fourteen years, those who insist on the New Testament requisition have gained in the same period nearly 300,000 members. If we institute a comparison betwixt England and Wales, we shall have a like result. The number of those who hold our sentiments in Wales is greatly larger, in proportion to the population of the country, than the number of Baptists in England. The Welsh Baptists, it is well known, insist upon inviting to the communion those only who have been baptized on a profession of their faith. Thus it appears, that whether

we compare the denominations holding different views on this subject, and found in different countries, or whether we compare those pursuing these different practices in the same country, the result abundantly confirms the position which we have taken.

Yes, brethren, God has blessed us whilst we have been contending for what we believe to be the truth on this important subject. Never have our principles been so triumphant as in this country. Look at your own Association. Though you have been frequently dismissing churches to join other Associations, your number is to-day nearly three-fold as great as it was twenty years ago. We believe that one source of our prosperity has been, under God, our steadfast adherence to the teaching of Christ and his apostles, respecting the ordinances of the Christian church. And "as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so let us walk in him;" let us continue to contend for the faith on this subject, which we believe to have been de-

livered to the saints; asking on this, as on all other questions, Lord, what will thou have us do?

In the mean time let us endeavor to cultivate a closer spiritual communion with our brethren of every name. Let us emulate the earnest piety, the enlarged benevolence, and the self-sacrificing zeal, which they so beautifully exhibit in the service of that same Jesus for whom we toil. Let us, as far as we possibly can, co-operate with them in efforts for the extension of the kingdom of Christ. And when they say to us, that as you expect to commune with us in heaven (as most assuredly we do), you ought to welcome us to the table now; let us remind them that there will be no table spread in heaven; and that we can have, and do have the same communion with them on earth which we hope to enjoy, in a higher and holier degree, in that bright world where

“ Perfect love and friendship shall reign
Through all eternity.”

THE PURE CHURCH

CHARACTERISED BY SPIRITUALITY.

A Discourse preached before the Baptist Convention of the
State of Vermont, at Brandon, October 5, 1853.

BY LUCIAN HAYDEN.

Pastor of the Baptist Church at Saxton's River, Vt.

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THE PURE CHURCH

CHARACTERISED BY SPIRITUALITY.



1 Peter 11: 5.—Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

THE ancient Jews beheld in the externals of their appointed worship, numerous and powerful attractions.

The magnificent proportions of the edifice in which that worship was conducted; its massive walls; its grand colonnades; its spacious courts; its sumptuous apartments; its costly furniture; its pompous retinue of a gorgeously robed and mitred priesthood; its often repeated and imposing sacrifices;

all conspired to invest their system with an enchanting splendor.

When Jesus of Nazareth appeared as the promised Messiah, many enrolled themselves among his followers. But to Judaism they still cherished, nevertheless, an undying attachment. Though the orb of that economy, while they yet looked upon it, was sinking into the night of the past, their eyes lingered on the varied hues of the mellow twilight, and they saw in them a glory, which, to their ardent imaginations, surpassed the pure and spreading effulgence of the gospel dawn.

This mischievous illusion, adapted to "corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ," and to ensnare their affections "to weak and beggarly elements," the Apostles timely discerned, and with becoming prudence and energy, sought to dispel. The *external* splendor of the old dispensation, they did not deny; but an

internal splendor, greatly transcending it, they discovered in the spirituality of the new. During the long night-time of antiquity, the brightest star in the firmament, they cheerfully conceded, was Judaism; but when the world was flooded with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, the brilliancy of that star faded and disappeared. "If THE MINISTRATION OF DEATH was glorious," says Paul, "which glory was to be done away, how shall not THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory! For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is DONE AWAY was glorious, much more that which REMAINETH is glorious."

Mind excels matter. The moral purity of the soul outshines the splendor of the

sun. So the spirituality of the new economy, glows with a divine radiance, immeasurably surpassing the outward pomp and glare of the old. Did the magnificence of the temple, a mere material fabric, enchain the heart of the Jew? A nobler temple is the church, "a spiritual house," built up of "living stones." Was there enshrined in the breast of the Israelite, an ineffaceable veneration for the Aaronic priesthood? A more illustrious priesthood is that of Christ—and under Him, the church of Christ, every member of which, by "an unction from the Holy One," is solemnly consecrated to the sacerdotal office. Was the daily immolation of animal life by Jewish priests, a sacrifice to be revered? A more acceptable oblation is the one great offering of the Son of God upon the cross for our sins; and the daily offering of the redeemed, the holocaust of the "hidden man of the heart"—a

“spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

The grand characteristic of the kingdom of the Messiah, then, is its SPIRITUALITY; a glorious element, which serves to distinguish it, not only from Judaism, but from heathenism; nay, even from the corruptions of Christianity itself. A church of Christ, as far as it is conformed to the scriptural model, uncontaminated by error, unperverted by tradition, unpolluted by connection with the principalities and powers of this world, and uninvested with the meretricious trappings of papal Rome,—such a church, I say, is characterised by spirituality. In a word, A PURE CHURCH IS A SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

In maintaining this position, I would first observe that, a pure church is spiritual in its *membership*. The materials of which it is composed, are all endowed with spi-

ritual vitality. Such is the teaching of the text. Metaphorically viewed, the church is represented as a temple. Christ, the foundation, is a living stone: "To whom coming as unto a living stone." But, by the same omnipotence which breathed life into Adam's nostrils, this vital principle is sent up from the foundation, throughout every part of the edifice. Hence, each particular stone is pronounced 'lively,' or rather '*living.*' Each stone being animated, the whole house is animated: "Ye are built up a spiritual house." The effect of this animating principle, Paul describes as a growth: "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, *groweth* unto a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit." The result is, that all the materials, whether considered separately as isolated stones, or collectively as a magnificent building, are vivified with

spirituality. The church, throughout its entire membership, being animated with the Spirit of Christ, is itself spiritual.

A glorious transformation has been wrought. Once, the materials of this church were dead: now, they are alive; once, in bondage under the elements of this world: but now, delivered. The Son has made them free, and they are free indeed. Once, they "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Now, they have received, "not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things that are freely given to them of God." Once, they had their "conversation in the lusts of the flesh; fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Now, their "conversation is in

heaven." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God." Their minds are renewed. The old man is put off. The new man, created after God in righteousness and true holiness, is put on. They are "led by the Spirit," are "after the Spirit," and do "mind the things of the Spirit." They bear his image and superscription. They are regenerate, holy, heavenly. "Ye are a chosen generation," says Peter, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." How clearly every epithet, every contrast, and every varied form of expression, involves the doctrine of the spirituality of the membership in the church!

To the same effect, is the testimony of the Faithful and True Witness, at the tribunal of Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world. . . . Now is my kingdom not from hence."

Such, then, in an uncorrupted church, is its membership. Spirituality is their distinguishing endowment. Now, as the entire membership is spiritual, the ministry, being a component of the church, must be spiritual. It follows, moreover, by a law of congruence, that the ministry shall be spiritual *in an eminent degree*. When all the rank and file that compose an army, must be distinguished for heroism, much more must the same quality distinguish their chief. When, in the animal economy, the hand, the foot, and every member must possess vitality, much more must the living principle animate the heart and the head. When the whole church is a priesthood of saints, "an holy

priesthood," all having received the "anointing which teacheth all things," how copious and fragrant should be the divine unction of their exemplars and overseers! Both the membership in general, then, and the ministry in particular, must be spiritual; renewed by the Holy Ghost, enjoying his influences, graces, and gifts.

Here we discover the true bounds, within which, a church of Christ must be circumscribed. She may "enlarge the place of her tent, stretch forth the curtains of her habitation, lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes;" yet she may never stretch herself *beyond her measure*. She may never surpass *the limits of visible spirituality*. But spirituality, visible or invisible, is not yet universal. No zone so salubrious, no Eden so well dressed, no tract of country so exempt from the wiles of the serpent, as to contain exclusively a holy people. Under the most propitious

sky, and on the most thoroughly fallowed soil, tares thrive as well as wheat.

Hence, a pure church *cannot be territorial*. Neither theoretically nor practically, can she include within her pale, the entire population of a given area, let that area be either narrow or broad.

Away, then, with *territorial* organizations. Away with establishments—provincial, state, national, and ecumenical—as of Scotland, England, Greece, and Rome. Away with that ostentatious nomenclature, which appropriates to a sect, or to the clergy of a sect, territorial names; which, in an exclusive sense, styles some particular communion, in a given region, *the church* of that region;—which singles out, in the same local section, here and there a minister, perhaps a worthy one, perhaps otherwise, as pre-eminently its bishop;—the bishop, for instance, of Massachusetts, the bishop of New York, or the bishop of

Vermont. If in the forum of modesty, these high-sounding assumptions escape an indictment, yet inevitably are they arraigned at the tribunal of the Gospel. There they must answer to the grave charge of banding together, in a perpetual conspiracy, to remove the ancient landmarks from between the church and the world. It needs not the prescience of a seer, to predict with unerring certainty, that with Jesus as the judge, and the twelve apostles as the jury, the verdict must be—GUILTY.

II. As the church unalloyed, is spiritual in membership, so it is spiritual in *doctrine*. The uncompromising enemy of tumult and sedition; the steadfast friend of wholesome government; the efficient patron of law and order; the church, nevertheless, has no distinctively political principles. It espouses no political creed. It strikes

hands with no political party. It weds no particular system of civil government.

Nor are its principles literary or scientific. On every department of learning they shed, indeed, a genial influence; but are themselves another system. The beams of noonday permeate, warm, and enlighten the atmosphere, yet partake not of its properties, but retain the luminous element which they receive from the sun. So gospel doctrines traverse and illuminate the firmament of politics, science, and literature, partaking not of *their* properties, but distinguished by a divine nature which they receive from the Father of Lights. Philosophy may change her dogmas; Science, her theories; Literature vary like the hues of the chameleon: now may flourish the tenets of the Peripatetics; now of Bacon; now the system of Ptolemy, and now again of Copernicus: Archæology may wring from the shriveled hands

of hoary Time his choicest relics; and Geology disembowel the earth, to inspect its entrails and divine new theories. But what of it? Daylight is unchanged. Rays from the eternal throne are unchanged. Here and there, the beams may be separated by a prism, converged by a lens, or reflected by a mirror; yet the light from on high ever shines in its own unborrowed brightness—is ever resplendent with its own native lustre.

III. A pure church is spiritual in its *worship*. “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers, shall worship the Father, in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.” The “living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus

Christ." Their sacrifice of *prayer* is spiritual: "I will pray with the Spirit." Their sacrifice of *praise* in sacred song is spiritual: "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Their *preaching* is spiritual: "We are not as many which corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

Even their *symbolic* worship is spiritual—baptism and the Lord's supper. The outward signs, indeed, are physical; but by a divine constitution they become to believers the exponents of spiritual truth. And from this, their relation to truth, they are used in acts of worship, exclusively in a spiritual sense. Think of these central facts of the Gospel—Death and the Resurrection. Trace out their several ramifications: the literal death and resurrection of Christ; the literal death and resurrection

of believers in Christ; and their metaphorical death and resurrection—their death and burial to sin, involving a cleansing from guilt, and their resurrection to a new and holy life. As often as a new believer, personally and voluntarily answers, in the baptismal burial, “a good conscience toward God,” how appositely and impressively is every portion of this fundamental truth avouched and taught, “Buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so even we also should walk in newness of life.” Think of that vital doctrine, the Atonement—the Saviour’s body and blood, considered as the source and support of spiritual life. How vividly is this essential truth declared and commemorated by the solemn participation of the bread and the cup! The authoritative injunction is, “This do, in remembrance of me.” “For as often as ye eat this bread

and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

The appointed worship with symbols, then, is spiritual; eminently so, inasmuch as their lawful use is limited to spiritual persons. Rites are not the germ of vitality in the "living stones," but the manifestation. Even the initiatory rite of the church, *originates* nothing. Baptism is not a friction-match, smeared with phosphorated grace, to be dextrously plied by consecrated fingers, for lighting up a piety "not seen as yet;" but is the vivid corruscation of an internal fire already visibly glowing—a fire kindled by the breath of Him, who consumed the drenched sacrifice on the Tishbite's altar.

IV. So far we have seen that a pure church is spiritual in its constitution and economy; particularly in its membership, doctrines, and worship. But I go further.

Such a church is spiritual, considered in reference to any and every other object, internal and external. That is, a pure church is spiritual *in all its relations*.

Toward its own individual *members* its relations are spiritual. It is not related to them as a householder to his family, or a corporation to the stockholders, or a state to its citizens; but as the church triumphant, to the saints before the throne. In the economy of grace, "we know no man after the flesh."

The relations of the church to *Christ*, are spiritual. Does it sustain to him a relation, analogous to that of the branch to the vine, the wife to the husband, the body to the head, a temple to its foundation, or a kingdom to its sovereign? None of these are the relations of nature, but all of grace; none external and temporal, but all internal and spiritual; "Yea, though we have known Christ after the

flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

Of the same character are the relations of the church to the *unrenewed world*; the relations of light to darkness, of the living to the dead, of animated stones to stones inanimate. Carnal relations, the church knows not. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." She sustains no peculiar affinity to any particular race, Mongolian, African, Caucasian, or even Abrahamic.

Her *law of succession* is not natural, nor prelatie, but spiritual. Parentage in Christ's house, is spiritual parentage; births, are spiritual births; children are spiritual children. Natural consanguinity has there no lawful place. If it enters, it enters not by the door, but climbs up some other way. If it gains a footing within, it

gains it, not by equity, but by usurpation. Hereditary affinities, hereditary rights, and hereditary privileges, are suited to Cæsar's kingdom only; not to Christ's. And the law is, "Render unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's." In this matter, the church is distinguished, not only from the governments of this world, but from the ancient theocracy of the Jews.

An essential element in that theocracy, was natural inheritability. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee," said Jehovah to Abraham, "and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."* By

* Gen. xvii. 7, 8.

the terms of this compact—a compact which was afterward fully unfolded in the Mosaic economy—Abraham and his natural posterity in a particular line, were received by the Lord into a peculiar relation. But this relation was external and temporal only; not spiritual and permanent.* For as to duration, the covenant itself—and consequently the relation involved—was to be commensurate only with the possession, by Abraham's descendants, of the land of Canaan. Both the "possession" and the "covenant" are styled "everlasting;" that is, while one was continuing, the other would continue. Whenever one should expire, the other would expire. Not with exact precision, indeed, but essentially, each would survive for the same protracted though limited period of time. The hereditary "token of the covenant," was circumcision;—to Abraham "a seal of the

* Heb. vii. 18, 19.

righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised;" but to unconscious infants, not a seal of their faith, nor of the faith of their parents, but a badge of their inherited privileges in that external covenant. As was indicated by this badge, the peculiar advantages of the covenant in question, were transmitted from father to son, by the law of physical descent.

But as, in the visions of the Apocalypse, from the face of him who sat on the great white throne, the heavens and the earth fled away, and there was found no place for them, so when the King of Glory appeared in the flesh, and assumed his seat upon his holy hill of Zion, "to be the head over all things to the church," hereditary affinities, privileges and rights, together with the dispensation to which they belonged, all quickly vanished, to reappear no more forever.* Then was ratified, as

* Heb. viii. 6—13.

the visible constitution of a new economy, the Covenant of Grace. The rudiments of this covenant had early been given to Abraham and to Isaac, in the promise of the Messiah.* But unlike the "covenant of circumcision," with which it never was incorporated, it was in its inception, is now, and must remain to all generations, exclusively spiritual.† Accordingly all its peculiar privileges follow the line of spiritual descent only—the line of Abraham's true "seed through the righteousness of faith."‡ Were it otherwise, were an unconscious infant, by virtue of the piety of its parents, to bear some special affinity to the Gospel Covenant, such an affinity, too, as to be entitled to its distinguishing badge, how irresistible would be the inference, that grace is subject to a law of physical entail! How inevitable the doctrine, that piety,

* Gen. xii, 3; xxii, 18; xxvi, 4. † Gal. iii, 8, 9, 14—18.

‡ Rom. iv, 13—18; Gal. iii. 29; John viii, 39.

like consumption, flows presumptively at least, in the family line! How obvious the deduction, that, by some occult diathesis, the rudiments of salvation run in the blood!

“But what saith the Scripture?” Abraham is “the father of all them that believe;” not of such as are incapable of faith. “The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.” Natural descent, then, is excluded—lineal inheritance, set aside. Relationship in the household of Christ is not carnal, but spiritual. “The children of the Church,” are not the fruit of the body, but the offspring of a heavenly birth—“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” *All her* children are “taught of the Lord.” All have “received the Spirit by the hearing of faith.” *Her* new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.”

Will it be objected to this doctrine, that it wears toward our helpless offspring, "a cold and forbidding" aspect? The very reverse. It strips, indeed, from the dependent little one, the threadbare robe of an antiquated tradition, but tenderly wraps it in the fresh, sweet swaddling-bands of parental affection, fidelity and hope; and, bearing it upward in the arms of faith and prayer, lays it, a priceless offering, on the Saviour's altar. It espies the lovely infant, in its pitchy rush ark, where maternal solicitude has carefully placed it, among the flags, on the brink of "that ancient river, the river" Delusion; and clasping it with a compassionate embrace, summons yearning Piety, and says to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." And it questions not that in due time this Moses, drawn from the waters, shall be qualified by assiduous instruction, succeeded by a divine impulse, to

identify himself voluntarily with chosen Israel, and go forth with the ransomed hosts to the true Canaan. It declines to convey the child to the font, "which can never make the comers thereunto perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;" but carries it directly to the bosom of Him, who once took up infants in his arms, laid his hands on them, blessed them, and benignly said, "Suffer the little children to come unto ME, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

Let republican America be charged, if it must be so, with indifference to the children of her land, because she withholds from them the freeman's oath, until they can receive it voluntarily and understandingly. But let not the charge be brought against a church, that she assumes a bearing of indifference toward the offspring of her members, because, while she inculcates the strictest parental fidelity, she adminis-

ters not that far more sacred oath—the oath of allegiance to the Great King—until she discovers a preparation to receive it, both with the understanding and the heart.

The several considerations to which we have adverted, may serve to indicate

1. *The scriptural criterion of a true church;* namely, SPIRITUALITY. As is the spirituality of any church, so is its *trueness*. Whatever church, considered as a house, is most thoroughly charged with this vital element; whatever church is built upon the living foundation and of living stones, offering sacrifices pre-eminently spiritual, and consequently most “acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;” whatever church excels in spirituality of membership, of doctrine, of worship, and of relations,—such a church, I say, beyond all others, is scripturally true. On the contrary, any particular church, in proportion to its want of spirit-

uality, is scripturally antichristian, or, in other words, false.

Will the trueness of a church be argued, however, on the ground that she traces up her existence to a remote *antiquity*? As well, for a similar reason, might manhood be predicated of a mummy. Will the *unbroken succession* of regular orders in the ministry be urged? As well might the plea be advanced, that the bandages are unbroken with which this mummy is wrapped. The mummy was once a man. Centuries on centuries ago, it lived, moved, breathed, and sustained the various relations of genuine manhood. Even now, it exhibits the outlines of the human form. It possesses human members; the head, the hands, the feet, all symmetrically arranged in their appropriate positions. No one can say that the blood of this mummy is not now coursing his own veins. Why not then pronounce the mummy a man;

since, undeniably, many ages before we were born, it was a member of the race,—to us, perchance, an ancestral member,—and since it retains to the present time the general figure of a man? Because it lacks life. Long, long ago, history, paleology saith not when, the spirit fled. The clayey tenement, however, remained. By an uninterrupted existence, it has continued, in form unbroken, to this day. But obviously it is not now a man. It is mere inanimate dust.

Some particular ecclesiastical organization may boast of having existed as a church in primitive times, and of having descended in an uninterrupted course, through the long succession of intervening centuries, to the present day. But if this ancient confraternity has been abandoned by the Spirit of Truth; if it cherishes “a show of wisdom in will-worship, after the doctrines and commandments of men;” if

it is bound about with unscriptural ceremonies, canons, and the like—in a word, if *vitality* is gone, it is no longer a true church, but an unseemly mockery.

2. Our subject may serve, furthermore, like the astronomical observations of a ship on her voyage—to indicate, beloved fathers and brethren, *our true denominational position*. Shoulder to shoulder, with the whole “sacramental host of God’s elect,” we maintain unmutilated, the common standard of evangelical truth. Not boastingly, but in humble sincerity, we would proclaim to all people our unwavering purpose, “not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified:” to “preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

But in preaching a crucified Saviour, we are pained to discover, that a distinguish-

ing principle of his life-giving gospel, is extensively overlooked;—the doctrine of the complete spirituality of the church. On us especially, if not exclusively, devolves the high trust of maintaining this heaven-given doctrine in its original purity. As we revere the authority of the King in Zion, as we prize his precious truth, as we desire acquittal at his bar, we would not, we *dare not* neglect this trust.

Besides, if with this necessity laid upon us, we altogether hold our peace, where is the place whence “enlargement and deliverance” shall arise? Who shall proclaim the scriptural distinction between the two Abrahamic covenants,—the covenant of circumcision, external and temporal, and the covenant of grace, internal and spiritual? Who contend, that, under the gospel economy, none but a voluntary and responsible agent can be the subject of any religious duty? Who teach that univer-

sally in theory, and (unavoidable mistakes excepted,) universally in practice, the temple of the new dispensation must be built up exclusively of "living stones?" Who maintain that the reception of the sacred symbols must invariably follow—never precede—the manifestations of spiritual life? Who vindicate the position, that, in the initiatory symbol, a personal spiritual faith in the resurrection—that grand corner-stone of Christianity—must be voluntarily and intelligently avowed? Who sustain the incorrupt doctrine, that, as regards sacredness, the two symbolic ordinances are *equal*; and, as an obvious consequence, that, whoever scripturally receives the first, may then,—though not until then,—receive the second? Who assert and defend the momentous principle that spirituality—this unseen electricity of the heart—travels downward from generation to generation, not in the highway of

flesh and blood, but along the telegraphic line of the new birth? Touching these vital sentiments, were we to seal our lips in silence, from what Anathoth would the faithful Jeremiahs rise to hear the imperative “word from the Lord?”—“Stand in the court of the Lord’s house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord’s house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word.”

Yet the assertions have sometimes been hazarded, that, as a denomination, we are devoid of distinguishing principles—that we are grounded on non-essentials—that we contend merely for forms and shadows—and that the only question at issue, is the insignificant circumstance of the quantity of water in the baptismal ordinance; or, as it has been tartly expressed, “the mere mode of a mode.” These several imputations, charity, which “hopeth all

things, and endureth all things," would prefer to attribute, not so much to the spleen of malignity, as to the short-sightedness of mistake. The eye has been caught with the glitter of the symbols; the principles which underlie the symbols, it has failed to discover.

Mistake, however, admits of correction. For this purpose, shall a single illustration suffice? Go then with me, in imagination, to the shore of the ocean. Descry far off that gallant ship of the line, joyously plowing the bosom of the deep. Her "star-spangled banner," the symbol of her nationality, floats proudly in the breeze. She encounters a foe, sailing under a different flag, bearing different devices. A bloody action begins. Broadside after broadside is given and received. Her oaken hull trembles. Carnage and death rage on her deck. Is there no relief? She has but to strike that flag, and instantly the contest

shall cease. But she refuses to strike. The flag still floats on high. What then? Does she contend for non-essentials? for mere devices and emblems? for the quantity or cut of the linen in her flag? Who is ignorant that she regards her flag, not as indued in its texture or form with a latent or mysterious value, but merely as the appointed symbol of her national relations and principles—that these relations and principles, not the flag which waves from her mast, distinguish her from her rival—and that for these, and *these alone*, she really contends?

Now the particular religious rite which constitutes the universal badge of our communion, contains no latent, no mysterious value. It is merely the gospel flag, appointed of heaven as the distinctive banner of A PURE CHURCH, the true symbol of her spiritual relations and spiritual principles.

And like as our navy is expected to sus-

tain untarnished the flag of our country, so we endeavor to sustain unmutilated the distinctive banner of our Saviour. But the glorious affinities which that banner proclaims—affinities to Christ, and through him to his people—these are our rock and our fortress. The vital truths symbolized, truths essential to the purity and integrity of Christianity, these are our joy and our crown.

Yet, would to God that all his dear children in the great family of the redeemed, were really in as close proximity to us, as the imputations in question seem to imply; that not a veil, ay, not a shadow were lingering between us! With what profound emotions of joy unfeigned, would we greet them! Not with the misgivings of hesitating Isaac, would we doubtingly ask, “Art thou my very son Esau?” but with the yearning heart of Isaac assured, we would say in tones of tenderness, “Come near,

now, and kiss me, my son." We would throw around them the arms of our affection, clasp them to our swelling bosoms, and weep upon their necks a great while, as Joseph wept over his once estranged, but then reconciled brethren. We would hold them, and not let them go, until we had brought them into our "mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived" us. Our pensive spirits, cheered as was the harassed and tempest-tossed Apostle's, when his brethren "came to meet him as far as Appii Forum," would "thank God and take courage."

3. We discover, in the light of our subject, *the appropriate sphere of the whole militant church*. It is the entire field of spiritual truth, duty, privilege, and influence. The mechanical construction of the eye, denotes that it is formed as the organ for sight. So the spiritual construction of

the Church of Christ, demonstrates that she is formed as the organ for all things "pertaining to life and godliness." Her grand design, worthy of the combined energies of the whole host of heaven, is to rescue a lost world; to snatch immortal beings from the jaws of the pit; to invest them with the spotless robe of the righteousness of Christ; guide them heavenward, and enthrone them with the Lord in glory. In conducting this godlike enterprise, she begins "where Satan's seat is,"—in the very core of moral turpitude,—the individual heart. From the deadly Upas of depravity, which thence towers toward heaven, other agencies may lop off here and there a bough, but she, divinely commissioned, passes on directly to the trunk, and with the axe of truth, hews down the tree and extirpates the roots. The spring of noxious waters which flows forth from the soul, and, not unlike the fountain of

Jericho in the days of Elisha, overspreads the moral soil with spiritual sterility and death, other agencies may divert into new, and perhaps subterraneous channels; but from the cruse of the gospel, she casts into this deadly spring the healing salt of renewing and purifying grace, that there shall not be thence any more sterility or death.

How promising, how gladdening, then, is the work of the Church! How valuable beyond all price! "He who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." How acceptable her sacrifice to God by Jesus Christ! How well approved in heaven! "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." Who, if not effectually enslaved and infatuated by the god of this world, would not aspire to

the high rank of "a living stone," fit to be laid in the walls of the spiritual temple? Who, if not stultified by the grand Deceiver, would not account "a place and a name in the Lord's house, better than sons and daughters?" What tongue, if not wholly palsied by sin, would not emulate the strains of the bard of Israel, and sweetly sing, "One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple?" What individual of our favored race, if nourishing in his bosom a particle of genuine love to God, would not gladly identify himself with the Church; and, marshaled among her militant hosts, resolutely come "to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty?"

The Church, considered not only as the appointed agent of God for conducting

souls to glory, but even as the effective means for purifying and blessing the world, is entitled to universal esteem and love. By healing the fountain, she heals the stream. By renewing the heart, she renews the entire individual man. By renovating individual after individual, she renovates the race. "Ye are the light of the world." "Ye are the salt of the earth."

Hence, in every true reformatory enterprise, she may rightfully demand—and if true to her Head, to mankind and herself, will really demand, and unhesitatingly assume—the precedence? An engine of vast capacities, placed by the arm of Jehovah on the railway to the city of the Living God, she sends forward now and then, indeed, some little hand-car of human endeavor to clear the track; but presently, impelled by a potent, though invisible energy, she sweeps majestically along,

drives aside her petty harbinger, and draws not only crowds of passengers, but, attached to the rear, every car of true philanthropy—a long and stately train!

Let not the sincere friend of humanity, then, whose heart glows with benevolent affection for the ignorant, the despised and the oppressed, be insidiously enticed, in an evil hour, to join in the insane cry, “Down with the Church!”

Let no man, unless his heart is the heart of a fiend, gloat over her imperfections, whether fancied or real. In the evening of her depression, when the Lord “covers the daughter of Zion with a cloud, and casts down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel,” let there be none to “clap their hands and hiss, and wag their heads,” and tauntingly ask, “Is this the city that men call The Perfection of Beauty, The Joy of the whole Earth?” But let every harp be hung upon the wil-

flows. From all eyes "let tears run down like a river." From every heart let the sentiment break forth, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And when, with the progress of her night-time, the cloud of her covering begins to break away, revealing in her firmament the day-star of hope, let that brilliant star be eagerly hailed, as the herald of the auspicious morning, when her animated walls, slowly and toilsomely built up, shall be carried to their grand completion; and when, by the right hand of the Most High, the head-stone thereof shall be brought forth; while all worlds, transported with joy, shall swell their mighty shoutings of "Grace, grace, unto it!"

THE END.





A PEDOBAPTIST CHURCH

NO HOME

FOR A BAPTIST.

AN ARGUMENT

ADDRESSED TO THOSE WHO ARE BAPTISTS IN SENTIMENT,
BUT WHO CONTEMPLATE RECEIVING IMMERSION FROM PEDOBAPTISTS.
OR JOINING WITH THEM IN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

BY ROBERT T. MIDDLEDITCH,

Pastor of the Shrewsbury Church, Redbank, N. J.

~~~~~  
*Twelfth Thousand.*  
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A PEDOBAPTIST CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION.

SHOULD a reader of the Bible, unskilled in the controversies of the age, go forth on the Sabbath by the river side, and see a minister, after leading the solemn devotions of a large assemblage, go down into the water, and, in the hallowed name of the TRINITY, bury a fellow-being in baptism, his heart would be naturally touched with the solemn beauty of the scene. But he would certainly receive a very unpleasant impression by learning, afterwards, that the act in which the administrator had engaged, was performed by him, not from a belief of its having any peculiar acceptability with God, but in order to satisfy the erring conscience of man. He would be still more surprised if informed that the candidate, who believed obedience to Christ rendered this observance impe-

rative, had needlessly sought the services of an administrator who, so far from personally viewing it with favor, regarded it as originating in ignorance or weakness, if not in formality and bigotry, and himself neither had submitted, nor would submit to the ordinance.

The plea for this inconsistent course, by both parties, is charity. Christian men are often willing to incur odium on any account more readily than by a charge of uncharitableness to the opinions of others. It should, therefore, occasion no surprise that in the excess of unregulated Christian zeal, some, who are Baptists by conviction, are willing to throw the mantle of charity over their unbaptized brethren; and thus, while hiding the supposed nakedness of their faith, not only flatter themselves in their own eyes, but obtain great estimation with others of similar opinions.

On the same plea of charity to a "weak brother," many unimmersed Pedobaptist ministers consider themselves justified in administering baptism contrary to their own views of propriety. Paul never attained to such a charity as this course of procedure indicates. He taught those among whom he had labored, to abstain

from a course by which a brother "stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak;" and with regard to the observance or non-observance of certain days, he says, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." He, however, knew nothing of that fallacious charity, which would foster a brother's delusion, or become a partaker of it. *Abstinence*, from respect to a brother's conscience, is a very different thing from *action*. When we go beyond the bounds which the inspired Apostle prescribes, so far from exhibiting true Christian charity, we betray a laxness of principle which must be highly offensive to the Head of the Church.

All Christians ought to obey the Apostolic exhortation, "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good, unto edification." This, however, cannot be quoted in defence of an irregular administration of immersion; for few ministers who reject Baptist sentiments think there is anything "good," or tending to "edification," in the act of a believer's being "buried with Christ in baptism."

If the writings of Pedobaptists are to be regarded as an exponent of their principles, many of them believe "Sprinkling the only mode of

Baptism." The Rev. Dr. Peters has lately issued a work with this very title. Another, with extraordinary biblical perceptions, has discovered that "Baptists can produce neither express command, nor an undeniable example of baptism by immersion in the Bible." Not a few, it is to be presumed, agree with the Rev. Dr. Murray, in his opinion of immersion: "To insist on it, is like Popery in this respect—it teaches for doctrines the commandments of men."

Such writers, no doubt, believe immersion a service which God has not required at their hands, and would refuse to administer the ordinance. Others, however, professing precisely the same opinion, engage in the service; although, according to their own consciences, they are acting in a similar way to those who were guilty of offering "strange fire" before the Lord.

One writer, whom we have quoted, has recorded his opinion of immersion, that "with too many it is the one thing needful." Another writes, "the native tendency of the doctrine is to superstition and abuse." The countenance and high honors which have been awarded them

by their brethren, and that portion of the religious press under Pedobaptist influence, affords reason for the belief, however unwelcome to Baptists, that these sentiments are entertained by the majority of Pedobaptists. To administer immersion with such views, so far from being in accordance with Christian liberality, is positive wickedness. As well might a Protestant pastor endeavor to relieve a burdened soul by extreme unction, as by thus conniving at immersion, and taking an active part in what he holds is not only a "superstition and abuse," but one which tends to foster "arrogance and exclusion."

If any man is not satisfied that immersion is of Divine authority, he must believe that it is an invention of men. In this case there is awful sacrilege in administering the ordinance. The use of "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in an observance which it is thought the Sacred Three do not regard with complacency, would fill any truly Christian mind with horror. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

A sincere Pedobaptist minister in sprinkling a child, upholds an observance in which he has

faith. Although a Baptist may consider his defence of the rite altogether insufficient to justify it, he will yet respect him for carrying his belief into practice in a prayerful and orderly manner. Far different, however, is the effect likely to be produced when that minister renounces what he believes the true or preferable mode of baptism, for what he regards as but a pernicious form.

In baptism, a believer presents a penitential, grateful, and confiding surrender of himself to Jesus Christ. A glaring inconsistency is evident when a servant of the Saviour makes himself an instrument in the solemn dedication of a soul to his Lord, without any conviction on his part of the obligation, propriety, or acceptableness of the service. In the whole transaction he is an automaton. In pronouncing the form employed in baptism he degrades himself as a minister of Christ. Instead of appearing as the living minister of a living faith, he acts in a way which does little to "magnify" his office, for he is scarcely more to be accounted of in the spiritual house than the Organ in the material—that of an auxiliary to a worship in which no interest is felt. The difference is cer-

tainly in favor of the latter *instrument*. The vast pipes which are under the direction of man will give forth a harmony of sounds which causes the breast to heave with emotion, and throws a subduing spell over the soul; while the performance of him into whom God has breathed the breath of life, will only awaken emotions of contempt or pity. Far better will the lifeless Organ harmonize with its employment, than will the soul of the minister with the office he assumes.

Why then should a Christian believer, who desires to be baptized after the example of his Lord, in order "to fulfill all righteousness," make application to such a minister for immersion? Why thus invite him to sin by performing an act in which he has no faith, or in which, at best, he is a mere automaton, the passive instrument of another's will, in administering the most solemn act of Christian worship under Heaven?

CHAPTER I.

PEDOBAPTIST CHURCH RELATIONSHIP ON THE
PART OF IMMersed BELIEVERS, INCOMPATIBLE
WITH NEW TESTAMENT REQUIREMENTS.

“Ye are not your own,” is one of the first truths which a ransomed sinner must recognize upon his adoption into the family of God. Bought with a price which cannot be computed by arithmetical rules, henceforth he is to set the Lord always before him, and all his actions must be subservient to the will and glory of God. He is not, therefore, at liberty to merge himself into a body of Christians on any considerations which have reference merely to his present enjoyment.

The fact that under the ministry of any denomination he was first awakened to the truth, does not make clear his duty as to the church relationship he should form. Gratitude to those to whose labors we are indebted, may give a bias for church relationship; but the choice which is grateful to our own feelings, and seem

ingly proper, must be surrendered when it conflicts with the requirements of the Divine word.

Many a Christian has been induced to make a sacrifice of his convictions to his pleasure; but he has afterwards learned, by a course of painful experience, that happiness cannot be obtained when it is sought by the sacrifice of duty. The fraternal greetings and fellowship of love, to which he is introduced, may cause a temporary oblivion of the sentiments, in which he differs from those with whom he is associated. But the period will arrive, when the remembrance that the solemn act of initiation by which he entered into fellowship with them, was one whose significance they do not perceive, will convince him that he is not in his right place. Whatever instruction he may derive from the pulpit, he will scarcely feel at ease when such opinions as we have quoted, of immersion and those who practice it, are advanced. He has little reason to complain; for frankness is commendable in the minister of any denomination; yet this consideration will not afford relief to his wounded feelings. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"

1. One guiding principle, necessary always to be remembered is, that *Divine ordinances ought to be observed in accordance with Divine teaching.* Matt. xxviii. 19.

In Apostolic times, those who “gladly received the word, were baptized,” that is to say, were regularly immersed, *in order to be added to the church.* Acts ii. 41. Here they were to be taught to “observe all things whatsoever” Christ has commanded. But no man is justified in uniting with a church in which membership varies from what it was in the Pentecostal church; nor is he at liberty to place himself in circumstances in which he cannot as freely utter his sentiments on baptism, as could every one who received the ordinance on that memorable day.

That society, however, with which a person irregularly immersed intends to unite, far from requiring his immersion, would feel best satisfied by its omission. It is not a prerequisite to their fellowship or communion.

The candidate, immersed by a Pedobaptist, believes immersion the Scriptural law of baptism, and, it follows, believes that the members of the churches planted by the Apostles were

immersed. It is evident that he must have the most faulty views of the relation of baptism to other Christian privileges, to think of joining any other. Although baptized to profess his allegiance to Christ, the act is not performed with a view to union with a church composed of those who have submitted to the same divine observance, but chiefly of persons who repudiate it altogether. When he shall come to know the will of the Lord more perfectly, he will see that whatever superiority he might have in his conscientious observance of immersion, his want of this knowledge greatly detracted from the value of the service.

2. Another guiding principle for a disciple of Christ to observe is, that *however important his end, he is not at liberty to sanction any subversion of Gospel ordinances.* In other words, he is not at liberty to "do evil that good may come." Rom. iii. 8.

The believer who after immersion unites with a Pedobaptist church, may find an opiate for his conscience in the thought, that by this union he manifests his love for all who love the Saviour. If, however, he believes the primitive Christians were immersed, whence did he ob-

tain a commission to sanction a departure from the original institution?*" Believers have no authority to annul, or render inoperative a single article of the constitution of Christ's kingdom. *God converts men to obey, not to legislate.*

3. No Christian, however trifling he may deem his influence, *is at liberty to favor measures which detract from the spiritual aspect of Christianity.* John xviii. 36.

Pedobaptists pursue a course which tends to obliterate the distinction between the church and the world. An eminent Congregationalist† has truly observed: "From the manner in which some have spoken and written, one is almost tempted to imagine their notion of a

* A lamented writer (Robert Hall), who directed some of the greatest efforts of his massive intellect against scriptural terms of communion, was asked for a New Testament precedent for the course he advocated. "You should not ask for one, Sir. You should not ask for one," was his reply; "they were all Baptists in those days, Sir; but a *new case* has arisen now." If however, no new *rules* can be found for the "*new cases*" which human misjudgment developes, we must be satisfied that it is best to obey the teaching of the New Testament.

† The Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, of Glasgow.

visible church to be, that of a body as different as it can be rendered from the invisible,—the latter, of course, meaning those whose hearts, which cannot be seen by man, are right in the sight of God. Now instead of this, the aim evidently ought to be, *to bring the visible, as far as possible, to identity with the invisible,—* that is, to make the visible a community of those only whose rectitude of heart in the sight of God is made apparent, or visible to men, in their characters; and *where the exceptions are the result of mistake, not of open-eyed intention.*”

Now, what tends to efface the distinction between the world and the visible church so much as Infant Baptism? The pernicious dogma, that “the children of professing Christians are already in the church,” does more than anything else to hide the spirituality of God’s kingdom. “Infant Baptism defeats the design of Christian baptism, and makes the ordinance the *reverse* of what it is intended to be,—it baptizes the *world* instead of baptizing the *church*. Infant baptism baptizes the *world*, but it *never* baptizes a *disciple of Christ*. Some who are baptized in infancy may afterwards be convert-

ed, and become the disciples of Christ; but this is in no way denoted by their baptism in infancy—the unconverted are as much baptized as they are. In all countries where infant baptism prevails there are more baptized *worldly people* than there are baptized *Christians*. The god of this world has more baptized subjects than the King of Zion.”*

4. No Christian should unite with a church *where baptism is*, in his own opinion, *degraded and subverted*.

* One of the missionaries of the Maryland Union Association, writes thus of his field of labor in that State: “Upon examination I found there was very little ‘world’ left—in other words, the people were nearly all members of the church, made so by infant sprinkling. This practice hinders the Gospel; as I have found by experience, the idea possessing the minds of such people that *something* has been done for them so that they would *somehow* get to heaven.”

This hindrance to the Gospel has often been seen and lamented, by pious Pedobaptists themselves. Many testimonies might be cited, but let a single sentence from Pascal tell the fearful truth. In speaking of the effect of infant baptism in his own Church, that eminent man observes: “*The course which she (the Church) has adopted for her children’s safety, becomes the almost certain occasion of their ruin.*”—See Pascal’s Thoughts, Am. Ed. 1829, p. 251.

In the beginning, baptism was a voluntary and personal profession of attachment and surrender to Christ. Of this aspect it is entirely despoiled by infant baptism. If the views of those who adhere to this observance prevailed, such baptisms as are recorded in the New Testament would be rare indeed. Should a Christian of the Apostolic age now return to the earth, and witness the ceremony which sometimes takes place in edifices devoted to the worship of God, would he imagine that anything so unlike the primitive practice deserves to be called baptism? When immersed believers unite with those whose only claim to be considered baptized is, that they were "sprinkled in infancy," though they may think thus to manifest their love to all the members of the so-called visible church, they, in fact, countenance a fearful prostitution of Christian baptism. Of its extent they cannot be ignorant. The abodes of profligacy and intemperance abound with those who in infancy were baptized into the "visible church," who are not even visible believers, but visibly those "whose end is destruction, . . . and whose glory is in their shame."

It may not have been the "open-eyed intention" of those who gave them the rite, but it is so frequent a result that they must suffer from a fearful obtuseness who do not perceive the impropriety of thus degrading an institution of Christ. If, as its friends themselves admit, there is no express authority nor clearly proved example of infant baptism in the New Testament, are baptized believers justified in joining "hand in hand" with it? No Christian ought to identify himself with a custom he is unwilling or unable to defend.*

5. In a gospel church, *all baptized members, against whom no charge can be sustained, ought to be admitted to the Lord's table.* Acts ii. 41, 42; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

* Assertions are far easier than proof. A large and expensive volume was lately published, bearing the boastful title, "Infant Baptism a Scriptural Service." As far as demonstration is concerned, the title page is the vestibule of "airy nothingness;" and after passing through more than five hundred pages, the best proof afforded that Infant Baptism is a "*Scriptural service*" is the assertion, that those who deny baptism to babes "trample upon the strongest *probabilities.*" Thus far, has the "Professor of Sacred Literature for the General Assembly Royal College, Belfast," fulfilled his promise to those who have purchased his costly volume.

Pedobaptists consider sprinkling in infancy, baptism. On their own grounds, they are inconsistent. It was not the custom of the Apostles to refuse to commune at the Lord's table with any whom they had baptized; but thousands are called baptized every year now, who never will be admitted to this privilege. Instead of being "baptized," and then "breaking bread," according to the Apostles' doctrine and practice, they are not permitted to touch the elements. The very lips which pronounce them baptized, fence them from the Lord's table, without trial or charge. Though said to be "in the Church," and never in any way excluded from its privileges, they are treated as heathen and infidels.* Most righteously, we admit, are

* An instance, in point, is now before our eyes. In the "Presbyterian Sabbath School Visitor," Philadelphia, Feb. 1, 1851, the following article appears as the first under the editorial head.

"CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH.

'Do you belong to the church?' one of the scholars asked another, on the way home from school last Sabbath day.

'To be sure I do,' was the quick reply, 'and so do you.'

'O no, I do not,' the other said, 'and I did not know that you did.'

'Yes, we are both members of the church, having

they prevented from taking in their hands the emblems of the Saviour's passion; but most *un-*

been born of parents who are members, and having been baptized in our infancy. But I wish you would hear what the teacher has to say; he is just ahead of us.'

"They overtook him, and stated the case with much freedom and simplicity. He was glad to explain to them as well as he could, the relation they sustained to the church of Christ.

'The church is made up of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and their children. Your parents are believers, and as members of the church you have been baptized; but you are not admitted to the communion of the Lord's Supper, until you are prepared to say that you love him, and trust in him for the pardon of your sins, and the salvation of your souls. The vows of God are upon you. It is your first duty to repent of your sins, and to believe in that Saviour who died for you. If you grow up in sin, you are more wicked than those who have not enjoyed such blessings as you, and if you perish in your sins, your punishment will be much greater than that of the heathen, or of the children of wicked parents who live around you.'

"The children were very thoughtful as they walked along, and the teacher added a few words as they parted, begging them to remember that, as members of the church, their account would be a dreadful one to give, if they refused to love the Saviour."

The above instance is, perhaps, the best use which is ever made of the doctrine of infant church membership. But apart from its utter want of Scriptural authority, see what a character it gives to Christian churches—a majority of their members excluded from communion as unregenerate or profane!

righteously were they baptized. The one ordinance belongs not more to Christ's disciples than the other. *Those who have no claim to the children's bread, can have no claim to the children's baptism.*

Why was this sacrilege committed? Why was Christ thus dishonored by his ministers? How can a believer dare to sanction such a prostitution of an ordinance which Christ intended only for that people whom he should save from their sins? We should grieve to see a young lady with a cross on her bosom, entering the theatre or the ball-room, for we feel that such a token should not be carried into the haunts of worldly pleasure. But how much more may we mourn to know that thousands go down into hell who have been pronounced baptized.

How much better is the course of Baptist churches, who honestly aim "to bring the visible, as far as possible, to identity with the invisible," and therefore so observe baptism according to the Scriptures, that they can make communion in the Lord's Supper co-extensive with it; except in those rare cases, in which, in accordance with apostolic precept, they "withdraw

themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." 2 Thess. iii. 6.

6. *The sincerity of those who hold error, though it may claim tenderness, is no reason why any Christian should give it his fellowship.* Rom. x. 2, 3.

They do not forfeit our personal esteem, but their error is none the less to be deprecated. On the plea of sincerity the followers of Baal deserve regard. A Christian martyr could scarcely show more willingness to suffer, than they did in their self-inflicted tortures. Before his conversion, Paul was sincere in opposing the gospel of Christ. Who are now more sincere than Romanists?

If the lack of light or reflection is considered to detract from the force of these parallels, we may ask where can men be found more sincere than literary Unitarians, or contemplative Swedenborgians? No Christian, no church has authority to fellowship error, whether it be the error of an individual or of thousands. How can baptized Christians exhibit a more glaring defection from New Testament principles than by sanctioning infant baptism? But this they do when they unite with those who ground their

right to Christian privileges on the fact that they were sprinkled in infancy.

Before showing a fellowship for this departure from the Truth of God, the candidate should inquire how many inventions of men may be adopted by a body of professed Christians without losing their right to be called a Church of Christ? If the basin may be admitted, is there not room for the Confessional? It has the same parentage, and equal scriptural authority. A Romish priest, with the passage, "Confess your faults one to another," (James v. 16,) will make a far better case for Auricular Confession from the New Testament, than a Protestant minister for Infant Baptism.

The tendency of the principles here laid down we are neither desirous to disguise nor evade. Consistently followed out, they limit those who hold them to communion at the Lord's table with none but immersed believers. To some this appears uncharitable. The often answered inquiry is reiterated, "It is the *Lord's* table; why do you exclude any of his disciples?" The reply of a scriptural Christian is founded on the fact that it is the *Lord's* table. Christ is the only Lawgiver for his churches. It is

treason to the King of Zion to intrude upon his prerogative. The trust which he has committed to his churches they are not at liberty to violate. It is to be their aim to keep his table *as He left it*, "till he come." If none but immersed believing guests found a place there when he was on earth, who shall annul his laws? When the hand of fellowship must be the "hand of the betrayer," who shall dare to extend it? We have no record of any persons "breaking bread" in the Pentecostal church, who had not "gladly received the word" and been "baptized." And this is all that Baptist churches require now. *They* have raised no bar to communion. *They* can throw none down. *They* do not refuse to receive any disciple who is willing to enter on the same footing as those already incorporated in the body of Christ. Of the Supper of the Lord, like the gospel feast, they can say,

"None are excluded thence, but those
Who do themselves exclude;
Welcome the learned and polite,
The ignorant and rude."

Let our brethren be just. Baptists are not alone in restricting communion at the Lord's

table to their own membership. Large bodies of Pedobaptists do the same.* A single instance here may suffice. The Rev. John N. M'Leod, D. D., thus explains the position of the "Covenanters." "On the subject of *sacramental communion*, the principles of the church are, that such communion is the most solemn, intimate, and perfect fellowship that Christians can enjoy with God and one another; that when Christians are associated together in a church state, under a definite creed, communion in the sacraments involves an approbation of the principles of that creed; and that as the church is invested with authority which she is bound to exercise, to keep the ordinances pure and entire, sacramental communion is not to be extended to those who do not approve the principles of the particular church, or submit themselves to her authority. In maintaining, these principles, the Reformed Presbyterian Church does not design to unchurch any other religious denomination, or deny the Christianity of its members. She re-

* Ample proof of this may be seen in the works of Howell, Curtis, or Remington on Communion.

cognizes the validity of the ordinances of all Christian communities who hold the Divine Head, and the plenary inspiration of his word. She rejoices to know that these contain many of the saints of God, who have fellowship with him and with one another at the table of the Lord, and she is willing to co-operate with them to the extent of her ability, in promoting the common Christianity. But she does not feel at liberty to allow every man to be the judge of his own qualification for sealing ordinances, to dispense these ordinances to such as do not assent to her religious principles, or whom she could not submit to her discipline were they found violating their Christian obligations."

In most respects the ground here taken is that which the Baptist denomination occupies. If a Presbyterian can advance arguments which relieve him from odium, in declining church communion with those who have received the same baptism as himself, surely these arguments have accumulated force when applied by a Baptist to the case of those who, in his view, favor an entire subversion of Christian ordinances.

The objections which are made against this

scriptural and consistent communion are not always made in sincerity. Many persons who "illiberally contend for liberality," and indulge in multiplied censures with respect to Baptist exclusiveness, will pass an edifice in which a church assembles with whom they might commune, without manifesting the least desire to show their fellowship with them at the Lord's table. Such inconsistency can only be accounted for by the fact that, like our first parents under temptation, they desire what is forbidden, and forbidden, too, by the same authority. That authority shields *us* from the charge of sectarianism.

Yet, let no one imagine that there is anything in itself pleasant, in the stand which Baptists feel compelled to take. Only allegiance to the King of Zion could keep them there. It would be far more pleasant, could they with a clear conscience, cordially merge themselves with the rest of the Christian church. BUT THE TORCH OF LOVE CANNOT BE APPLIED TO THE SACRIFICE OF DUTY. That is a false liberality which, for the sake of union, would resign the positive commands of Truth. The desire for association is not less powerful in our hearts

than in the hearts of others, but it cannot annihilate our obligations. The principles which guided the Apostles, *we* may safely follow whithersoever they lead. "Once right, they are for ever right. Anywhere right, they are everywhere right. They keep a course like the luminaries of heaven. They witness against the wrong-doer. Their straight line exposes the contrast of the crooked generation. They constitute a standard of appeal, amidst the caprices of fashion and the meannesses of compromise. They stand as a sea-mark, against which the waves only dash themselves to foam."

Instead of forming church relationships, where Christ's authority must be trifled with, far preferable is the conduct of the disciple who, not fearing the misconception of his motives, is able to say, "I dwell among mine own people." A few years since a Christian man, whose early training and predilections were all in favor of infant sprinkling, was encouraged to make a thorough examination of the Scriptures on baptism, by hearing a minister remark that "immersion was not so much as named in the New Testament." Prayerful study made it evident to his mind that infant sprinkling was

the invention of man, and the immersion of believers the only Christian baptism. On his return from being baptized by a Baptist minister, the Pedobaptist minister, whose labors he had previously greatly valued, waited upon him, and in the course of conversation remarked, "Well, *now* I hope you are satisfied, and will sit down with us and make yourself happy." His reply was, "No, I am now more unhappy in your connexion than before, and cannot continue with a church which I conscientiously believe to be in error; for I am now a Baptist in principle and practice, and intend to carry out my belief." Christians of any denomination would honor a man who thus preserves his fidelity to his convictions, and lifts up his testimony for Truth.

The bitter consequences of the opposite course will more clearly appear in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER II.

IMMERSED BELIEVERS IN UNITING WITH PEDOBAPTIST CHURCHES DISHONOR THEIR OWN PRINCIPLES, AND TAKE PART IN THEIR OWN DEGRADATION.

TRUTH is a costly article, and when a Christian has bought it, he is not at liberty to hide or sell it. Prov. xxiii. 23. He is but a trustee. It is his duty to pass it on, as he received it, to bless the world. An immersed Christian, in forming church relations with Pedobaptists, sacrifices a portion of the Truth. He dishonors the principles he professes, and after all his steadfastness, in adhering to immersion as the law of Christ, shows a very poor estimate of it indeed.

1. One condition of his membership in a Pedobaptist church, sometimes expressed but always implied, is *silence on the subject of baptism.*

Such persons are not at liberty to impair the comfort of their fellow-members by awakening

in their minds any doubt as to whether they have been baptized. The Apostle enforced the obligations to holiness from the fact of baptism, but they must not venture on a similar course. Conquerors always regard the patriotic songs of a vanquished people as mischievous and revolutionary, and forbid their use. An immersed member of a Pedobaptist church must submit to similar discipline. He will soon repent his temerity if he uses any "plainness of speech" about baptism. His lips are forbidden to speak a word which conjures up what so much tends to disconcert his fellow-members. Though the church may not seem very inflammable, there are "words that burn" when uttered by some tongues. Baptism is one of these, and it is virtually proscribed. If any one's affections are so interested in the subject that he cannot hold his peace, nor refrain from advocating immersion in the case of others, he will soon find himself in a very unenviable position. He must show his penitence by observing

"silence,—deep,—unnatural,—like
The quiet of the grave,"

or his intractable course will alienate his breth-

ren from him; and, if not excommunicated, he will know little of the joys of a spiritual home.

2. As far as an immersed member of a Pedobaptist church has the means and the disposition to give, *he contributes to the support and extension of Pedobaptist institutions and sentiments.*

It may be that the Gospel is about to be sent to a heathen nation, who have never been blessed by the beams of truth. A baptized believer, we naturally conclude, desires they should have the ordinances among them agreeably to the mind of Christ. But will it be so? Is *he* not contributing to a different result? He knows that so far as Pedobaptist missionaries go, so far they carry sprinkling instead of immersion; and that, as soon as possible, infants will receive the rite.

Who that is at all acquainted with the mischiefs which the controversy has produced in our own land, and the fearful extent to which it has diverted the energies of Christians, desires to plant the same controversy on what is now heathen ground? Yet the Baptist member of a Pedobaptist church will help to forward

this result. In his own case he received his convictions of the propriety of believers' immersion from the Bible. When the Scriptures shall be given to the heathen, although the ordinance may be veiled in an "unknown tongue," yet still, without greatly mutilating the truth, believers' immersion will shine forth. The same Spirit of Truth who enlightened ROGER WILLIAMS, ADONIRAM JUDSON, and many others, in the midst of Pedobaptists, may lead some convert to see the importance of observing the ordinances as they were first delivered to the churches by Divine authority. Then will the fierce sirocco of controversy sweep over the fruitful fields reclaimed from heathenism. It may be but a small amount which an immersed believer has contributed to this result, but he is not blameless. He cannot escape on the plea that it is better to give the heathen the Gospel with a few errors, rather than not at all, because he well knows he might have contributed through institutions in which Divine ordinances would not be made void by human tradition. In that case he would not have given his aid to nourish a plant which our Heavenly Father hath not planted, and thus he would not have to la-

ment that he was helping to implant errors which so much time, talent, and energy are required to uproot.

Nor would he have the sin of helping to give God's word, with baptism, hidden, marred, or mis-translated. In nearly every Pedobaptist church, contributions are made to a Bible Society, whose translations, in many instances, leave the heathen with as little clue to the meaning of baptism as possible. If an error is even uttered from the pulpit, its influence is comparatively limited; but where, as the result of deliberate action, it is propagated from the press, it may deceive the nations for ever. Those who thus mystify baptism may sincerely disclaim all intention to teach error; but the course they pursue shows their unwillingness candidly to study the meaning of the term, and then give to the world—whatever conclusion they reach—that definition which they honestly believe is Truth. Now, there is no investigation of the subject. It is purposely involved in mystery. How can an immersed disciple inflict greater dishonor on his own principles, than by forming a fellowship where he will aid such a system of concealment, or perversion?

3. The practice of a Baptist member of a Pedobaptist church, provided he has a household, *does not agree with that of other members.* His children will not be sprinkled. They will only have, like the children of other Baptists, a prayerful dedication to God daily.

If a minister believes the principles generally maintained by Pedobaptists—so well expressed by Dr. CLARK—that infants “are sanctified by being born of believing parents,” and are “already, in some sense, within the limits of the church and of the covenant of promise,” can he think it a trifling omission? How can any man, who believes infant baptism a divine institution, be a party to the admission of any persons into church fellowship whom he has reason to believe will neglect the observance by which the “seed” of believers, in his views, are made “partakers of the benefits of the covenant of grace?” Are not such parents, to his view, guilty of sin in depriving their children of so distinguished a privilege? Ecclesiastical standards are not set up, to be taken down just when it suits convenience. When principles are so little valued that men are not prepared to

abide by them in any event, the sooner a divorce is made the better.

4. Immersed parents who unite with unbaptized churches *expose their children to influences prejudicial to their spiritual welfare.*

Those who desire to foster right religious influences in the young, find that the impressions they receive of ministerial character have a very powerful bearing for evil or for good. Everything which depreciates a minister in their esteem, will detract from the power of the truths he presses on their regard. When infants are sprinkled, the children of immersed parents hear the minister they have been taught to love and revere, enforce a tradition of men, virtually nullifying their own parents' baptism. Parents, if they have any proper sense of responsibility to Christ, must vindicate his institutions. It will become their duty to show their children not only the mode of baptism, but to teach them that, like every other religious act, it requires that we "*obey from the heart* the form of doctrine delivered to us." When, however, an attempt is made to correct the erroneous impressions which the minister would

leave, a sceptical and captious disposition may be encouraged. Will not the opinion be formed, that a minister who is mistaken in one matter, may be wrong in another? Saving verities, when proclaimed by him, may be discredited, and, instead of receiving with meekness the engrafted word of God, children may try every discourse by their own limited knowledge. Here is one evil effect of injudicious church relationships, and who can tell how far this evil may extend?

Parents who act thus inconsistently, may exercise an injurious influence in another respect. They will partake of the Lord's Supper in the company of those who are unbaptized, and their children will be taught, by this act, that, though immersion is a command of Christ, yet when neglected, the omission is of very trivial importance. However active the consciences of the parents may have been on the subject of baptism, the consciences of their children will be blunted. Whereas, had they been accustomed to mingle in the worship of those who insist that baptism is for him "that believeth," they could not escape the conviction that their remaining unbaptized indicates the

absence of saving faith, and a constant exposure to perish in their sins. Mark xvi. 16.

5. It is remarkable that those Pedobaptist churches whose pliability is so extreme, that they adopt all modes according to request, should generally *refuse immersion to those who were sprinkled in infancy.*

The man who received sprinkling in infancy, must keep it, however unwillingly, after he becomes a believer; while he who was born of ungodly parents has his own choice—sprinkling, pouring, or immersion! The child of the reprobate has privileges superior to the child of the godly! He who has parental negligence on his side, may well congratulate himself, if he desires, without repudiating the act of an honored parent who had them sprinkled in infancy, to “put on Christ” scripturally. The effect of this system will be, that many who have been made to dispense with baptism, will feel unwilling to thrust their children into like perplexity, and, therefore, will leave them unsprinkled. Pedobaptists thus give a premium to those who despise their own customs, and make a breach in their own walls.

6. It is expected that members of any church

will be able to defend the fundamental principles by which their fellowship is regulated.

Membership in a Pedobaptist church, of course, as far as a ceremonial prerequisite is concerned, is based on infant baptism. Here, then, the Baptist believer of such a church is involved in a serious dilemma. He may be called upon to defend the practice of his church, not only by Baptists, but by parties from whom they are wide as the poles asunder. Let a Romanist ask him to show scriptural authority for this observance. As a member of a Baptist church he could show he was in no way identified with it; but as a member of a Pedobaptist church, he is shorn of his strength. He must defend a custom in which he does not believe, or let it appear that he clings to a church whose principles will not bear inquiry. It is useless for him to plead his own immersion as a believer, when his antagonist can reply, "But your church baptizes infants—does it not?"

We are not drawing upon fancy for arguments. Romanists know the weak point of their opponents. They delight to torture a Protestant Pedobaptist by pinioning him to the Bible with respect to infant baptism. In a

public discussion, which from the learning and ability of the parties engaged, excited great attention, the Roman Catholic inquired of the Protestant champion, who vauntingly held forth the Bible as his only rule of faith, "Where, in that book, is to be found one word relative to the baptism of infants? I ask, unless Tradition comes to the rescue of my learned friend, by what refining ingenuity will he call upon the Bible to protect him in baptizing infants that cannot give the answer,—that cannot exclaim, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?'" The discomfiture of his opponent was complete. The Romanist turned to the Baptists then present, and remarked, in reference to Pedobaptist inconsistency, "These men, in order to confute us Catholics, take up the Bible and proscribe Tradition; but in order to confute you, they throw away the Bible, and take up Tradition as the standard of their faith, the confounder of their enemies."

Is there a Baptist who would expose himself to such rebuke? If he cannot defend infant baptism, why should he join with Pedobaptists? His fellow-members may defend themselves honestly with respect to the observance, but he

cannot. He must degrade himself in his own estimation, or in the estimation of others. He must be unfaithful to his conscience, or unfaithful to his church.

7. A Baptist *cannot develop his gifts in a Pedobaptist church.*

The peculiarity of his views will in general prevent his sustaining any office. As well might a Jew aspire to a distinguished station in Russia, as for an individual holding to immersion to think of being a minister among Pedobaptists. Any young man, whatever his piety, talents and acquirements, whose belief extends no farther than that immersion is the *preferable* mode of baptism, will find this single opinion entirely debar him from the ministry. Pedobaptist ministers instinctively feel, "It is not safe to let him in."

Not only ought there to be deep reflection on the part of any person who believes in immersion, whether it is right for him to unite with a denomination in which his sentiments would prove a hindrance to any individual attaining to the ministry; but it also deserves serious consideration from the men of piety in those churches, whether, whatever the prospect of pre-

sent usefulness, they ought to encourage young men who, there is reason to believe, may afterwards prove suitable for the Gospel ministry, to place themselves in a position which must occasion such serious perplexity.

8. Pedobaptist ministers, as far as possible, *dissuade candidates for church fellowship from immersion.*

Although they admit that it is *not* unscriptural, they will use every plea which their ingenuity can invent, so that the converts may recede from primitive ground. They will lead people many miles from Jerusalem to water their cattle, and assuage their own thirst, rather than admit that "much water" was required for baptism. In the face of demonstrated facts, they will assert the impossibility of immersing three thousand converts at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. They can invent an ingenious hypothesis, by which they will prove a person can be "buried" without being covered over.

Nor is this the worst. We blush to tell truth so humbling to our brethren, as we must tell of *some* at least. If they have a young lady to deal with, they will strive to influence her

womanly nature by considerations of the "indecent" of being baptized as Jesus Christ was.* When they have thus reasoned, ridi-

* That such arguments are not confined to private conversation, but are actually deemed legitimate for public discourse, and for the widest diffusion from the press, is proved, we regret to say, by the following extract from a sermon, delivered by a distinguished minister of the Presbyterian Church, whom we personally know and love. The sermon was published, *by request of his church*, at Petersburg, Va., in 1847. The language is exquisitely guarded.

"Would it be venturing too far, also to suggest, that this mode of baptism often requires an exposure exceedingly trying to a modest and sensitive female, and such as, in other circumstances, would be esteemed indelicate. I know that where Scripture is explicit, all must bear the cross, if they would be followers of the Lamb; but where the Divine authority contended for, can, to say the least, admit of reasonable doubt, does not the fact, that the mode of administering an ordinance, which almost of necessity requires a painful trial to the highest and finest feelings of a woman's nature, afford strong presumptive evidence such is not the mode which came from God." See "*Scriptural Baptism explained and defended.*" By Rev. John Leyburn, D. D.

In connection with the above, we think it proper to present an extract from the Memoir of Mrs. Lydia M. Malcom, for the express purpose of showing the feelings of a lady of the most refined delicacy, on the occasion of her baptism, by the Rev. Dr. Staughton, in 1818. After stating in a letter to a friend her previous fears of being intimidated, she proceeds: "When the hour arrived, I experienced no such emotions. My

culed and distorted the ordinance, then, perhaps, rather than lose the convert, they will

soul was devoid of rapturous feeling, but serene joy pervaded every faculty, and every feeling vibrated with celestial love. I exulted when I stood up with the Dr. during a portion of his address, in thus publicly professing myself a candidate for an eternal world, a child of God, a follower of the blessed Jesus. My happiness was consummate, and I panted to tell those who were present what a precious Saviour I have found, and most ardently I desired again to relate to them what Jesus had done for my soul, and to persuade precious immortal souls, who do not love God, no longer to pursue the fleeting, shadowy pleasures of time, while immortal substance awaits them. I regretted that it was not customary for candidates on baptismal occasions to speak to the audience. I would have told them that I was once the infatuated votary of pleasure, and immersed in amusements that abstract the affections from God; that it was his power alone that defended me from the shaft of death which they conceal, and rescued me from the gulf of destruction to which they allure; and that I would not exchange the happiness I derive from the promises of the sacred oracles, for all that human power can afford me without Christ. Truly the ways of religion are pleasantness and her paths peace. The soul that has once enjoyed them, acknowledges that they present the highest happiness that a rational creature can desire. My dear friend, why do you delay to come before the world, and profess the name of the holy Jesus?"—*Memoir of Mrs. Lydia M. Malcom*, page 14.

Could an honorable, high-minded man, and sincere Christian, like Dr. Leyburn, have drawn his representation from facts like this, and not from the preconcep-

say, as did one who occupies a highly respectable position, "Well, if nothing else will satisfy you, I'll *douse* you." Now, while the person is to be pitied, who would submit to be baptized by persons who thus scoff at and caricature the Divine ordinance, what measure is there diminutive enough to show the dwarfishness of attainment—literary and spiritual—of the men who adopt such arguments?

Ministers who thus undertake to immerse, certainly compromise their own character for purity of heart. A recent circumstance affords an illustration. A young lady, belonging to a highly respectable family, having been, as she trusted, brought to the knowledge of the truth, was impressed with the Divine authority of immersion, and, therefore, desired it in her own case. She conversed with a Pedobaptist minister on the subject. He used the common argument for the propriety of sprinkling, and en-

tions of a startled imagination, we cannot but believe he would have spared such indelicate insinuations as those in which he has indulged in his published discourse. As it is, we judge him not. "To his own Master he standeth or falleth."

deavored to show that immersion was unnecessary. He had directed every arrow in his quiver against the ordinance but one. His visitor was a young lady. She was modest. He thought he could not fail to hit his mark. "It is not decent for a young lady to go into the water with a man." This did not move her. "To the pure all things are pure." Unwilling to lose her from his church, the minister determined to make a last effort to retain her. "If you still insist upon being immersed, allow me to *offer my services.*" Patiently had his visitor endured his behaviour hitherto, but now he appeared so degraded that this was no longer possible. Rising in all the majesty of womanhood, she addressed him as follows: "And would *you* 'offer' to do an indecent thing to *me*, Sir? I have discovered a new feature in your character. I did not think *you* would do an indecent thing, sir." Let those who can, form an opinion of the feelings of the man whose insolent modesty was thus rebuked. And let them not fail to appreciate the moral deducible from such a circumstance. A minister who assails immersion on the score of indecency, lays himself open to imputations of immodesty. A

spectator of a baptismal scene in which such a clergyman officiates, might well feel justified in using the tone of indignant remonstrance, and exclaiming,

“I blush for you!
Men of your quality, expose your fame
To every vulgar censure.”

Other considerations might be adduced to sustain the ground we have taken, but the mortifying facts already presented—that immersed members of Pedobaptist churches are expected to sustain sentiments they reject, and observe a servile silence as to those they do hold; that their children are exposed to influences prejudicial to their spiritual welfare; that their practice does not agree with that of other members, and must lead to disorder and rebuke; that their principles are a disability to holding office, and are even subjected to the imputation of indecency by Pedobaptist ministers—are sufficient to prove the dishonor they put on their own views of truth, and the degradation they incur by such a union.

CONCLUSION.

FROM the inquiry we have now prosecuted we believe it is evident, that while the administration of immersion by those who have not themselves received the rite, is inconsistent and indefensible, still more so is the course of the person thus baptized. Though manifesting, by observing the ordinance, an attachment to the primitive institution, yet by receiving the ordinance at the hands of an unimmersed minister (who has never been baptized as a believer,) and with a view to union with a church, the majority of whose membership have never been baptized as believers, he by the same act professes Truth and sanctions Error. He clasps the Bible to his heart, and salutes Tradition. Into the very Jordan he seems to carry a basin; for while rejecting sprinkling, a sprinkled minister officiates. Though baptized on his own personal

profession he countenances a proxy faith. He cannot believe that such a baptism occurred in apostolic times.

That there should be strong affections existing in the mind, towards a minister, by whom spiritual blessings have, under God, been communicated, does not excite surprise. There is however reason for gratulation, that notwithstanding this, many clearly perceive their duty. The number of persons who yearly leave the churches in which they have been irregularly immersed, and seek union with Baptist churches, affords ample proof that a Pedobaptist church can be no home for those who adopt believers' baptism. The "sophist's rope of cobweb" may be twined with great ingenuity, but the Christian who has been led to see the true mode of observing Christ's ordinance, will soon perceive how rotten is any line of argument which tends to place him in church fellowship with those, who, as far as their influence extends, endeavor to bring into contempt the baptism of Jesus, to which he has delighted to submit.

As to the *validity* of the baptisms which such persons have received, it is not our desire to intermeddle. Many believe that Paul re-baptized

the twelve at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 1-7), because their gross misconceptions vitiated the ordinance. Those skilled in casuistry must decide what extent of ignorance renders a re-baptism expedient. But it is evident that when persons have views materially defective, their baptism, however sincere, loses all claim to regard as a Divine service. On this ground, probably, there is frequently more reason for re-baptism than the disability which applies to the administrator.

That it is the duty of those who prize primitive institutions, in every consistent manner to discountenance these irregular immersions is evident, if for no other reason, because they are administered upon principles which have an intimate affinity to Popery. There is the very spirit of Popery in the administration of the ordinance, without any necessity, by an unimmersed minister. Whence did the idea arise that it is fitting for men to administer to others, rites and ceremonies which they do not observe themselves? It can be attributed to none but "the Man of Sin." When Protestants thus act, they infringe the patents of the Papacy. This doctrine may suit the slaves of the Vati-

can, but will it be endured by Christ's freemen? We trust not. Such priestly assumption must receive the severest reprobation of intelligent Christians.

In closing, we congratulate the friends of Truth upon the "signs of the times." In the period in which our lot is cast, it is evident that it is high time for every spiritual house to be set in order. A reason must be given for every practice and observance. The hope may be entertained that infant baptism will not long exert its blighting influence. The mere fact that so many of its advocates are willing to immerse believers, shows the slightness of its hold upon public esteem.*

Nothing will gain currency now which has not the superscription of Truth. "Every thing is in the crucible, in this age." The issue is not

* Pedobaptists advocate sprinkling as sufficient for all the purposes of the ordinance. If sprinkling is sufficient, and of equal authority, why should they sanction a departure from its observance? The Pedobaptist administrator throws contempt upon his own baptism. A spectator of his proceedings is justified, in believing that so unusual a course would not be adopted if it had not the best of arguments in its support. He is not unlikely to inquire, "has sprinkling like evidence in its favor?"

doubtful. "Eternal Truth will gain the supremacy—all temporal plausibilities will perish."

The baptismal controversy is not ended. *It has to do with all that is spiritual and voluntary in religion.* For the sake of Christian union an attempt may be made to coffin and bury it, and "Non-essential" may be inscribed upon its tomb. But it will rise again. As God has made this ordinance so prominent in his Word, he will not allow it to be so lightly regarded among his people. There can be no real alliance among Christians, if any portion of His will must be put out of sight in order to form it.

There will yet be union among the people of God, but it will be union in the Truth. It is only as Christ dwells in his people that the breaches of Zion will be healed, and that they will become "perfect in one." The more His presence is individually realized, the nearer shall we be to the settlement of this vexed question.

One great end of those who desire the return of a spirit of union and love among the disciples of our Lord is, to cherish a spirit of free inquiry. "If any man will do His will, he

shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Conviction depends not alone upon the nature and amount of evidence, but upon the disposition of mind with which a subject is examined. When a man, with his own predilections and prejudices, gives himself to the study of baptism, or any other controverted subject in which he may be in error, it is no wonder if he rises up with only increased bitterness against the arguments which conflict with his own cherished views.

Many satisfy themselves with the idea that Baptists are unlovely in practice, without inquiring what makes their practice appear unlovely. If they would do this, they might learn that what is deemed exclusiveness, would have been unnecessary had all Christians "kept the ordinances as they were delivered." It is matter of little surprise that those whose minds are thus prejudiced should fail to be convinced. "Honest impartiality and earnest desire to know the truth for its own worth, are no less rational and necessary, as instruments for its acquisition, than excursive investigation and decisive argument. Without them, in vain are men dazzled by the concentrated blaze of evidence.

Evidence can influence only as a moral means; but what are moral means, without a disposition to use and improve them? The Jews and Gentiles of Apostolic times wanted neither evidence of the truth of Christianity, nor diligent research, yet they remained unconvinced, because morally unfitted for being convinced." "They loved darkness rather than light." They failed to comply with the exhortation, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

Prejudice and pride often dwell unconsciously in the bosoms of sincere Christians. Like heavy vapors in the air, they darken the keenest eye, and chill the warmest heart. We see this in such a man as Nathaniel, "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." But a day of purer light is promised. It already begins to dawn.

As a humble and teachable spirit shall be more generally diffused in the Christian world, the ecclesiastical atmosphere will become clear, and no longer sustain those clouds which now so often obscure the vision of our holiest men. Then, true to their great Commission, the disciples of Christ will perceive, that, like the glo-

rious Gospel, whose leading facts it is designed visibly to embody, Immersion is adapted to men of every nation, kindred and tongue, inhabiting every zone of the earth—even though they find a home beneath the burning fires of a tropical sun, or amid the perpetual snows of an arctic winter.*

* Let it not be thought that the above statement is exaggerated. It is well known that all the great Reformers of the Sixteenth Century, freely admitted that Immersion was the meaning of the original word, and also the primitive practice. But they pleaded for a liberty of change *to suit the climate*. This plea is unsound. 1. It rests on a false assumption of power in the Church. 2. It opens the door for other innovations. 3. It is without support from any real necessity: as the uniform practice of the Greek Church demonstrates. 4. It is acquiesced in, mainly from custom, convenience, or taste, and therefore in all such cases, is not “the answer of a good conscience towards God.”

Even were it true, that Immersion is impracticable in a few places on the habitable globe, how could this excuse Sprinkling in mild and temperate climates like ours? Every year, in the United States, more than fifty thousand persons professing faith in the Redeemer, are immersed, without the slightest injury—often to the awakening of the unconverted. What fact in Science is better proved than the perfect safety of Immersion? Immersion is *actually practised now*, by the Baptist Missions of the Indian Archipelago, *directly under the heat of the Equator*; and by the Russian Greek Church amid the inhospitable wastes of Siberia—the *coldest regions inhabited by Man*.

J. N. B.

Human tradition shall then no longer mar the significant symbols of the Christian's faith.—“Then shall the offering of his people be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years.” Intelligent Manhood shall then, in the waters of baptism, present its voluntary and reasonable service of a “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” Childhood too shall be there, but it shall be Childhood “taught of the Lord,” and bright with the unfading “beauty of holiness.” Then shall “the churches have rest” from controversies more paralysing than persecution; “and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, be multiplied.”

THE END.

THE

Sufficiency of Water for Baptizing,

AT JERUSALEM,

AND ELSEWHERE IN PALESTINE,

AS RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT;

SET FORTH IN A LETTER

BY THE

REV. GEORGE W. SAMSON.

Philadelphia:

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,

530 ARCH STREET

THE

SUFFICIENCY OF WATER FOR BAPTIZING,

AT JERUSALEM, AND ELSEWHERE IN PALESTINE.

TO THE REV. G. W. SAMSON.

Boston, April 1, 1851.

REV AND VERY DEAR SIR,—As you have lately visited Palestine, and enjoyed ample means of becoming acquainted with the interesting localities of Jerusalem, and with other places connected with the history of baptism as presented in the New Testament, I have a request to make. It is this. That you communicate such facts as may illustrate the points discussed in Dr. Ripley's manuscript, which you saw at my house yesterday.

Yours, with much esteem and christian love,
I. C.

REPLY.

REV. DR. CHASE.

Dear Sir,—You have asked me to note down some personal observations and impressions as to

the facilities offered for immersion at Jerusalem, and other localities in Palestine, where in the New Testament the rite of baptism is recorded to have been administered. It is no easy task you demand; though at first it might seem a simple one. The eye certainly is the instructor of the mind, and the knowledge gained by sight is indeed the surest and the most positive we can obtain; yet many things come in to restrict the extent, and to modify the real value, of such knowledge. After all the crowds of Christian men that have traversed throughout the length and breadth of the Holy Land, there are some spots of interest which have not been sought out. Moreover, many that have been visited have been but imperfectly explored and more imperfectly described; for only the jaded traveler himself knows how the fatigues of constant journeying take away the mind's stimulus and zest, and make the eye heavy and the pen sluggish over the evening journal. Yet again, scenes that are examined with leisure and interest take a form and a hue corresponding to our previous prepossessions; things that one person would distinctly observe being unconsciously overlooked by another. And still, once more, when the mind in distant, subsequent years, endeavors to run back and review the thousand varied scenes long past from

vision, the keenest observer, and the most sincere and faithful chronicler, will inevitably sometimes mistake the images of fancy for the remembrance of realities. "Charity believeth all things, hopeth all things;" and a large measure of the exercise of that grace is justly due toward either of two travelers who may widely differ as to their statement of matters of eyesight and as to impressions derived from scenes visited. I feel assured, therefore, that, in reading this letter, you will not be hasty to detect any unjust censure of others who differ with the writer; that you will feel the value of citations from the writings of men who have traveled through Palestine in ages long gone by, before the difference of opinion now existing among Christians as to the mode of baptism had assumed its present marked tone, and when, therefore, men wrote free from the bias of prepossession; and that moreover you will charitably excuse any statement of an impression which may seem to you to indicate that the writer's own mind has been warped from the nice line of a just conclusion, since the great Apostle evidently speaks of an attribute belonging only to the All-Perfect when he says, "*We know that the judgment of God is according to truth.*"

Some of the Ancient Chroniclers.

Before we enter, then, on our survey, allow me to recall from the treasures of your own lifetime's study the honored names of some of those men who have gone before us in their visits to the scenes where Christian baptism was first administered ; that thus, when we shall stand and view the localities they describe, we may be prepared rightly to weigh and to compare their testimony. First among the early Christian writers who particularly describe the places hallowed in the life of Christ is the famed Bourdeaux Pilgrim, who wrote in Latin an account of his visit to Palestine, A. D. 333. Previously to that age, indeed, numberless Christian scholars and pilgrims, as we know, had traversed the Holy Land, visiting its hallowed scenes ; for Jerome, in his beautiful eulogy on Paula, a Roman lady who was descended from the renowned Scipios, and who during his day had visited Palestine, states, that great numbers of pilgrims, (to use his own words,) "*through all the ages from the ascension of the Lord to the time in which we live,*" journeyed through Palestine, among which pilgrims he mentions men from "India, Ethiopia, Britannia, Hibernia."*

During that early age, however, the necessity

* Jerome, Epist. XXII.

had not yet arisen for any thing but a bare mention, such as Origen, for instance, makes of the localities then well known; just as the time has not yet arrived when Americans need in the history of Washington any thing more than a mere reference to places now familiar, as Bunker Hill, Saratoga, and Yorktown. When, however, Christianity became the established religion of the Roman empire, then detailed descriptions of places whose localities were known to residents of Palestine was demanded by distant believers in Christ: as localities in this country must be described to an Englishman, Frenchman, or Italian. When that necessity arose, the Grecian Eusebius, who was born at Cæsarea in Palestine, A. D. 270, and lived and died there, wrote an extended history of the Christian Church, and wrote also a description of localities in his native land hallowed in the life of Christ and of his Apostles. Then also Jerome, who had been baptized at Rome at about forty years of age, came and dwelt at Bethlehem, near Jerusalem, for more than thirty years, from A. D. 386 until his death, A. D. 420; preparing there his version of the Old Testament in Latin, and visiting again and again, and describing the sacred spots of the Holy Land. The testimony of these early writers has been deemed invaluable on every point of Bibli-

cal geography; and their statements, therefore, which may show the facilities for immersion at Jerusalem and in Palestine, are of the first importance. In the age next following, from the time of Constantine to the day when Jerusalem was taken by the followers of Mohammed, A. D. 637, pilgrims still flocked to tread the venerated soil; as a specimen of whom may be mentioned Arculfus, a French bishop, who on his return from Palestine was cast away on the coast of Scotland, where a Scotch abbot named Adamnanus wrote out his account of his travels, and presented the record to King Alfred, A. D. 698. During the Mohammedan supremacy then succeeding, other adventurous Christian scholars recorded their travels in the Holy Land; and when the Crusades restored the sacred places again to Christians, numberless chroniclers penned their notices; some of which are of great value on the question we would investigate. Pages could be filled with merely the names of those who, in later centuries, down to our time, have visited and written descriptions of scenes in Palestine. Selecting from among the more valuable of these honest chroniclers, so far as their works are in our reach, and storing our memories with what they have recorded to aid our investigation, let us go, thus prepared, to stand amid the scenes

where Christ's apostles baptized, and there examine for ourselves the facilities offered for immersion.

Supplies of Water at Jerusalem.

Perhaps the student of the New Testament finds most difficulty in accounting satisfactorily for the immersion of the great numbers converted in the early days of Christianity at *Jerusalem*. The facilities for the performance of this rite in and about the Holy City, therefore, demand the first notice. The nearest living stream to Jerusalem in which immersion could be performed is the *Jordan*, which is distant fifteen miles, or about a five hours' journey; and moreover there is no natural sheet of standing water within the same distance. The *brook* Kedron, often mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, is, as the original term indicates, nothing but the bed through which the rains of winter drain off between the eastern wall of the city and Mount Olivet; and its channel is therefore dry in the early spring, several weeks before the period, in the month of June, when the feast of Pentecost occurred. Unfavorably situated, therefore, as this great capital is in reference to *natural* provisions for water, as might be expected, the arrangements for an *artificial* supply are on a scale peculiarly extensive. The

cisterns, reservoirs, and pools prepared by Solomon, Hezekiah, and Herod (not to mention other rulers), for this purpose, have been the admiration of men from every part of the world in many a succeeding age. The *sources* from which this supply is obtained are principally *five*; from a fine natural fountain or spring breaking forth from underneath the rocky rise on which the old temple stood; from the winter rains, gathered as they fell into cisterns under the court-yards of private houses and of public buildings, such as the temple and the castles; from the extensive drainage of the winter rains gathered from the northern and western hills, whose slope for a mile around converges into the valley of Gihon; from a single large well, pierced to a great depth, in the valley of Hinnom; and, finally, from natural springs in the hills seven or eight miles south of the city, the waters of which springs are gathered first into a large underground reservoir, whence they flow through a narrow passage to three immense tanks some quarter of a mile distant, called "the Pools of Solomon," whence, again, they are conducted by a massive aqueduct to the city. It should perhaps be added, that though at present there is but a single natural spring in Jerusalem, and but a single well (and that a very deep one in the valley outside) fed by living springs, yet there

were probably, before King Hezekiah's day, other fountains about the city. Solomon was crowned at "Gihon," which Josephus calls "the fountain of Gihon." Hezekiah "stopped the upper *water-course* of Gihon," and "all the *fountains* without the city."* Perhaps, if excavations could be made, it would be found that the fountain now gushing so copiously from under the ancient temple area is furnished by concealed streams brought from without the city.† The settlement of this question, however, is unimportant to our present inquiry.

Various Facilities for Baptism common to most Eastern Towns.

It is worthy of a passing notice, that even the cisterns of Jerusalem are not unadapted to the rite of immersion. Any one who has visited the immense ancient reservoirs at Constantinople, or those about ancient Baiæ in Italy, will have some idea of what is found throughout Palestine, and especially at Jerusalem. The visitor descends by steps into a vast subterranean hall, sometimes covering acres in extent and supported by scores

* 1 Kings i. 33, 38; 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4, 30. Josephus, *Antiq.*, VII. 14. 5.

† See Robinson's *Researches*, Vol. I. p. 512; and *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. III. pp. 634-638.

of columns, where water stands, increasing in depth as a person advances along the sloping bottom, offering the most favorable opportunity possible for immersion. Such cisterns even in Jacob's day seem to have existed in this land, where they are so much needed; and the historian Moses, who had occasion often to allude to them, deems it of importance to mention, that the one into which Joseph was cast by his brethren "was empty, there was no water in it."* Many such reservoirs, *without water*, Dr. Robinson describes on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.† Several such, of magnificent size, containing water deep enough for immersion, are found on the road from Jerusalem by the tomb of Moses to the Jordan.‡ Underneath the grotto of Jeremiah, near the northern wall of Jerusalem, is such a reservoir. Entering a side door and descending a few feet, the traveler finds himself in a fine ante-room,

* Gen. xxxvii. 24.

† Robinson's Researches, Vol. II. pp. 353, 395-398.

‡ At a distance of 2h. 10m. from Neby Mousa on the road to Jerusalem, at a place called er-Reib er-Rohawah, near the junction of Wady Rohawah with Wady Sidr, are fine springs of water, and three noble reservoirs cut into the rocky side of the valley. Into one, which is about 25 by 40 feet, the entrance is by a doorway and staircase. Another, about 50 feet by 60, has an open front and a gradual slope to the water.

twenty or twenty-five feet square, cut in the rock. Passing through a side door and descending by a stairway twenty-five or thirty feet farther, he stands in a large subterranean hall, about sixty feet square, whose arched top is supported by columns, and whose sloping bottom is nearly covered with water; into which he can descend to a considerable depth.

That such cisterns, and other facilities for bathing, were peculiarly abundant about the cities of Palestine in the age of the Apostles, Josephus is witness; who often mentions the aqueducts, and baths, and reservoirs, and costly fountains, which Herod before Christ's day built, and which after Christ's day existed in different towns of Judea, as Ascalon, Cæsarea, and Herodion, and in different quarters of Jerusalem, as under the towers of Hippicus and Phasaëlus, and of Antonia, "the castle" into which Paul was borne.* That such baths and cisterns were used by the Apostles for immersion seems to be indicated by the Bourdeaux Pilgrim, who, visiting the Cæsarea where Peter baptized Cornelius, about three hundred years after that event, records, "There is the bath of Cornelius the centurion, who did much alms." The frequency with which

* Josephus, *Antiq.*, XV. 9. 4 and 6; wars, I. 21. 10 and 11; V. 4. 2; V. 5. 8.

such reservoirs are met, not only in Palestine, but in Southern Italy and the whole Levant, removes from the mind of the inquiring traveler all difficulty as to facilities for immersion at Jerusalem, Philippi, Corinth, Rome, and elsewhere, in the Apostles' day; as from the mind of the late Dr. Judson the same difficulty was removed by observing the baths in the jail-yards of Burmah and India. While, then, the *lexicographer* finds the meaning of the word used for this ordinance to be immersion, the ancient and the modern Christian traveler alike find no difficulty as to the means for immersion, even when he has examined only the *ordinary* conveniences for bathing in an Oriental city.

Pools at Jerusalem.

Passing, however, these facilities for immersion common to most Eastern towns, observe those peculiar accommodations offered at Jerusalem in the numerous large public *pools* of the city; six of which will claim our special notice. In devout harmony of soul with the ancient Psalmist, loving as he did the truth and honor of God, seeing that Jerusalem's ancient "towers," and "bulwarks," and "palaces" are all laid low, take we up the *spirit* of his language: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her. See the *pools*, mark ye well

her *fountains*, consider her *flowing waters*; that ye may tell it to the generation following."

1. *The Pool at Bethesda.*

Proceeding from the southern brow of Zion, where the Spirit of God is supposed to have been poured on the disciples of Jesus upon the memorable Pentecost, a few minutes' walk brings us to the north of the ancient temple-area on Mount Moriah. Here, in the open air, by the side of the wall of the ancient temple inclosure, is a long, broad excavation into the earth, the sides of which are built up with masonry of small stones, whose surface is covered with a hard, smooth cement. According to Dr. Robinson's measurement it is 360 feet long, 130 feet broad, and 75 deep, being now partly filled with rubbish. The natives call it "*Birket Isrâîl*,"—The Pool of Israel; and the tradition of ages has declared it to be the ancient Pool of Bethesda, mentioned in Christ's day.* Tacitus, the Roman historian, in describing the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans after Christ's day, says of the temple-area: "There were *pools* and cisterns for preserving rain water."† Eusebius, the Christian historian, three hundred years after Christ, speaks of the Pool of Bethesda thus: "Bexatha, a pool in Jerusalem, which is

* John v. 2.

† Tacitus' Hist. Vol. II.

the sheep-pool, anciently having five porticos; and now it is shown in the double pool at the same place, one of which is filled by the yearly rains, and the other of which shows its water in a singular manner, tinged with red, bearing the mark, as they say, of the sacrificial victims anciently washed in it; for which reason also it is called the sheep-pool, on account of the sacrifices." Jerome a few years later wrote: "Bethesda, a pool in Jerusalem which is called *προβατικὴ* *probatikē*, and may be interpreted by us *sheep-pool*. This had formerly five porches; and there are shown two lakes; one of which is usually filled by the winter rains; the other of which, in a wonderful manner tinged with red, as if by bloody waters, witnesses the marks of the ancient work done in it. For they say that victims were washed in it by the priests, whence also it received its name." The testimony of both these ancient inhabitants of Palestine agrees, that at their early day the pool of Bethesda was *well known* that it was *in the city*, that it was so near *the temple* as to be convenient for the washing of sacrifices, that it was then *filled with water*, and that it was (though in two sections and then without porticos) the *same structure* as the single pool which once was surrounded by covered colonnades. The Crusaders, eight hundred years later, found two

immense pools near the inclosure of the temple, filled with water by rain and aqueducts from a distance.* The Greek pilgrims who visited Jerusalem afterward, and travelers down to our day, describe the Pool of Bethesda at the same point. Dr. Robinson, though differing with ancient and modern authorities as to the identity of this pool with the ancient Bethesda, nevertheless agrees in all that is essential to our inquiry. He regards it as the fosse, excavated for the defense of the fortress Antonia, as rebuilt by Herod the Great; saying, however, "It was once evidently used as a reservoir;" and again, "That it was once filled with water is apparent from the lining of small stones and cement upon its sides;" and yet again, "The reservoir has now been dry for more than two centuries."† Here, then, was an expanse of water, in an open pool, *existing before Christ's day, covering more than an acre* of ground. Just such a body of water was needed for the purposes of bathing by the thousands of Jews who of old came up to Jerusalem, bringing their oxen and sheep for sacrifice; and whether they entered by the eastern, northern, or western gates, this immense reservoir was on their road as a convenient and needed place to perform the washings

* See Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 479, Note 3.

† Researches, Vol. I. pp. 429—432, 434, 490.

demanded by the Law. Accredited historians, who could no more mistake than a Sparks recording the life of Washington, declare that the Jewish priests used to wash the sacrificial victims here, and that hence it was called the "Sheep-pool." Here, or near this spot, was in Christ's day a pool so large that it had *five covered colonnades* about it, under which lay *a great multitude* of diseased persons, *free to bathe* there and have *ample room* for the bath. Here certainly has remained since Christ's day an expanse of water furnishing nine hundred and sixty baptisteries, each six feet by ten. When, therefore, in Christ's day, three thousand were converted at the Pentecost, and the converts had such "favor with the people" that they could continue "daily with one accord in the temple" in Christian worship, it is utterly inconceivable that they should find no facilities for Christian baptism according to the form Christ prescribed.

2. *The King's or Solomon's Pool.*

Passing now out of the eastern gate, from which the pool just described is but a stone's throw distant, descending thence the steep declivity to the bed of the Kedron, and proceeding from the Garden of Gethsemane down the valley southward, a ten minutes' walk brings us near the head of the

rich bottom which once formed "the King's Garden." Here, in the rocky hill-side, above which towers the wall of the temple, we descend beneath the arched roof of a natural cave, and by a flight of steps cut in the rock, to what is now called the "Fountain of the Virgin." It is probably the "King's Pool" mentioned by Nehemiah, to which Josephus gives the name of "Solomon's Pool."* At the foot of the steps we stand in a cavernous chamber "fifteen feet long by five or six wide," and "six or eight feet high," according to Dr. Robinson's measurement. From the side toward the temple, through an arched passage-way, enters a copious stream of water, which goes out on the opposite side through a passage-way large enough to stand up in. The water in the basin formed by the floor of this chamber is from one foot to three feet deep, any desired depth being in a few minutes attained by throwing a slight dam of earth and stones across the outlet; a practice which, as Dr. Robinson observed, is now resorted to by the natives.† At certain hours of the day, troops of Arab females from the opposite village of Selwan, (the ancient *Siloam* mentioned in the New Testament,) come with their water-jars on their heads, and thronging down the steps, linger

* Neh. ii. 14: and Josephus, Wars, V. 4. 2.

† Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. pp. 500, 502.

to wade about in the cool pool and to bathe their feet and faces.* At other times it is so retired, that Dr. Robinson was able to change his raiment, and, wearing only a pair of Arab drawers, to spend a considerable time in examining the outlet to the pool of Siloam.† If Providence had designed this place expressly for immersion, there could hardly have been prepared a more convenient and appropriate font; furnishing as it does ample room, an abundant supply of water, and also (if needed) retirement even for change of raiment.

3. *The Pool of Siloam, with its smaller Reservoir.*

Proceeding now still down the valley about a quarter of a mile farther southward, we come to that spot so full of sacred interest, the "Pool of Siloam." It is an open reservoir, built into an excavation in the hill-side, and lined with hard cement. It is fifty-three feet long, eighteen broad, and nineteen deep. The wall next the valley is now so broken down, that not more than two or three feet of water stands in the bottom. The water enters from an arched passage-way high up on the side next the hill. Mounting the hill back

* Luke xiii. 4. See Spencer's East, (published at New York, 1850,) p. 311.

† Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 502.

of the Pool, we find a smaller reservoir, six or eight feet broad and eight or ten feet long, having a descent by steps to its bottom.* Into this smaller basin the water comes from the Pool of the Virgin just described; and doubtless the original supply is from the gushing source under the temple area and the aqueducts centering there.

In either the lower pool or upper basin, any depth of water may be readily obtained by damming temporarily the mouth of the outlet; a practice now resorted to, as Dr. Robinson has remarked.† It is evidently the fountain and the reservoir mentioned before the Babylonish captivity by Isaiah, after that captivity by Nehemiah, and in the day of our Saviour by John the Evangelist.‡ As to the permanence and abundance of the supply of water here furnished, the amplest evidence may be presented. Josephus, describing it as it was in the days of the apostles, says of *Siloam*: "That is the name of a fountain which hath sweet water in it, and that in great plenty;" and again, representing to his besieged countrymen the hopelessness of their holding out against the Romans, and exhorting them to surrender their city to Titus, he remarks,

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 497.

† Researches, Vol. I. 497.

‡ Isaiah viii. 6; Nehemiah iii. 15; John ix. 7, 11.

“You know that Siloam, as well as the other springs without the city, . . . now have such a great quantity for your enemies, as is sufficient not only for drink both for themselves and their cattle, but also for watering their gardens.” The old Bourdeaux Pilgrim, who visited Palestine before Constantine’s day, after describing some things *within* the city, adds: “The pool which is called Siloam has four porticos; there is another large pool without.” Of this pool Jerome a few years later speaks, distinguishing the fountain and the pool of Siloam. An interesting description of the religious washings or bathings at this place, while the sacred structures of the Christian emperors yet stood, is given by Antonius the Martyr in the sixth century. Speaking of the fountain of Siloam, the pious chronicler says: “There is a circular church there, from under which rises Siloam; an inclosure of lattice-work, in one part of which men bathe, and in the other, women, before the benediction; in which waters many things are shown, and even leprous persons are cleansed. Also before the court is a vast pool, artificially constructed, in which the people bathe constantly, though at certain hours only; for that fountain sends forth many waters which descend through the valley of Jehoshaphat.” The bathing here mentioned seems to be a reli-

gious act. The mind accustomed to the opinions of that age will readily distinguish between the historian's statement of facts and the religious devotee's allusion to signs miraculous. The abundance of water supplied for bathing, and the freedom with which it was thus used, recalls to mind Christ's direction to the blind man, if it does not impress the scene of baptism at the Pentecost. The concurrent testimony of numerous other travelers in succeeding ages might be cited ; so that a chain of testimony from Christ's day to our own might present the facilities which Siloam always has afforded for immersion. And when one accustomed to honor the ordinance of baptism in its primitive simplicity now stands at this sacred spot, and beholds before him the copious gushing fountain, and the broad tank and vast pool to receive it, when he sees the freedom with which men and women, by scores, now come hither, and, damming up the broken wall and the circular outlet, bathe their persons, and wash their clothing, he wonders that any one who knows that the proper meaning of the word designating the ordinance of baptism is immersion, and who has visited this spot, could hesitate as to the facilities for that rite at Jerusalem.

4. *The Old Pool, or the Upper Pool in the Highway of the Fuller's Field.*

Having now surveyed the group of pools on the east of the city, we return to our starting-point, where on the southern brow of Zion the converts of the Pentecost were gathered, and proceeding again thence, let us visit the corresponding group of pools on the west of the city. A ten minutes' walk brings us to the "Castle of David," at the western gate. Passing through that gate, we proceed up the gentle ascent north-west, a distance of half a mile. Here, in the broad valley, where is centered the drain of the northern and western hills for a mile or two around, is a vast ancient pool dug into the earth and limestone rock, and its sides are built up with masonry and lined with cement. Its dimensions, according to Dr. Robinson, are, length 316 feet, breadth 218 feet at one end and 200 at the other, and depth 18 feet. It is probably one of the structures of which Solomon says, "I made me pools of water;" the one which even in Isaiah's early day was called "the *old pool*," and which the same prophet also speaks of as "the *upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field*;" the one also by which the Assyrian army encamped in Hezekiah's day, and from which that king brought

the water down into the two pools on the west of the city.* It is, then, a pool of very great antiquity, and one at which, when in proper repair, there was a quantity of water sufficient to accommodate the city dyers, to give drink to a besieging army, and to supply two other pools below. It now receives only the drain of the winter rains from the surrounding hills; but originally it seems to have been supplied by fountains in the neighborhood, which Hezekiah concealed by covering up and conducting underground their waters.† Near the bottom, on the side toward the city, an underground passage conducts its waters thither. Jerome, in the early Christian times, mentions it, attributing its construction to Solomon. The Crusaders speak of it, calling it "*Lacus Patriarchæ*," the Lake of the Patriarch, the former part of the name probably referring to its *size*, the latter to its *antiquity*. An old Norman Chronicle lately found in the Royal Library of Paris, and first published in 1843, a work containing facts of great value, speaks of this pool as it existed during the occupation of the Holy City

* Eccles. ii. 6; Isa. vii. 3; xxii. 11; 2 Kings xviii. 17; 2 Chron. xxxii. 30.

† 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14. See Robinson's Researches, Vol. I, p. 514, and the remarks above, pp. 10, 11, on the "Fountain of Gihon."

by the Franks, and represents it as still supplied with water, and used to give drink to the horses of the Crusaders' army.* Travelers of our day, who visit Jerusalem in April, a month after the winter rains, find this pool dry. Dr. Robinson explains the reason thus: "The tank was now dry, but in the rainy season it *becomes full*." Again: "It would seem to be filled in the rainy season by the waters which flow into it from the higher ground round about. Or rather, *such is its present state of disrepair* that it probably never becomes full." In further description of it he says: "The sides are built up with hewn stones laid in cement, with steps at the corners by which to descend into it." † Here then, again, is another broad basin of water, which could hardly have been better adapted to immersion if it had been constructed for that purpose. It is retired from the city: it is broad enough, covering more than *an acre and a half of ground*, to accommodate any supposable number of administrators; and it has steps at the corners convenient for descent. In the days of Isaiah and Hezekiah, and again in the days of the Crusaders, it was well supplied with water, and now would be if a small sum were expended in repairing it. Nothing but the very

* William's Memoir. Appn. dix, No. II. Sect. 6.

† Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. pp. 352, 484.

perversity of scepticism would deny the probability, or doubt the certainty even, that in the days of Herod, the great fountain builder, (and hence in the time of Christ,) it furnished ample facilities for the immersion of Christian converts.*

5. *The Pool of Hezekiah.*

Turning our steps now toward the city again, in a few moments we reach the western gate whence we went out. Entering, passing the Castle of David, and bending through the narrow streets to the left, in two or three minutes we stand look-

* The suggestion may arise to some minds, that, when the pools of Jerusalem above described were *full*, the great depth of water would render them ill fitted for immersion. This difficulty will be removed by the following considerations. The supply of *rain-water* in these pools is now exhausted (and probably always was) early in the spring. As we have seen, on the testimony of Dr. Robinson and others, the main and permanent supply of water in all these pools is from aqueducts fed by *springs*. Of course the supply, except during the winter and early spring, would be a gradual one, and the depth of the water could be graduated at pleasure. We have seen that this is now precisely the fact at the two pools on the east side of the city; the people keeping the water at just such a height as they desire. That the same practice was pursued in our Saviour's day is evident; for the pool of Bethesda was then supplied with just the amount of water sufficient for bathing. Farther on, we shall perceive that the lower pool of Gihon, the largest of all these pools, is adapted, even when full, to immersion.

ing into the "Pool of Hezekiah." The general opinion is probably correct, that this is the work of Hezekiah, thus alluded to in the sacred history: He "made a pool and a conduit and brought water into the city." * Jerome mentions this pool as the Dragon Fountain alluded to by Nehemiah, describing it as "at the west of the city, near Mount Calvary." † The Crusaders, from its location evidently, called it the "Pool of the Holy Sepulchre." This reservoir, according to Dr. Robinson, is about one hundred and forty-four feet broad and two hundred and forty feet long. The natives now call it "Birket-el-Hûmmâm," the Pool of the Bath; from the fact that a neighboring bath is supplied from it. Though hemmed around by houses, there are narrow alleys by which its sides are approached; and the people freely descend to wash, and to fill their water-jars. Of this pool Dr. Robinson says: "The reservoir is supplied with water during the rainy season by the small aqueduct or drain brought down from the Upper Pool, along the surface of the ground and under the wall at or near the Yâfâ Gate.

* 2 Kings xx. 20.

† Jerome on the article "Fons Draconis." This mention of it as a *fountain* seems to confirm the idea that the upper pool and this pool were once *supplied by a fountain* called Gihon. See Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 514.

When we last saw it, in the middle of May, it was about half full of water, which however was not expected to hold out during the summer." * The Rev. George Williams, an English clergyman who had resided fourteen months at Jerusalem, and who prepared his works with the aid of the accurate survey made in 1841 by the ordnance corps attached to the English force which recovered Syria from the Pacha of Egypt, adds these particulars: "There is a descent by steps into it at the northwest angle; and the water which in the rainy season runs in from the rude aqueduct at the southwest corner, occupies only a small part of the pool at the southeast angle." † This latter remark evidently refers to the quantity of water in the pool in the dry season of the year; for in April it is well filled, and even to the middle of May, as Dr. Robinson mentions, is well supplied with water. His former remark shows that the bottom is *sloping*, and thus favorable for descent into the water. Here then, again, near where the apostles stood preaching, is a pool which existed long before their day, furnishing even now an ample supply of water for bathing at

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p 487.

† Williams's Memoir, p. 19. The full title of his work is, "Historical and Descriptive Memoir on the Town and Environs of Jerusalem. To accompany the Ordnance Survey. By George Williams, B. D., Fellow of King's College, Cambridge London. 1849."

the season of the ancient Pentecost, having every facility for a gradual descent into the water, covering more than an acre of ground, so as to furnish room for scores to enter together, and still generally used for the very purpose of bathing. It is not surprising that one whose early prepossessions were opposed to the mode of baptism indicated by the word which Christ's apostles used to express the rite, has not mentioned the natural and inevitable conclusion to which a view of this expanse must lead; but it would seem impossible that the mind bent on the inquiry should fail to see the facilities here offered for immersion.

6. *The Lower Pool of Gihon.*

Retracing our steps now to the western city gate, and proceeding on south still in the valley about a quarter of a mile, we come to the "Lower Pool of Gihon." It is rather a *pond* than a pool, unlike all the others about Jerusalem, being formed by two dams built across the bed of the valley; these dams forming the *ends* of the reservoir, while its *sides* are the sloping sides of the valley. It is in fact formed like a New England mill-pond; except that it has a dam at the *head* as well as at the *foot* of the pond. A covered passage leading from the upper pool comes in at the upper dam, and, though now dry like the upper pool, it was

originally supplied, doubtless, from that pool with the rain and spring water which once filled it. The immense aqueduct from the Pools of Solomon south of Bethlehem, also crosses the valley about two hundred and twenty feet above the upper end of this pool, and probably from this aqueduct a supply of water was also obtained; for the dam at the *head* of the pool (or pond) evidently indicates that the water in the pool was once made to rise above the ordinary level of the valley, so as to require a raised embankment to restrain its spread. The dimensions of this pool are, according to Dr. Robinson's measurement, as follows: length along the centre 592 feet; breadth at the north end 245 feet; and at the south end 275 feet; depth at the north end 35 feet, and at the south end 42 feet. This pool has generally been regarded as "the lower pool" mentioned by Isaiah, and is probably the work ascribed to Hezekiah by the prophet Isaiah and the two historians of the Jewish king.* Though this reservoir is now dry, in the days of the Crusaders it was well supplied with water. The Norman chronicler above alluded to calls it "le Lai Germain," the *Lake of Germain*, saying that "Germain had it made to collect the waters which descended from the mountains when it rained;" and he adds, "there

* Isa. xxii. 9; 2 Kings xx. 20; 2 Chron. xxxii. 30.

the horses of the city are watered.”* Another Latin chronicler of the same age, (A. D. 1177) calls the reservoir, in like manner, “Lacus Germani,” and says that it “is common for the use of the whole city.” † The reservoir is now called Birket es Sultân,—the *Sultan's Pool*; this designation probably denoting (as usual) *superiority*, either in size or excellence. Of its present condition and of its former supply of water, Dr. Robinson says: “A road crosses on the causeway at the southern end along which are fountains erected by the Muslims, and *once fed from the aqueduct which passes very near*. They were now dry. . . . This reservoir was probably *supplied from the rains and from the superfluous waters of the Upper Pool*. It lies directly in the natural channel by which the latter would flow off, but is now in ruins.” ‡

Here then, again, is an immense reservoir,

* The Chronicler probably means simply that this Germanus *repaired* the reservoir; for William of Tyre, an earlier writer, mentions this same pool as celebrated in the times of the kings of Judah; and the continuator of William of Tyre mentions that this same Germanus, who was burgess of the city under Baldwin the Fourth, opened in a time of famine the well of Job, which had been filled up. See Williams's Memoir, pp. 55 and 63, and Appendix, No. II. Sect. 6.

† See Williams's Memoir, Appendix, No. II. Sect. 6.

‡ Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. pp. 485, 486.

acknowledged by all to have existed long before the days of Christ and of his apostles. So late as the days of the Crusaders, it was so abundantly supplied with water that all the city were allowed to use it freely, and it was the great watering-place for horses. From the rains, the aqueduct, and the Upper Pool, an ample supply of water could have been obtained to keep it full when those structures were in their perfection. The pool, of course, was made of its ample dimensions with the intention that it should be filled, and it is a presumption which no ingenuous mind would think of disputing, that it was, in its original perfection, kept filled. The days of the apostles were just subsequent to the time of Herod, who repaired with the greatest care the reservoirs at Jerusalem and throughout Palestine; and no foreign invasion had between his day and that of the apostles occurred to break up or impair those structures. There is, therefore, an historic certainty, that when the Spirit of God was poured out at Jerusalem, after Christ's ascension, there was in this single reservoir, covering as it does more than *four acres of ground*, and its sides having a slope just adapted to a descent for immersion,—there was, in this single reservoir, ample room for all the seventy, and for the twelve added, to act as administrators of the sacred rite. If

then, as the learned lexicographer seems to admit, the only ground for doubting that the rite practiced by the apostles was immersion, is the want of facilities at Jerusalem in their age for that observance, the sincere inquirer needs no longer to stumble at that imaginary difficulty. For, not the imaginings, nor even the personal investigations, of a fallible individual, have here been stated. On the other hand, the plain declarations of ancient, unprejudiced visitors, and the equally honest statements of those moderns who make the objection, have been brought together, and have been found to present a uniform picture by one who on the sacred soil has sought to compare and harmonize their views, and *from them to educe the truth* as it is in the Word of God. And if now, after our survey, you are in wonder that two minds, with all these same acknowledged facts before them, should come to conclusions so diverse, let me ask that you read again the first paragraph of this letter, and bear in mind that no man needs to exercise greater candor and charity than he who follows over the footsteps of eminent, but interested travelers.

Other places: Bethabara and Enon.

There are two or three other localities in *Palestine* where the rite of baptism is said to

have been administered in the days of Christ and of his apostles, which demand a brief notice. There are, first, the two spots at which John the Baptist administered the rite; namely, Bethabara and Enon. The precise location of neither of these places can now be fixed; yet the slight indefiniteness as to their exact situation does not at all impair our decision of the main question. Three of the Evangelists record that John baptized "*in the Jordan;*" conveying the impression that *in this stream alone* was the rite performed. The evangelist John mentions two particular localities where John baptized; both of which there is the strongest reason for believing were *on the Jordan*, so that the four Evangelists harmonize in their statements. Now the River Jordan (as in our day is well known) is a stream supplying throughout its whole length peculiar facilities for immersion. Near ancient Jericho it was a stream of such size, that, by a special miracle, God divided its waters for the passage of Israel under Joshua, and afterward of Elijah and Elisha. Only at particular places could it in ancient times be forded, while at other points it must be crossed in a boat.* Above ancient Succoth and Sichem, we learn that in Jacob's age a river called Jabbok, so large that it must be passed at a ford,

* Josh. ii. 7; Judg. iii. 28; 2 Sam. xix. 18.

joined its waters to the Jordan; so that the united stream must have been throughout the greater part of its length of no small size.* What the Jordan was in that early day, it was in Christ's age, and has been ever since. The thorough exploration by Lieutenant Lynch, in the spring of 1848, has established its varying breadth at from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty feet, and its depth (increasing of course ordinarily as the breadth diminishes) from three to twelve feet.† The facilities for immersion

* Gen. xxxii. 22; Deut. iii. 16. The Yermâk, which enters the Jordan several miles north of Bethshean, is "40 yards wide," and "as wide and as deep nearly as the Jordan," and is "crossed by a bridge."—See Lynch's Expedition, pp. 191, 194, 196.

† Lieut. Lynch gives the *average* breadth and depth of the Jordan on the 1st, 2d, 4th, 5th, and 6th days of his descent. On the 8th and 9th there are separate notes; but on the 3d, and 7th there are none. The following are the details given:—

	Breadth.	Depth.	pp.
1st day	25 to 30 yds.		175
2d "	40 "	2½ to 6 ft.	184
3d "	(rapids) 40 " (as the Yermâk)		191, 194
4th "	45 "	4 ft.	203
5th "	30 to 70 "	2 to 10 ft.	221
6th "	56 "	4 ft.	238
7th "	(a short Sabbath's journey.)		
8th "	40 yds.	7 ft.	252
9th "	40 "	12 ft.	266
" "	50 "	11 ft.	267
" "	180 "	3 ft.	268

therefore, are, and always have been, sufficiently ample in any portion of the stream.

The point on the river, near Bethabara, at which John first baptized, is fixed by an unbroken and unvarying tradition. As early as one hundred and fifty years after Christ's day, the place was known; just as Americans know, and always will know, the spot on the banks of James River where the first colony settled, the place on the Delaware where Washington crossed, and the point on the St. Lawrence where Wolfe landed, fought and fell. Such a spot could no more be forgotten than can Bunker Hill. Less than two hundred years after Christ was baptized, Origen, coming from Alexandria to visit, as travelers now do, the Holy Land, found the site then fixed by a permanent tradition. Alluding to the fact that, in some of the manuscripts of his day, the name of this place was Bethabara, and in others Bethany, (a difference arising perhaps from the frequent occurrence that a place *changed* its name, or that the same place had *two* names,) Origen says: "We were persuaded that we ought not to read *Bethany*, but *Bethabara*, having been in the region tracing the history of the footsteps of Jesus, and of his disciples and of the prophets." He adds: "There is shown, they say, on the bank of the Jordan, the Bethabara where

they relate that John baptized." The Latin pilgrim of A. D. 333, records the following: "*Thence* [from the Dead Sea] to the Jordan where John baptized is five miles. There is the place above the river, a little mount on the farther bank, where Elijah was taken up to heaven." In his day the place was known, its distance being particularly noted; and it was regarded as the same as that over which Elijah passed. The latter fact perhaps explains Origen's allusion to "the prophets" in the same connection. Eusebius has the following note: "Bethabara, where John was baptizing, beyond the Jordan. And the place is shown in which, also, many of the brethren, even to the present time, are anxious to receive the redemption." Jerome's note is much the same: "Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John baptized unto penitence. Whence also even to this day very many of the brethren, that is, of the number of those believing, desiring there to be born again, are baptized in the life-giving flood." In his beautiful letter in memory of Paula, a devout Roman female who had made a pilgrimage through the Holy Land, Jerome has this eloquent passage, suggesting other historical traditions as to this locality: "Scarcely had night passed when with most fervent ardor she came to the Jordan. She stood on the bank of the stream, and, as the sun

rose, she remembered the Sun of righteousness; how in the midst of the bed of the river the priests planted their dry footsteps, and at the word of Elijah and of Elisha, the waters standing on either side, an open passage offered itself; and how the Lord by his baptism cleansed the waters polluted with mud and stained with the slaughter of the whole human race." The Scotch Abbot Adamnanus, who entertained the shipwrecked French bishop in King Alfred's day, about A. D. 698, gathered from the pilgrim's lips these particulars, as the venerable Bede has transcribed them: "In the place in which the Lord was baptized there stands a wooden cross as high as the neck, which sometimes is hidden by the water rising above it; from which place the farther bank, that is, the eastern, is a sling's throw distant; while the hither bank bears on the summit of a little hill a large monastery renowned as a Church of Saint John the Baptist; from which over a bridge supported by arches they are accustomed to descend to that cross and to pray."

The river, then, seven hundred years after Christ's day, at the point of his baptism, must have been several rods wide, and it is indicated that the depth east of the cross was over a man's head. Chateaubriand, the modern French tourist, mentions that the river at the same spot is "six

or seven feet in depth under the bank, and nearly fifty paces (or one hundred and seventy-five feet) in breadth." Dr. Robinson, though he spent a day or two in the valley, did not make any estimate; but, quoting from a certain English traveler of 1815, named Turner, he gives the rough guess, "rather more than fifty feet wide and five feet deep."* Lieut. Lynch gives the general dimensions of the river in that region as "forty yards wide and twelve feet deep."

In farther description of his own impressions at the spot, Lieut. Lynch records: "9½ o'clock P. M. We arrived at 'El Meshra,' the bathing place of the Christian pilgrims. . . . This ford is consecrated by tradition as the place where the Israelites passed over with the ark of the covenant, and where our blessed Saviour was baptized by John. Feeling that it would be desecration to moor the boats at a place so sacred, we passed it, and with some difficulty found a landing below. My first act was to bathe in the consecrated stream; thanking God, first, for the pre-

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. II. p. 261. The opposing tradition alluded to here and at p. 257, though mentioned by English travelers of the last half-century, has no authority, or even mention, among the earlier writers; it was evidently the result of a temporary spirit of controversy between the Greek and Roman Church, and is now seldom heard of or mentioned.

scious favor of being permitted to visit such a spot, and secondly for his protecting care throughout our perilous passage. For a long time after, I sat upon the bank, my mind oppressed with awe, as I mused upon the grēat and wondrous events which had here occurred. . . . Tradition, sustained by the geographical features of the country, makes this the scene of the baptism of the Redeemer. . . . On that wondrous day, when the Deity veiled in flesh descended the bank, all nature, hushed in awe, looked on,—and the impetuous river, in grateful homage, must have stayed its course and gently laved the body of its Lord. . . . Over against this was no doubt the Bethabara of the New Testament. . . . The interpretation of Bethabara is ‘a place of passage over.’ Our Lord repaired to Bethabara where John was baptizing; and as the ford probably derived its name from the passage of the Israelites with the ark of the covenant, the inference is not unreasonable that this spot has been doubly hallowed.” Speaking of the caravan of pilgrims, who came on the annual bathing-day, the very morning the American party were encamped there, Lieut. Lynch says: “The pilgrims descended to the river where the bank gradually slopes. Above and below, it is precipitous. The banks must have been always high in places, and

the water deep. . . . Each one plunged himself, or was dipped by another, three times below the surface, in honor of the Trinity.”*

Lieut. Lynch is not alone among intelligent Americans who thus feel and act at this sacred spot; for the American mind, cultured remote from the realm of superstitious tradition and of irrational scepticism also, has learned to “distinguish things that differ.” The Rev. Mr. Spencer, of the Episcopal Church in New York, thus records his experience at this hallowed place : “Alone in a woody and retired spot, protected by the shade of the sycamore, the ilex, and the willow, I disrobed and advanced into the river. The bank is very declivitous, and in a few moments I was nearly out of my depth. . . . From the depth of my soul I blessed God for the privileges of his covenant sealed to us by the holy sacrament of baptism ; and I seemed to myself to be looking on the solemn and touching scene of our Lord’s baptism by his messenger whom he sent to prepare the way before him. Earnestly did I supplicate that God of his mercy would wash and purify my soul, body, and spirit, by the blood of Christ Jesus our Lord ; and with the deepest reverence, remembering whom I was worshiping, I bowed my head beneath the waters of

* Lynch’s Expedition, pp. 255–263.

the Jordan three times, and pronounced each time the name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, the TRIUNE GOD of our salvation.”*

The most impressive season for a visit to this hallowed spot on the Jordan, is during Easter week, in the middle of April, when a mighty throng of from three to five thousand persons goes pouring out of the eastern and northern gates of Jerusalem for the annual bath. There are young and old, rich and poor, men and women, mounted on horses, camels, and donkeys, or plodding on foot. They are members chiefly of the various branches of the Eastern Church, Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, and Copts, only here and there a Roman Catholic and a European traveler being seen. They all retain, from the days of their fathers and of the apostles, the primitive ordinance of *immersion*, and though they have in infancy received from others the rite, they regard it almost indispensable to salvation that once in their lives they be immersed, on profession of their own faith, in the very spot where Jesus was baptized. Hence that immense multitude is every succeeding year an entirely *new* one; pilgrims gathered from Russia to Egypt, and from Greece to India. A Turkish guard of four hun-

* “The East,” by the Rev. J. A. Spencer, p. 392. New York, 1850.

dred men, with the governor of Jerusalem at their head, goes to guard the host from intestine strifes, and from attacks of the desert Arabs. The slow march of so vast a throng through the various defiles leading to the valley of the Jordan occupies the first day. The night encampment is near ancient Jericho, four or five miles from the sea. At midnight the whole camp is roused, and, a hasty breakfast being partaken, the traveler mounts into his saddle, and by one o'clock all are moving toward the sacred stream at the thrice sacred spot where Israel crossed, where Elijah passed, and where John baptized the Son of God. So tediously slow is the movement of the motley throng in the dark, that the gray dawn is streaming along the eastern mountain peaks ere the river is in sight. Then, with a headlong rush, all hasten to plunge in the turbid waters; laying aside on the banks their upper garments, wading out to their middle in the stream, and then plunging themselves forward three times beneath the waters. In the sacred rite, strong youths support persons tottering and trembling with age, and parents plunge their little children, while vigorous men swim off beyond their depth, breasting the rapid current and again and again bowing their heads beneath the reverend tide. The Christian scholar, as he stands and gazes on the impressive

scene, learns that important distinction made by the apostles of Christ between traditions which are history and traditions which are superstition ;* separating the true from the false, clipping the text of history from the added gloss of bigotry ; sifting the kernel of the permanent and valuable from the mere chaff of the temporary and worthless. Historical traditions, as to objects of sight and of permanent existence, are as sure and as valuable in the land of our Saviour as in the land of Sesostris, of Alexander, of Cæsar, of Charlemagne, of Alfred, or of Washington. The primitive mode of baptism, the spot where our Lord received it, the identity of that spot with scenes in the lives of patriarchs and prophets,—these are objects of *sight*, matters of historical fact, and the tradition in reference to them, like all other permanent historical traditions, is the surest of all testimony and the most worthy of credit. It is testimony, in fact, of such a kind, that to reject it would be to leave the whole past without any basis of certainty. There can be no question that

* Compare Stephen's reference to Moses's learning, Paul's allusion to Jacob's leaning on his staff, and to Jannes and Jambres, and Jude's mention of Michael, Balaam, and Enoch, &c., where *historical traditions* are confirmed as *true*, with Christ's statement as to the *religious* "traditions of the elders." Mark vii. 3-13; Acts vii. 20-22; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Heb. xi. 21; Jude ix. 15.

John selected as the scene of his preaching and baptism the point on the Jordan where the great route of travel from Jerusalem and Jericho to the important cities beyond the river crossed; a spot most favorable to gather hearers, and at the same time furnishing facilities for immersion. In that age the spot bore a name so general in signification, and so changeable in form, that before Origen's day it began to be supplanted by another of similar import;* and afterward, for the same reason, this second name also disappeared. The only important fact, the *locality of our Lord's baptism*, is known long after its transitory name has passed away; just as the spot where the Pilgrims landed will a thousand years hence be certainly fixed, although even now only the antiquary knows that its original name was Pawtuxet.

Enon.

The second locality where John baptized, called *Enon*, cannot with so much precision be ascertained. Yet the following facts can be established: it was situated *on the Jordan*; it was

* The signification usually assigned to *Bethabara* is "house or place of the ford or passage," and that of *Bethany* (the name Origen rejected) is "house or place of ships," the two being equivalent.—See Robinson's *N. Test. Greek Lexicon*.

eight Roman or about seven and one third English miles south of ancient Bethshean or Scythopolis ; and it was at or near the great thoroughfare from Galilee and Samaria across the Jordan to the important cities on the other side. That it was *on the Jordan* is implied in the fact, that no one of the New Testament writers mentions any other water than the Jordan in which John baptized. Eusebius and Jerome describe the location as well known in their early day ; implying that, for the three hundred previous years since Christ's day, the place had always been marked. The former makes this record : "Ænon, near to Alim, where John baptized, as in the Gospel according to John. And even to the present time the place is shown, eight miles from Scythopolis, toward the south, near to Salim and the Jordan." The latter records : "Ænon, near Salim, where John baptized, as it is written in the Gospel according to John ; and the place is now shown, at the eighth milestone from Scythopolis at the South, near Salim and the Jordan." The testimony of these ancient writers, who lived so near the time of Christ, and had such ample opportunities for investigation, fixes the site of Enon *on the Jordan*, and at seven and one third English miles south of ancient Scythopolis, or Bethshean, whose ruins yet remain a distinct landmark, bear-

ing the name of Beisan. Among more modern authors, Brocardus, in the later period of the Crusades, makes this mention of it: — “Before Mount Galaad, toward Jezreel, which is on the northern side of Mount Gilboa, a level road passes from Jordan at Salim, where John baptized. From Bethsan there are two Gallic miles (nearly three English) toward the west to Jezreel.” A reference to Dr. Robinson’s map will show that this road must have passed all along the north-western slope of Mount Gilboa, through the plain to the river; and that it was at the point upon the Jordan where the great thoroughfare from Western Galilee and Samaria crosses it, that John selected his favorable location for baptizing. Burkhardt has the following on the general locality. Of Beisan he says: “The ancient town was watered by a river now called *Moiët Bysan* (Waters of Beisan), which flows in different branches through the plain.” “The town is built along the banks of the rivulet.” Having spoken of the mountain range north of Beisan, he says: “At one hour distant to the south, the mountains begin again.” Burkhardt crossed the Jordan, two hours distant (about six miles) from Beisan, from which point its ruins lay north-northwest. It was the 2nd of July, in midsummer, when he crossed; and at that season he found the stream

“80 paces broad and 3 feet deep.” He adds: “the river is fordable in many places during summer, but the few spots where it may be crossed in the rainy season are known only to the Arabs. The river, for three hours from the lake [Tiberias], flows on the west side of the valley, then on the eastern, and at two hours south of the ford returns to the western side. Near where we crossed, to the south, are ruins called *Lukkot*.” Burkhardt’s statement as to the waters of the Beisan does not interfere with Josephus’s statement, that the valley was without water except the Jordan;* since what he calls a *river* in one sentence he calls a *rivulet* in another. As he crossed evidently near the place where John baptized, his statement as to the size of the stream is valuable. His mention of the direction of the river from Beisan, nearly due south, shows that, according to Eusebius and Jerome’s statement, Enon might be *south* of Beisan, and yet *on the Jordan*. We learn, also, that, at the point where John baptized, the valley ran near the eastern mountains, having on the west a plain where a habitable town would naturally stand. We see from his statement, also, that John’s place of baptizing could not have been far from the thoroughfare by which Jacob and his family and flocks crossed.

* Josephus, Wars, IV. 8. 2.

Dr. Robinson thus describes Ain Jalud, "a very large fountain" near Jezreel, which is about eight miles northwest of Beisan: "It spreads out at once into a fine limpid pool forty or fifty feet in diameter, in which great numbers of small fish were sporting." In speaking of the stream which passes Beisan he says: "This would seem probably to be the rivulet which comes down from the valley of Jezreel."* While this account shows that in Palestine there are pools and other places where immersion might be practiced, it of course furnishes no information as to Enon, which was eight Roman miles south of Beisan. The celebrated English travelers, Irby and Mangles, make the following statements on this locality: "At one hour and twenty minutes from Bysan the depth of the ford reached above the bellies of the horses. We measured the breadth and found it 140 feet. . . . About half a mile to the south is a tomb on a barrow called Sheikh Daoud."

The expedition of Lieut. Lynch, during the spring of 1848, has added some important particulars to what was before known as to this locality. In his account of the day previous to his passing the section of the river where Enon must have been situated, he records, that, near their en-

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. III. pp. 167, 168, 175.

camping place (which on the map is two or three miles below Beisan), "the river describes a series of frantic curvilinears, and returns in a contrary direction to its main course." "The river averaged to-day forty-five yards in width, and four feet in depth." The land party who visited Beisan, not far from that town "came to quite a large stream," evidently the same mentioned above. The following day, during which the position of ancient Enon must have been passed, Lieut. Lynch seems to have passed the most enchanting region on the river. Of this day he says: "The river, from its eccentric course, scarcely permitted a correct sketch of its topography to be taken. It curved and twisted north, south, east, and west, turning, in the short space of half an hour, to every quarter of the compass, seeming as if desirous to prolong its luxuriant meanderings in the calm and silent valley." "Here and there were spots of solemn beauty. The numerous birds sang with a music strange and manifold. . . . Above all, yet attuned to all, was the music of the river, gushing with a sound like that of shawms and cymbals. . . . At times we issued from the shadow and silence of a narrow and verdure-tented part of the stream into an open bend, where the rapids rattled, and the light burst in, and the birds sang their wild wood song." Over and over, with a

spirit resembling that of romance, the almost enchanted navigator repeats the varied beauties of that day's progress.

Knowing now, as we do, from the ancient Christian writers, that in the midst of this very scene stood "Enon," who can fail to see where the descriptive John obtained his expression "many waters" or "much water," for these interminable windings of the river certainly gave many a shady retreat, and a shallow, gentle flow, for the administering of immersion; and those "rattling rapids" and dashing cataracts are, in their appropriate measure, "the *voice* of many waters." Further on, in reference to this same day's journey, Lieut. Lynch says: "In our course to-day we have passed twelve islands, all but three of diminutive size, and noted fourteen tributary streams, ten on the right [or west] and four on the left bank. With the exception of four, they were trickling rivulets." "The width of the river was as much as seventy yards, with two knots current, and narrowed again to thirty yards, with six knots current; the depth ranging from two to ten feet." "About five miles nearly due west from the camp were the ruins of Succoth." Lieut. Lynch has so much of his own impressions to record this day, that he has mentioned little or nothing of the observations of the land party, except that, on

account of the mountain range running near the river, they were obliged, most of the day, to travel far to the west of the stream. This, however, they were not obliged to do, until farther south than the site of ancient Enon.

It was the happy lot of your correspondent, four days afterward, on Tuesday, April 18th, 1848, to meet the party at the Pilgrim's bathing-place below, when Dr. Anderson became his companion to Jerusalem. Particular inquiries were made as to the shape of the country, and as to other particulars. No stream or fountain was met by the party during the day on which they traversed the plain where Enon once stood. No relic of such a name seems to remain. The permanent record of the early Christians, sanctioned by the New Testament writers, and confirmed by all subsequent observations, leaves no doubt that Enon was at a passage of the Jordan in the romantic region above described, and at a point which might be accurately ascertained by any one who should measure the distance from Beisan. It was my design to visit this locality, a few days after meeting the party on the Jordan, and personally to examine it; but on arriving within a day's journey of the region, no persuasion or offer of money could prevail on my Arab attendants to venture into the dangerous neighborhood. The replies to

my inquiries, however, and my own distant scanning of the region from mountain summits, left an impression hardly less definite and satisfactory than a personal visit could have given.

The Place where Philip baptized the Eunuch.

Yet one more locality in Palestine mentioned as the scene of Christian baptism in the time of the Apostles demands notice ; namely, the place on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza where the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized by Philip. No spot in Palestine was marked with more interest and more particularity by the early Christian pilgrims and Christian scholars. The Bourdeaux Pilgrim, less than three hundred years after the event, described with care its situation. His note is (as he advances from Bethlehem) : "Thence to Bethazsora is fourteen miles, where is the fountain in which Philip baptized the eunuch. Thence to the oak where Abraham dwelt is nine miles. Thence to Hebron is two miles." Eusebius, on the word *Bethsur*, has the following note : "Bethsur of the tribe of Judah or Benjamin. There is also now a village Bethsoran, twenty miles distant from Jerusalem toward Hebron, where also a fountain issuing from a mountain is shown, in which the eunuch of Candace is said to have been baptized by Philip. There is also another Beth-

sur in the tribe of Judah, distant one mile from the city of Eleutheropolis." Jerome in like manner says on the same word: "Bethsur in the tribe of Judah or Benjamin. And there is at this day a village Bethsoron, to us going from Jerusalem to Hebron, at the twentieth milestone; near which a fountain, boiling up at the foot of a mountain, is absorbed by the same soil from which it springs; and the Acts of the Apostles record that the eunuch of Queen Candace was baptized in this by Philip. There is another village Bethsur in the tribe of Judah, a mile distant from Eleutheropolis." In his beautiful eulogy on Paula, the Roman pilgrim, Jerome records: "She began to pass over the ancient way which leads to Gaza, the power or the riches of God, and in silence to revolve with herself how the Ethiopian eunuch, prefiguring the people of the nations, had changed his skin; and while she read again the ancient document, she found again the fountain of the Gospel. And thence she passed to the right. From Bethsur she came to Escol, which is translated, the *grape-cluster*. . . . And she ascended to Hebron." In the days of the Crusaders the same locality was fixed. Brocardus, A. D. 1283, records: "From Hebron it is reckoned three Gallic leagues [four and a half Roman miles] toward the north, declining a little to the west, to *Nehel-Escol*, that is, the

torrent-bed of the grape-cluster, whence the spies bore the branch of the grape: Num. xiii. 23, 24, 25. At the left of this valley through half a league [three quarters of a Roman mile] descends the stream in which Philip baptized the eunuch of Queen Candace, not far from Sicelech. From *Nehel Escol* it is reckoned eight leagues [twelve Roman miles] to the house of Zachariah." At a later period, (perhaps for the reason that *Bethsur* was a general name, and given to different places, perhaps also from a spirit of controversy between the Eastern and Western Christians, or for convenience,) the location of the traditionary spot was changed; as Sinai was in like manner changed to Serbal.* Hence several succeeding modern writers, as Quistorpius, Pococke, and Buckingham, describe the fountain of Philip as being in a valley, which Pococke states to be "about six miles north-northwest of Bethlehem." Dr. Robinson doubts the authority of the early tradition; intimating the two objections, that the Itinerary of the Bourdeaux Pilgrim makes Bethsur eleven Roman miles from Hebron, whereas it is but six miles to the site he himself (doubtless correctly) has marked for Bethsur, and again, that the road from Jerusalem to Gaza could not have

* Alluded to in Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. pp. 173-186.

passed that way. * As to the first difficulty, it is doubtless explained by Jerome, who describes Paula as *turning to the right* in going from Bethsur to Escol, evidently making a *circuit* around the mountain interposed, instead of going directly over it. The Bourdeaux Pilgrim is precisely accurate in the other distances he mentions; for his six miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and his fourteen miles from Bethlehem to Bethsur make the twenty miles of Eusebius and Jerome; and his two miles from the oak of Abraham to Hebron agrees precisely with the *forty minutes* occupied by Dr. Robinson in passing over the same ground. †

As to the second objection, Reland will reply to it. Dr. Robinson marks another locality, Tellel-Hasy (which is also on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza by way of Hebron), suggesting that there is a sufficient expanse of water for the administration, though he does not describe its size. ‡ Many others equally favorable might be mentioned on the same road; but the authority of Eusebius and Jerome, as to the precise locality where the rite was administered, cannot be disregarded where *baptism* is concerned, any more than where the site of an old Roman town, as Eleu-

* Researches, Vol. I. p. 320.

† Ibid., Vol. II. p. 429.

‡ Ibid. Vol II. pp. 380, 641.

theropolis, is to be determined. The best authority in Biblical geography of modern times, Reland, speaking of *Bethsur*, regards the locality mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome to be the same as that mentioned among the mountains between Jerusalem and Hebron in Joshua's time, which was afterward fortified by Rehoboam.* He thinks it also the same as the *Bathsura* fortified by the Maccabees, which is described as "in Idumea," and again as "on the borders of Judea;" while he regards the mentioned distance, "five furlongs from Jerusalem," either to be a mistake, or to refer to another fortress.† As to the road to Gaza and the locality where the eunuch was baptized, Reland's language is: "Near this village there is fountain boiling up at the foot of the mountain, and in which, they say, the eunuch of Queen Candace was baptized. [See Eusebius in his Onomasticon and the Jerusalem Itinerary.] This tradition Cellarius argues to be false, because the Ethiopian was not going in the way leading to Hebron, but in the way leading to Gaza, which declines far to the west of Hebron. But, though Gaza may lie to the west of Hebron, the roads were not always constructed straight through the

* Josh. xv. 58 and 2 Chron. xi. 7.

† 1 Mac. iv. 29, 61; vi. 7, 26, 31, 49; ix. 52; xiv. 7, 33; also, 2 Mac. xi. 5, etc.

shortest routes ; nor do I think that by this circumstance the authority of this tradition is diminished. I acknowledge that a route might be established from Jerusalem to Gaza, first toward the west as far as the plains of Judah, and then through the region bordering on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea to Gaza. We know also that formerly (whether as early as the time at which the eunuch lived that third route existed is uncertain) journeys were made from Jerusalem to Eleutheropolis, and thence to Ascalon, and so on to Gaza. This follows from the Itinerary of Antonine. But that through Hebron also the journey to Gaza was made, follows from the fact, that in almost all the itineraries of the moderns we read that, if any one journeyed from Jerusalem to Gaza, they went through Hebron thither ; never, so far as I know, through the plains bordering on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea."

With reason does Reland express the doubt whether the route by Eleutheropolis existed in the eunuch's day ; since according to Dr. Robinson that town is not mentioned, even by its name *Betogabra*, until the beginning of the second century after Christ, nor by its later and more important name till the fourth century. On the Article "*Ælia Gazam*," *From Jerusalem to Gaza*, Reland presents the same view again. On the

word *Gaza* he expresses the opinion, that the word "desert," in Acts viii. 26, refers to the *city*, not to the *route*. It is worthy of remark, however, that the designation, coming as it does from the pen of Luke, is peculiarly applicable to the *route by Hebron*: for the *same writer* uses the *same word*, in the *same general sense*, and in describing the *same region*, when he mentions that John the Baptist was reared "in the deserts;" the home of John's parents, according to Dr. Robinson, being at Jutta near Hebron.*

Starting now from Jerusalem on the route thus indicated, let us view the facilities for immersion along its course, and especially at the spot where history has fixed the eunuch's baptism. Proceeding on horses, at the ordinary rate of three Roman miles an hour, † in two hours and thirty minutes we reach the three immense pools of Solomon, from which water was conducted to Jerusalem. In Christ's day they were little lakes of water, for the three cover about three acres of ground, ‡ and when filled they furnished all needed facilities for immersion, lying open, as they do, and in a retired valley. Even now, such is the quantity of water in the lower pool, that a more

* See Luke i. 80.

† See Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 545.

‡ Ibid. Vol. II. p. 165.

convenient place for the sacred ordinance could hardly be desired. Proceeding thence over hill and dale, and through one long valley, which, from the number of its wells, the muleteers call "Wady-el-Beer," the *Valley of Wells*, in one hour and fifty minutes more we stopped on a hill-side to water our horses, and to drink at a large reservoir with an arched roof, from which the water is drawn up with a bucket. Of this place Dr. Robinson says: "The road up the ascent is artificial; half way up is a cistern of rain water, and an open place of prayer for the Mohammedan travelers."* At this spot immersion would not be difficult. Descending thence into the fine valley before us, crossing it, and ascending on the opposite side, in thirty-five minutes more we reached the ruins of an ancient town, which our muleteer calls Howoffnee, but which Dr. Robinson has marked Abu Fîd; mentioning "olive-trees and tillage around, and a reservoir of rain water."† This *reservoir* lies in the open field, with a grassy brink around it. It is fifty or sixty feet square, and it is now, in the last of April, full of water, the depth being apparently from three to five

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 320. The water is evidently *spring*-water, rather than rain-water; for it is slightly tinged with the limestone of the hills.

† Ibid., Vol. I. p. 320.

feet. It is evidently ancient, the walls being built up of large hewn stones. A fitter place for immersion could not be desired. Along in front of the old town and pool, a fine old Roman road, paved with stone and having neat curbing stones at the side, may be traced in the grass some distance down the hill-side toward Jerusalem; as evident a carriage-road as is the old Appian Way now seen south of Rome. Proceeding onward, through a country quite open and considerably cultivated, in one hour and five minutes we reach, at the foot of a long and steep hill, the ruins of a fortress or church on the left of our road. The structure is perhaps fifty feet front, and sixty feet long. Within there are the remains of two large halls, with an arched ceiling. The stones of the building are massive, some of them eight feet long and two feet square. There are three door-ways in front. In some respects it resembles a fortress, in others an ancient church. On the hill side, half a mile southwest, is another less ruined fortress. The one near us is called, by the shepherds keeping their flocks here, *Anee-ed-Dirweh*, and the other, *Es-Soor-ed-Dirweh*. In front of the fortress by us is a fine gushing fountain of sweet water, and broad stone troughs in which we water our horses. This spot has been fixed on by Dr. Robinson as the *Bethsur*

mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome as the place where the eunuch was baptized.* Halul, mentioned next to Bethsur in the list of towns of Joshua's age,† stands on the hill top, a mile or more distant, still called Hulhul by the natives. The *distance*, which we have made six hours by horse or eighteen Roman miles from Jerusalem on the *direct* route, agrees well with the twenty miles of the *ancient* route, which *bent easterly through Bethlehem*. The ground in front of the fountain and of the structure behind it is so broken up and covered with stones, that it is difficult to determine what was once here. There is now a slightly depressed hollow, with a sandy or gravelly bottom. It is hardly conceivable that, in the days of Herod, the fountain-builder, this most favorable spring should not have been made to supply a pool in this land of such structures; and even now water sufficient to supply such a reservoir flows from the troughs, and soaks into the soil; as, according to Jerome's mention, in his day it seems also to have been absorbed. That there was an *ancient* and even a *modern* route

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 320, note. Under the word Beth-tsur, in Robinson's edition of Gesenius's Hebrew Lexicon, the name Beit-Sur is said also to be applied to ed-Dirweh.

† Joshua xv. 58.

from Jerusalem to Gaza *by Hebron*, Reland and the ancient Christian writers have shown; and, what is more, even now the *usual* route from Jerusalem to Gaza is by Hebron. If the traveler at Gaza, for instance, hires horses and mules to Jerusalem, the *understanding* is, that the journey is to be made by Hebron, as the smoother and safer road; and an extra price must be paid to go by the more direct, though rougher and more dangerous route. That an ancient "*chariot*" road passed this way, the observant traveler will often perceive on his journey. Dr. Robinson twice between Hebron and Jerusalem, notices this;* and we have traced even plainer evidences.

The task to which you invited me is at length finished; having swelled into a more extended labor than was at first anticipated. If the conclusions here suggested shall seem to be just, awakening in the minds of other inquirers the same confident and cheering faith they have begotten in the mind of the writer, it will be an ample requital both for the toil of the study and for the fatigues of the journey.

Yours as ever,
G. W. S.

* Researches, Vol. I. pp. 316, 320; "the path is here paved," &c.; and "the road is artificial."

BUNSEN'S

V I E W O F B A P T I S M,

Ancient and Modern.

BY REV. IRAH CHASE, D. D.

Philadelphia :

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INTRODUCTION.

AN ancient Greek work, recently found among the literary treasures on Mount Athos by an agent from the Royal Library at Paris, was published at Oxford, in 1851. At first, it was ascribed to Origen; but strong reasons have been brought forward, by the Chevalier Bunsen and others, for believing it to be from the pen of the learned HIPPOLYTUS, Bishop of Portus, near Rome, who had personal intercourse with Irenæus, near the close of the second century, and honored him as his teacher. The examination of the newly discovered work called up afresh to the Chevalier's mind his ample studies in early ecclesiastical history; and it led him to prepare, with remarkable promptitude, his publication entitled, "HIPPOLYTUS AND HIS AGE; or, The Doctrine and Practice of the Church of Rome under Commodus and Alexander Severus: and An-

cient and Modern Christianity and Divinity compared." Commodus and Alexander Severus were Emperors of Rome, the one late in the second century, and the other early in the third.

In 1854, the author issued a new edition, and made it constitute the first two of his seven volumes on "CHRISTIANITY AND MANKIND, their Beginnings and Prospects;" a production rich in antiquarian and philological learning, and acknowledged by all to be, on many deeply interesting subjects, one of the most able and earnest discussions in modern times. In his opinion, the recently discovered work of Hippolytus, embracing as it does copious extracts from fifteen preceding authors whose works are lost, doubles our means of knowing the actual condition of the early Christian churches, up to about the year 236 of the Christian era. Hence the vast labor which he has expended in examining its results, and their application to the various Churches of modern Christendom.

The view of *Baptism* that so distinguished a man presents, in this survey of a most important period of ancient church history, ought to be known, and set in a proper light. His character and position, as will soon be perceived, entitle him to a respectful hearing. Whoever also has known him personally in private, must remember

him with much esteem and love. And yet, let it never be forgotten, there is a higher authority than he.

We have before us a copy of the Liturgy which was prepared under his eye, if not by himself, for the use of the chapel of the Prussian Embassy at Rome, while he was ambassador there. On a blank leaf at the beginning of a copy presented by him to the writer of this tract, in connection with expressing in German, that the book was presented by him *for Christian remembrance*, on the Capitoline Hill, at Rome, March 30, 1833, there is written, also with his own hand, an abbreviation in Greek, indicating CHRIST THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

New historical investigations are bringing forth new testimonies to the principles and observances of the early churches. Thanks to the Prussian ambassador, and to others who have labored with diligence and fidelity, and have spoken with freedom! At the same time, it becomes us and all Christians to keep in mind our only authoritative rule of faith and practice; and not only to know the truth, but also to *obey* it.

The passages referred to, in the following pages, can easily be found in Bunsen's second edition, by consulting the list of correspondencies here presented :

FIRST EDITION.	SECOND EDITION.
Vol. II., p. 104.	Vol. IV., p. 275.
Vol. II., p. 108.	Vol. IV., p. 278.
Vol. III., p. 179.	Vol. II., p. 105.
Vol. III., p. 198.	Vol. II., p. 117.
Vol. III., p. 211.	Vol. II., p. 125.
Vol. III., p. 201.	Vol. II., p. 119.
Vol. III., p. 240.	Vol. II., p. 143.
Vol. III., p. 209.	Vol. II., p. 124.

BUNSEN'S
VIEW OF BAPTISM,
ANCIENT AND MODERN.

CHAPTER I.

INFANT BAPTISM TO BE RETAINED, THOUGH "NEI-
THER SCRIPTURAL NOR APOSTOLICAL."

IN the work of the Chevalier Bunsen, on HIP-
POLYTUS AND HIS AGE, we have a striking ex-
emplification of our proneness to justify, in some
way, the unwarrantable practices which we do not
like to abandon. The author has long occupied a
distinguished position in the literary world. It
will be recollected that, for fifteen or twenty years,
he was the Prussian ambassador at Rome; and
afterward, for several years, at London. He has
enjoyed uncommon facilities for prosecuting his fa-
vorite studies; and he has prosecuted them with
commendable zeal. As a conscientious investigator
of ecclesiastical antiquities, he acknowledges, with

entire frankness, that Infant Baptism was unknown till after the end of the second century; and yet, as a member of the Established National church of Prussia, he would have it retained.

HIPPOLYTUS was an ancient Christian writer, who was born in the latter part of the second century, and who died a martyr in the reign of the emperor Maximin, about A. D. 236. The work which we have mentioned as treating of him and his times, consists of four volumes, published at London, in 1852. It exhibits abundant evidences of erudition; and it discusses a great variety of matters respecting which it is not our design now to say any thing. What follows may be sufficient for the present.

In the second volume, (p. 104,) after mentioning the leading antagonisms of the Protestant Reformed churches with respect to the Romish church of the Middle Ages, the author proceeds thus: "But there are also internal antagonisms in the Reformed churches themselves, contradictions between the principle of the Reformation and its logical consequences, on the one side, and the formularies and ecclesiastical institutions of the seventeenth century, on the other. *The first internal contradiction* consists in this: The Reformation appealed to Scripture alone, and accepted only with a general reserve, the creeds of the Councils. . . . The

Reformation accepted in a similar way Pedobaptism, although its leaders were more or less aware that it was neither scriptural nor apostolic." In speaking of antagonisms between Apostolic Christianity and the systems of the Reformed churches, he says, (p. 108 :) "The theories respecting Pedobaptism, according to any of those systems, would be perfectly unintelligible to the ancient churches, and cannot be brought into harmony with their consciousness and monuments, except by fictions and conventionalities. But these fictions and conventionalities are also required for our own age; and it cannot be denied that on the whole they prove inefficacious and insufficient, and do not satisfy the public conscience. Those who deny this fact, show as much an ignorance of the real state of the world as of the nature of Christianity."

The picture which the author gives of the usage in the apostolic times must not be overlooked.— (Vol. III. p. 179 :) "The Church adhered rigidly to the principle, as constituting the true purport of the baptism ordained by Christ, that no one can be a member of the communion of saints, but by his own solemn vow made in presence of the church. It was with this understanding that the candidate for baptism was immersed in water, and admitted as a brother, upon his confession of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It understood bap-

tism, therefore, in the exact sense of the First Epistle of Peter, (iii. 21,) not as being a mere bodily purification, but as a vow made to God with a good conscience, through faith in Jesus Christ. This vow was preceded by a confession of Christian faith, made in the face of the church, in which the catechumen expressed that faith in Christ and in the sufficiency of the salvation offered by Him. It was a vow to live for the time to come to God and for his neighbor, not to the world and for self; a vow of faith in his becoming a child of God through the communion of his only begotten Son in the Holy Ghost; a vow of the most solemn kind, for life and for death. The keeping of this pledge was the condition of continuance in the church; its infringement entailed repentance or excommunication. All church discipline was based upon this voluntary pledge, and the responsibility thereby self-imposed. But how could such a vow be received without examination? How could such examination be passed without instruction and observation? As a general rule, the ancient church fixed three years for this preparation, supposing the candidate, whether heathen or Jew, to be competent to receive it. With Christian children the condition was the same, except that the term of probation was curtailed according to circumstances. Pedobaptism, in the more modern sense, meaning thereby bap-

tism of new-born infants, with the vicarious promises of parents or other sponsors, was utterly unknown to the early church; not only down to the end of the second, but indeed to the middle of the third century."

In closing his representation of the lamentable change, the author makes the following remark, (p. 198,) which ought not to be forgotten: "When the church attached rights and promises of blessing to any thing except to the conscious abandonment of sin, and to the voluntary vow of dedicating life and soul to the Lord, the consciousness of sin and the longing for real, truthful reformation died away in the same proportion among her members."

After this, and much more of a similar character, that might be quoted, who would expect to find what presents itself on a subsequent page? (p. 211 :) "Upon closer and deeper reflection, it will appear wise to retain Pedobaptism, but to remodel the whole baptismal discipline on the following principles:

"To this end, in the first place, the doctrine of biblical baptism must be reformed in the sense of the German church, and of the doctrinal works of Schleiermacher, Neander, Nitzsch, and the German school in general. According to this view, our act of baptism forms a whole, the commence-

ment of which is the sprinkling of the child, the conclusion the pledge of the grown up and instructed young Christian, sealed by a blessing."

Does any unsophisticated mind need to be informed that what is here proposed involves an utterly inadmissible abuse of language?

But let us hear the next proposal: "In the second place, the superstition that such children of Christian parents, as die of tender age unbaptized, are under damnation, from which they must be rescued by baptism, is to be put down for ever by bringing forward its true corrective." Excellent! For the accomplishment of this we hope and fervently pray.

The author proceeds: "This can only be done by positively and practically realizing the idea that the baptism of new-born children is the outward sign of the vow of the parents to dedicate their child to God, as his gift, entrusted to them; and to prepare it by a Christian education for becoming a member of the Christian church, until it be itself able to profess the faith in Christ, and to make the vow of a godly life dedicated to God and the brethren."

Certainly, parents should dedicate themselves, and their children, and all with which they have been entrusted, to God. Certainly, they should

bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But is it right, by performing a ceremony on them in unconscious infancy, to deprive them of the baptism divinely appointed for the disciple deliberately and devoutly professing faith in the Saviour? Why prevent them from receiving, when they become disciples of Christ, the benefit of putting on Christ according to his appointment, and of being able to remember the impressive act all their days?

Baptism is a *sign*; and, as such, it has been appropriated by our Lord, and made to occupy a specific and prominent place in his religion. Now, to remove it from that place, and appropriate it to another purpose; to make it, arbitrarily, the sign of some other thing, (no matter how good the thing may be,) than that of which He has made it the sign; and, especially, to do this so as, in effect, to supersede and annul the baptism which he has ordained—can not meet with HIS approbation. Manifestly, it cannot be the “true corrective” of the evil deplored. Few, we are confident, very few among those who regard His authority and His claims, and who have duly considered His design in the ordinance, can think it quite safe to conclude that “the doctrine of biblical baptism must be reformed in the sense of the German church.”

The "true corrective" must be sought in ascertaining the truth relative to what He has required; and, when ascertained, in following it with conscientiousness, and with a dutiful reliance on his wisdom and grace.

CHAPTER II.

ANCIENT BAPTISM AND MODERN.

IN the former part of this tract, after adducing from the Chevalier Bunsen's very learned work relative to Hippolytus and his Age, some passages in remarkable harmony with the opinions of the Baptists, it was intimated that much more of a similar character might have been quoted.

Still passing over much in the picture given under the general head of the Christian School and Baptismal Vow, where, among other things, the author calls special attention to the fact that, according to a professedly apostolical constitution as received in the church at Alexandria, even the youngest of those who were to be baptized were such as had been instructed in Christianity; and as such could go into the water with the other candidates, although they more frequently and to a greater extent than these, might, perhaps from the embarrassing excitement of the occasion, need assistance or substitutes in making the necessary responses;—passing over all this, we would now present the greater part of the statements respecting “An-

cient Baptism and Modern," that occur in the section entitled "The Churches of the present day reflected in this Picture." The extract begins with the paragraph on the 201st page of the third volume; and a few notes have been subjoined.

"But if you look a little closer into the ecclesiastical condition of the two ages [the early period and the later down to the present,] are you not overpowered by one predominant feeling? And is this not the feeling, that in the one age we find, upon the whole, connection, reality, internal and external truth; in the other, little else but patchwork and ruins, shams and phantoms? That in the one case a real life was lived, a life of freedom, as to the church and as to the individual; that in the other, conventionalism is fostered, or rather in most instances maintained by fire and sword, by the tyranny of the state churches, or by the unthinking superstition of habit? and that such a state of things is most ill-advisedly vaunted as possessing vitality, or even most impudently proclaims itself perfect and infallible?"

"The ancient baptism comprised, on gospel grounds, four spiritual elements—instruction, examination, the vow, the initiation. To each of these elements was attached a sacred symbol, an

externally-working act of the church, who, by means of her bishops and elders, ordained in the place of God. To instruction, the blessing corresponded; to examination, the imposition of hands; to confession, immersion in water; to the vow for life and death, the unction as priest and king.*

“It is impossible but that this ceremony should have produced a great general impression, which was not diminished if the initiated were the child of Christian parents. The act was his own, as much as it was in the case of a convert from heathenism. . . . The baptism of new-born infants grew out of that of children advancing towards the age of boyhood. From the baptism of the Spirit, which Christ instituted, people relapsed into ceremonial law, and fell back upon the shadow of a Jewish custom, which had ceased to be binding with the extinction of the nation, and now was made a sanction for the religion of the new covenant of Humanity.

“In consequence of this alteration and complete subversion of its main features, brought about

* Our author seems not to be aware of the evil that was even then beginning to enter. Would that man, without divine authority for the purpose, had never presumed, “in the place of God,” to ordain symbolical additions and supposed amendments to what our Lord himself instituted!

principally by the Africans of the third century, and completed by Augustine, [by or before A. D. 428,] these natural elements have been in the course of nearly fifteen centuries, most tragically decomposed, and nothing is now remaining any where but ruins. In the East, people adhere to immersion, although *this* symbol of Man voluntarily and consciously making a vow of the sacrifice of self, lost all meaning in the immersion of a new-born child. The Eastern Church, moreover, practised the unction immediately after the immersion, although that unction implies even more than immersion, man's full consciousness; and is to be the seal of a free pledge—of a responsible act. Yet the Eastern Church requires, nevertheless, the general recognition of both, as necessary to salvation, and denies there is any efficacy in the Western form of baptism.

“The Western Church, under the guidance of Rome, abolished, together with adult baptism, its symbol, immersion, and introduced sprinkling in its stead. She retained unction, the *chrisma*, by way of confirmation, and separated the two acts, [baptism and confirmation;] so that, at all events, a beginning of consciousness and instruction may be assumed to be implied as a justification of the subsequent ceremony. Yet with this she rigidly maintained in her teaching, as the effect of the act

of baptism, all the consequences which the gospel and the Ancient church so undeniably and authentically connect with the previous instruction and the voluntary conscious vow. The doctrine of Augustine was completed and stereotyped by Thomas Aquinas. The practice of the Latin church has equally little correspondence with the custom and spirit of the Ancient, as regards unction. The postponement of this solemnity is a recognition of the principle; but even the legal age of seven is much too early a period to show that the ceremony is not to be an *opus operatum*, but the voluntary act of the conscious mind. And still, the practice prevailing in exclusively Catholic countries, of bringing children of four and five years old to the bishop to be confirmed, proves how little the proper idea to be conveyed by the act is seriously attended to; and more strongly still, how little impression it has made on the popular mind. Whatever improvement has been effected in this practice in France, and to a still greater extent in Catholic Germany, by way of preparation for the first communion, (the admission to which, according to the idea of the ancient church, is expressed directly by the unction,) is due, as history asserts, to the influence of the Reformation on the formation of the popular customs.

“But what did the Reformation itself? The

Reformers retained the doctrine of Augustine, together with pedobaptism. It is true, nevertheless, that they regarded the baptism of new-born infants merely as an offering, a dedication of the children by their parents; as a vicarious act, and as the first step only in a process which was actually to be completed by themselves in riper years, after their Christian education was finished, through their own voluntary confession and vow. We are indebted to Luther especially for this correct conception; and the having worthily and rationally carried it out, is the most blessed work of the Evangelical Church of the German nation.* Confirmation is, at the present moment, together with the principle of intellectual liberty, the Bible, and the

* Perhaps our author, unconsciously, attributes too much of what he deems to be the "correct conception" of baptism to the great Reformer and his associates. Luther endeavored to give evangelical life and character to Confirmation, but left baptism very much as he had found it in the Roman Catholic church. Only he would ascribe to faith what the Papists ascribed to the external act performed. And in order to maintain the consistency of infant baptism with his great doctrine of justification by faith, he supposed that faith is *infused* into infants in answer to the prayer of the church presenting them in baptism and believing. On this assumption, he taught that infant baptism "is truly efficacious, and confers the adoption of the sons of God." See "Baptismal Tracts for the Times," pp. 235 and 186; and D'Aubigne's "History of the Reformation," B. VI. c. 6.

hymns, the principal means of keeping alive German Protestantism. But, at the same time, the doctrine of the sacraments did not admit Confirmation as one of them. Consequently, it was not held to be necessary to salvation, because not prescribed in the gospel; which, however, is equally silent upon the subject of the sprinkling of children. Thus the essential points in the gospel and in the practice of the apostles, faith and self-sacrifice, have been placed lower in the scale than the sprinkling, which was adopted instead of immersion; and the personal act has been held in less estimation than its substitute. This may be compatible with the Romish doctrine of good works, but is as repugnant to the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith as it is to the precepts of the gospel and the practice of the apostles. The leathern scholasticism of the seventeenth century, it is true, knew how to justify all that; but of this justification, neither Scripture rightly interpreted, nor reason speaking its own language, can take cognizance.

“The Protestant Church in Germany fell, besides, into another contradiction; inasmuch as she defended and admitted the validity of Confirmation, as being the voluntary act of the individual, and yet supported, with all her power, the interference of the State; by whose regulations no person can

be admitted into any trade or service, unless he can produce a certificate of Confirmation.

“The Reformed Church, which had no scruple in swallowing the camel of pedobaptism, found no place in its theological conscience for Confirmation, because it was not prescribed in Scripture—was a human invention. In the course of two centuries, wherever the two evangelical confessions [the Lutheran and the Reformed,] co-exist, custom has corrected that untenable theological one-sidedness, by the introduction of the Lutheran confirmation; and this has been one of the many inward preparations to the union of the two confessions.

“The English Church, in her Articles, adopts the general evangelical doctrine of baptism in such a way as to place human faith by the side of Divine grace.—(Art. 27, compared with Art. 33.)* She receives, moreover, the scholastic doctrine which limits the efficacy of baptism to original sin, and excludes from it all deadly sins committed after baptism, as well as the fanatical view that persons once baptized can sin no more.—(Art. 16.) But in her liturgy, exclusively and rigorously prescribed since the end of the seventeenth century, she certainly uses expressions which appear better suited

* And yet, it might have been stated, the 27th Article asserts that “The baptism of young children is *in any wise* to be retained.”

to the Romish than the evangelical doctrines, and which have consequently become a snare to many consciences, and a cause of constantly continuing separation from the church. Lastly, Confirmation has been no farther advanced, either doctrinally or practically, beyond the point at which it was left at the time of the separation from the Church of Rome. The English church, therefore, is not only in this particular essentially unreformed, but considerably behind the French, and especially behind the Roman Catholic church in Germany.

“The Baptists have restored adult baptism. But the restoration of an old form has grown into a formality. The Baptists find it difficult to understand that the idea of the German Protestant act of baptism, which concluded with the vow and benediction, corresponds exactly with the idea of the gospel commandment, the letter of which they push to such an extent; and, under the yoke of an utterly one-sided rigid Calvinism, they are inclined to attach to their own form a superstitious power, by which the efficacy of a continually renewed faith is thrown into the background.”

Here candor and justice seem to require some remark. If what the Baptists have restored—the baptism of penitent believers, the ancient, the scriptural manner of admitting into the church—

has in any case "grown into a formality," the fact is much to be deplored. The remedy, however, is to be found, not in discarding the true and scriptural manner, but in cherishing the spirit that it was intended to promote. If *we* have forgotten the emotions which swelled our bosoms, and the resolutions and promises which, before God and the world, we made when we were "buried with Christ in baptism;" if we have given any occasion for the casting of reproach or scorn upon an ordinance of the blessed Saviour, may we repent, and do the first works!

That the *idea* of the German Protestant *act of baptism*—an act which, according to the theory proposed, commences in the sprinkling of the unconscious infant, and is completed in his regular confirmation, fourteen or eighteen years afterwards, "corresponds exactly with the idea of the gospel commandment," we do, indeed, find it difficult to understand.

In regard to the sweeping censure conveyed in the latter part of the closing sentence, it is, probably, sufficient to say that the respected author must either have written these lines inconsiderately, or he must have been misinformed. Surely, one would think, he cannot have had the means of forming a correct estimate of the religious senti-

ments of those who should be considered as representing the distinctive principles of the Baptists.

At all events, it is quite clear from this strong language of the Chevalier, that what he has written favorably to our views has not been prompted by any bias in our favor. Whatever may be thought of *us*, let *principles* be judged according to their own merits. Perhaps the unfavorable impression may yet be removed. Every Baptist may contribute somewhat to so desirable a result, by living a truly Christian life, looking, not to a frail human master, but—as on the memorable day of our baptism—to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. It is well, if we can, to remove every stumbling-block out of the way; and whether we continue to be reproached or not, it is well to secure the approbation of Him who died for us and rose again, and is to be our final Judge.

APPENDIX.

NEED OF A NEW REFORMATION.*

BY CHEVALIER BUNSEN.

(Taken from the Introduction to the Third volume of his work on Hippolytus; in the second edition, the *second* volume.)

No historical Church of the present day can be compared with that apostolic age, without manifold misconceptions of later times becoming lamentably apparent, in that light of truth and of substantial reality. Between us and those fathers, empty phantoms have started up, darkening that primitive age; and, wherever these dark phantoms are received as lights, they will obscure the light of primitive antiquity, and falsify the life of our own time. A severe trial, therefore, awaits any one who looks primitive Christianity in the face.

And yet, what clear-headed and honest inquirer,

* However we may differ from the distinguished Author as to the extent of the changes required, none can fail to sympathize in the following earnest and decided views, which we have thought worthy of being added here. J. N. B.

to whom Christianity is a life, and its renovation the condition on which all the hopes for the future of the European world are based, has not felt, in our trying and almost Apocalyptic times, the want of entering into communion of life with the spirit of primitive Christianity?

You take your stand upon the Church; here is its commencement. You take your stand upon the Bible; here is its first Apostolical realization. What is required of you is, not to substitute scholarship and research for simple Christian faith, much less to set up the idol of philosophy in the shrine of religion. You have no longer to deal with the abstract philosophy and barren research of the eighteenth century; you live in the nineteenth, one of historical philosophy and of reconstruction. The work to which we are called, is, unweariedly and humbly to sweep the porch of the Temple; to clear the floor; not to riot as destructives in the darkened chambers, but to bestir ourselves to restore, and to allow the light of Heaven to penetrate within them. It is the rubbish of false learning and conventional scholasticism which separates us from the Sanctuary, and it is high time to sweep it away, as the signs of the latter days have appeared, in which infidel superstition intends to usurp the altar, and willful falsehood the throne of truth.

Assuming now the result of such a conscientious examination of facts and documents to be what I have arrived at, in these volumes, (and I am firmly convinced no thinker and investigator can arrive, upon the whole, at a very different conclusion,) the question arises: What is to be done? Shall we build ourselves a new house out of some blocks of the Apostolic age, upon the ruins of the one in which we were born and live?* Or shall we, in the despair of unbelief, and in the weakness of materialism, (which is real ungodliness,) refuse all research and all investigation into our church life and common constitution, in whatever shape; and, above all, shall we refuse to lay a finger on the plague spots, because we might make the evil worse? Is this not saying, in other words, that Christianity is not true? Or, since the ecclesiastical foundations are every where gone or giving way, shall we try to strengthen them with outward forms; or, if need be, support them by force, because the forms of religion are so closely connected with State arrangements and outward customs, and even, perhaps, with influence and power, with interest and wealth? Or shall we rake up all the arts of sophistry and false learning, straining at gnats and swallowing camels, in order

*It is to be remembered that the esteemed Author is a member of a National Church. J. N. B.

to persuade people that all is right, although the form satisfies the conscience no longer, and leaves the mind empty?

Is it not time in truth to withdraw the veil from our misery? to point to the clouds which rise from all quarters, to the noxious vapors which have already well nigh suffocated us? to tear off the mask of hypocrisy, and destroy that sham which is undermining all real ground beneath our feet? to point out the dangers which surround, nay, threaten already to engulf us?

Is the state of things satisfactory in a Christian sense, where so much that is unchristian predominates, and where Christianity has scarcely begun here and there, to penetrate the surface of common life? Shall we be satisfied with the increased outward respect paid to Christianity and the Church? Shall we take it as a sign of renewed life, that the names of God and Christ have become the fashion, and are used as a party badge?

Can a society be said to be in a healthy condition in which material and selfish interests in individuals, as well as in the masses, gain every day, more and more, the upper hand? in which so many thinking and educated men are attached to Christianity only by outward forms, maintained either by despotic power, or, by a not less despotic, half superstitious,

half hypocritical custom?* When so many churches are empty and satisfy but few, or display more and more outward ceremonials, and vicarious rites? When a godless schism has sprung up between spirit and form, or has even been preached up as a means of rescue? When gross ignorance, or confused knowledge, cold indifference, or the fanaticism of superstition prevails, as to the understanding of Holy Scripture, as to the history, nay, the fundamental ideas of Christianity? When force invokes religion in order to command, and demagogues appeal to the religious element in order to destroy? When, after all their severe chastisements and bloody lessons, most statesmen base their wisdom only on the contempt of mankind; and when the prophets of the people preach a liberty, the basis of

*“The first result of the protectorate of the Christian emperors was, that in their codes they converted church ordinances (that about baptism, for instance,) into statute laws. Thus Justinian, in the beginning of the sixth century, ordered newborn infants to be baptized, under a penalty for neglecting it; *a law which still passes for a Christian principle in the code of many a Christian State.* Evangelical and Apostolical freedom thus received its death blow from the same police crutch which was given it for support. It has remained in the same crippled state to this day, in the East.”—*Bunsen's Hippolytus*, vol. iii. p. 249.

Is not here the secret of much of that persecution which the Baptists, to this hour, suffer on the Continent of Europe, even from Protestant States? J. N. B. .

which is selfishness, the object libertinism, and the wages are vice? And this is an age, the events of which show more and more fatal symptoms, and in which a cry of ardent longing pervades the people, re-echoed by a thousand voices?

I have neither written for my own personal gratification, nor for any party, either here or in Germany, nor for any fashion of the day. I have meditated and inquired from an earnest desire to discover truth, and to meet the wants of a confused and eventful age, which yearns after light and information; and I have said nothing which I have not thoroughly examined and tested for at least twenty-five years. Thus, while I shall not be scared by any dictatorial assertions, neither will any correction come unwelcome to me. Of the truth of the fundamental views which I have expressed, and of the soundness of their philosophical and historical ground work, I have as little doubt as I have of my own existence.

This applies, in particular, to my conviction that the question at this moment is, not *how to carry out*, but *how to prepare* A SECOND GRAND RECONSTRUCTIVE REFORMATION. The porch of the Temple must first be more thoroughly cleansed than it was in the sixteenth, and above all, restored more honestly than it was in the seventeenth century; and,

lastly, the work must be handled more practically than it has yet been done by the critical German school of this age.*

In the mean time, let every one cleanse his own heart and house as well as he can. When the feeling of the misery which is coming, and a real faith in the saving truth which is in Christ, shall have thoroughly penetrated the nations, then will the Spirit of God assuredly come upon them with might, either for the reformation or the annihilation of the existing Churches. Whether this crisis will end in the renewal or the destruction of the present nations and states, will depend upon the position they take in face of the demands of the Gospel, and the wants of the time. For every nation and age has its time and its day of visitation, after which its fate is sealed.

This great movement, however will assuredly

* The following concession of our Author on this point, suggests a fact too important to be overlooked by us or others. J. N. B.

“But how little the National Churches of the seventeenth century can make head against the onsets of the Baptists, in countries where a great and free religious movement exists, is evinced by the fact, that, among serious Christians of the English race in the United States, the Baptist or Congregational preachers are on the increase more than any other sect, so that they form already the most numerous and most progressive community.”—*Bunsen's Hippolytus*, vol. iii. p. 209.

not lead to the destruction of Christianity, but to its establishment on a firmer basis; not to the lowering of the person of Jesus of Nazareth, but to his greater glorification; and God's kingdom of Truth and Liberty on earth, will advance as triumphantly over the perishing as over the renovated kingdoms and states of the present world.

My belief in this future rests upon the following convictions, which have been considerably strengthened by, and seem to me naturally to flow from the criticism of the work of Hippolytus and of his Age; and which I consider as the final result of the comparison between Ancient and Modern Christianity and divinity, founded upon that criticism.

Christianity is true, because free; and it is free and freeing, because true Christianity is philosophically and historically true; and it could not be true, except by being so both by its thought and by its history. It is true, by the inexhaustible truth of the eternal thought which it manifests, and by the equally inexhaustible truth of the divine individuality upon which it rests, Jesus of Nazareth. It is true, by the genuineness and historical truth of the apostolic and evangelic accounts which we possess of this exalted individuality, and by the harmony of these records with the living tradition which accompanies it. This tradition is the Church, and the Church is Christianized human-

ity; Christianized by the Spirit of Christ and by the Scriptures which that Spirit produced.

The great proof of the divine nature and truth of Christianity, is its power of regenerating the world.

This regenerating power has shown itself twice in an unparalleled world-renovating change, produced by the spirit of Christianity: in the moral and intellectual revival of the ancient world, after the downfall of the universal empire of Rome in the fifth Christian century; and by the moral, intellectual and political revival of the modern world after the downfall of the omnipotence of papal Rome in the sixteenth.

Whatever there exists of great, of hopeful, of redeeming, in the present state of the human race, is the effect of Christ and Christianity. This is the true, progressive, and comforting fulfillment of all the prophecies of Christ himself, and of his Apostles, and of all those prophetic words and deeds of the ancient world, (principally, not exclusively, of the Jewish,) which speak of a reign of truth and justice upon this earth.

The nations of Christendom, whether of the Greek and Roman, or of the National, that is to say, Protestant communions, may live, and ought to live, by the side of each other in charity and peace; but they can only do so by virtue of the great prin-

ciple of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and of the free political constitutions it has produced and is producing. For that great principle is the moral self-responsibility of each individual, founded upon personal faith in Christ and in his Spirit, reflected, as both are, by the conscience of the human breast, and by the reason of the human mind. This faith produces, necessarily, self-responsibility; self-responsibility produces, and virtually is, self-government; self-government renders possible, and works political liberty; and this political liberty is the only safeguard, as much as it is itself the fruit of religious liberty. Both liberties together, render material toleration possible without indifference, and prepare the age in which divine charity is to rule paramount over the world.

Whoever idolizes the letter of Byzantine Christianity, and the system of Medieval divinity, breaks with the church of the Apostles; he forfeits the Spirit of Christ, and falls out of the very communion with the ancient believers which he pretends to cherish. Whoever will attempt, whether out of fanaticism, or, (which is more likely to be the case, and more condemnable,) for political ends, to replace those systems upon the throne of the world, breaks with the present and with the future. And whoever seeks for the conservative element in the restoration of sacerdotal dominion over the con-

science, and of priest-rule over national government, prepares not only great political revolutions, but also the entire downfall of the hierarchy itself. Those who have sown superstition have reaped, and are reaping, anarchy. But those who will do so now, or in any time to come, will bring upon themselves, and as far as in them lies, upon the world, a much greater convulsion and destruction than ever were witnessed since the downfall of the Roman empire.

THE END

REASONS

FOR

BECOMING A BAPTIST:

TOGETHER WITH

A Farewell Letter to his late Charge.

BY REV. S. REMINGTON, A. M.,

LATE PASTOR

OF ST. PAUL'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, LOWELL, MASS.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say."

Sixty-Fourth Thousand.

PHILADELPHIA:

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,

530 ARCH STREET.

Lowell, March 2d, 1846.

DEAR BROTHER—Believing that the reasons assigned by you, for becoming a Baptist are eminently scriptural, and that their general circulation would promote the cause of truth, we, your brethren in the ministry, respectfully invite you to commit your interesting work to the press.

Affectionately yours, in the service of Christ,

LEMUEL PORTER,
IRA PERSON,
DANIEL C. EDDY,
D. BURROUGHS,
J. BALLARD.

REV. S. REMINGTON.

Lowell, March 3d, 1846.

REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN—As I desire to promote the cause of truth, and as you think the publication of my “Reasons for becoming a Baptist” may contribute to it, I therefore accede to your request,—praying that the Great Head of the Church may give it his sanction.

With great respect, Rev. brethren, I am happy to subscribe myself your fellow-laborer in the best of causes.

S. REMINGTON.

REV. LEMUEL PORTER, &c.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by the
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in
and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

REASONS
FOR
BECOMING A BAPTIST.

“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”—*Matt.* 28: 19, 20.

THE word “therefore” refers to the preceding text, in which Jesus Christ asserts his authority to rule and regulate his church; to appoint his ministers, and to give them their appropriate commission, so that all their doings may be done in his name and by his authority. Hence he says—“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” “Go ye therefore”—

You will observe the order of their commission—To teach, baptize, and then build up the church on her most holy faith—and his promise is to be with all such to the end of the world.

They are, then, first to teach all nations what they must do to be saved, and bap-

tize all that believe. See Mark 16 : 15, 16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Then secondly, having introduced them into the church of God by the rite of baptism, the command is—"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." By this means they are to become established Christians, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

The main point which invites our attention upon this occasion, is Baptism.

What is the mode, and who are the proper subjects of Christian baptism? are questions upon which the Christian world have been, and still are, divided.

The Baptists tell us that believers are the only subjects, and immersion the only true mode of administering the ordinance, while Pedo-baptists contend that infants ought to be baptized, and that sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, are equally valid.

There are points, however, upon which both parties generally agree,—that baptism is a gospel ordinance; that it is the door of admission into the visible church, and ought always to precede the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and that it should be administered to the same subject but once.

This common ground implies its impor-

tance to both parties. Though it is an external rite, and not absolutely necessary to salvation, yet being an institution of the gospel, and the visible line of separation between the world and Christ's kingdom, it is of great importance that we should observe it agreeably to its original design and intent.

It is a positive law, and hence should be observed according to its letter. There is no mending, altering, or changing the laws and institutions of Christ allowed to any of his followers, however devout and holy they may be. He is our Lord, as well as Saviour, and we must hear and obey him.

This discourse will contain a brief narration of the different steps which I took in the investigation of this subject, and the conclusions to which I arrived.

To begin. The first book which I opened was the New Testament. In this book, the word baptize often occurs,—a Greek word with an English termination. To understand its meaning seemed to be the first step for me to take. I therefore had recourse to the Greek Testament which contains the original language in which it was written. Here I found the word baptizo with its noun baptisma, and participle

baptizontes ; the verb, called by our translators "baptize," the noun "baptism," and the participle "baptizing."

As words are the signs of our ideas, the great point with me was, to obtain the true translation of the word "baptizo;" in order to which, I examined every passage in the New Testament where the word is used, and found in every place where baptism was spoken of, this was the word used by the inspired penman.

My next business was to obtain the meaning of the word baptizo, as translated by Greek lexicographers. I obtained the testimony of no less than twenty-three, all of whom agree that its primary meaning is "to immerse, plunge, dip, overwhelm,"—and a few of them give as a remote meaning, "to wash, lave, or tinge;" this, however, as a consequence, or by implication, because a thing washed, whatever may be its process, must be as wet as if immersed. Hence, Alstedius says, "it means not to wash, except by consequence."

So overwhelming is this testimony, that many learned Pede-baptists, I found, were constrained to admit it—among whom is Professor Stuart of Andover. He says that "the words bapto and baptizo mean to dip, plunge, or immerse into any thing

liquid," and that "all lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this." Accordingly, I sought out the opinions of a number of distinguished divines, who were acquainted with the best Greek authorities, including classic literature, and to my surprise, I found an host of witnesses who were Pede-baptists, and yet, in spite of their creed, conceded the point.

Your attention is invited to the testimonies of a few of these witnesses.

Campbell says, "The word *baptism*, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse. Had baptizo been employed in the sense of *raino*, to sprinkle, (which, as far as I know, it never is, in any use, sacred or classical,) the expression would doubtless have been, "I indeed baptize water upon you."

Beza. "Neither does the word baptizo signify to wash, unless consequently, for it properly signifies to plunge into, for the sake of tinging or dying."

John Calvin says, "The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

Luther. "The term baptizo is Greek, and may be rendered dipping, as when we dip any thing in water, so that it is

covered all over. And although the custom be now abolished among many, (for they do not dip their children, but only pour on them a little water,) yet they ought to be wholly immersed, and immediately taken out; the etymology of the word seems to require it."

Melancthon. "Baptism is an entire action, to wit, a dipping and the pronouncing these words, I baptize thee, &c."

I could quote more than a dozen additional, whose testimonies are equally explicit, but for the want of time, I will close this paragraph by giving you *Dr. Whitby's*. He says, "Baptism by immersion, is suitable both to the institution of our Lord and his apostles; and was by them ordained to represent our burial with Christ, and so our dying unto sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life."

The next thing that attracted my attention was, *the practice of the Greek church*. This church is of ancient date, and comprises at this day a large portion of the Christian world; portions of which are in the coldest latitudes in the Russian Empire. And yet immersion is their only mode, and has always been so from the beginning. Now, it will be recollected that the Greek

is their mother language, and it is to be supposed that they understand the popular meaning of the word baptizo, and that their practical application of that term to immersion, is an imperishable monument to its truth.

In view of these facts I inquired, Whence came the practice of sprinkling? The Greek lexicographers answer, "Not from us." The Oriental church answers, "Not from us." The Roman Catholic church answers not from the primary meaning of the word, nor from the primitive practice, which was immersion; but by authority committed to her *she changed it*. I could but wonder at the inconsistency of the Reformed churches, and their learned men, who, with the writings of the Reformers in their hands, declare, in the language of Calvin, that "the word baptize means to immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church," and yet plead for the change on the ground of expediency and convenience.

My only alternative, therefore, was either to admit the infallibility of the Papal church, and her right to change or alter the ordinances of the gospel, or that immersion was the primitive and only scrip-

tural baptism. Of course, I must choose the latter.

By this time I consider the word fairly translated. With this translation I began to read the Scriptures. "In those days came John the Immerser—and were all immersed of him in the river Jordan. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be immersed of him. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and immersed. Jesus made and immersed more disciples than John, though Jesus himself immersed not, but his disciples. He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved. Go ye,—teach all nations, immersing them. Then Peter said, repent and be immersed every one of you. Then they that gladly received the word were immersed." And so on.

I was led to ask myself, What, if this word had been properly rendered by the translators of our English version of the bible, would have become of sprinkling?—who of us would have practised it? As it is, nearly half of the Christian world are Baptists.

My next inquiry was, Do the scripture examples set forth immersion as essential to the ordinance? Have we any unequi-

vocal examples of immersion, and have we any equally so of sprinkling, either direct or indirect—positive or inferential?

I found several undoubted examples of immersion recorded in the New Testament. First, John the Baptist baptized by immersion. Matt. 3: 12. Luke 3: 3. Acts 19: 4. Mark 1: 5. John 3: 23, and Luke 7: 29, 30. In these passages we are taught, 1. That John prepared the people for baptism by preaching. 2. That he required repentance and faith as the pre-requisites for receiving the ordinance. 3. For the want of this the Lawyers and Pharisees were not baptized. 4. That this baptism was immersion. This is the common sense view of the subject. They were baptized *in* the river Jordan. The reason assigned for his baptizing at Ænon near to Salim was, because there was much water there; hence they came and were baptized. And finally, the original has but one name for the ordinance, and that is, as we have seen, immersion. "They came and were immersed."

Christ's baptism furnishes the second example of immersion. Mark 1: 9. Matt. 3: 16. Mark 1: 10. Jesus was baptized, not *with* the river Jordan, but *in* it;

and hence when he was baptized, went straightway out of the water.

Had the baptism of John and of Christ any thing to do with Christian baptism? was the next question which I was led to examine.

John's baptism was either under the law or the gospel dispensation. If under the former, we should expect that the law required it. But where can such a requirement be found in the law? The baptism of John was not from the law, but more recently from heaven. Matt. 21 : 25. Luke 16 : 16, informs us that "the law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it." By "the kingdom of God," we understand the Gospel dispensation, which, from the days of John the Baptist, was preached. This is evident from Matt. 11 : 12, 13, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and all the law prophesied until John." The kingdom of heaven began just where the law and the prophets ended. The law and the prophets were until John, when the new dispensation opened, and the kingdom of

God was preached. Hence Mark 1 : 1, John's ministry is called "The beginning of the gospel of the Son of God." Mr. Benson remarks in his commentary on this text, "The gospel of Jesus Christ began, according to the prediction of the prophets, with the preaching and baptism of John the Baptist." Hence Zecharias his father declared at his birth, by the inspiration of God, that "The day spring from on high hath visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness," &c., Luke 1 : 78, 79. "That is," says Mr. Benson, "the Gospel dispensation is as superior to the Patriarchal, or Mosaic, with their types and shadows, as the light of the rising sun is superior to the moon and stars. This gospel day dawned in the ministry of John the Baptist, and it increased more and more during the personal ministry of Christ, and it shone out with meridian splendor on the day of Pentecost." This view explains Matt. 11 : 11. The phrase, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he," does not mean that he was not in that kingdom at all; but that he was only acquainted with its rudiments, while the future subjects of Christ's kingdom were destined to enjoy its privileges in its matured state.

Having therefore satisfied my mind that John's ministry was not under the law but under the gospel, I was about to conclude that his baptism was a gospel ordinance, when the thought occurred to me that some of his disciples had been rebaptized. This led me to examine the passage in Acts 19 : 1—6. These persons were undoubtedly rebaptized. But why? Was it because of any imperfection in John's baptism? I think not. But the whole passage implies that they had been baptized irregularly. For, 1. It does not appear that John himself ever baptized them. The text does not say that he did; for had he, we have reason to believe that he would have given them instruction upon those points on which they were profoundly ignorant. So ignorant were they that they said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

Now, could they have attended upon the ministry of John and been so ignorant? Review John's discourses, and you will see that would be impossible. To use the words of Prof. Ripley—"Their baptism, then, was an altogether ignorant and irregular transaction; it was in truth a nullity. And on this ground, doubtless,

the apostles required them, having since become Christians, and having now been properly instructed, to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

The baptism of John, when regularly administered, was evidently considered by the first Christian church essentially the same with Christian baptism. Hence we do not find that any apostle, or other disciple of Jesus, was the second time baptized; not even Apollos, mentioned in Acts 18: 25, because he had before believed in Jesus Christ, although he had received only the baptism of John.

This objection being obviated, my conclusion was, that John's baptism was a gospel ordinance. This conclusion was, if possible, still more strongly confirmed in my mind by a reference to the fact that John and Christ were baptizing at the same time; and the strong intimation that John even baptized some of Christ's disciples. John 3: 22—24, we read—“After these things came Jesus and his disciples in the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there, and they came and were baptized; for John was not yet cast into prison.”

And they came and were baptized. Who? The word "disciples" seems to be the antecedent to the pronoun "they." If so, is it not presumptive that "they"—the disciples of Christ—"came, and were baptized" by John? This appears to me more than probable.

Christ's baptism was the next subject into which I looked. I had always thought that the baptism of Jesus had nothing to do with the Christian ordinance, supposing that he was baptized as a priest. But here I found myself in error. Christ was not baptized as a Jewish Priest, for he did not belong to the Jewish priesthood. In Heb. 7 : 14, St. Paul says, "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah ; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood." Of course no statute of the Mosaic law touched the priesthood of Christ, who, verse 13, the apostle says, "pertained to another tribe of which no man gave attendance at the altar."

Christ's baptism, therefore, was not a Jewish ordinance. What was it, then? In Matt. 3 : 13, and in John 1 : 32, 33, we have the answer—"Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." The term

“righteousness” denotes *practical obedience*. See Luke 1 : 6.

Mark the phrase, “*thus it becometh us.*” That is, both myself and yourself; for when Christ speaks of himself alone, he always uses the singular number. Here was a duty for both John and Christ to perform. Why? It was an appointment of the Father that Christ should be made manifest to Israel at the time of his baptism. This fact was revealed to John by Him who had sent him to baptize. Though John knew him not, yet he knew that the *circumstances* were appointed by which he should be made known both to himself and Israel as the Messiah. John 1 : 31, 33. John says, “I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.”

By this account we perceive that the design of Christ’s baptism was to ratify the ordinance; honoring it with his first manifestation to Israel, and thus giving it the sanction of his own example. In this manifestation of Christ to Israel, three things were evidently taught. 1. That he should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

2. That he was God's anointed; and 3. That God approved of this act performed by him as the great Prophet, to teach both by precept and example.

From the whole, my conclusions were that Christ was baptized under the gospel dispensation; not as a Jewish priest; not unto repentance,—for he had no sin to repent of,—but as our great Teacher and Exemplar of *practical obedience*; ratifying the ordinance, by sealing it with his own example, that all his church should follow his steps. I can see it in no other light.

My next inquiry was, What was the practice of the Apostles? Did they follow the example of Christ and go down into the water, and come up straightway out of the water, or did they sprinkle?

The first prominent example of immersion is recorded in Acts 8: 35—the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch. The following circumstances mark this as an undoubted case of immersion. 1. The Eunuch said, Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? 2. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch. 3. When in the water Philip baptized him. 4. After his baptism “they came up out of the water.”

Dr. Doddridge remarks, “It would be

very unnatural to suppose that they went down to the water merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the Eunuch. A person of his dignity had no doubt many vessels in his baggage, (by which water might be brought into the chariot,) on such a journey, through a desert country; a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts, and never omitted by them."

My next business was to look at those passages which were less minute in detail, and see if by fair construction any of them favored a different mode. I turned to Acts 2d and read, "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Two objections have been urged against the idea of the immersion of these persons. 1. The want of time in which to immerse such a multitude. 2. The want of conveniences in which to perform that rite.

With regard to the first objection, it has not been fully demonstrated that twelve men could not have performed that service "the same day." But if it were demonstrated, it is not certain that these twelve men had to perform all this service, for there were seventy others who had equal

authority to baptize. Add this number to the twelve, and the difficulty vanishes at once.* With regard to the second objection, there were ample conveniences in the Temple, and it does not appear that the disciples had yet been excluded from the privilege of the temple. Luke 24 : 53. Besides, Jerusalem abounded in cisterns, reservoirs, fountains and pools. So abundant were they, that Dr. Robinson devotes nineteen pages, in his work on Palestine, to the supply of water in Jerusalem.† He says, “In the numerous sieges to which Jerusalem in all ages has been

* Some suppose that there were one hundred and twenty administrators; if so, says Rev. L. Porter, “There would have been twenty-five candidates to each, who might easily be immersed in thirty minutes. “To twelve administrators,” continues Mr. P., “there would have been two hundred and fifty candidates each, who could readily have been immersed in five hours, with time for resting. Although the administrators were sufficiently numerous and the water sufficiently abundant for the baptism of 3,000 in one day, we are not informed that 3,000 were baptized in one day. In one day 3,000 were added to the church.—See Rev. L. Porter’s Notes, p. 121.

† In Jerusalem, baths for immersion were so numerous, that the digging of cisterns, for such uses, was a trade. In the Temple there were ten brass layers, each of which held over nine barrels of water, and the great brazen sea that contained over 500 barrels of water. There were also the pools of Siloam and Bethesda, and the brooks of Cedron and Sorek. These places were all free.—Rev. L. Porter’s Notes.

exposed, we no where read of a want of water within the city."

In the absence, therefore, of all evidence of sprinkling, with the examples of immersion already quoted, together with the true meaning of the word baptize, my conclusions were that they were immersed. They were also the same with regard to the baptism of Paul. Acts 9 : 17. Cornelius and his friends. Acts 10 : 42. Lydia and her household. Acts 16 : 13. So Paul baptizing at Corinth. Acts 18 : 4.

The case of the Jailor, in Acts 16 : 27, is more circumstantial, and I determined to mark all the circumstances, and see on which side of the question they seemed most favorable.

1. The Jailor brought out Paul and Silas and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

What did he bring them out of? Answer. The prison. Where did he bring them to? Answer. Into his house. For it is added, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."

2. When they were baptized they went out of his house, where he washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his.

3. It appears that after this he "brought them into his house."

Now, on the supposition that the Jailor and his household were sprinkled, I could but admit that it would have been much more convenient, at the midnight hour, for them to have remained in his house, than to have gone out. Most certainly the brief circumstances here noted are altogether on the side of immersion.

The next topics of examination were those figurative and metaphorical passages which speak of baptism.

In this examination my chief inquiry was, which do they best represent, sprinkling or immersion? I turned to Luke 12: 50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." "That is," says Prof. Stuart, "I am about to be overwhelmed with sufferings, and I am greatly distressed with the prospect of them."

Again, Mark 10: 38, 39. Can "ye be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" That is, says Prof. Stuart, "Sufferings of an overwhelming nature."

Again, 1 Cor. 15: 29. "Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead?" Says the same author, "of what

avail is it to endure overwhelming sorrows, if there be no resurrection of the dead?"

The baptism of the hosts of Israel unto Moses, and in the cloud, 1 Cor. 10 : 1. Also, Noah and his family saved by water, "the like figure. whereunto baptism doth also now save us." 1 Pet. 3 : 20. "The being baptized into one body," Gal. 3 : 27. "Baptized into Christ," are all figurative passages drawn from, or intended to represent baptism. I cannot see that these figures could any more justify the idea of sprinkling, than a few drops of water could surround and cover hundreds of thousands at one time; or float the ark; or that a person could sink down into a few drops of water.

I concluded this paragraph by an examination of Rom. 6 : 3, and Col. 2 : 12. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are

risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

I consider that a careful examination of this passage establishes the following. 1. That baptism is here used as a metaphor, by which to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. 2. Of the Christian's death to sin, and resurrection to spiritual life. Observe the two phrases. Buried with him *by* baptism, and buried with him *in* baptism. The one referring to the act of baptism, and the other to the state of the baptized. It is plain that sprinkling cannot answer this figure, and nothing short of, nothing but immersion is intended by it.

My last inquiry was as to the practice of the primitive church, with regard to immersion. This inquiry is to be answered only by a reference to the testimony of historians. It so happens that we have them in great abundance.

Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin fathers, says, "we die symbolically in baptism." Upon these words *Rigaltius* remarks, "we are immersed as if we suffered death, and rise up out of the water, as reviving again."

Chrysostom says, "to be dipped and plunged into water, and then to rise up

out of it again, is a symbol of our descent into the grave, and of our ascent out of it. And therefore Paul calls baptism a burial, when he says, "we are therefore buried with him by baptism into death."

So *Barnabas* says, "we go down into the water full of sins and pollution, but come up again bringing forth fruit in our hearts."

Tertullian, in his treatise on Baptism, says, "it is all one whether we are washed in the sea, or in a pond; in a fountain, or in a river; in a standing, or in a running water; nor is there any difference between those that John baptized in Jordan, and those that Peter baptized in the Tiber."

Justin Martyr, in his apology before the Roman Emperor, says of those who dedicate themselves to God through Christ, upon their conversion, "they are brought to a place of water and washed in the name of God the Father. Moreover the person baptized and illuminated, is baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the name of the Holy Ghost."

Basil, archbishop of Cæsarea, puts the following questions in his Lent sermons, to the catechumens before their baptism. "How can we be placed in a condition of likeness to his death? Answer. By being

buried with him in baptism. How are we to go down with him into the grave? By imitating the burial of Christ in baptism; for the bodies of the baptized are in a sense buried in water. By three immersions we administer this important ceremony of baptism, that death may be represented in a figure."

Grotius, in his Annotation on Matt. 3 : 6, says, "That this rite was performed by immersion, and not by affusion, appears both by the propriety of the word, and the places chosen for its administration."

Du Pin says, "In the three first centuries, they plunged those three times in the water, whom they baptized."

Gregory, in his Ecclesiastical History, informs us, that "baptism, in the primitive times, was administered by immersion."

Mosheim, speaking of the second century says, "Those adult persons that desired to be baptized, received the sacrament of baptism according to the ancient and primitive manner of celebrating that institution, even by immersion."

Eusebius, in his life of Constantine the Great, records the following speech of the dying Emperor. "This is the hour, (that is, the hour of his baptism,) wherein we may also enjoy that seal which confers

immortality. I had heretofore taken a resolution of doing this in the river Jordan, where our Saviour himself, in likeness to us, is recorded to have partaken of the laver." Sickness prevented this design, and the Emperor was baptized in the usual way, by Eusebius, in the suburbs of Nicomedia."

The truth is, pouring made its first appearance in the third century. In cases of sickness that would not allow of immersion, pouring was then allowed, because baptism began to be considered essential to salvation.

Sprinkling was held in the eighth century in cases of necessity to be valid by a decision of Pope Stephen III., but it was not until the year 1311 that dipping or sprinkling were declared to be indifferent, which was done by the Legislature, in a council at Ravenna.

I might go on to quote from historians, who all seem united in one common expression, viz., that sprinkling or pouring is of a much later date than immersion. The relics of baptisteries which are now standing, and known to have been of ancient date, are so many Monuments in favor of immersion.

Indeed, I know of no instituti^on of God

that comes to us supported by a greater amount of evidence of its divine character, than that immersion is the only scriptural baptism.

Having fully settled the question in my mind, as to what constitutes baptism, I began to doubt whether I had been right in my views as to its proper subjects; for in the investigation of the mode, I necessarily glanced at the subjects of baptism. I had believed that there were three classes of subjects—penitents, believers, and infants.

The first I had founded on Acts 2: 38. “Repent and be baptized every one of you,” &c. This error, I perceived, arose from my viewing their repentance in a sense which did not include saving faith. The 41st verse corrected my mistake. “Then they that gladly received the word were baptized.” Their *gladly receiving the word*, implies faith.

This left me but two classes of subjects, believers and infants. As to the former, there is no controversy. The latter only, claimed my attention. The subject, therefore, was narrowed down to a single point, *Ought infants to be baptized?*

I judged as ministers of the gospel baptized in the name, so also must they bap-

tize by the authority of Jesus Christ, and that the gospel should contain their credentials.

I turned to my text which contains our commission. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. I reasoned—are not infants a part of all nations? Yes. Then ought we not to baptize them? But according to the order of the text, we ought to teach first, those whom we baptize. But infants cannot be taught; therefore they are not included in this commission. I then examined the parallel text, Mark 16: 15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," &c. I said to myself, infants are creatures; but did our Lord intend that the gospel should be preached to them? Certainly not: for he adds—"He that believeth and is baptized," &c. It follows therefore, as infants cannot believe, nor be taught, so the Master did not commission his servants to baptize them.

I understand the commission thus:—"Teach all the gospel who can be taught, and baptize all that truly believe; but infants cannot be taught, therefore you are not to baptize them."

Infant baptism then, is not in the commission given to the ministers of Christ

Of this I am certain. Nothing can be plainer. So I decided, and so I believe.

Still I reasoned that if it belonged to Christ's kingdom, its enactment must be somehow or somewhere recorded. I searched the New Testament for one precept, but could find none.

I then looked for inferential proof. I recollected that this was the kind of evidence by which we proved female communion; namely, women were baptized, and as such, they had a right to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. I thought inference equally clear for infant baptism would satisfy me.

I turned to Mark 10 : 14. "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." I had no evidence that this passage had any allusion to baptism. The children were brought to Christ, not to be baptized, but to be blest; and when Christ had prayed for them and blessed them, they went away as they came, unbaptized. Mr. Scott says that the reason why they were not baptized was, because they had been circumcised. But had not all the male disciples of Christ been circumcised?

It is not contended that these children were baptized, or brought to Christ for

that purpose; but that the phrase, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," implies, that they were the proper subjects of baptism; that the kingdom of heaven means either the world of future glory, or the gospel church; that if they are the proper subjects of the former, they must be of the latter.

But query—Are infants the proper subjects of the kingdom of glory? If so, they are holy, and of course the doctrine of human depravity cannot be true. But we all believe that infants are unholy, and as such they are not fit for heaven, and can no more be admitted into that holy place than we, without a change of heart. Therefore infants, with the nature with which they were born into this world, are not the proper subjects of the heavenly world.*

Again. Are they the proper subjects of Christ's kingdom on earth? If so, are they not the subjects of the laws, and privileges of that kingdom?

What laws can infants be the subjects of, and what privileges can they enjoy?

* Still I believe that all who die in infancy are saved. But not because they are naturally holy. I trust that through the infinite benevolence of God, as they have never actually sinned, so the merits of Jesus will be unconditionally applied to regenerate and save them.

Answer. None. They may be baptized, and they may partake of the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, which they ought to do if they are members of the church. Hence infant communion is almost, or quite, as old as infant baptism. But is all this obeying the laws and enjoying the privileges of the kingdom of Christ? I think not.

I see then no evidence that infants are the proper subjects of either the kingdom of grace, or glory. The word "*such*" in the text, I do not understand to express *identity*, but *comparison*. The context plainly shows it. "And Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." No one supposes that Christ meant to teach that we must shrink into the size and age of little children by humbling ourselves as little children. Consequently, in that passage where Christ says, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein," he would teach us that

adults must receive the kingdom of God in that humble, meek, and depending temper, which will make them appear *like* or *as* little children. So we believe that Christ uses the word "*such*" as a term of comparison. Hence this passage does not appear to have any thing to do with baptism, either directly or indirectly.

The next passage to which I looked is found 1 Cor. 7 : 12—14. "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy."

What holiness? It is either moral, ceremonial, or civil. It could not be moral holiness, for holiness is not hereditary. It could not be ceremonial holiness, for the ceremonial law was abolished. It follows, then, that it must be civil holiness, —these children being the pure and legitimate offspring of the holy institution of matrimony; and hence the true sense of the text evidently is—Else were your children illegitimate, but now are they legitimate. I ask again, what has this to do with baptism?

I next inquired if it could not be inferred from what the scriptures say of the baptism of whole householders?

At Phillipi there were two households baptized—Lydia's, Acts 16 : 13, and the jailor's, verse 33. Lydia's household

comprised all who were first baptized within the boundaries of Europe, and the jailor's the second company of baptized individuals.

This company Paul and Silas left at the prison when they went back and entered the house of Lydia. Here "they saw and comforted the brethren." What brethren? Were they not those believing individuals whom they baptized in the family of Lydia?

Dr. Whitby on this passage, says:— "And when she and those of her household were instructed in the Christian faith, in the nature of baptism required by it, she was baptized, and her household."

The assembly of divines in their annotations and note on this text say, that "Paul and Silas entered into the house of Lydia doubtless to confirm them in the faith, which they had preached to them. Lydia and hers *hearing* of their miraculous deliverance, could not but be comforted and confirmed in the faith." These testimonies from Pede-baptists show that there is nothing to be drawn from this, in favor of infant baptism.

As to the jailor's household, I could find no infants there. It is said that the apostles spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. Mark

ye—they spake the word of the Lord “to all that were in his house.” Would they speak the word of the Lord to infants? Certainly not; but they spake the word to all that were in his house. It follows then that there were no infants in his house.

And hence verse 34th says, “that when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” As Matthew Henry says, “the voice of rejoicing, with that of salvation, was heard in the jailor’s house. *He rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.* There were none in his house that refused to be baptized, and so make a jar in the ceremony; but they were unanimous in embracing the gospel, which added much to their joy.”

Acts 8: 4, 5—8, we are informed of the baptism of Crispus and his household. But it is said that he “believed on the Lord with all his house.” Hence they were all believers, and no infants.

The next is the household of Stephanas. 1 Cor. 1: 16. Of this household Paul says, ch. 16: 15, “Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia.” Fruits of what? The ministry of the word by which they believed, who

were rendered the proper subjects of baptism.

Of this household Paul further adds, "that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." To whom will this apply? Not to infants. We know that none but adults could administer to the wants of the poor persecuted followers of Jesus.

The household of Cornelius, Acts x. Here is the formation of the first Christian church among the Gentiles; and as such we should look to it as a model church. But what is the sum of the whole history bearing upon this question? It is simply this: 1. Peter preaches to them. 2. The Holy Ghost falls upon them. They receive it and believe; and 3. They are baptized.

Now, if the infants of those who believed were also to be admitted into the pale of the visible church of Christ, the apostle omitted a very important item in giving to the gentile world a model for a Gospel church. There were doubtless many families present to hear Peter, who were converted to God under his ministry, and yet after all there was not an infant baptized, nor a single hint given to that effect.

Surely Pedo-baptist missionaries in hea-

then lands do not follow Peter's example. From their journals we find that they as regularly baptize the children of their converts as they do the converts themselves. But why Peter neglected this branch of his duty I cannot conceive, unless he were a Baptist, and had no confidence in infant baptism. Confidence, did I say? I doubt whether he had ever heard of such a thing. Ay, more. I seriously doubt whether he had ever thought of such a thing. I am sure I never should if I had never heard any more about it than what is taught in the Bible.

Again, I looked for some intimations which might favor infant baptism in Acts 2. But I found that all who were baptized on the day of Pentecost were believers. 1. They were pricked to the heart, and said, &c. 2. They were required to repent, &c. 3. "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized." 4. "They continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

But did not the apostle hint at the baptism of infants, when he said, "the promise is to you and your children?" I think not; for to what "promise" does he refer? **Answer.** The promise of the Holy Ghost,

which infant children are incapable of receiving. But a cursory view of his discourse makes this evident.

The Apostle's exhortation teaches that upon their repentance and baptism they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. "For the promise," says he, "is unto you and your children—even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The promise, then, can only be claimed by such as repent and are baptized, having been called by the Gospel. The *children* mentioned are such as can repent, and hence the term does not mean infants; but *posterity*. The promise is recorded in Joel 2: 28. And the children are those mentioned in Acts 2: 17, 18. "Your sons and your daughters, young men, servants and handmaids."

One more case. We learn in the eighth chapter of Acts, that Philip, one of the first deacons of the church at Jerusalem, became the instrument of a revival of religion that moved the city of Samaria. So general was the work, that it is said that, "the people with one accord gave heed unto the things that Philip spake," &c. And that "when they believed, they were baptized, both men and women."

Strange, indeed, that Philip should have

neglected the children. If he did not, it is equally singular that Luke omitted the mention of it. He says he baptized both men and women. Why not children, also? Then it would have read, "Baptized men, women and children." I am satisfied why the word children was not added; and so I think every honest man must be who examines this subject, and draws his proofs from the holy scriptures.

I thus went through the New Testament scriptures, and asked, where is infant baptism to be found? And echo answered, Where? It was not there, neither in precept, example, intimation, nor inference, as I could see.

Pedo-baptists admit the silence of the New Testament upon infant baptism. But this silence, they say, is one of the strongest arguments in favor of its truth. They say that baptism is substituted in the place of circumcision, and that all believers are under the Abrahamic covenant. Now, as children were interested in that covenant under the law, so must they also be under the gospel, unless the gospel states to the contrary. The gospel being silent upon that subject, makes it sure that infant children are to receive the substitute of circumcision, namely, baptism. In this whole

statement I find the premises are assumed. They are not proved, neither can they be proved. What then becomes of the conclusions drawn from them? I was led to this decision by an examination, critically, for the first time in my life, of the Abrahamic covenant. It is recorded in Gen. 17. This covenant embraces, 1. God's promise to Abraham, that he should be the father to many nations—and of kings—that he would be his God, and the God of his posterity, to whom he promises to give the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.

2. This covenant was conditional;—which condition he and his posterity must comply with, in order to a fulfilment of the promise, “Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man-child among you shall be circumcised.”

In order to ascertain whether we are under the Abrahamic covenant, and that baptism is the substitute for circumcision, I inquired:—1. What part of the law of circumcision as applicable to baptism is still in force? The rite itself is abolished. Here we all agree. But what in reference to the law of circumcision is binding?

Does it include for its substitute the same classes of subjects, viz.—Infant children, slaves and domestics, whether adults or infants, believers or unbelievers, and finally none but males? Does it require us to baptize our children precisely at eight days old, under the penalty of breaking the covenant? What is the practice of the whole Pedo-baptist world? Do they not baptize their infants at any age, and of both sexes—adult slaves and domestics not at all, except by their own request as believers? Why depart from this law? Is not the gospel silent upon this subject, and does not this silence imply, according to their own argument, that it is still binding?

2. What was the design of circumcision? I instituted this inquiry to ascertain if baptism answers the same design. For surely it ought, if believers are under the Abrahamic covenant. 1. The first design of it was to form a national church, the nucleus of which was in the family of Abraham. It was a rite by which persons became entitled to all its blessings and privileges, which, as promised in Genesis, 17th chapter, were principally of a temporal nature. I need only to ask, is this the design of baptism? We know it is not. 2. Circumcision was designed to prefigure the

necessity of regeneration. Rom. 2:28, 29. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; * * and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Gal. 4:15. Col. 2:11.

This rite, then, when applied to infants, was designed to show the *want* of a new heart, and not the actual possession of it. But baptism does not teach the *necessity* of the new birth; it is the "outward and visible sign of the inward, and spiritual grace" already received, and must be inapplicable to all infants, unless we regard it as regeneration, as some Pedeo-baptists do, in which they are consistent, though the doctrine itself is absurd.

3. The sign of circumcision was designed to be a seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4:3. It was a seal to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It was intended to perpetuate this glorious doctrine,—that there was a substitute for the law of works or perfect obedience as a condition of the sinner's justification. It was the seal of this blessed truth. It preached it until the gospel day, every time this rite was administered. It was not the condition of justification, for Abraham was justified when in uncircumcision. It was not

the badge of its profession ; but it was a seal to its truth and perpetuation.

Is baptism the seal of the doctrine of justification by faith ? Answer. It is not. Christ has sealed the doctrine in his own person and ministry. Circumcision sealed it until Christ came. To circumcise after Christ's ministry had been enjoyed, was a tacit denial of Christ. It was a refusal to admit the truth of Christ's ministry, and a going back to the law, and bearing its heavy yoke, from which Christ makes his people free. Hence Paul says, Gal. 5 : 2, 3, " If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Such have nothing to do with the gospel. He has more confidence in this bloody rite than he has in the words of Jesus Christ. If baptism be the substitute of circumcision, then it must be the seal of the doctrine of justification by faith. But why have this seal when we have the thing for which it was instituted ? Has not Christ sealed this truth in his life, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and his preached gospel ? Is baptism more significant than all this ? I challenge the Christian world to find a single passage that intimates that

baptism is the seal of the righteousness of faith. Where, then, is the evidence that baptism is substituted for circumcision?

But it is said that we are still under the Abrahamic covenant. We will suppose for a moment that we are. If so, those children who were circumcised previous to the institution of the ordinance of baptism needed not to be baptized in order to become members of the gospel church, because they had fulfilled the condition of that covenant in their circumcision; and as baptism is designed for the same purpose, its administration to all such would not only be unnecessary but improper. It would be the same as baptizing a person twice, each of which being according to the divine institution.

Yet all John's subjects had been circumcised. All Christ's disciples had been circumcised. All the males of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost had also received that rite, and Paul, speaking of himself, says that he was circumcised the eighth day—and yet when he believed he was baptised. What, I could but ask myself, were all these persons baptized for, if they had already fulfilled the condition of the Abrahamic covenant? The truth is, I have concluded that believers under the

gospel are not under this covenant, but as St. Paul says, Heb. 8 : 6, "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

I see then nothing in the promise of the Abrahamic covenant—nothing in the law of circumcision—nor in the design of the institution, that intimates that baptism is to be its substitute, and withal I am well satisfied that believers are not under the covenant of circumcision.

If we were disposed to turn the tables, we think it would not be a difficult task to show, that the design of baptism is totally dissimilar from that of circumcision. But for want of time we will not pursue this idea.

Of one thing, however, I feel well assured, and that is, that these two institutions are as dissimilar one to the other in their design, as they are in their forms.

I think it can be satisfactorily shown from the New Testament, that baptism never was designed to be a substitute for circumcision.*

In the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, by the unanimous voice of a council, comprising most if not all of the

* See page 53.

apostles and elders of the whole Christian church, and by the approbation of the Holy Ghost, *we see circumcision put down and no substitute proposed in its room.* In this whole account there is not the most distant hint that baptism was to be the practice in the room of circumcision.

In the twenty-first chapter of Acts, there is a case still plainer than the one recorded in the fifteenth chapter. When Paul made his last visit to Jerusalem, we are informed that the day after his arrival he went in unto James, and all the elders were present. Before these he rehearsed what wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it they glorified the Lord. But one of them remarked, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of the Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law; and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews that are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children."

Here is a case directly in point. Paul is charged with teaching his Jewish converts to neglect the circumcising their children; but in case he taught them to baptize in its room, was he not called upon

in the most imperious manner in self-defence to have declared it? But did he? No. His total silence on that occasion comes to my mind with all the weight of positive evidence, that no such practice was then in existence.

Where, then, is the evidence for infant baptism? It is not in the New Testament. It is not in the Old Testament.—Nor is it in the Old and New Testaments if taken both together. Where, then, is the proof? The Roman Catholic church may answer, but revelation is silent.

I am quite sure it is not an institution of Christ, that it was not practised by his apostles, nor during the apostolic age;—that it is an institution of man, originating in false views of the design of baptism itself, and was not known in the Christian church until the latter part of the second century, or the beginning of the third. I fully believe with Martin Luther, as to infant baptism it cannot be proved by the sacred scriptures that it was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the apostles.” I know it has been said, that Irenæus states that “the church received a tradition from the apostles to administer baptism to little children, or infants.” This would be coming pretty

near to it. For Irenæus was a disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp was a disciple of John the Evangelist; but Dr. Gill has spoiled this argument by challenging the whole literary world to produce such a passage from the writings of Irenæus. It was afterwards acknowledged that Origen, of the third century, and not Irenæus of the second, was the writer intended.

Tertullian, of Africa, in the latter part of the second, or beginning of the third century, is supposed to be the first writer who makes any mention of infant baptism. He wrote a book against the indiscriminate baptism of minors. He contends that it is most expedient to be regulated by the disposition and age of the person to be baptized. He says, "Let them come while they are growing up, let them come and learn, and let them be instructed when they come, and when they *understand* Christianity, let them profess themselves Christians."

About the middle of the third century, or about fifty years after Tertullian, the people in Africa had got baptism down to new-born babes.

Fidus, a country bishop, wrote to Cyprian of Carthage, to know whether children might be baptized before they were

eight days old, for by his bible he could not tell. This question could not be decided by Cyprian without consulting a council of bishops. This council consisted of between sixty and seventy bishops, who finally decided, that as baptism was so necessary to save men, infants ought to enjoy the benefits of it as soon as they were born.

Here lies the secret of the origin of infant baptism. If men had not blended it with regeneration and made it regeneration itself, it had never been known. No argument was then sought from the example or precept of Christ, or his apostles. It was wholly a matter of expediency, and was introduced and prevailed for the sake of the salvation of precious, immortal souls! Dr. Gill says, "No instance can be given of infant baptism, so early as of infant communion."

If it be asked, how could infant baptism ever have been begun in the church? the answer is, just as the worship of angels and saints, and praying to them, celibacy of the clergy, the observation of Lent and other popish festivals, the worship of relics, the doctrine of purgatory and of transubstantiation, and the order of monks, were begun. For all these took their rise in the

church about the same time with infant baptism and infant communion.

For the reasons above assigned, I can but reject infant baptism as absurd and ridiculous. It is also evil in its tendency. It prevents us from owning Christ in the way of his appointment. It is that by which Antichrist has extended his dominions over many nations. It is the foundation of national churches ; and its influence is to lessen the authority of the word of God, which it makes void by human tradition.

Thus, my hearers, you have my reasons for changing my denominational relation, and you have heard the substance of the arguments which have made me a Baptist. I was sprinkled soon after I found the Lord, and I verily thought myself baptized. But I am now quite sure that in this I have erred. And as baptism is to answer a good conscience, for conscience' sake I have been obliged to make this concession, and follow my Saviour. And I rejoiced when the hour came. I hailed it not as a cross. I complied with Christ's command, not as a task, but as one of the happiest and most privileged acts of my life.

In conclusion I would remark, that I have heard much said about my being

precipitate in deciding these great questions. But I can assure the public that I have not been hasty in my conclusions.— And I think that those who have heard me on this occasion, will at least admit that my decision on these points was never made without much study and careful research to find out the truth. I can assure you, and all whom it may concern, that I never announced myself a Baptist, until I fully and unequivocally believed their doctrine—that I never gave up the subject until, to my mind, infant baptism and sprinkling were annihilated, and nothing left as scriptural baptism but the immersion of believers.

It has been inquired, “Why did you not go to the most intelligent of your ministerial brethren and frankly state to them your doubt?” To this I reply, Why should I? Did I not understand all that could be said by Pedo-baptists? That ground was familiar to me, and I was certain that they could add nothing new.— They might have given me advice, but surely they could not have given me arguments which I had not seen. I wanted arguments to counteract the Baptist argument, and not merely friendly advice.

Finally, I would say to all such as are

inclined to censure me for dissolving my connexion with the church of my early choice—a church of which I have been a member ever since I was seventeen years old, and in which I have been an ordained minister for nearly twenty years—I would just say : You may think me unwise, premature, or even acting under an infatuation, and in this you may be honest. I also claim to be equally so, in believing it to be my imperative duty to come out as I have done in defence of what I regard as the truth. Should even my motives be impugned, still an approving conscience will sustain me, and in the exercise of Christian love I hope to pray, “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

But to all such as honestly inquire, Why have you done this? I would say, consider well the statements to which you have attentively listened. And above all, take the holy scriptures, and “ search and see ” for yourselves.

And may God grant his Holy Spirit, by which we may understand His word, and be made wise unto salvation thereby, through faith in Jesus Christ. AMEN.

NOTE. In the 16th chapter of Acts we have an account of Paul's circumcising Timothy, upon whom this rite had never been before performed. For though his mother was a Jewess, yet his father was a Greek. But he had been baptized, because, in verse 1, he is called a disciple, and doubtless belonged to the Christian church. For he was "well reported by the brethren," &c. ; upon which the apostle not only received him as a brother, but as a son in the gospel, and a fellow laborer in the ministry. Here, then, is a clear case of circumcision after baptism. How, then, could baptism be its substitute? The substitute must follow—not precede. Besides, if the rite of circumcision and the ordinance of Christian baptism be the same, then Paul, by circumcising Timothy, sanctioned the doctrine of baptizing the same person twice.

At a meeting of the Official Board belonging to St. Paul's Station, held on Friday evening, the 6th inst., it was suggested that I should prepare an address to my congregation, informing them of my change of Theological views; to meet which, the following was prepared and read to the Quarterly Meeting Conference, at their own request, on the next evening. Objections were strongly urged against its being read to the people, on the ground of its dangerous tendency. Though it was admitted that it did not contain the argument, yet to their mind there appeared a certain something about it which they feared might to many be more conclusive than the scriptural argument itself. These explanations are made, and the "farewell letter" is published, with a view of answering a question, which has been so often asked, namely,—“Why was it, Br. Remington, that you left us so suddenly as not even to bid us *farewell*?”

FAREWELL LETTER TO MY LATE CHARGE.



MY DEAR CONGREGATION—

Many of you have by this time probably heard that your Pastor has of late changed his theological views on some points, by which it is rendered necessary for him to resign his charge of this church and congregation, and to connect himself with another church, whose faith upon these points is in accordance with his own.

It is due to himself, and to the people to whom he has officiated, that some explanations should be made by which the cause of this change may be definitely known. And believing that none can be better qualified to discharge this duty than himself, the Official Board has not only given him liberty so to do, but have expressed a desire to have him do it; for which he feels very grateful to them, and equally free to discharge the duty, as he is grateful for the privilege.

For persons to leave one church and unite with another, is an occurrence which often takes place both in the ministry and membership. But such an occurrence never ought to take place without being well considered. It is a serious matter, and ought not to be entered upon without a clear conviction of

duty. Principle, not passion, should guide us in such an affair. So distinctly should we see every step of the ground over which we pass in going from one denomination to another, that our way should be perfectly clear to ourselves, and there should not be a lingering doubt as to the expediency and propriety of our course.

When a private member of a Christian church changes his denominational relation, he should be so enlightened himself as to the path of duty, as to be prepared on all proper occasions to give his reasons for so doing.

If this may be said of the private member of a church, how much more so of a minister who has the pastoral oversight of a church and congregation. It is a duty he owes to the people—to the cause of Christ, for which he is supposed to act, and to himself, that the ministry be not blamed.

What I am now doing is not the practical result of mere impulse; but I trust that I am guided by motives to glorify God, and advance the interests of His cause. I cannot but believe that the hand of God is in it, for he hath led me in a path that I knew not.

A few months ago, I should as soon have expected to have been a Roman Catholic as a Baptist. Not that my opinion of the latter people was the same as of the former. For I always believed them to be a good, spiritual people, though I thought bigoted, and exceedingly narrow in their Christian charity. This I supposed grew not exactly out of their hearts, but

out of their creed, or out of their peculiar notions of the ordinance of baptism.

I acknowledge that I was strongly prejudiced against them; and so far did my prejudice extend itself, that I was almost ready to question their sincerity, and to look upon their rigid adherence to this point rather as a pretext by which to proselyte from other churches.

As to my own views of baptism, I scarcely believed at all in immersion. Indeed, my faith was so weak as to this mode, that I determined never, when I could possibly avoid it, to be its administrator.— Secretly did I almost hope that such persons would go to the Baptists, where I thought they more properly belonged.

Still, occasionally I had to administer the ordinance, either in person or by proxy. For I generally found such persons incurable. If I talked them out of it, in a short time their convictions would return again; and then our hands were tied, and they must either leave our church and go to the Baptists, or remain dissatisfied, which generally injured their spiritual enjoyments. One class, however, I never would baptize. I mean those who were Baptists,—that is, believe that immersion was the only mode, or the only true baptism. Such I either convinced to the contrary, or advised to join the Baptists. My reasons for this course must be obvious. We, as Methodists, believe baptism to be the door of admission into the visible church, and that no person has a

right to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper who has not been baptized, it being a privilege belonging exclusively to members of the visible church. Hence I always thought the Baptists consistent in what is called close communion. They believe that baptized Christians have a right to the communion, and none but such; and so also do the Methodist Episcopal Church believe. The only difference is, that the latter recognizes sprinkling equally valid as baptism with immersion, while the former contends that immersion is the only baptism, or in other words, that sprinkling or pouring is no baptism.

It happened, a little more than two months ago, that several persons belonging to my congregation desired to be immersed. I could not refuse them, though I resolved not to immerse them myself.—Accordingly I engaged a brother in the ministry to officiate for me. To confess the whole truth, I felt rather vexed than pleased. The weather was cold, and I thought it presumptuous to go into the river under such circumstances. There were eight candidates, all females; one of whom was very feeble in health, and I was requested to reserve her for the last, which request I readily complied with.

Suffice it to say, they went down into the water one by one, and came straightway up out of the water, while I stood upon the shore a silent spectator. Soon, however, the scene began to melt my heart, and something seemed to kindly whisper, *this*

is the way to follow Jesus. I felt that Jesus was present to own and sanction his ordinance. That Spirit that descended upon him at his baptism in the river Jordan, appeared to be hovering over us, and to change the whole aspect of the occasion in my mind to one of the most intense interest and delight. At length the last subject came; that feeble young woman went down into the water, and to my surprise she came up out of the water praising God.—And every step to the shore she repeated her praises, declaring that the water was not cold, though the ice was swimming all around her. So warm was her heart with the love of God, that she was unconscious of the cold. My heart was humbled, and I felt to mingle my tears of gratitude with hers. The impressions made upon my heart that morning, I trust will continue while memory endures.

I went home and confessed to my family that I had spoken unadvisedly about the solemn and interesting ordinance of immersion, and in my heart resolved never to do so again. Moreover I determined to examine more fully than ever I had done, the claims of the Baptists, thinking that by so doing my prejudices might become permanently softened, and my feelings more charitable towards them. Little did I think that such a result would follow as the sequel will show.

In the prosecution of this work, my Bible was my text-book, my only authority. I read the arguments of the Baptists,—the arguments of Pedit-baptists I

already understood. I therefore endeavored to weigh each on both sides, in the balances of divine truth. I think I was honest, and I am sure I earnestly prayed to be guided into the truth. I had not pursued the examination very far before I became convinced, and as I advanced, those convictions increased, till at last, I was fully converted to the views which are entertained by the Baptist church on these points, by which they are distinguished as such. Or, in other words, I found myself in doctrine, a Baptist. I went over the ground again, and again, and came every time precisely to the same conclusions: viz. That there was no divine warrant for infant baptism in the word of God, and no evidence of its being an institution of the gospel—that believers alone, are the proper subjects of that holy ordinance.

I also came to the conclusion, that sprinkling or pouring is an unscriptural mode of administering baptism, for which we have neither precept, nor example, nor the most remote inference in the New Testament. And that immersion being sanctioned by precept and example, is baptism. In short, that there is no baptism without it. Of course my opinion must be, that those who are sprinkled are not baptized—and as unbaptized persons have no right to the communion, none but such as are immersed ought to commune together.

With these views, my congregation will plainly see that I could not remain in the Methodist church, and be an honest man. I could not baptize infants.

or sprinkle in the name of the Lord, and by his authority, when I felt perfectly satisfied that He never gave authority to do it. Nor could I virtually allow the validity of sprinkling or infant baptism, by an admission of such to the table of the Lord.

As, therefore, I must give an account of myself to God, so must I act for myself. Honor, duty, consistency, religion, require me to resign my pastoral charge over this church and congregation. I have served you as long as I could discharge, with fidelity, the duties imposed upon me by the Methodist Episcopal Church. I leave you with no unkind feelings. No. The members of this church and congregation have always treated me in the most gentlemanly and Christian-like manner. For all your kind attentions to me and mine, during my ministration among you, you have my sincere and hearty thanks. I shall always feel an interest for you, and not cease to pray that God may be with you, and bless you.

You all know that I have not sought to proselyte any to my new views. I have cautiously concealed all my thoughts from you with regard to this subject. I do not wish to divide or injure the church for whose spiritual welfare I have labored as their pastor. I love them no less now than ever. My advice to you is—"Be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace be with you and bless you." Commit your cause into His hands.—"Give to the winds your fears," while you put your trust in God. And I trust that God will send you a faithful pastor, who will edify and build you

up. I am soon to take up my lot and inheritance with another tribe of our common Israel, and the recollection that we belong to the same common family, will always afford me no small degree of pleasure. And finally, the hope of meeting in that bright world of light and glory, where we shall see truth without error, and forever bask in its sunshine, is most cheering and delightful in the prospect.— There I hope to meet you and the many thousands of the tribe of our Israel with whom I have been associated for more than twenty of the last years of my life.

Allow me to say, in conclusion, that the step which I am now taking, is guided by principle. Had I one doubt as to its propriety, I would hesitate ; but I have not. My mind is clear. I think I know my duty, and I shall cheerfully perform it. I am aware many may impugn my motives, and censure me for so doing ; but if they do, I shall still pray for them. I am sure of one thing, and that is, those who know me best will give me credit for moral honesty ; and those who do not know the facts as they are, but deal in wholesale censure, as may be the case, will do it ignorantly, and I hope to put the most charitable construction upon what they may say. I know the power of prejudice, and that many good men have much of it about them. Sad experience has taught me that lesson. I shall therefore remember the simple couplet,—

“ That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.”

I love the Methodist church. I love her for her simplicity—for her zeal—for her unity of evangelical faith—for her experimental and practical piety. I love her for her revival spirit—for her zeal in the missionary cause—for her activity in every religious and benevolent enterprise. I love her for her institutions by which to fan up the flame of vital godliness in the church, and to keep her membership alive to God. Why should I not love her?—she has been a mother to me. She took me in youth and inexperience, and bore with my ignorance and mistakes. She has carried me in her arms, and always treated me with the utmost kindness and tenderness. Under God, I owe much to her instruction, forbearance, and fostering care. I leave her communion with deep emotion—I leave her ministry with feelings unutterable; for there are hundreds in her self-sacrificing ministry, to whom my heart has been wedded by many a “tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.” But duty directs.—I must obey. My compliance is cheerful and voluntary. I leave a flourishing church to go to another equally so; and remember this is my last prayer while within the walls of the M. E. church, “Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.”

S. REMINGTON.

Lowell, Feb. 8, 1848.



Pedobaptists not Open Communionists.

A

DEFENCE

OF

RESTRICTED COMMUNION,

Revised and Enlarged :

WITH

AN APPENDIX ON THE NATURE OF A GOSPEL CHURCH.

BY REV. S. REMINGTON, A. M.,

NOW PASTOR OF THE THIRD BAPTIST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

AUTHOR OF "REASONS FOR BECOMING A BAPTIST."

Forty-Seventh Thousand.

PHILADELPHIA:

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,

536 ARCH STREET.

ADVERTISEMENT.



TWENTY-ONE thousand copies of this little work have been already circulated in its original form, and the evidences of its usefulness are abundant. As the demand for it is steadily increasing, it has been thoroughly revised by the Author, enriched with several important additions, and enlarged by a valuable Appendix on the Nature of a Regular Gospel Church. Thus improved, it has been stereotyped anew by the American Baptist Publication Society; and although enlarged more than one fourth, it is still sold at the original price of six cents a copy, to encourage its wider circulation and more extensive usefulness.

The Author's preceding work, "Reasons for becoming a Baptist," of which 32,000 copies have been printed, has recently been translated into the French and German; and this work also is demanded, and will soon be issued in the German language. Together or apart, they present very concise and correct views of the scriptural practice of Baptist churches in regard to Baptism and the Lord's Supper—the very views by which the Author himself was convinced, and which, by the Divine blessing, have been successful in convincing many others.

J. N. B.

PHILADELPHIA, }
August 10, 1852. }

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P R E F A C E .



THERE is nothing that is *considered* peculiar to the Baptist denomination, which its ministers and members have to meet so frequently, as the charge of "*close communion*." We often hear this phrase pronounced in a satirical tone, and with an air of contempt, which seems to imply that we arrogate to ourselves a peculiar sanctity, as if we said to our brethren of other churches—"Stand off, I am more holy than thou."

The writer of the following Treatise has been a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church for nearly a score of years; and having been stationed during that time in eight different cities, besides country villages and towns, (and a member of three different Annual Conferences,) his acquaintance with the ministry and membership of that church is very extensive.

Although he dissolved his connection with that church because of a change of theological views, as the little work which he published, entitled, "REASONS FOR BECOMING A BAPTIST," will show, and not because he was disaffected toward his brethren; yet has he had to meet at almost every turn, where he has met them, the popular charge of contractedness in Christian charity. "Will you eat and drink with us?" is a question of almost every day occurrence, accompanied sometimes with—"I don't like the Baptists, because of their close communion."

To such interrogations and declarations, the writer, as a matter of course, would be expected to reply, which he has

done to such as he believed would listen with candor; and endeavored to show that Baptists, in this matter, are actuated by *principle*, and not by prejudice, bigotry, or a want of Christian affection toward the disciples of Christ, of whatever name or denomination.

But still he felt the want of a work directly in point, to meet such objectors. For certain is he, that multitudes are kept from uniting with Baptist churches, by misunderstanding this question. Booth, Howell, Cone, Andrew Fuller, G. F. Davis, and others, have written ably upon this subject; (and he would commend their works to the perusal of all inquirers after truth;) still they are either too large or too small exactly to meet the thing at which he has been aiming. He therefore feels that if he can so far awaken inquiry on this subject, as to lead our Pedobaptist brethren to read those works, he has not labored in vain.

What seemed to the writer of these sheets to be at this time most needed, was a work that would tend to silence this clamor of Pedobaptists, by showing that they themselves are *not* open communionists, and that it is not possible for them to be so and maintain church order and discipline; also, at the same time, to vindicate Baptists as being *scriptural* in their practice of restricted communion, and not thereby justly liable to the charge of bigotry.

How far he has accomplished this object, the reader must be the judge. To his candid and prayerful consideration are the thoughts spread out upon the following pages commended, with sincere and earnest prayer to God that the reader and writer may be guided into all truth.

S. REMINGTON.

NEW YORK, August 10, 1847.

A DEFENCE OF RESTRICTED COMMUNION.



CHAPTER I.

THE POINT EXPLAINED.

CLOSE COMMUNION is the popular phrase used by Pedobaptists, by which they designate what they deem the PECULIAR views and practice of the Baptists with regard to the proper recipients of the Lord's Supper.

It is, however, an important question, whether the phrase is justifiable—whether it does not imply more than is really intended and properly inferred from the practice of the churches to which it is applied.

If it necessarily means *Christian* communion only with the members of Baptist churches who adopt the principles which give rise to it, then certainly we ought to disclaim it; inasmuch as we rejoice to believe that there are genuine Christians in all the evangelical churches, for whom we not only entertain the highest respect, but sincere Christian affection and fellowship.

The question, then, may be asked, "Why not commune together at THE LORD'S TABLE?" This question is by no means novel; and to the minds of many, who may not have carefully examined the principles on which Baptists ground their practice in this particular, it may appear to imply an inconsistency, irreconcilable with our professions of CHRISTIAN fellowship for all the lovers of the blessed Jesus.

In the examination of this subject, I may be permitted to inquire, whose fault is it that we do not sit down together at the same Table? Is it the fault of the Baptist churches, or is it the fault of the Pedobaptists?

In view of this question, I shall state some of the prominent points upon which we agree, and one in particular upon which we differ,—and which one constitutes the barrier to the fellowship enjoyed by churches in the communion of the Lord's Supper.

1. We agree that Baptism is an institution of Christ; that it is a duty enjoined upon all Christians to be baptized; and, though it be not a saving ordinance, yet it cannot be wilfully omitted without disobedience to the requirements of the gospel.

2. We agree that it is the visible line of distinction between the kingdom of Christ and this world, and consequently that it is the door of admission into the visible church of Jesus Christ.

3. We agree that it is one of the essential requisites of an admission to the Lord's Table, and that none, however pious, ought to be permitted to enjoy this holy ordinance previous to a compliance with this Christian rite.

These points of agreement are so obvious, that it

would appear to be needless for me to quote authorities by which to prove them. It would seem to be time enough to do this, when it is affirmed to the contrary. The fact is, that the practice of all the Pedobaptist churches is founded upon the admission of this principle: none are admitted to the Lord's Table until they become members of a Christian church, and none are recognized members of a Christian church without having been first baptized.

This is as it should be; and this practice is sanctioned by the New Testament Scriptures. We there learn that Baptism was instituted before the Lord's Supper, and that it was the invariable practice of the inspired apostles to baptize all believers before they admitted them to the Lord's Table, and that to this practice there is not a single exception on record. For proof, the reader is referred to the converts of Pentecost, recorded in Acts ii.; the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii.; Lydia and her household, and the Jailor and his household, Acts xvi.; Cornelius and his friends, Acts x.; and that of Saul, Acts ix. These were all baptized as soon as they believed, and not one of them enjoyed the communion of the Lord's Supper until after they had submitted to this ordinance.

Now if it were a matter of indifference whether they were baptized or not before they partook of the communion, we should naturally look for some examples. Ananias might have said to Saul, "Now, brother Saul, let us commemorate the sufferings and death of the blessed Saviour;" but did he? No. He said, "Arise and be baptized." Peter might have said to Cornelius and his friends, "Can any forbid these persons coming to the Table of the

Lord, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" but did he thus address them? No; but he said, "Can any forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Paul might have said to the jailor, "In a most miraculous manner has God this night interposed and converted you and your family to himself, and let us now eat and drink together in the name of the Lord Jesus, as a token of our Christian love and fellowship;" but did he? Nay; he baptized "him and all his, straightway."

And why was this practice so *invariable*? Because it accorded with the Commission which they received from the Great Head of the Church, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, and Mark xvi. 15, 16. The order of this Commission is, 1. Teach men the gospel plan of salvation; 2. Baptize all that believe; and 3. Then "teach them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded you." Among the commands to be observed *after* baptism is, "This do in remembrance of me."

These passages set forth Baptism as a divinely appointed preliminary to the Lord's Supper; which has been so held in all ages since the days of Christ and his apostles, by all orthodox denominations.

MR. BOOTH says, "Before the grand Romish apostasy, in the very depths of that apostasy, and since the Reformation, both at home and abroad, the general practice has been, to receive none but baptized persons to communion at the Lord's Table." This declaration of Mr. B. can be proved by an abundance of historical *data*, which sets the question under consideration beyond the power of successful contradiction.

JUSTIN MARTYR, A. D. 150, only about fifty years after the death of the apostle John, when speaking on this very subject, remarks: "This food is called by us the Eucharist, of which it is not lawful for any to partake, but such as believe the things that are taught by us to be true, and have been baptized."

JEROME, A. D. 400, says: "Catechumens cannot communicate at the Lord's Table, being unbaptized."

AUGUSTINE, A. D. 400, speaking of administering the Lord's Supper to infants, remarks, "Of which certainly they cannot partake unless they are baptized."

BEDE, A. D. 700, narrates the following incident: "Three young men, princes of the Eastern Saxons, seeing a Bishop administer the sacred supper, desired to partake of it as their royal father had done. To whom the Bishop replied—If you will be baptized in the salutary fountain as your father was, you may also partake of the Lord's Supper as he did; but if you despise the former, ye cannot in any wise receive the latter."

THEOPHYLACT, A. D. 1100, testifies, that "no unbaptized person partakes of the Lord's Supper."

BONAVENTURE, about A. D. 1200, observes:—"Faith, indeed, is necessary to all the sacraments, but especially to the reception of baptism, because baptism is the first among the sacraments."

F. SPANHEIM, who flourished about A. D. 1600, asserts—"None but baptized persons are admitted to the Lord's Table."

Lord Chancellor KING, A. D. 1700, says: "Baptism was always the precedent to the Lord's

Supper; and none were admitted to receive the Eucharist till they were baptized. This is so obvious to every man that it needs no proof."

To further show that this doctrine, which is sanctioned by the Apostolical Fathers and the respectable writers quoted, is truly apostolical, we will apply the celebrated rule of Augustine as translated by DR. WALL:—"What the whole church through all the world does practise, and yet it has not been instituted by councils, but has always been in use, is, with very good reason, supposed to have been settled by authority of the Apostles." And what is this that he says is "supposed to have been settled by the authority of the Apostles?" Answer. "That they cannot partake of the Lord's Supper unless they are baptized." Hence, DR. WALL boldly states—"No church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. AMONG ALL THE ABSURDITIES THAT EVER WERE HELD, NONE EVER MAINTAINED THAT ANY PERSONS SHOULD PARTAKE OF THE COMMUNION BEFORE THEY WERE BAPTIZED."

DR. MANTON'S testimony is—"None but baptized persons have a right to the Lord's Table."

DR. DODDRIDGE says—"It is certain that Christians in general have always been spoken of by the most ancient fathers as baptized persons. And it is also *certain* that, as far as our knowledge of primitive antiquity extends, no unbaptized person received the Lord's Supper."

DR. DWIGHT'S opinion, in connection with these decisive testimonies, is entitled to great weight. He says—"It is an indispensable qualification for this ordinance, that the candidate for communion

be a member of the visible church of Christ, in full standing. By this I intend, that he should be a person of piety; that he should have made a public profession of religion; and that he should have been baptized."

I will conclude this chapter with an extract from REV. ROBERT HALL, who, though a Baptist, was nevertheless favorable to open communion. He says—"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. Considered as an *argumentum ad hominem*, or an appeal to the avowed principles of our opponents, this reasoning may be sufficient to shield us from that severity of reproach to which we are often exposed, *nor ought we to be censured for acting upon a system which is sanctioned by our accusers.*"*

* In his "Short Statement," &c. *Hall's Works*, vol. ii. p. 213.

CHAPTER II.

THE REAL POINT OF DIFFERENCE.

WE perceive then, that this view of the subject is common ground for both Baptists and Pedobaptists. It may then be asked, wherein do we differ? Answer. We differ as to what constitutes Christian Baptism. The argument properly turns upon *baptism*, and not upon restricted communion. We all agree that none but believers who have been baptized ought to be allowed to commune. The point at issue is, WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED? Pedobaptists say "all infants or adult believers who have been immersed, poured, or sprinkled." The Baptists say, "none but immersed believers."

If the argument, then, turn upon this point, why censure the Baptists for carrying out a principle which all acknowledge to be scriptural? Why not let the objection be directed to the real question at issue? Or, in other words, why are the Pedobaptists always harping upon this string, when they themselves constantly carry out the same principle in their own recognition of proper subjects of the communion?

Some, probably, do not fully understand the ground upon which Baptists act in restricting the Lord's Supper to immersed believers; and there-

fore think them exceedingly bigoted and narrow in their Christian charity.

Others who understand the *principle* upon which Baptists act in this matter, it is to be feared, are themselves, to too great an extent, the victims of that bigotry which they so unsparingly charge upon us; and so they raise the cry of *close communion* as a denominational *ruse*, by which to represent us in a light repulsive to that catholic spirit which should characterize every true Christian.

“We are God’s children,” say they, “and we claim the right as such to sit down with you at his table; but you cut us off from this privilege; you lay restrictions upon God’s table which the Master will not sanction.” And all this is said by those who guard the Table of the Lord against the intrusions of all unbaptized persons.

Again, they charge us with robbing them of their privilege; and they ask, “How dare you rob the dear children of God of their privilege?” In reply, we ask, “What privilege?” Have you not the Lord’s Supper in your own churches, and do you not enjoy that privilege as often as we do in our Baptist churches? If it were consistent for us to invite you to partake with us at the Lord’s Table, how often, think you, would this privilege be enjoyed? How often do the different denominations of Pedobaptists commune with each other? For more than twenty-five years I was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and never for once during all that time have I enjoyed the “privilege” of communing with any other denomination. It was not bigotry, nor a want of opportunity that prevented; nor did I for once think to reproach

myself with the idea, that I was voluntarily cutting myself off from the enjoyment of a great "privilege," for I had all the "privilege" I wanted at home in my own church.

A few weeks ago, in conversation with a preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the following colloquy took place between us.

Preacher. "I wonder, Brother Remington, how you, who have always appeared to me to be so liberal towards all evangelical denominations, can subscribe to doctrines or views by which you are obliged to debar your brethren of other churches the privilege of eating and drinking with you."

R. "Let me ask you, my brother, how long have you been a member of the M. E. Church?"

Preacher. "Over twelve years."

R. "How many times have you communed with other denominations during that period?"

Preacher. "Let me think—upon my word I must confess—not once."

R. "What a privilege!"

Here our conversation on this topic ended. This is only one case among the multitude; and yet the unjust cry is continued, "You Baptists rob the children of God of their privilege."

Indeed, in these days, when Christians of all denominations are favored with churches and ordinances to suit their own peculiar views, the communion of the different denominations can scarcely be spoken of in the light of a "privilege." And I question whether it is so viewed by our Pedobaptist brethren when they seriously and candidly reflect upon it.

Sectarian zeal frequently carries good men quite

too far, and under its influence they often say and do things which, with a little reflection, they would not—could not conscientiously do. When I was the pastor of the Bromfield Street M. E. Church, in Boston, the Rev. Mr. R., a member of the New England Conference, visited the city and spent the Sabbath. He went to one of the Baptist churches in that city to hear the Rev. Mr. —; it was their ordinance Sabbath, and he remained with the church at the communion, when as he informed me, the following conversation, as near as I can recollect took place between him and Mr. C.

R. “My name is R. I am a member of a Christian church, and a minister of the gospel: will you permit me to sit down with you and your church at the Lord’s Table?”

C. “Are you a Baptist?”

R. “No, sir. I am a Methodist, and a member of the N. E. Conference of ministers; and I should like, if agreeable, to commemorate the death and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ with you.”

C. “But, my brother, you must be baptized before you come with us to the Lord’s Table;—and you know our principles, that we consider no baptism valid but immersion.”

R. “True; but I have been immersed.”

C. “Let me inquire, then, my brother, do you both by precept and example, sanction immersion as the only gospel baptism?”

R. “O no, sir. I believe that a valid gospel baptism, may be performed by either sprinkling or pouring.”

C. “I thought so; and you certainly know that, with such views and practice, we should make our-

selves very inconsistent to admit you to the communion with us."

R. "Brother C., this is a hard case."

C. "I know it, Brother R., but the remedy is at hand;—do and teach the commandments of Christ, and we shall rejoice to welcome you at his table."

Brother R. went away, not indeed sorrowful, for there were no less than six Methodist churches in that city, where he could, if he had desired it, have communed that day. I leave the reader to draw his own conclusions.

"It is a hard case," said a gentleman while listening to the above relation from Mr. R., "a hard case, indeed, to shut a man from the Lord's table whom we believe to be a real Christian." And in this he spoke what multitudes of others have said; but they have said it, as he did, more from impulse than sober reflection. For it is an undeniable fact that Pedobaptists, would do this same thing for which they so strongly censure us. To illustrate this, I will give the substance of a conversation which took place between an old and respectable Methodist brother of New York, and myself a few weeks ago. I will call him Brother L.

L. "The Methodist Conference is now in session in the Allen Street Church, and a great many of your old friends are there. I should think you would want to see them. Have you been there yet?"

R. "O yes, sir, several times; and I was much pleased to see them, and gave many of them a good hearty shake of the hand."

L. "Do you still believe them to be Christians and Christian ministers?"

R. "I know nothing to the contrary; and I am bound so to believe until I do."

L. "Should you have communion in your church during the session of the Conference, and these dear old friends and brethren of yours be present, would you invite them to sit down with you at the table of the Lord?"

R. "Not because they were my personal friends, or even ministers of the gospel. There are three kinds of fellowship among Christians—Christian, Ministerial, and Church fellowship. The two former may be exercised without the latter, and the latter without either of the two former. I may fellowship you as a Christian, and them as Christian ministers, without any church fellowship. And, on the other hand, I may be obliged in some cases, to fellowship persons in the church with myself simply as members, not believing them to be genuine Christians."

L. "Then I understand you to say, that you would not let them come with you to the Lord's Table. Bigotry! bigotry! bigotry! How uncharitable and how antichristian. I pity you for your bigoted notions and your contracted Christian charity."

R. "You seem, my brother, to be very sincere, and I doubt not you feel a strong commiseration for me. Perhaps, however, I may relieve your mind a little if you will answer me a few questions. Allow me to ask, do you believe that God has any real Christians and Christian ministers among the Quakers, who were never baptized at all?"

L. "O yes, many. I have known some reconverted souls among that people; and some who were excellent preachers, and called of God, in my humble opinion, to the work of the gospel ministry."

R. "Should any of these gospel ministers happen to be at your church at the time of the communion, and should ask to enjoy the privilege of going to the table with you, would the Methodists let them enjoy that privilege?"

L. "I suppose not."

R. "Why not? They are Christians and Christian ministers. And is it possible that *you* are so bigoted—so narrow in *your* Christian charity, as not to eat and drink with ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ just because they are Quakers and not Methodists? 'Bigotry! bigotry! bigotry!'"

L. "Why, as to that, Brother R., you know the reason. They have not been *baptized*, and it is contrary to the usages of our church to admit persons to the Table without it."

R. "So it seems, then, that you and I perfectly agree. You have admitted that these Quakers are entitled to Christian fellowship, for they are Christians—that they are entitled to ministerial fellowship, because they are ministers of the gospel; but that they are not entitled to *church* fellowship, because they were never admitted into the church in Christ's appointed way, namely, by Christian baptism. Now can you blame me for not having church fellowship with those whom I do not believe have any more obeyed Christ in his ordinance than these pious Quakers who discard baptism altogether?"

L. "Well, my brother, that does seem to present the matter to my mind in a new light. If you are right about baptism, I don't know as you are wrong about close communion; but I think you must be wrong about baptism."

R. "I think the fault lies in your refusal to submit implicitly to the example and precept of Christ, the gospel Lawgiver."

Thus ended the dialogue. And thus it always ends, when the principle which guides the Baptists in their views of communion is traced to its legitimate source.

I never was disposed to charge upon Baptists inconsistency with regard to this practice for which they are so much and so severely blamed. I always said that their conclusions were correctly drawn from the premises which they laid down. If they were right as to their views of baptism then were they also right with regard to what is called close communion; and I acted accordingly, as the following incident will show.

When, some seven years ago, I was the pastor of the State Street M. E. Church, Troy, N. Y., a young convert applied to me for baptism. The following colloquy took place between us.

Young Convert. "I have called to see you, Mr. R., to tell you what God has recently done for my soul; and if you think proper, after you shall hear my story, I want you at a suitable time to baptize me." Here she related her Christian experience, and then said, "Now, sir, if you think me a proper person to belong to the church, I desire you to immerse me, for I do not believe that either sprinkling or pouring is baptism."

R. "What! do you not believe in sprinkling or pouring for others, if not for yourself? Do you not believe that either mode is sufficient, if it but answer a good conscience?"

Y. Convert. "No, sir. The Bible is my only guide, and I cannot see any other baptism but immersion there. I read in Matt. iii. 16—'And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water;' and Mark i. 9, says that 'Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John IN JORDAN.' And I read in Acts viii. 38, 39, 'And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were COME UP OUT OF THE WATER, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.' I also read in Col. ii. 12, 'BURIED with him in baptism;' and in Rom. vi. 4, 'Therefore we are BURIED with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' Here I have the EXAMPLE of CHRIST—that example copied by PHILIP and the EUNUCH—and the testimony of PAUL; for Paul must be speaking of immersion; for who ever heard of any person being BURIED in a few drops of water. I can't read any thing about sprinkling or pouring for baptism in the New Testament; and I therefore must believe that IMMERSION is the only true Christian baptism."

R. "Well, madam, if this is your opinion I cannot baptize you, because you are not a Methodist, but a Baptist."

Y. Convert. "I thought I was a Methodist. I

was converted among them, and love them; but I begin to think that you are right—that "I am a Baptist."

R. "Let me explain, my young friend, so that you may see that it is consistency at which I am aiming, both for yourself and myself. You must already perceive the inconsistency of your being immersed, in our church, with your views. We believe that baptism is a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, but according to your views of baptism I myself have never been baptized, for I have only been sprinkled, and that is also the fact with the majority of my church. How could you commune with an unbaptized minister and church?"

Y. Convert. "But don't you sometimes immerse?"

R. "Certainly I do; but it is only in those cases where the candidates prefer it for themselves but believe other modes equally valid to such as choose them."

Y. Convert. "Then I perceive that I am not a Methodist. I will take your advice and go to the Baptists."

CHAPTER III.

THE TWO SYSTEMS COMPARED.

IN surveying this entire question as it lies between Baptists and Pedobaptists, I am obliged to come to the conclusion, that the principal difference between them in this matter is, that the Baptists adhere to the Bible and their creed, while the Pedobaptists discard both in this instance for the sake of open communion.

I acknowledge that this assertion seems severe, but only a glance at the grounds upon which it is founded, will show that such a conclusion is drawn from facts, as they appear in the premises.

A pious Scotchman, a few years ago, after enumerating all the different sects in Scotland, remarks, "Each of these sects is close communion in every sense of the word. They never partake of the Lord's Supper together; they all say, if we have reason to divide into different sects we cannot unite in the Lord's Supper, which is the most essential act of church fellowship."

The same may be said of the churches of England in the seventeenth century, in the days of Baxter, Charnock, Palmer, Saunders, Longly, Doolittle, Henry, Earl, &c.

And what shall we say of our own New England

Pedobaptist churches, who, in 1636, by force of arms, banished Roger Williams from Salem, Mass., for his principles; in 1639 fined the leading men who formed a little Baptist interest in Weymouth from 20s. to £20 each for the same thing, and threatened them with perpetual banishment if they persisted. Did it look like open communion in 1644, when they passed a law in Boston to banish all who openly condemned or opposed infant baptism? In 1643 seven men were tried, convicted, condemned, sent to prison, and put in irons in the city of Boston, and in 1644 were banished by order of the general court, and forbidden to return under the penalty of suffering death; and all this for the dreadful crime of being *Baptists*. In 1644, a poor man by the name of Painter, in Hingham, near Boston, was condemned, tied up and whipped, and for what? because he turned Baptist and refused to have his child sprinkled. In 1651, three Baptist clergymen in Lynn, a few miles east of Boston, were arrested while one was preaching on Lord's day, and sent to prison in Boston, where they lay two weeks, and were fined—one £30, one £20, and one £5, and sentenced to be publicly whipped if they refused to pay. How one got out, history informs us not; but of the other two we are informed that the fine of one was paid and that the other, Mr. Holmes, was cruelly *whipped*. Two men who were standing by, and witnessing this bloody scene, showed some signs of sympathy, which led the Pedobaptists to suspect them of being Baptists, and they were accordingly arrested, and each sentenced to pay 40s. and to be publicly whipped.

The poor Baptists, after enduring the most re-

lentless persecution, succeeded in building a church in Boston. But the Pedobaptists shut it up in 1680, and posted the following note upon the door: "All persons are to take notice, that by order of the COURT, the doors of this house are shut up; and that they are inhibited to hold any meeting, or to open the doors thereof without license from authority, till the GENERAL COURT take further order, as they will answer the contrary at their peril.

"Dated at Boston, 8th March, 1680.

"EDWARD RAWSON, *Secretary.*"

Between the years 1727 and 1733, there were twenty-eight Baptists, two Quakers, and two Episcopalians imprisoned at Bristol, Mass., (now R. I.) for Congregationalist ministers' tax. In 1770, about four hundred acres of land, belonging to the members of the Baptist church in Ashfield, were sold at auction by order of the Court, to pay the Congregational minister tax. "Nay, they sold their dead; for they sold their grave-yard. The orthodox minister was one of the purchasers." (See Minutes of the Philadelphia Association, page 116.)

In 1658, the court of New Haven, Conn., made a law *prohibiting all conversation* of the common people with any of those heretics, such as Quakers, Baptists, &c., and all persons from giving them any entertainment on the penalty of £5.

It is indeed painful to refer to such historical facts; but I do it that we may be able to test the practical influence of the doctrine which we are defending. We are charged with being bigoted and narrow, and confined in our Christian charities, and that all this grows out of our close communion. But what are the facts? What do the facts which

I have just noted say in behalf of the Pedobaptists of America in the seventeenth, and, I might have added, the eighteenth century also. Are we not under the painful necessity of not only charging them with bigotry, but, in too many instances, with *intolerance*? Religious intolerance never exists without bigotry, and bigotry never exists without fostering a spirit which would lead to the same unhappy results. Any system of religion, therefore, which in its practical influence would lead us to persecute those who are of a different opinion with ourselves, or would preclude Christian fellowship with those who are right in the fundamentals of religion, and have passed from death unto life, and become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, just because they differ from us in some things not absolutely necessary to salvation, must be wrong, radically wrong. Such is the connection between cause and effect, that we may always look for the latter to follow the former so far as the cause is permitted to operate unobstructed by different circumstances.

If restricted communion have a tendency to make us bigoted and uncharitable toward Christians who differ from us in opinion, then we might look for religious intolerance and persecution in some form, either in spirit or practice, to mark the history of the Baptist denomination. But you may trace the history of the denomination from the days of John the Baptist to the present time, and you will find that all the blood that has ever been shed on account of Baptists, has been shed by the cruelty of their persecutors, and flowed from the veins of Baptists themselves. Whatever imperfections have

marked their history—whatever zeal untempered by knowledge, or whatever enthusiasm may have seized their ranks, at any period, they cannot be charged by their most virulent enemies with ever having been a persecuting people.*

It is true, great moral *tenacity* has marked their history; which, while it has also marked their *integrity*, has nevertheless brought down upon them severe, and, at times, unmitigated persecutions from other Christian denominations. But this *tenacity* by which they have been distinguished, and for which they have suffered so much calumny and violent persecution, has been *for the Bible*—the pure and unaltered Word of God in all it communicates for the faith and practice of mankind; and that, too, irrespective of popular opinions and influence. They contend for that liberty which allows every man to read, think, and decide for himself as to the duties and privileges set forth in God's revelation to the world. They contend that

* A gentleman put into my hand, a few days ago, an *extract* which he made a short time since, when in Providence, R. I., from the City Directory. It will be remembered that this is the place in which Roger Williams took refuge when banished by the Pedobaptists from Massachusetts, in 1636, for his principles of religious liberty which were regarded as Baptistical. It goes to substantiate the fact that Baptists have not been persecutors, when they in their turn have had it in their power to banish those who differed from them in their religious views. We give to the reader the extract, and let it speak for itself.—“1658. The town, though strongly urged by the Commissioners of the United Colonies, steadfastly refused to banish such Quakers as were here, or to prohibit others from coming, and consequently became a City of Refuge to that persecuted people.” The reader will observe that this was twenty-two years after the banishment of Roger Williams from Massachusetts.

we should both do and teach the commandments of Christ as Christ himself hath said, and not as man says. They contend that the duties and ordinances of the gospel are to be observed as Christ, the great Head of the Church has directed, and not as the Councils of the Church may decree. In short, they contend that conscience is no safe guide in any of these things, only as it is enlightened by the word and Spirit of God. And all they ask of the whole Pedobaptist world, is for them to follow their example in this particular—be willing to take God's Holy Word as it may be literally interpreted, and as the best authorities do construe its sacred words, and they are certain that it would not be long before the whole evangelical church would say, we have "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism."

One other thing which is worthy of praise must be allowed us, and that is CONSISTENCY. We neither believe in, nor will we give countenance to, infant sprinkling; nor allow sprinkling or pouring to be Christian baptism; nor will we admit that any unbaptized person has a right to commune. Here we stand unflinchingly, and are determined not to move or swerve a hair's breadth. If we should, we would be inconsistent. I *might* say, if we should depart from any of these land-marks we would cease to be Baptists.

If the same consistency marked the Pedobaptists with regard to the ordinances of Christ, there would be hope of ultimately ending this controversy. It is a fact which all our Pedobaptist ministers and many of the people know, that in their churches there are multitudes who, but for certain manœuvres on their part, would have been Baptists. And

even now a very little thing would so far wake up this subject in their minds, as to make them feel very uncomfortable in their connection with Pedobaptist churches.*

Let the Pedobaptist churches enforce their respective disciplines, and require their members to invariably sanction infant baptism, and there would be such a fire kindled among them that nothing but immersion would quench it. They would drive their members off to Baptist churches by hundreds if not by thousands. They dare not do this thing; but I ask, are they consistent for not doing it?

Again, I know of many ministers of the gospel who, notwithstanding the avowed principles of the Pedobaptist churches, that baptism is an essential prerequisite to the communion, will immerse such as have been sprinkled in infancy, and even adult years, rather than let them go to the Baptists. Is not this inconsistent? It is certainly inconsistent with established usage, not to say the plain letter and example of the New Testament; and it is virtually denying the validity of sprinkling as a Gospel ordinance. Such, therefore, lay themselves open to the charge of that kind of inconsistency, which shows a want of moral honesty. In their disciplines they say one thing, and in their practice they do another, by which they contradict their own professions, and set aside their declared belief to the world. This certainly is the most charitable view that we can take of the matter, unless they contend that it is proper to *re-baptize*, or in other words to

* See "A Pedobaptist Church no Home for a Baptist." Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society.

baptize the same person twice. But they do not thus contend. They universally hold, that baptism is an ordinance which is to be administered to the same person but once. Yet some of them, to my own knowledge, do re-baptize; and that, too, with impunity, as far as it relates to any censure that may come upon them from the church to which they belong. They say, "WE believe that sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, is either of them valid Christian baptism, whether administered to infants or adult believers." But the young convert comes forward and says, "I am not satisfied with my infant sprinkling; I want you to immerse me." "Well," says the minister, "as baptism is to answer a good conscience you shall be accommodated." But, I ask, what does the minister do with *his* conscience in baptizing the same person twice? Again, the more matured Christian comes forward and says, "I was sprinkled when I was converted; but I have examined the subject more minutely since, and am not satisfied. I think the Bible teaches immersion as essential to the right administration of this ordinance, and I feel it my duty to be thus baptized. If you cannot consistently do it, I shall go to the Baptists. I do not desire you to violate your own rules on my account; but still I should like to remain in the church of my early choice, if I can follow Christ in his ordinance." "Oh," says the preacher, "my brother, you need give yourself no uneasiness about the matter. You shall be accommodated. Your own conscience shall be fully satisfied. I will baptize you again." I acknowledge that this is not in accordance with established usage in Pedobaptist churches; but

this usage is departed from in individual cases. I know several ministers of the gospel, one of whom was in 1847 a Presiding Elder of a District in the New England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who will do this thing;—aye, he will go further than this. He told me, that “under some circumstances he would be willing to commune with an unbaptized person.” This, however, is not Methodism. Yet is this man, with his declared views, allowed to be a minister, and even hold the high and responsible office of a Presiding Elder of a District in the M. E. Church.

It has been questioned whether the Methodist Episcopal Church really requires baptism as a prerequisite to the communion, or church membership. The practice of some of her ministers seems to indicate that she does not. When a Presiding Elder of a District avows that he would not object to immerse such as had been sprinkled, if they were dissatisfied with their baptism, and that he would be willing to commune with unbaptized persons, will be very proper to inquire if, in this particular, he is a sound Methodist. I do not hesitate to aver that he is not, nor any one else who shall advocate the same views. To determine what are the doctrines or discipline of any Church, we must not rely upon the mere statements or practice of isolated individuals. They may not be orthodox themselves; and therefore it would be unsafe to depend upon them for an exposition of the peculiar features of the denomination to which they belong. To ascertain what the Methodist Episcopal Church really believes, or requires her ministers and members to believe and practise, we must go to her

Discipline and standard writers. To these therefore we will now go, for the purpose of determining this question, viz.: *What do they teach as to Baptism being a pre-requisite to the Lord's Supper, and Church membership?*

We begin with their Discipline, the last edition, published by order of the General Conference of the M. E. Church, 1850. On page 24, section 2, it is asked—"How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the Church?"—*Answer.* Let none be received into the Church until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been *baptized.*" I admit that probationers for "full membership" in the M. E. Church, may be admitted to the Table of the Lord with them, providing they have been baptized, and not without. To this agrees their general invitation on communion occasions, as on page 106. It is as follows: "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, *following the commandments of God, and walking from hence forth in his holy ways*; draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament to your comfort." Bishop Hedding, in a discourse on the administration of discipline, which he delivered before the New York, Providence, New England, and Maine Conferences, and published at their request, states that there are several things which should debar a minister from giving a general invitation in the congregation to members in good standing in other churches, "to come to the Table of the Lord." Such as, "*heretical doctrines, immoral practices,*" any practice

which would exclude a member from their communion, or non membership in any church. We give his own words, (pages 72, 73,) and the reader can then judge for himself. "Is it proper," he asks, "for a preacher to give out a general invitation in the congregation to members in good standing in other churches, to come to the Lord's Supper?" To this, the bishop gives the following answer: "No; for the most unworthy persons are apt to think themselves in good standing, and sometimes persons who are not members of any church, will take the liberty, from an invitation, to come. And again, there are some communities, called churches, which, from heretical doctrines or immoral practices, have no claim to the privileges of Christians, and ought not to be admitted to the communion of any Christian people." The rule, he adds, in that case, is as follows: "Let no person who is not a member of our church be admitted to the communion without examination, and some token given, by an elder or deacon. No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our Church." *Discipline*, page 104. Now I ask, how much further than the above, as to guarding the Lord's Table, would Baptists desire to go?

The reader's special attention is invited to one very important *item* in this quotation, to show that in the opinion of the Bishop, non-membership in any church, disqualifies a person from the privilege of partaking of the Lord's Supper, in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The preacher is advised not to give a general invitation in the congregation, be-

cause, says the Bishop, "*sometimes persons who are not members of any Church, will take the liberty, from an invitation, to come.*"

In these authorities we clearly perceive, 1. That no person can be admitted into the Methodist Episcopal Church until he is baptized. 2. That no one can be admitted to the communion with them, who is not either a baptized member on probation, or in full membership in their church, or a baptized believer belonging to, and in good standing with some other church. 3. The conclusion is that the Methodist Episcopal Church hold, that Baptism is a pre-requisite to the Lord's Supper, and the door of admission into the church.

The quotation of one more authority will confirm the above; and it is good authority. The book from which I am about to quote, is recognized by the General Conference of the M. E. Church as a standard work, suitable as a text book for young men, in their preparatory studies for the ministry in their church; and for the "third year," in their "course of study." See "*Discipline*," page 217, under the head "*Systematic Divinity*." The work referred to, is "*Hibbard on Baptism*." I quote from the edition of 1841, page 174. It reads as follows: "It is but just to remark that in one principle, the Baptist and Pedobaptist Churches agree. They both agree in rejecting from communion at the Table of the Lord, and in denying the rights of church fellowship to all who have not been baptized. Valid baptism they consider as essential to constitute visible church membership. *This also we hold*. The only question, then, that here divides us is, what is essential to valid baptism."

I sincerely thank brother Hibbard, my old friend, for the above honest statement, for the concession which he has so frankly made, and for the justice which he has done to Baptist principles. On the communion question, brother Hibbard is in *principle* a Baptist, and if he should ever happen to discover that the Greek word *baptize*, means immerse, I think that about the only prop that holds him to Pedobaptist views would fall. And, notwithstanding he has written a very elaborate and able work to defend Pedobaptists, yet I have no doubt that the candor and integrity of this excellent brother, would lead him to follow the example of some of his brethren who have felt it their duty to be "buried with Christ by baptism."

To show that this view of the subject is, and ever has been essentially Methodistic, the reader shall be furnished with extracts from the writings of the founders and fathers of Methodism. We will begin with Rev. John Wesley, their founder. In his notes on Acts v. 2, he says: "Here is a native specimen of a New Testament Church, which is, a company of men, called by the Gospel, grafted into Christ by baptism." Rev. Joseph Benson, who, by the appointment of the English Conference, wrote a commentary, in which he was to embody and expand the notes of Mr. Wesley, in his commentary on the same passage, endorses Mr. W's notes. He observes, "As the word church (*ekklesia*) now occurs a second time in this history, it may be proper to observe, that we have here a native specimen of a New Testament Church; which is a company of persons called by the Gospel, grafted into Christ by faith and the Holy Spirit,

admitted into the society of Christians by baptism." Dr. Adan Clarke, on the same passage, quotes Mr. Wesley's words *verbatim*, viz., that a New Testament Church must be "1. Called by the Gospel. 2. Grafted into Christ by baptism." In his observations on the nature and importance of baptism at the close of Mark xvi. on page 349, the Dr. remarks that "according to its nature, it is introductory to the visible church." And again, "Baptism also brings its *privileges* along with it; while it opens the way to a partaking of holy things in the church, and places the baptized within the church, over which God exercises a more singular providence than over those who are out of the church."

One quotation more may suffice. This is from high authority—Rev. Richard Watson, who is the theological oracle of the Methodists, both in England and in this country. In his *Theological Institutes*, volume iii. in the chapter headed "The Christian Church," Mr. W. says, "The Church of Christ, in its largest sense, consists of all who have been baptized in the name of Christ, and who thereby make a visible profession of faith in his Divine mission." Again, on the same page, Mr. W. asserts: "It is obligatory on all who are convinced of the truth of Christianity to be baptized; and upon all thus baptized, frequently to partake of the Lord's Supper." On page 371, the same author observes, "Thus was baptism expressly made the initiatory rite, by which believers of "all nations" were to be introduced into the church and covenant of grace." With the above authorities before him, what *sound* Methodist can ever invite to the Lord's

Table, or commune with an unbaptized person? And how can he censure Baptists for adhering to a principle which he himself allows? Let all our Pedobaptist brethren commune with us *in baptism*, and we will commune with them *in the Lord's Supper*. For the former, according to their own concessions, must precede the latter.

Does any one think we demand too much of our brethren in order to union? But of whom do we ask this? Only of those who admit that the immersion of believers is valid baptism, (and very few dispute this,) and who profess a desire to have every barrier to union at the Lord's Table removed. It is not in our power to remove this barrier, for we did not raise it. We have not changed the ordinances. On the contrary, is it not clear as the sun, that we adhere to the plain letter of the law of Christ, against our own ease, interest, and popularity? We ask of them no sacrifices which we do not cheerfully make ourselves. Only as "the answer of a good conscience toward God," do we hold our present position. All that we ask of our brethren is, that in brotherly love they will respect our consciences in this matter, *so far as what we ask does not interfere with their own*. If we understand the case aright, they could all be immersed without any violation of conscience. By so doing, they remove the only barrier to our church communion, and having "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," we shall joyfully come together "in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace."

CHAPTER IV.

THE COMPARISON CONTINUED.

ANOTHER fact which illustrates the inconsistency of nearly all the Pedobaptist churches is, that their open communion professions conflict with their own Discipline, public journals, and ecclesiastical decisions. By an examination of their Disciplines, it will be found that they are but little, if any, more open communion than Baptists.

Let us glance at a few facts. Dr. Howell justly observes—"In reference to the several Protestant denominations, I believe they all hold that manifest corruption in doctrine and worship is a disqualification for the reception of the Lord's Supper. Let that fact be remembered, and then how shall we answer the following interrogatories? Do not Methodists habitually and bitterly charge both these upon the Presbyterians, on the score of their Calvinism? Are the Presbyterians less ready or adroit in hurling back upon the Methodists the same imputations on the score of their Arminianism? Each, too, has its own internal war. Old School, New School, Cumberland, Hopkinsian, and other Presbyterians; and Episcopal, Protestant, Whitfield, and other Methodists, strive on the arena of ecclesiastical combat. Do they all commune? If they do, is it a feast of

union, and the love of each other, for the truth's sake, which each denies is held by the other. If so, what means this clangor of arms, this shaking of shields, and the noise of their fierce combats which I hear? If they unite in love at the Lord's Table, why do they denounce each other in derision immediately after, in the conference, the session, and the pulpit?"

These remarks of Dr. H. may seem to some severe, yet are they just. Dr. Engles, the editor of a leading journal of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, under date of Sept. 12, 1840, observed—"It is presumed that a Presbyterian believes in Presbyterian doctrine, or why is he a Presbyterian? And that a Methodist believes in the doctrine of his own church, or why is he not something else? The Methodists and Presbyterians alike believe that they have very good reasons for being as they are; nay, so potent are those reasons regarded, that neither imagines he could ever be induced to change his position. * * * * Let us ask them if they are prepared to advise their people, on all favorable occasions, to go and commune with Presbyterians? * * * Why, then, should they be angry with us for following their example? Holding the faith we do, * * can we, or ought we to say to the sheep of our folds—Yonder are pastures in which we believe there are poisonous weeds growing, but still there can be little danger in feeding occasionally there? In this matter we have never found our Methodist brethren a particle more liberal than ourselves."

Thus we see that there is not much of the spirit of communion between Presbyterians and Metho-

dists. The same writer gives us to understand, that the hostile attitudes of Old School and New School Presbyterians to each other, is a sufficient barrier to communion together. "The measure," says Dr. Engles, "by which the New School were excluded from the communion of the Presbyterian Church, was either righteous or unrighteous; if the former, why should we make any professions of attachment which our actions do not sustain; or, if the latter, why do we not magnanimously avow it, and invite them back in a body? We believe it was righteous; and whether right or wrong in our belief, we contend that while the causes exist which led to it, *it is utterly inexpedient to hold communion with those churches.*"

Who does not see from these extracts that our Pedobaptist brethren who view the subject of open communion in all its bearings, are obliged to decide in favor of close communion. The following views of a distinguished Pedobaptist writer, I believe, will express the feelings of nine-tenths of all the members of the different evangelical churches, if they were to speak out on this question: "For the last twenty years or more," says the writer referred to, "I do not recollect of having entertained a doubt, that the opening of the doors of communion to all of what are denominated evangelical churches, is erroneous; that it will either be changed, or lead to errors of a still more serious nature, containing in itself *essentially* an indifference to sound religious principle and practice, though slow in its development.
* * * * I object to the practice, in the first place, because *I have never yet seen the man, how-*

ever strenuously he might advocate it, who could inform me how far it was right, and duty called to extend the privilege—a very important item in making out a line of conduct, and without which it must be unsafe in matters of conscience to act at all. We are told, it is true, that all who are evangelical, or who hold the essentials of religion, are to be admitted to the Lord's Table; but then these essentials are undefined; some make them but two or three at most, others, perhaps, four or five, and others still more. * * *

“I object to the practice, in the second place, because it clearly implies that our church creeds or confessions contain certain items of faith and practice, *the belief of which, or conformity to which, is not necessary to the right of church privilege.* This implies either that these things are not based on divine authority, on which supposition they are the works of men; they are schismatical too, dividing the church where there is no conscientious principle involved, and, therefore, ought to be rejected as evils; or it implies that, notwithstanding they are based on divine authority, they are indifferent—of little importance, may be practised or not, as we may see proper, with impunity;—which last conclusion is to me revolting. * * * I suppose a case which I think is in point. An individual applies to you for admission to baptism and the Lord's Supper. After examining him to full satisfaction as to his experimental religion, you inquire of him whether he will conform to the order of God's house, in submitting to discipline, the discharge of religious duty, such as family discipline, the baptism of his children,

&c. But he replies, I do not approve of this government, and as to the baptism of children, I consider it unauthorized. You would reply, I presume, that you make subjection to this duty a condition of membership, and of privileges connected with it. But on the supposition you practise open communion, he would reply; You admit to all the privilege I desire without such subjection, for you admit *Baptists*, and those who neither believe nor practise it. You reply—because they submit to their own order. He takes his departure, connects himself with those who will not require this thing, and returns, and, at your invitation, enjoys with you all he asked. I see in such a case a predicament I should not envy. For what is your attitude now in the eyes of your own members? Most assuredly you appear inconsistent, and they must feel in consequence that they lie under a condition, a compliance with which guaranties them no privilege. You lay every distinguishing feature of your own church liable to prejudice and reproach. To me the inference would be, your conduct being right, that your church ought forthwith to relinquish its own distinctiveness, and sink into the church catholic, and every other church practising the same ought to do likewise.

“I am fully aware that my views on this subject are esteemed very *illiberal*. This is the *argumentum ad invidiam*, which with many weighs heavier than a thousand others. I have, however, always been happy to consider them *liberal to truth and sincere in the truth*. But the state of the case is misapprehended; the principle, on the ground of consistency and sincerity in the truth, applies

equally to all sects, who must, in charity, be supposed conscientiously attached to their own peculiarities, for where this is the case, they must needs do violence to their own consciences where they dispense with such peculiarities. And I would here add, that the practice is absolutely inconsistent, in my opinion, with the very idea of *fellowship*, which in all cases implies a community of responsibility."

In addition to the above, I will call the attention of the reader to an extract from the records of a Presbyterian Synod, as published by its order in the *Union Evangelist and Presbyterian Advocate*, 1820, vol. ii., pp. 96—99. To the question—"Is it proper that there should be intercommunion between Presbyterians and those denominations who hold Arminian sentiments?" the following answer is given in this report:—"That after giving it all the attention which the importance of the subject demands, they are of the opinion, that for Presbyterians to hold communion in sealing ordinances with those who deny the doctrines of grace, through the blood of Christ, &c., is highly prejudicial to the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor can such intercommunion answer any valuable purpose to those who practise it, as two cannot walk together except they be agreed." Every one perceives that this report is directed against Methodists, and all who hold Arminian sentiments.

Another report of a committee on a former resolution of a Presbyterian Synod, and which was adopted, goes even further than this. It is as follows:—

"The committee are of opinion, that for Pres-

byterians to hold communion in sealing ordinances with those who belong to churches holding doctrines contrary to our standards, is incompatible with the purity and peace of the church, and highly prejudicial to the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor can such communions answer any valuable purpose, &c. In accordance with these views your committee are of opinion, that *the practice of inviting to the communion all who are of good standing in their own churches, is calculated to do much evil, and should not be continued; while every church session is, however, left at liberty to admit to occasional communion members of other denominations, after having conversed with them, and received satisfaction of their soundness in the faith and Christian practice.*"

The committee, though full in its report in favor of close communion, yet seems rather to draw back a little by leaving every church session at liberty to admit to "*occasional communion members of other denominations,*" that is, on the condition that they give "*satisfaction of their soundness in the faith and Christian practice;*" in other words, if they are Presbyterians in doctrine and in practice; for nothing short of this could give the required "*satisfaction.*"

The General Assembly of 1839 fully sustains these synodical doctrines. The language of the Assembly is:—"Every Christian church, or association of churches, is entitled to declare the *terms* of admission into the communion. And what is the unanimous doctrine of their leading divines as to these terms? Ans. "*Agreement in essentials.*"

What are the "essentials?" Answer. The reports which I have just quoted inform us.

This is going quite beyond Baptists. They do not feel at liberty to exclude any true believer in Jesus from the Lord's Table, whose life is answerable to his profession, and who by precept and example sanctions immersion as the only Christian baptism. In short, they refuse not to commune with any exemplary Christian whom they believe to have been inducted into the church of God in Christ's own appointed way. But Pedobaptists will not go thus far. There are a multitude of *members whom they have introduced into the Church of God*, and recognized as members of his mystical body, and *yet they never permit them to commune with them*. I mean their baptized children, concerning whom they say in their Confession of Faith, p. 273:—"A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, *with their offspring*, voluntarily associated together for Divine worship and godly living." Again, p. 327: "Children born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and government of the church. And *when they come to years of discretion*, if they be free from scandal, sober and steady, and have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed that it is their duty and privilege to come to the Lord's Table."

In the Larger Catechism we find the following Quest. 62. "What is the visible church?" Ans. "The visible church is a society made up of all such as, in all ages and places of the world, do profess the true religion, *and their children*."

Porter, on Christian Baptism, says: *Baptized children are members of the visible church.*"

Dr. Miller, whose views on this subject harmonize with those of the Methodists, inquires: "Is there no advantage in publicly ratifying the connection of our children, as well as ourselves, with the visible church?" Dr. M also avers, that "there are but two places in the universe where there are no children; one is the bottomless pit, and the other is the Baptist church." But in this declaration the doctor was mistaken. There is one more place where there are no children, and that is, the Pedobaptist communion table.

This is what I call, not "close," but *partial* communion. Baptists, close communion as they are, never refuse to commune with their own members who retain the moral standing they have at the time of baptism; but Pedobaptists shut out from the communion *one-half* or two-thirds of their members, who stand as fair as they *did* when baptized.

The peculiar views and discipline of the PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH render it close communion. They who contend for apostolic succession as essential to the gospel ministry, will not recognize men who are out of that line as ministers of the gospel, and therefore duly qualified to administer the ordinances of the church. With these views, which the whole Protestant Episcopal Church entertain, no intelligent member or minister of that communion will any more receive the ordinances from the hands of Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist ministers, than they would from the hands of laymen. But though they may not deem it consistent to come to the Presbyterian or Methodist com-

munion table, yet they will condescend to allow them to come to theirs, after the elements have been consecrated by the hands of one of the regular descendants in the line from St. Peter. And yet by this great *condescension* they exhibit their *inconsistency*, by departing from their own laws; as will appear by a reference to the Book of Common Prayer under "Confirmation." It reads thus: "And there shall none be admitted to the holy communion, until such times as he be confirmed, or be ready or desirous to be confirmed." Of course they cannot admit, according to this law, any but Roman Catholics, and such as have confirmation like themselves. As for Presbyterians—Old and New School, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists, should they desire such a privilege, they must all stand aside; because none of these denominations either desire, practise, or believe in Confirmation. With close communion laws, I ask, how can the Protestant Episcopal Church be open communion? They cannot claim to be open communionists *with these laws*, and with their refusal to reciprocate the courtesy of other denominations by sitting down with them at their table, and thereby recognizing them as churches of Christ, and their pastors as his accredited and authorized ministers.

The METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, by a fair construction of her Discipline, is far from being open communion.* By open communion, I under-

* This is the Discipline of 1847. Since then, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church has somewhat revised this little book. In thus revising it, they have struck out, on page 77, section xxiii. on the Lord's Supper, these

stand a joint participation of the different evangelical denominations in the Lord's Supper. This definition is intended to include, not only the admission of members of other churches of good and regular standing, but a reciprocity of the different churches in the communion one with the other. We have seen, that though the Episcopalians will break their own rules to allow persons who neither practise nor believe in Confirmation to come to the Lord's Table with them, yet they will not reciprocate by receiving the elements from what they deem unconsecrated hands. The Methodist Episcopal Church do not deem it wrong to go and eat and drink with them, though they will never return the courtesy. But I shall show that, whatever Methodists may do with regard to the act of sitting down at their table, according to their Discipline they are far from being open communion with regard to the admission of members of other churches to their own table.

words: "Let no person that is not a member of our church be admitted to the communion without examination, and some token given by an elder or deacon." With this notice of this fact, the reader will account for the present edition of this little work, not retaining it, as in the former editions. Still with this alteration of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, she has not gone far enough in reform or revision to merit the name of being an open communion church. Perhaps the next General Conference will strike a blow at the very root of the argument, by which I have endeavored to prove that she is not open communion in her Discipline, if she is in practice. And then I shall be free to come out and admit that she is *consistent* as it relates to an agreement of practice and Discipline. One of her ministers remarked to me that their Discipline was open communion in its *spirit*, if it were not in its *letter*. I merely replied that I considered it then a very extraordinary book. Its letter said "no," but its spirit said, "yes." (1852.)

On page 104 of their Book of Discipline, 1850, it is asked: Quest. Are there any directions to be given concerning the Administration of the Lord's Supper? In the second article of the answer, we have the following: "No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our church."

We will suppose a minister of another church applies to an elder for admission to the Lord's Supper. The elder looks at him, and says: "You are very plain in your dress, and as far as your appearance is concerned I can admit you, but I must examine you as to your practice." He then takes the Book of Discipline and reads on page 86, section i., question 4, "What shall be done with those ministers or preachers who hold and disseminate, publicly or privately, doctrines which are contrary to our articles of religion? Ans. Let the same process be observed as in case of gross immorality." "Now," says the elder, "I would inquire, are you with us in doctrine?" "No, sir, I am not;" replies the applicant. "I believe," continues he, "in the doctrine of personal and eternal predestination and foreordination, as set forth in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, pp. 15—19; and I accordingly preach it whenever I deem it proper so to do." "Then," says the elder, "I cannot admit you to the table of the Lord, as you must perceive from the Discipline which I have just read." "But, then," responds the applicant, "that applies to *your* ministers and not to us." "I admit that it does," rejoins the elder; "but think you that we ought to admit a person to the table who is

guilty of what would exclude a minister from the church." Besides, the Discipline says in another place, "that no person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our church." "May I not further inquire," says the applicant, "whether this last rule which you have quoted does not apply to members, and not to ministers?" "I think not," replies the elder; "for we have another rule very similar to it which particularly applies to members. Page 92, section iv., article 3. 'If any member of our church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or Discipline, such person so offending shall be first reprov'd by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and, if he persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the church.' Now, if you will promise that you will not inveigh either against our doctrines or Discipline, I can admit you, otherwise, I cannot." "Why, I thought you were open communion; but I find I am mistaken," replies the applicant. "O yes," says the elder, "we are open communion. Our greatest objection to the Baptists is, that they will hang on to close communion." "Well, upon my word," says the applicant, "all the difference I can perceive between you and the Baptists is, you profess *open* communion, and are in your Discipline *close* communion; while the Baptists make their practice agree with their profession. From what I can learn from you and your Discipline, I find that the terms of communion with you are simply these—*we must believe, preach, and dress just like the Methodists*

If I mistake not, that is going a little ahead of the Baptists. For Baptists will allow their members and ministers to differ on some theological points, and yet not refuse to fellowship them at the Lord's Table. Permit me, then, my dear friend, to suggest, that instead of crying out against the Baptists for their close communion, boasting at the same time of your open communion, you lay your hand upon your mouth, until you alter your Discipline, striking out the restrictions which render your church more restricted in her communion, than even that church which we Pedobaptists all agree to censure for its practical want of catholicity."

Finally, it can be shown from the Discipline of the M. E. Church, that it is as strictly close communion as any Baptist church in the land. Page 74, section ii., question 4, it is asked—"What shall we do with those members of our church who wilfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class? Ans. 1. Let the elder, deacon, or one of the preachers, visit them, whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequence if they continue to neglect, viz., exclusion. 2. If they do not amend, let him who has the charge of the circuit or station bring their case before the society, or a select number, before whom they shall have been cited to appear; and if they be found guilty of wilful neglect by the decision of a majority of the members, before whom their case is brought, let them be laid aside, and let the preacher show that they are excluded for a breach of our rules, and not for immoral conduct."

From the above laws of the M. E. Church, we observe that *non-attendance upon class*, without

any immorality, is sufficient to exclude a person from the church. Now suppose this excluded person, who may be in every other sense a worthy member, should join another evangelical church—nothing against his moral character—no one doubts his piety—not even the Methodists doubt his sincerity, and that he is a man of genuine religion. All that can be said of him is, “He will not attend class.” Well, now, he comes back to the church from which he has been excluded, and presents himself as a member of another church, in good and regular standing, for admittance to the Lord’s Table. Says the elder, “My friend, I cannot admit you.” “Why not?” asks the brother; “do you not believe that I am a Christian, and that I am bound with you, as such, to a better land? And do you not rejoice with me in the hope of sitting down together at the marriage supper of the Lamb?” “O yes, my brother,” responds the elder, “I must inquire (perhaps I am a little too fast,) are you truly sorry that you did not comply with the rules of the church, and attend class?” “I am not sorry, my brother,” he responds, “for I did not then, neither do I now, believe in class meetings.” “Well, then, I must read you the law,” replies the elder. Page 96, section iv., article 5—‘After such forms of trial and expulsion, such persons shall have no privilege of society or of sacraments in our church, without contrition, confession, and proper trial.’ Now, if you are not penitent, as I perceive you are not, you see that you cannot be admitted to the Lord’s Table with us.” He answers, “I have only to say, my dear brother, as I have not violated any of the laws of Jesus Christ, I did not

know but you might deem it proper to allow me to sit down occasionally with my old brethren at the Lord's Table." "It is true," replies the elder, "I do not charge you with any direct violation of the laws of Christ, but you have broken or refused to yield obedience to the laws of our church, and that is sufficient to shut you away from the table." "Why, elder, the Baptists would not do that thing. They shut the door, they say, because we will not obey Christ. And there seems to be some good reason in that; but you admit that I am not excluded for disobedience to Christ, but to your church. Has your church a power to make laws, and bind them upon its members, that Christ never made, and then for non-obedience to exclude a genuine Christian, and treat him as a heathen and a publican? If so, I regret not that I am out of the pale of her communion."

In conclusion, let us inquire whether, by fair inference, this rule appertaining to *class meetings*, which would exclude all the members of the M. E. Church who wilfully refuse to attend them, and cut off all such from the Lord's Table in that church, would not also preclude members of other churches who do not attend class meetings from communing with the Methodists? I think it would. We have seen already that those excluded for the neglect of this duty are cut off from that privilege, though they may be genuine Christians, and in good standing in other churches. And the rule which says—"No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our church," would shut out from communion among the Methodists

all members of other churches, who do not practise attending class meetings. Now I would ask what are the facts in this case? In the first place, class meetings are a peculiarity of Methodism. There may be a few churches that have them to some limited extent; but the great mass of the evangelical churches neither have them, nor practise attending them. Their "practice" essentially varies from that of the M. E. Church, and is such as would exclude them from the M. E. Church if they belonged to it. Can the Methodists, then, admit them to the Lord's Supper? Their *rule* says, that they shall not be admitted. If they do admit them they break their own rules; and this they ought not to do, for every traveling preacher is required to pledge "not to mend their rules, but to keep them; not for wrath but conscience' sake." Sec p 46, art. 10.

CHAPTER V.

PRINCIPLE THE GROUND OF ACTION.

I HAVE been thus particular in the examination of this subject, to show the ground upon which Baptists act in the admission of persons to the Lord's Supper—that it is not prejudice nor bigotry that influences them to adopt their course, but *principle*—that it is not that they believe themselves any better than other Christians who differ from them in opinion, but because they desire to do the will of God, as they understand it to be revealed in the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ. It is not, in short, because they do not believe that there are multitudes of Pedobaptists who, but for educational influence, would have received the ordinances as Baptists understand and practise them; but they care not either practise error or sanction it by extending *church* fellowship to such as, in their opinion, have been irregularly introduced into the visible church of Christ. For this course, consistent as it must be admitted to be, they are most unjustly censured as being exceedingly uncharitable towards other Christian denominations. But the censure is powerless, and will remain so until it can be shown that the Baptists have been, or are now, unsocial and intolerant towards those Christians who walk

not with them. Baptists will go with other denominations just as far as they can without compromising the truth. This they cannot, will not do. They will exchange pulpits—mingle in the social and prayer circle; they will rejoice in the prosperity of the cause of Christ in Pedobaptist churches; but when you ask them to sanction sprinkling or pouring for Christian baptism, every true Baptist will be found at his post, and from it he will not move, whatever the consequences may be. He would consider himself a traitor to God and man to forsake his post of duty. The truth he will stand up to, whatever it may cost him; nor will he sell it, if for it he could obtain the smiles of the whole Pedobaptist world.

In these sheets I have endeavored to show that open communionists, as some would call them, have not been more distinguished for respect to the rights of conscience, and a brotherly feeling towards all Christians, than the poor reviled Baptists. That many of them have been the persecutors, and the Baptists the persecuted. That whatever Baptists have been, they have never been persecutors. They will suffer any thing for the truth, but they will not *coerce* any man's conscience. If neither arguments nor gospel means will bring him over to their views, they leave him to God and his own conscience, with their prayers for his spiritual and eternal welfare.

Let me say to all whom it may concern in general, and to my old friends of the M. E. Church in particular, do not censure us for being close communion in our practice, while you are decidedly so in theory. I have shown that the laws of the Epis-

copal and M. E. Church, and others, are close communion in their character. The former can only admit to the Lord's Supper those that are confirmed or desire so to be; and the latter can admit from other churches none but those who "practise" attendance upon class meetings. If we cannot believe alike on all points, let us be careful how we impugn each other's principles. If we cannot all have "one baptism," let us all seek to have "one Lord, one faith, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling."

In summing up what I have said in this treatise, I will give for the reflection of the reader a brief synopsis of the arguments advanced.

I. It is doubtful whether the phrase, "close communion," ought to be applied to Baptists at all. They go as far as *they* believe the laws of Jesus Christ authorize them to go. They restrict their invitations to all such as sanction these laws; with them and none others can they hold sacramental communion.

II. Baptists most cheerfully extend the hand of Christian and ministerial fellowship to any Christian or Christian minister, though he be a Pedobaptist or even a Quaker. They do not consider this spiritual fellowship inconsistent with restricted communion, which they regard essential only to *church fellowship*.

III. The Baptists and Pedobaptists *agree* that Baptism is a preliminary to the Lord's Supper. The example of Christ, his commission to his ministers, and the practice of the apostles teach it. We also have the testimony of the apostolic fathers,

and best and most orthodox divines down to the present day to the same effect.

IV. They *differ* in their views of what constitutes Christian Baptism, which they agree is the preliminary to the Lord's Supper; and they also differ as to who are the proper subjects of baptism.

The Baptists say, none but immersed believers are the proper subjects of this ordinance. To prove the truth of their position, they have the example of Christ, who was immersed in the river Jordan—that of the Ethiopian Eunuch, whom Philip immersed—the teachings of Paul, who calls it a burial, &c., &c.; and nothing in the New Testament indicates any other mode for baptism, as either taught or practised by Christ or the apostolic churches. They cannot, therefore, admit sprinkling or pouring to be valid Christian baptism.

V. Baptists and Pedobaptists act upon the same principle in admitting persons to the Lord's Table. Let both answer this question—"Who are the proper subjects of sacramental communion?" They both answer—"None but baptized believers." Here, then, we agree in principle. And the only reason why our practice disagrees, is because we do not see alike as to what constitutes Christian baptism. Properly the argument, as every sensible man will see, turns not upon close communion, but baptism. If the Baptists are right with regard to their views of baptism, they are certainly right as to their practice of restricted communion.

Some may not fully understand the ground upon which Baptists act; but it is the duty of all Christians to inform themselves upon this matter, and to be able to decide as the unerring pages of divine

truth direct; and as for those who are not candid in their censures upon us, for practising what we conscientiously believe to be right, we pity them, and pray that they may come to a better mind. It is not the design of Baptists to rob God's dear children of their privilege; and I have endeavored to show, that as much as the privilege of open communion is talked of, but few avail themselves of it. If it be a great privilege for all Christians to enjoy jointly sacramental communion, the door is open. Let us have "one baptism," and the difficulty is removed.

VI. The practice of close communion does not lead to bigotry; if it did, we might reasonably suppose, the Baptists would have been persecutors, at some period of their history; for bigotry leads to persecution. Baptists have never been persecutors; but they cannot say this of Pedobaptists. History with trumpet-tongue proclaims the cruelties which Baptists have suffered from the hands of Pedobaptists, even in our own favored country. Why is it that at this day, when, though they are among the largest and most efficient of the evangelical churches of our land, all the Pedobaptist churches seem to count it a virtue to unite in the cry of bigotry, bigotry, bigotry? Are they afraid of us, that we shall at some time get so much power as to do as the Roman Catholics of the old countries, or the Puritans of the new have done? They have nothing to fear; and they must be aware that Baptists cease to be Baptists when they commence a persecuting career.

It is a source of great regret, that churches will permit with impunity their ministers to be schismatical, by winking at what they allow to be *re-*

baptism, when they profess to believe with us that baptism is not to be repeated on the same person—that instead of censuring the men who thus depart from orthodoxy, they virtually approve the act, by giving them the highest stations, or the most honorable posts in their church; and thus, for the sake of preventing people from becoming Baptists, make themselves supremely inconsistent, by practically denying what they declare to the world they believe. Upon the whole I know of no one point upon which the different Pedobaptist churches agree so well, as that of their united opposition to the Baptists.

VII. After all that Pedobaptists say against us for our close communion, they themselves are not open communion. The Presbyterians avow it. The Episcopalians ought to avow the same. With their notions of apostolical succession—that there is no church without a prelate—no ministry without Episcopal ordination—of course they cannot commune with any but Roman Catholics. And as they have decreed that Confirmation is a preliminary to the Lord's Supper, they cannot admit to the Lord's Table members of the different churches, who do not believe in and practise Confirmation. Hence, they cannot participate with these churches, neither jointly nor disjointly. Is not this close communion?

The Methodist Episcopal Church is close communion. None can be admitted to the Lord's Table among them without the approval of an elder or deacon, and none can obtain this without an examination as to doctrine and plainness of dress. If they do not believe as Methodists, they must promise not to disseminate their peculiar views; for

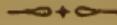
if they inveigh against the doctrine or Discipline of the M. E. Church, not even ministers of other churches can be admitted. Or if they wear rings, ruffles, or superfluities, they must strip themselves from these things or they cannot be admitted to the Lord's Table in the M. E. Church, no matter how good their standing may be in other churches. Or if they have been excluded from the M. E. Church for non-attendance upon class meetings, and have connected themselves with another church, and are in good and regular standing in that church, they cannot be admitted to the Lord's Table in the M. E. Church; neither can they be admitted from another church, if they wilfully absent themselves from class meetings, though there are no class meetings in the church to which they belong. For the laws of the M. E. Church would expel such from their communion, and their Discipline reads—"No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice, for which we would exclude a member of our church." Hence, the Discipline of the M. E. Church is clearly close communion, their practice and professions to the contrary notwithstanding.

VIII. Baptists are consistent with their own declared principles, which is more than can be said of some of our Pedobaptist churches. It is not consistent for any denomination to break its own laws. If their laws are bad, they should alter and amend them; if their practice is wrong by which they break their own laws, they should change it; but they should always let their avowed principles and practice work together. But do our Episcopalian brethren, when they practise open commu-

mon, do thus? I ask, do our Methodist Episcopal brethren do thus, by admitting members of other churches indiscriminately to the Lord's Table? We know their Discipline forbids it; but is it not true that they trample upon the authority of their own Discipline, in order to practise open communion in contradistinction to Baptists? Whether the charge of bigotry can be made to lie against the Baptists or not, one thing is certain, that the charge of *manifest inconsistency* must lie against those denominations whose rules are close communion, and whose professions and practice are open communion.

IX. Whatever I have said in reference to other denominations in this treatise, I can assure them, has not been said with any unkind feeling toward them. The freedom which I have allowed myself to take with their ecclesiastical decisions and disciplinary provisions, has not been to bring them into disrepute, or even to find fault with their regulations. My sole object has been to show that Baptists do not stand alone in the exclusiveness with which they stand charged by Pedobaptist churches, and that they are consistent; while those who condemn them for their narrow-minded bigotry, are arrayed at the bar of public opinion, and stand there convicted and condemned as being constitutionally guilty in their ecclesiastical polity, of the very thing for which they so unsparingly condemn us. A single quotation, therefore, from a sermon preached by the Saviour of the world, shall close this little volume: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matt. vii. 1, 2.

APPENDIX.



ON A REGULAR GOSPEL CHURCH.

A Regular Gospel Church described.—The Lord's Supper a Church Ordinance, and restricted to Church members.

THE original word (*ekklesia*), rendered *Church*, in the New Testament, signifies an *assembly*. It was the ancient name appropriated by the Athenians, to the regular assembly of the free citizens, convoked by authority, for the transaction of public affairs. It may, however, apply to an irregular or tumultuous assembly of citizens (Acts xix. 32); to a lawful civil assembly (Acts xix. 30); or religiously, to the congregation of God's people, whether under the Hebrew theocracy, or under the Law of Christ. Hence the congregation of Israel is called "the church in the wilderness" (Acts vii. 38); and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ when united and organized into a body, are designated by the inspired writers, as "the Church of God," and "the Church of Christ." The titles are synonymous, because faith in God implies faith in Christ. "Ye believe in God; believe also in me." (John xiv. 1.)

The New Testament describes the Church of

Christ as being both *invisible* and *visible*. The *invisible* church includes the whole body of God's chosen people: those on earth and those in heaven. This church Paul calls "The general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven." Heb. xii. 23. Of the members of this church it is said, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." As to the *visible* Church of Christ, it is made *so* by its own organization. Paul calls it "The house of God—the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.)

Christ's *visible* Church (Matt. xvi. 18,) is necessarily made up of particular churches, and in defining a particular church in regular gospel order, I object not to the one given by the compilers of the 39 Articles of the Church of England. "A congregation of faithful men, in which the true word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." The converts of Pentecost, who constituted the main body of the church at Jerusalem, have by some been looked upon as *constituting* the first organized church of Christ. But this is evidently an error. For were not Christ's disciples "a congregation of faithful men?" Was not "the true word of God" preached to them by their Lord and Master? and were not "the sacraments duly administered to them, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same?" If so, then the church was organized by the great Head himself while he was upon earth, and the converts of Pentecost became members of

that church. And hence, says Luke, Acts ii. 41: "The same day there were *added* unto them about three thousand souls." Observe—they "*were added unto them,*" not organized out of them.

I will not contend that the Church of Christ was fully matured as an organization while he was upon earth. But its immaturity does not necessarily prevent its being a *regular* gospel church; for whatever deficiencies there may have been with regard to the appointment of its ordinary officers, such as *pastors* and *deacons*, while the apostles performed the whole work, it does not at all affect it as a regularly organized gospel church.

With these facts before us, we are willing to take the apostolic church at Jerusalem for our model as recorded in the second chapter of Acts. We have here 1. The *instrumentality* by which the church is raised up, which is the preaching of the gospel by his servants, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, freely imparted in answer to prayer. 2. The *materials* of which the church is composed. Those who had been instructed in the Apostles' doctrine—to whose hearts the Holy Spirit had applied divine truth—and who had gladly received the word into truly penitent and believing hearts. Such receive the remission of sins—the gift of the Holy Ghost by which they are renewed, sanctified, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and prepared to become fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Such materials, and such only, are adapted to membership in Christ's visible church. 3. And into it they were *inducted*, not by conversion or faith alone, but by baptism on the profession of their faith in Christ.

“Then they that gladly received the word were baptized.” Their “gladly receiving the word” implies that they were believers; and their being baptized consequent upon their faith, shows that they were not baptized until after they believed: and their being admitted to membership in the church by, and after baptism as believers, also shows that the original church of Christ was composed of none but baptized believers. What then is a church of Christ but a *voluntary association of baptized believers under the law of Christ?* And with all deference to the opinions of great and good men who may assert the contrary, I will venture to assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that this is characteristic of *all* the churches of the New Testament—that it accords with the commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ to his first ministers, (Mat. xxviii. 19, 20, Mark xvi. 15, 16)—and therefore, that Baptist churches are the only churches of the present day, who are truly apostolic, and regularly organized according to gospel order.

A *visible church* it is very properly supposed may be *seen*—because it is a house, a temple, “a habitation of God through the Spirit, built up of lively stones” on Christ the foundation. It is therefore to be presumed that it has a *door of entrance*, and that this *door* is also *visible*. This presumption is so well-founded, and so explicitly taught in the New Testament, that whatever controversies there may have been between Baptists and Pedobaptists, they generally agree that baptism is the door of entrance into the visible church, and that it should precede

the Lord's Supper.* The points of disagreement are as to the *subjects*, and what is necessary to constitute Christian baptism.

As Baptists we regard immersion to be essential

* CHRIST alone is the door into the Church Invisible. John x. 7—9. The manifestation of His image and spirit entitles the soul to universal Christian fellowship. Rom. xv. 7. But Christ as Lord over all things to the church, has appointed a visible avenue or door of entrance into His Visible Church, viz. BAPTISM, on the personal profession of faith in His name. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Acts ii. 38, 41, 42, 47.

It is true, some have called this view in question. "If," say they, "baptism be the *door* into the visible church, how can a man, once baptized, be *put out* of the church, let his conduct or creed become ever so corrupt? Can he be *unbaptized*?" Errors often arise, as in this instance, from misapplying or *straining* figures of speech. Let us study to obtain clear ideas. If any force appears in the objection derived from the figure of a door, as urged above, it is because men forget for the moment that a visible church of Christ, like some spacious building, *has more doors than one*. Carry out the figure fairly, and the objection vanishes. There is the front door of ADMISSION having its two folds, by baptism and by letter; there is the right side door of DISMISSION to sister churches; the left side door of EXCLUSION for persevering offence; and the great hall door of DEATH, which leads the holy to the celestial mansions. The "keys" to open and shut all those doors, (the last excepted,) are delivered alike by Christ, *to the members of every gospel church*. See Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18—20. Accordingly, we see the primitive churches in the actual use of them. Acts ix. 26—28. 2 Cor. iii. 1. 1 Cor. v.

Besides the doors of the church thus established by its Divine Head, there is one of modern construction, and more questionable shape. It is a sort of *trap door* called ERASION, through which erring or missing members are silently *dropped* into the ungodly world. But of this it is unnecessary to say more, than that it is sometimes convenient for purging our church lists from unknown and *unknowable absentees*, and to such its use should be confined. A false tenderness should not adopt it for *known offenders*, since it is only by mercy and truth that *iniquity* is purged.

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to Christian baptism; because we believe that Jesus Christ taught it by example and command, and that his teachings were observed to the letter by the inspired apostles; and consequently that neither sprinkling nor pouring was ever thought of in the apostolic church as constituting valid baptism.

A similar remark is applicable to the proper *subjects* of this ordinance—that according to Christ's command, and the example of inspired men none but credible *believers* were immersed. And when immersed on profession of their faith in Christ, they were thereby made members of the church of Christ, and entitled to church fellowship. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts ii. 42.

The point to which the reader's attention is now directed, is this, *Is the Lord's Supper a church ordinance? And if so, are any but members of a regular gospel church allowed to partake of it?*

These questions have long since been answered. They are answered by the fact that *baptism is the first duty* subsequent upon believing. It was so with the converts of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 41, 42.) The church in Samaria—"But when they believed—they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts viii. 12.) The first Gentile church—"While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." "Then answered Peter, Can any forbid water, that these should not be *baptized* which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be *baptized*." (Acts x. 44, also 46, 47, 48.) The first thing that is said of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord

opened" so that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul—is that she was *baptized*. (Acts xvi. 14, 15.) So "the same hour of the night" that the jailor "believed in God with all his house," he and all his were straightway baptized. (Acts xvi. 31-34.)

The argument may be thus stated: All true believers ought to be baptized—baptized believers are entitled to church fellowship—baptism being the first duty after believing, it follows that the Lord's Supper must be a church ordinance, and confined exclusively to church members. And so it has ever been regarded by the main body of orthodox divines from the days of Justin Martyr down to the present century. Dr. Dwight remarks: "It is an indispensable qualification for this ordinance, that the candidate for communion be a member of the visible church of Christ in full standing. By this I intend that he should be a person of piety, that he should have made a public profession of religion, and that he should have been baptized."

There can be no doubt as to the source whence these numerous divines have derived their views on this question. They were obliged to admit that baptism is the door into the visible church—a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, and that none are entitled to the communion but members of the church of Christ. With these admissions, is not the Lord's Supper a church ordinance? We think so; not simply because these divines believed it, but because the word of God teaches it.

In addition to the reasons already given in favor of this point, there are two very important arguments which, in my mind, decide the question.

The first is that the Lord's Supper was *instituted* by Jesus Christ in a church capacity. (See Matt. xxvi. 26–30; Mark xv. 22–26; Luke xxii. 19, 20.) By consulting these passages the reader will perceive that the Lord's Supper was not instituted by a mere command, but by an actual partaking of the symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood, in their collective capacity, with the strict injunction of our Lord to continue its observance in like manner. "This *do* in remembrance of me."

Consequently the second argument is, that the Lord's Supper was *observed* by the apostolic direction, not only according to the form that Christ gave them, but in a church capacity. By consulting 1 Cor. xi., you will perceive that Paul corrects certain evils which had unfortunately been introduced into the church of Corinth, one of which was an *abuse* of the Lord's Supper in not observing it according to the *form* given by Jesus Christ at the time he instituted it. In stating the case, and reproving his Corinthian brethren, Paul takes it for granted that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance. For when they celebrated it "they came together"—"they came together in one place." (verses 17, 18, 20.) He did not blame them for coming together in the church (*ekklesia*) collectively—this was all right, providing "they came together for the better, and not for the worse." Their offence consisted in making a literal feast of the ordinance, and thereby perverting it from its design, and profaning it. Hence he expostulates: "What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? Or despise ye *the church of God*? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not," v. 22.

The reader will remark, that the apostle takes it for granted that the Lord's Supper was celebrated by the church *in its collective capacity*. This fact was understood, and never questioned. The reasons must appear obvious. 1. It is an ordinance to which none have a right but church members. 2. It was instituted by Jesus Christ to be observed by his *church*. 3. To this agrees the practice of the churches of Christ while under the supervision of the inspired apostles.

By observing this ordinance otherwise, it loses much of its significance. Christ's church is his family, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is instituted to be observed by his family to commemorate his love to them, when they were purchased by his precious blood. It is an act by which they express their obedience, and their gratitude, and in which the *body* holds communion with Christ the head. And I may add, it is also an act by which the body expresses its *oneness*—that they are members one of another, and that these many members fellowship each other as being one body, thereby showing that “by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Hence,

1. We learn that the church of Christ organized according to gospel order, must be composed of baptized believers. Baptism being confined exclusively to believers, it follows that there are no infants in the gospel church; for if they are to be baptized on the faith of their parents, the same authority by which they are baptized would require them to become communicants.

2. Pedobaptists who are united in a congregation may be regarded as a Church, and a Christian church, though they have never been baptized according to Christ's example and command; but they cannot be fellowshipped as a *regular gospel church*.

3. We learn the reason why Baptists do not commune with such. It is not because we do not regard them as Christians, but because they have not been baptized. To speak plainly, *they are not members of a regular gospel church*. We may extend to them the hand of *Christian* fellowship, but not the hand of *Church* fellowship.

4. This practice if rightly understood is not uncharitable. Pedobaptists will not commune with unbaptized believers, though they believe them Christians. In this we perfectly agree. We are even more liberal than they, because we *will* commune with all whom we baptize into the fellowship of the church; but they will not—they baptize *multitudes* whom they never admit to the Lord's Table. They are therefore *closer* than Baptists.

5. If the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance to be observed by a church collectively, then I ask, is it proper to admit to the communion with us even baptized believers who are members of Pedobaptist churches, and by their example *endorse* sprinkling and pouring for Christian baptism? Or to baptize believers with a view to their uniting with Pedobaptist churches, where we know that they will sanction by that act what is called infant baptism, as well as sprinkling and pouring, for that sacred ordinance? It does appear to me that *consistency* will not permit us in either of these ways to countenance what we as Baptists so distinctively

contend to be in opposition to gospel order. Can we conscientiously baptize any one, who we know will immediately nullify what he has done by walking disorderly—which he will do, if he sanctions either by word or act, any thing for a valid baptism but that of the immersion of believers?

6. This view of the subject will lead us to question the propriety of administering the Lord's Supper to the sick unless the church be convened. If our position be correct, then certainly it is not proper to administer it to individuals without first notifying the church of which they are members, and obtaining the appointment *by the church* of a sufficient number to represent them. I know it may be argued that the sick would, under these circumstances, be often deprived of the privilege of communion while upon their dying beds. The great question is, have we Bible authority for the practice? If we have not, then we should submit with pious resignation. There are many other privileges which the sick cannot enjoy, and it is a very great attainment to submit patiently to suffer the will of God concerning us—a much greater evidence of the existence and possession of the Christian graces than it would be to attend to any form which the gospel requires of us under other circumstances. The hour of affliction and death, of all others, is the one when we should rely upon Christ alone. The fewer forms we have to attend to *then*, the better. And the dear Redeemer has wisely ordered that his saints shall then be so circumstanced as to be constrained to say, "None but Christ!"

