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Mayes, R. B.
The Tecnobaptist

Rev. J. P. Holsinger







The Tenebaptist:

A DISCOURSE,

WHEREIN AN

HONEST BAPTIST,

BY A COURSE OF ARGUMENT TO WHICH NO HONEST BAPTIST CAN OBJECT,

IS CONVINCED THAT

INFANT CHRISTIANS ARE PROPER SUBJECTS OF
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BY

R. B. MAYES.

“ Lord, that I might receive my sight.” — MARK x. 51.

“ Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” — MATT. xxvi. 39.

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TO

THE HON. Z. WHEAT,

Of Columbia, Kentucky.

MY DEAR SIR, — Without having asked your permission, or intimated my intention, I take the liberty of inscribing this little volume to you; prompted by feelings, which, to the public, would possess no interest; to you, will need no explanation; to me, language is wanting to express.

Happy in the assurance that no proof is necessary, it is yet with pleasure that I thus testify the unmeasured regard with which I am

Affectionately yours,

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E .

CERTAIN authors, by bad advocacy (though, doubtless, the best of which the cause is susceptible), converted the writer of these pages from the opinion, in regard to infant-baptism, which he had imbibed from early associations. Afterward a friend forcibly presented one of their arguments at a time when the writer had forgotten the grounds on which he had previously rejected it. Not having sufficient learning to decide upon the accuracy of the premises assumed, he could not conscientiously deny them, and had nearly yielded, or at least confessed his inability to make immediate reply, when the view which is developed in the following pages flashed upon his mind. As he has never read any work in defence of the opinion which he now holds, he does not know but that the argument here presented is old ; but another friend, to whom it was submitted (and whose name, did the writer feel at liberty to mention it,¹ might recommend this essay to the respect of

¹ The writer no longer feels any delicacy in stating that the gentleman here alluded to was the Hon. Caswell R. Clifton, late of Jackson, Miss.; whose modesty cannot now be offended by the praises which his

many who may otherwise regard it unworthy of their notice), thought the argument new and striking, if not conclusive, and requested that it should be reduced to writing. In the following pages, the effort is made to comply with that request.

To the writer, who has pondered this argument a length of time, it seems plain and obvious ; but some have deemed it too abstruse to be readily grasped by persons unaccustomed to logical investigation. To adapt the reasoning to this class of persons, the synthetic method is pursued, and the colloquial form is adopted, as more favorable to a clear statement of the several conflicting opinions which require examination, and to a gradual unfolding and thorough simplification of the leading argument intended to be evolved. Some, who agree as to infant-baptism, are divided on the subject of baptismal regeneration, which is incidentally considered. It was therefore more convenient to introduce three colloquists ; and it has been attempted to make them, in character and temper, equally representatives of the true and liberal Christian gentleman, of whatever denomination. In doctrinal opinion, two of them represent two classes of theologians ; while the third is merely the vehicle of the opinions of the writer, who is

memory so well deserves. The manuscript of this discourse has been lying in the writer's drawer for considerably more than a year, during which time Judge Clifton was cut off in the midst of his usefulness. He will long be remembered for the purity and elevation of his character, in which zeal for his political and religious opinions was reconciled with charity for their opponents, moderation, integrity, and rectitude of judgment.

not connected with any denomination. He has adopted what he conceives to be the best method of making the former two express accurately the doctrines which they respectively represent. If, however, he have failed, the misrepresentation was not designed; and he will be grateful to any one who will kindly point it out.

As nothing is more important, in considering the doctrines of religion, than to approach them with a candid mind, these observations cannot be better closed than by recommending a careful perusal of the following extract from Locke's *Essay on the "Conduct of the Understanding"* (§§ 10-12): —

"He whose assent goes beyond his evidence owes this excess of his adherence only to prejudice, and does in effect own it when he refuses to hear what is offered against it; declaring thereby that it is not evidence he seeks, but the quiet enjoyment of the opinion he is fond of, with a forward condemnation of all that may stand in opposition to it unheard and unexamined; which, what is it but prejudice? He that would acquit himself in this case as a lover of truth, not giving way to any pre-occupation or bias that may mislead him, must do two things that are not very common nor very easy. First, he must not be in love with any opinion, or wish it to be true, till he knows it to be so. Nothing that is false deserves our good wishes, nor a desire that it should have the place and force of truth; and yet nothing is more frequent than this. Men are fond of certain tenets upon no other evidence but respect and custom, and think they must maintain them, or all is gone; though they have never examined the ground they stand on, nor have ever made them out to themselves, or can make them out to others. We should contend earnestly for the truth: but we should first be sure that it is truth, or else we fight against God, who is the

God of truth, and do the work of the Devil, who is the father and propagator of lies; and our zeal, though ever so warm, will not excuse us: for this is plainly prejudice. Secondly, he must try whether his principles be certainly true or not, and how far he may safely rely upon them. This, whether fewer have the heart or the skill to do, I shall not determine; but this, I am sure, is that which every one ought to do who professes to love truth, and would not impose upon himself, which is a surer way to be made a fool of than by being exposed to the sophistry of others."

YAZOO CITY, January, 1855.

THE TECNOBAPTIST.

§ 1. IN the town of ——— resided three gentlemen, between whom existed a strong attachment, greatly enhanced by the fact that they were devoted Christians, though of different denominations. One was an Antipedobaptist; the others, Pedobaptists: but, of the latter, one was of the Calvinistic, the other of the Arminian school. That this diversity may be the more easily borne in mind, they are designated by names which will serve as an index to their respective opinions. Thus the *Arminian* is called *Mr. A.*; he of *Baptist* views is *Mr. B.*; and the *Calvinist* is *Mr. C.*

§ 2. Mr. A. and Mr. C. had often deplored together the error which caused their friend to withhold from baptism an interesting family of children; and after many consultations, and frequent prayers for a better guidance than their own judgments, they determined to call on Mr. B., and spend a day in endeavoring to lead him into the right

way. After a random discussion of some length, the conversation proceeded as follows: —

§ 3. *Mr. A.* I perceive, *Mr. B.*, that you have well fortified yourself in your opinion. But you should not confine yourself to books that favor your own views.

§ 4. *Mr. B.* Nor have I; for, while I have carefully perused every treatise I have been able to find in favor of infant-baptism, I have studied but one book against it.

Mr. A. And what book is that?

§ 5. *Mr. B.* The Bible.

§ 6. *Mr. A.* Whether that book be for or against infant-baptism is the very point in issue; and it is to convince you that the Bible favors the baptism of infants that we are here this morning.

§ 7. *Mr. B.* Then let the discussion proceed no farther; for it can lead to no desirable result. Before it commenced, you had begged the question, — had assumed that you are right, and I wrong; for this is implied in your desire to convince me. If I also lay claim to infallibility, what will it profit us to talk farther on the subject? But, my friends, if you wish to investigate this important point with me, — desiring sincerely, not to force upon me your own preconceived opinion, but that we may all ascertain what is the truth, — I will cheerfully enter into the investigation with you in the same spirit.

§ 8. *Mr. A.* I stand reprov'd, my friend. To enter upon an intelligent investigation of this question, the examiner must free his mind from all previous bias for or against infant-baptism, and place before him the simple inquiry, "Is infant-baptism a divine institution, or is it not?" Let us approach this question with a love and desire of all profitable truth; putting away idleness, prejudice, and worldly affections, and so examine our opinions to the bottom; being prepared in mind to follow God, and God only, which way soever he shall lead us.

§ 9. *Mr. C.* In all our inquiries concerning truth and duty, we are to be guided by the word of God. This is the only rule of our faith and practice; and from this we are to learn all things which the Lord requires us to believe and observe and do. And, while we search the Scriptures with an earnest desire to know the truth, we may not trust to our own wisdom, but as we are directed by the wise man: "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." The church suffers much from men who interpret the Scriptures according to the reasonableness and fitness of things, or according to their preconceived opinions. These come to the word of God, not so much to learn what is true, as to seek if they can find something in the Scriptures to prove and establish what they have already

judged to be true by a certain process of reasoning. And many seek the truth, and find it not; because they trust to their own ability, lean to their own understandings, and neglect to ask wisdom of God. They ask not the Spirit of truth to guide them unto all truth: hence they are led away into all manner of errors and delusions; and thus the church is divided, troubled, distracted, rent, and torn as by an evil spirit. Let us now, as humble disciples of Christ, come to the word of God, that we may learn what is his will; casting off all prejudice, all self-confidence, and seeking the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that we may be guided to the truth,—that we may understand to whom it is the will of the Lord that we should administer the ordinance of baptism.

§ 10. *Mr. B.* That I will cheerfully do; for I can truly say, in the language of Chillingworth, “I know no opinion I have, which I would not as willingly forsake as keep, if I could see sufficient reason to induce me to believe that it is the will of God I should forsake it.” *Mr. C.*, will you present our petition to the throne of grace?

§ 11. *Mr. C.* [All kneeling.] O Lord God, the only wise! we would make our prayer before thee, that we may understand thy truth. Thy wisdom is infinite. Thou art light, and in thee is no darkness at all. Thou by wisdom hast founded the earth, by understanding hast established the heavens;

and by thy knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down rain. We are but of yesterday, and know nothing. We grope in noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness. But the entrance of thy word giveth light: it giveth understanding to the simple. And we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name, because, when we received thy word, we received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in those who believe. Yet, O Lord! who can know his errors? Be it indeed that we have erred concerning the truth,—that we have gone astray like lost sheep. O Father! for his sake who was made flesh, and dwelt among us full of grace and truth; who was called for a light of the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind,—for his sake, seek thy servants. Send thy light and thy truth, and let them lead us. To thee, O holy Word of God! to thee we cry, like blind Bartimeus, “Lord, that we may receive our sight!” Anoint our eyes with eye-salve, that we may see, and not err in vision, or stumble in judgment. Thou who wert meek and lowly in heart, grant that we may put on humbleness of mind, and meekness; that we walk not after our own desires, but seek to know and do thy will; that we be not wise in our own eyes, nor lean to our own understanding; but receive the love of the truth, and learn of thee, who only art a guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness,

an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes. Give us understanding, and we shall keep thy law ; yea, we shall observe it with our hearts. And now to Him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, — to the only wise God our Saviour, — be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

§ 12. *Mr. B.* Now, my friends and brothers in Christ, we may hope, that, in what we are about to undertake, nothing will be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, in an humble, childlike, teachable spirit, as becomes those who profess to love the God of truth. In the course of the investigation, it is natural that each one of us should be most clear-sighted and quick in detecting what will favor his own views. And it is better that it should be thus ; for it will insure the proper consideration of every thing which can weigh in either scale. Then, while investigating “the law and the testimony,” let each one act as the advocate of his own opinion ; but, in deliberating and deciding, we must throw aside the advocate, form ourselves into an impartial jury, “and a true verdict give according to the law and the evidence.” Since we have not time to explore the whole field, I leave you to select that one argument which you consider the most conclusive in favor of infant-baptism, — that one on which you are most willing to rest your

cause; and I agree to let that settle the question between us, if you also will abide by it. We may all safely agree to this, since a truth established by one incontestable argument is as impregnable as if established by a thousand.

§ 13. *Mr. A.* We approve your suggestion; and I propose the argument derived from the rite of circumcision.

§ 14. *Mr. C.* That is also my choice; for I regard that argument as perfectly unanswerable. But I am satisfied that one chief reason why discussions so seldom lead to conviction on either side is, that men begin to argue without having any facts or principles agreed upon as true. This is like making fast a boat to a floating log. Euclid commences with axioms which cannot be denied, and postulates which must be conceded; and afterward asserts nothing but what is thus agreed upon, or is proved from these premises. Hence every proposition is established by a course of reasoning which cannot fail to carry conviction to every mind. Let us endeavor to imitate Euclid, setting forth first those points on which we can all agree. If we admit none but what are true, I agree, with Stewart and Mill, that "we may obtain a series of conclusions as certain as those of geometry, and as irresistibly compelling assent."¹

¹ Stewart's "Philosophy of the Mind," part ii. chap. 2, § 3. Mill's "System of Logic," b. ii. chap. 5, § 1.

§ 15. *Mr. A.* Your suggestion is excellent ; and I agree with you as to the probable result. Let us adopt substantially the rule laid down for himself by Dr. Jarvis, in his “Chronological Introduction to the History of the Church” (p. 5), thus : —

§ 16. “The great object to be constantly kept in view shall be the investigation of truth for its own sake ; and to that end, testimony, and fair deductions therefrom, shall be followed whithersoever they may lead.”

§ 17. *Mr. C.* I presume that we all agree that an express command from God is not necessary to establish what is his will on any point, but fair and legitimate inference is equally obligatory upon us ; and such inference may be drawn from the analogy furnished by the history of the Old-Testament church. If this be not objected to, it will be taken for granted.

§ 18. Well : God commanded Moses at Mount Sinai to submit to the people this proposal : “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people ; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.”¹ It is plain, that, if Israel became to God “a kingdom of priests,” then God was their king : if so, “the kingdom of God,” in its highest sense, was proposed to be established at Mount Sinai. But was it actually there esta-

¹ Exod. xix. 5, 6.

blished? I reply, that, when Moses laid God's proposal before the people, "all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."¹ Here, by a unanimous vote, the nation acceded to the proposal, and thus, by their own voluntary act, became God's kingdom.

§ 19. *Mr. A.* Again: it will not be questioned that St. Stephen alluded to the posterity of Abraham, the Israelitish nation, when he said that Moses "was in the *church* in the wilderness."

§ 20. *Mr. C.* Thus the natural seed of Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob, constituted the kingdom, or visible church, of God, until the coming of Christ. Then we may agree, that, —

§ 21. Before the coming of Christ, the visible church, or kingdom of God, consisted of the Israelitish nation, who were the seed of Abraham, born of the flesh.

§ 22. It is equally clear, that every child born of Israelitish parents was one of the natural seed of Abraham by the very fact of its birth. It was born into the Israelitish nation; and, that nation being the church of God, it follows that it was a regular church-member in virtue of its birth. We can agree, therefore, that, —

§ 23. In the Old-Testament church, the children of Israelitish parents became members by the fact of birth, and stood toward that church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth.

¹ Exod. xix. 8.

§ 24. *Mr. A.* There can be no controversy between us as to the fact, that, in the Old-Testament church, the token of God's covenant, and the outward sign of membership, was circumcision; nor as to the following propositions:—

§ 25. The infant child of Israelitish parents, if a male, was circumcised on the eighth day after he was born.¹

§ 26. A stranger sojourning in Israel, and wishing to keep the passover, was required to be circumcised, with all his males.²

§ 27. *Mr. B.* It may be advisable to mention here the only remaining subjects of circumcision.

§ 28. *Mr. C.* By all means. Any servant whom an Israelite bought with money of any stranger must needs be circumcised.³

§ 29. *Mr. A.* When John the Baptist and Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," and "is nigh unto you," they evidently alluded to the spiritual reign of the Messiah. "The kingdom of Christ," "the kingdom of God," "the kingdom of heaven," are phrases which all signify the gospel dispensation. Thus, in the discourse with Nicodemus,⁴ Jesus uses the phrase "kingdom of God" to express the state of the church on earth, which is the gate to the celestial kingdom; and generally, indeed, speaks of his church on earth under this mode of expression, rather than the heavenly state.

¹ Lev. xii. 1-3.

² Exod. xii. 48.

³ Gen. xvii. 12, 13.

⁴ John iii. 3, 5.

§ 30. *Mr. C.* All that our blessed Saviour said to Nicodemus applies only to the visible church, or kingdom of God in this world, and not to the church in its triumphant state, or kingdom of God in heaven. This is absolutely certain from his own words: "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"¹ Let any one impartially examine the evangelists, and he will find this to be the general import of the phrase in question.

§ 31. *Mr. A.* Let it be agreed, then, that the phrases "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" — as used in Matt. xviii. 3, xix. 14, xxi. 43; Mark x. 14, 15; Luke xviii. 16, 17; and John iii. 3, 5 — are to be understood as referring to the Christian church on earth.

§ 32. Well: Jesus said to the chief priests and Pharisees, "The kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."² Does not such language indicate the transfer of a kingdom already existing, rather than the beginning of an entirely new one?

§ 33. *Mr. C.* The Apostle Paul speaks of the church under the similitude of an olive-tree.³ We understand the good olive-tree to represent the church of the Jews, or, what is the same thing, the church which was planted under the Old-Testament dispensation; and the Gentiles were the wild

¹ John iii. 12.

² Matt. xxi. 43.

³ Rom. xi. 16, 24.

olive-tree. Well: observe what the Lord has done to this good olive-tree. It has not been destroyed, and another tree planted; but the unfruitful branches were taken away. And the Gentiles were not pruned and cultivated as a separate tree, but were cut out of the tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted, contrary to nature, into the good olive-tree,—the same from which the others were broken off. And, when the Jews shall be brought in, they will not be grafted into another tree, but into their own olive-tree,—the same from which they were broken off. Can any thing be more pointedly descriptive of identity?

§ 34. *Mr. A.* How could the apostle call the church “their own olive-tree,” and them “the natural branches,” if it were not the same tree from which they were broken off?

§ 35. *Mr. C.* The church is the same in substance now that it was under the old dispensation. There is a difference, but not essential. The church is enlarged, and rendered more spiritual; and there is a change of external rites. Under the old dispensation, the privileges of the church were confined to the Jews; but now the middle wall of partition is broken down, and these privileges are extended to the Greeks, Scythians, Barbarians, and to all the nations of the earth. The relation of the natural seed of Abraham to God, signified by the name “Israelite,” prefigured the more honorable relation

which believers, the true Israel, stand in to God. Hence we may agree upon this proposition : —

§ 36. The New-Testament church, or Christian church, is the same as the Old-Testament church, only rendered more spiritual, and with a change of external rites. It consists no longer of the seed of Abraham born of the flesh, but of the spiritual seed of Abraham.

§ 37. *Mr. B.* I will not object to that proposition ; but will you explain how we can become the seed of Abraham if we be not born so, and how we can become his spiritual seed ?

§ 38. *Mr. C.* Like Nicodemus, you would know “how can these things be ?” I will endeavor to explain by setting before you the discourse of Jesus with Nicodemus. The Jews believed, that, by virtue of being the natural descendants of Abraham, and of those among whom the kingdom of God was at first established, they would enjoy peculiar privileges when the King should make his visible appearance in the person of the Messiah. It was to correct this error that John warned them : “Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.” And Jesus, to remove this error, taught Nicodemus that the children of the flesh are not counted for the seed of Abraham in the divine promise ; and, of course, that his being a lineal descendant of this great patriarch gave him no peculiar advantages in the kingdom of God. He must have another birth

before he could even see it. Nicodemus had no conception of what Jesus meant by another birth. Jesus in the most solemn manner re-affirmed what he had said, and explained it: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Few will doubt but to be born of water is to be baptized; that is, baptism visibly initiates into the kingdom of God, as natural birth makes one a subject of that government into which he is born. Jesus explained the matter still farther to Nicodemus by appealing to the known fact, that every thing which propagates at all propagates its own kind. Consequently, were it possible for a man to be born again in the literal sense mentioned by Nicodemus, by entering "a second time into his mother's womb," such second birth would do no more to qualify him for the kingdom of God than the first: "for that which is born of the flesh is" only "flesh;" and what proceeds, as we all do, from parents who are sinful and corrupt, is sinful and corrupt as they are. But God, being spiritual, must reign in a spiritual kingdom; and of course his subjects must be born of the Spirit before they can have such spiritual nature as qualifies one for being a subject of his kingdom: for "that which is born of the Spirit" is formed to a resemblance of that blessed Spirit whose office it is to diffuse a divine life into the soul. And as mankind have material, fleshly bodies connected with their spirits, these

bodies must be born of water to enter into God's kingdom. Thus Jesus demonstrates to Nicodemus that they who are born of the flesh, as the Jews were born of Abraham, cannot enter into the kingdom of God without another birth; and that birth must be of the Divine Spirit as to their spiritual nature, and of purifying water as to their fleshly nature.

§ 39. *Mr. A.* The descendants of Abraham, the Jews, were chosen to be "the people of God," — to be his visible church. But, in the days of Christ, a great religious revolution occurred, — no other than the abrogation of the church state of the Jews; for the great reason of their peculiarity and election, as a nation, was terminated by the coming of the Messiah. Almighty God determined no longer to found his church upon natural descent from Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob, nor in any other line according to the flesh; but to make faith in his Son Jesus Christ the gate of admission into this privilege. There was a new election of a new people of God, — to be composed of Jews, not by virtue of their natural descent, but of their faith in Christ; and of Gentiles of all nations, also believing, and put, as believers, on an equal ground with the believing Jews. Christians became, though in a more special and exalted sense, the chosen people, — the elect of God. The entrance into the Jewish church was by natural birth; while the entrance

into the Christian church, properly so called, is by faith and a spiritual birth. In his interesting discourse with Nicodemus, our Lord communicates to him the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith,— firstly, the necessity of new birth, or regeneration, by baptism and the Holy Spirit, to salvation ;¹ secondly, the redemption of mankind by the death of Christ, through faith, of which death the brazen serpent was a type ;² and, thirdly, the original cause of this mode of redemption,— the love of God.³ He declares the necessity of a new birth, in contradistinction to our natural birth, in order to our entrance into the kingdom of God ; and lays it down, that the Spirit of God is the sole author of this change, for that all births answer to the principle which causes them. As, therefore, the carnal births proceed from the flesh, so a spiritual birth proceeds from the Spirit as its vital principle ; that what is born of the flesh cannot alter its nature ; it is flesh still, and must always remain so, and in that state is unfit for heaven. In like manner, Jesus describes the state of “ the flesh,” this condition of entire unfitness for the kingdom of heaven, as our natural state ; and, to make this the stronger, he refers this unfitness, not to our acquired habits, but to the state in which we are born : for the very reason which he gives for the necessity of a new birth is because “ that which is born of the flesh is

¹ John iii. 3-11.

² John iii. 12-15.

³ John iii. 16-18.

flesh," and therefore we "must be born again." That we may be thus born of the Spirit, we must be born also of water; not as if there was any virtue in water, whereby it could regenerate us, but because this is the rite or ordinance appointed by Christ, wherein he regenerates us by his Holy Spirit; so that our regeneration is wholly the act of the Spirit of Christ. We learn, then, from the discourse of Jesus with Nicodemus, and from various other parts of the Scriptures, that every man must have *two* births,—one from heaven, the other from earth; one of his body, the other of his soul. Without the first, he cannot see nor enjoy this world: without the last, he cannot see nor enjoy the kingdom of God. As there is an absolute necessity that a child should be born into the world that he may see its light, contemplate its glories, and enjoy its good; so there is an absolute necessity that the soul should be brought out of its state of darkness and sin through the light and power of the grace of Christ, that it may be able to see (*idein*) or discern the glories and excellences of the kingdom of Christ here, and be prepared for the enjoyment of the kingdom of glory hereafter.

§ 40. *Mr. B.* Though I cannot concur in all that has been said, yet my questions have been answered well, and in the very words of our blessed Saviour. First, how can we become the seed of Abraham, if we be not born so? "Ye must be born

again.” Secondly, how can we become his spiritual seed? “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit:” hence we must be born of the Spirit to become the spiritual seed of Abraham.

§ 41. *Mr. C.* Then we are agreed thus far at least,—that those who are born of the flesh, whoever may be their progenitors, are not the spiritual seed of Abraham, and cannot enter into the kingdom of God, or church, without a regeneration and another birth, which is a spiritual birth, or being “born of the Spirit.”

§ 42. *Mr. B.* This proposition is very sweeping, including the whole human family. Are there no exceptions to it?

§ 43. *Mr. A.* None. The Lord will not alter the rules of admission into his kingdom to humor the prejudices of any set of men whatever.

§ 44. *Mr. C.* The proposition is not more sweeping than the declaration, “Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Here our Saviour has taught us the necessity of regeneration. All persons, without exception, are born in sin, and are by nature the children of wrath. In this natural state, man cannot see nor enter into the kingdom of God; for he is incapable of perceiving, understanding, or receiving the things of the Spirit of God. He must be born again, he must become a new creature, or he will not, he cannot, enter into the kingdom of God. In the natural

state, we are dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath, without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Hence it is evident, that, in the natural state, we are separate from Christ: it is equally plain that Christ's people, whom he has quickened, are united to him by the Spirit of Christ, which he has given them. Thus there was a time when Christ's people were separate from him; and afterwards there is a time when they are found in union with him. Then it follows, of course, that there was a time with every one of them when they were brought into union with Christ. Adult believers are united to Christ, or ingrafted into Christ, by his Spirit which is in them; for they have faith by his Spirit. Regeneration is inseparably connected with this union of the believer with Christ: it is the effect of our being ingrafted into Christ, or of our union with him, by having his Spirit within us.

§ 45. *Mr. B.* How are this spiritual regeneration and birth effected? By baptism?

§ 46. *Mr. A.* This needful and most blessed change is wrought by means of the sacred word of divine life, which is the seed of eternal life.¹

§ 47. *Mr. C.* Regeneration is not effected by baptism; for it is the work of God: neither is baptism to be accounted as a means of regeneration; for the believer to whom baptism is to be administered is regenerate already. Faith is a fruit of the

¹ 1 Pet. i. 23.

Spirit, and an evidence of regeneration. Therefore he is not baptized as a means by which he may be regenerated ; but, because he is a regenerate person, he receives the sign and token of God's covenant ; by which is also signified the work which the Lord has wrought by means of his word. That it is by means of the word appears from James i. 18 : " Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth ; " and this by the instrumentality of his ministering servants, by whom the gospel is preached ; as says the Apostle Paul, " In Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel." ¹

§ 48. *Mr. A.* We all agree that regeneration and the new birth are the work of the Spirit of God, wrought by means of his word ; and this by the instrumentality of his ministering servants, by whom the gospel is preached.

§ 49. We have seen, that, in the Old-Testament church, the external rite denoting entrance into the church was circumcision ; but, in the New-Testament church, baptism took its place.

§ 50. *Mr. C.* All who are born of the Spirit will surely enter into God's kingdom above, even though for want of opportunity, like the thief on the cross, they may not be baptized. But baptism being the introductory ordinance by which we are received or recognized as members of the visible church, which is God's kingdom on earth, none can be

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 15.

admitted without baptism ; and as all unbaptized persons are excluded from the church, or kingdom on earth, so all unregenerate persons will be excluded from the kingdom of God in heaven. When we say that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, we mean, not merely that circumcision is laid aside in the church of Christ, and that baptism has been brought in ; but that baptism occupies, in the evangelical dispensation, the place of circumcision under the Levitical, as the appointed initiatory ordinance in the church ; and that, as a moral emblem, it means the same thing, — being the outward and visible sign of the same inward and spiritual grace : for circumcision was a seal, not merely of temporal promises, but of the covenant of grace.¹

§ 51. *Mr. A.* If no objection be interposed, we will consider it settled, that, in the New-Testament church, or Christian church, baptism is adopted in the place of circumcision ; and is to the New-Testament church, and to the proper subjects of baptism, what circumcision was to the Old-Testament church, and to the proper subjects of circumcision.

§ 52. *Mr. C.* Some Baptists know so little of the sentiments of their brethren, that they suppose adult-baptism to be entirely rejected by Pedobaptists. I know you are not of this number ; yet, in matters of controversy, it will greatly facilitate our search to set aside all those things about which we are agreed,

¹ Rom. iv. 11.

and fix our attention only to that on which there is a difference. Among the points of agreement, we must therefore mention that —

§ 53. All true believers in Christ, who have not been previously baptized, are proper subjects of baptism; but no adult is a proper subject, without faith.

§ 54. *Mr. B.* Some of the propositions which you state as agreed are moot-points; and I do not wish to be understood as giving my unqualified assent to all of them, except for the purposes of the present inquiry. With this explanation, I consent that all these points be regarded as fixed truths.

§ 55. *Mr. A.* Let us, then, proceed to consider the question, Is infant-baptism a divine institution, or is it not? That it is so, follows inevitably from “the analogy furnished by the history of the Old-Testament church” (§ 17). The Old and New Testament churches are in substance the same, though under different dispensations (§ 36). While, therefore, the most perfect parallel can be drawn between the two, among other particulars, baptism, by divine authority, has taken the place of circumcision (§ 51). We should expect, therefore, to find the former in every respect answering to the latter; and so it does.

§ 56. *Mr. C.* Just so. Whatever belonged to circumcision, except the difference of visible cere-

mony, belongs also to baptism : they were initiatory rites of the same covenant at different periods. But the change of the initiatory rite made no change in the subjects of the covenant. Baptism is rightfully and properly applied to the same subjects as circumcision.

§ 57. *Mr. A.* Faith in Christ was an indispensable condition for circumcision of persons of mature age ; and it is an indispensable condition for baptism also in all persons of an age at which they are capable of exercising faith. But, by the express direction of God, an exception was made to this requisition in favor of the children of Israelitish parents ; and they were commanded to be circumcised, as well as those who had faith (§ 25).

§ 58. *Mr. C.* If there were no absurdity in that command, neither can there be in baptizing infants. The children of Jews were circumcised, when they certainly had as yet no idea of the intent and meaning of this religious rite. According to this analogy, children among Christians may be baptized even during those years when they cannot as yet understand any thing of the design of the rite, or make any profession of their faith. Their right to the one ordinance must be the same as it was to the other. If they were formerly capable of receiving a seal of the covenant of grace, which proves that they were then within the verge of that covenant, how they came to be now cast out of the covenant, and incapable

of the seal, and by what severe sentence they were thus rejected and incapacitated, those are concerned to make out that not only reject, but nullify and reproach, the baptism of the seed of believers.

§ 59. *Mr. A.* If they are to be debarred now because they have not faith in God, surely they should have been debarred on the same ground under the Mosaic economy. It follows as a necessary consequence, that the children of believing parents, under the gospel, have the same right to baptism that the children of Jewish parents had to circumcision under the law, unless their rights have been repealed or abridged.

§ 60. *Mr. C.* And unless there can be found some positive divine enactment or declaration excluding them.

§ 61. *Mr. A.* The absence of an explicit exclusion is sufficient proof of their title to baptism.

§ 62. *Mr. B.* Gentlemen, our agreed points were all proposed by yourselves; yet you seem to have forgotten one of them already, and a very important one. You now demand an explicit exclusion of infants from baptism by a positive divine enactment, though it was agreed that "an express command from God is not necessary to establish what is his will upon any point, but fair and legitimate inference is equally obligatory upon us" (§ 17). If, then, it appear from such inference that it is now God's will to exclude infants from baptism, you

cannot demand a positive enactment. It does not seem fair to mount up to your conclusion by the ladder of inference and analogy, and then to destroy that ladder, lest I should climb to some other conclusion. Stripped of these objectionable and erroneous expressions, the conclusion at which you arrive seems almost, if not altogether, inevitable. To be candid, I cannot see how it is possible to resist the conclusion, that, if baptism under the evangelical dispensation take the place of circumcision under the Levitical, the analogy must be extended to the persons entitled to receive the rite of circumcision under the one dispensation, and of baptism under the other. But let us apply your process of reasoning to another class of persons. "Any servant whom an Israelite bought with money of any stranger must needs be circumcised" (§ 28). If, in a land where involuntary servitude exists, a believer should buy an unbaptized servant from a Mussulman, or other stranger to the covenant of grace, must that servant needs be baptized?

§ 63. *Mr. A.* As, in the gospel-covenant which was made with Abraham, all the children of whom the Israelites had the care, not more he who was born in their houses than he who was bought with money of any stranger that was not of their seed, was to be circumcised, so the church is bound to extend her pastoral care to every child within her reach.

§ 64. *Mr. C.* If the servant be an infant, he should be admitted to baptism on the faith of the master; but not if an adult (§ 53).

§ 65. *Mr. B.* What, then, becomes of “the analogy furnished by the history of the Old-Testament church”? (§ 17.) Why do you not require faith in the infant? Because, “by the express direction of God, an exception was made in favor of infants; and they were admitted to baptism without personal faith” (§ 57). Exactly the same exception was made in favor of servants, without any reference to their age. “He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money of any stranger which is not of thy seed, must needs be circumcised.”¹ If we take your argument for infants, and substitute the words “masters” for “parents,” and “servants” for “children,” the necessity of baptizing servants is as firmly established by the argument as is the necessity of baptizing infants. Nay, by assuming that infant-baptism is scriptural, we can make that a link in the chain of argument in favor of servant-baptism, and thus give it the additional force of another resemblance between the two dispensations. The argument would stand thus:—

§ 66. Baptism has taken the place of circumcision, and answers to it in every respect (§ 55). The change of the initiatory rite made no change in the subjects of the covenant. Baptism is right-

¹ Gen. xvii. 12, 13.

fully and properly applied to the same subjects as circumcision (§ 56). Faith in Christ was an indispensable condition, for either rite, in persons of mature age (§ 57). An exception was made to this requisition in favor of infants, and they were circumcised as well as believers; and so now the like exception is made, and they are baptized. But, by the express direction of God, another exception was made in favor of the servants of Jewish masters; and it was commanded that they should be circumcised, as well as those who had faith (§ 57). If there were no absurdity in that command, neither can there be in baptizing servants. Their right to the one ordinance must be the same as it was to the other (§ 58). As they were not debarred for want of faith under the Mosaic economy, neither can they be now. The servants of Christian masters have the same right to baptism under the gospel which the servants of Jewish masters had under the law, unless their rights have been repealed or abridged (§ 59).

§ 67. What is the result? As faith was not required of the servant as a prerequisite to circumcision, it cannot be required as a prerequisite to baptism. As the servant might then have been an adult, so may he be now; as he might then have been an idolater, so may he now be an idolater, fresh from the wilds of Africa. Yet your argument, *mutatis mutandis*, proves that the Christian purchaser

must needs have the adult idolater baptized, contrary to our agreed doctrine, which is universally received in the Christian world, that no adult is a proper subject of baptism, without faith (§ 53).

§ 68. *Mr. C.* The church was formerly a separate nation; and the servant brought within that nation was thereby brought within the church. Now, however, the church is not a nation, but is distinct from secular kingdoms. A servant introduced into the family of a Christian is not thereby brought within the church; and cannot be, except by faith. It was the duty of the Jewish master to have his servant circumcised; but now the "bond-servant is the Lord's freeman," and is to be baptized upon the profession of his own faith and obedience.

§ 69. *Mr. B.* Your reasons are sufficient to exclude unbelieving servants from baptism; but again, *mutatis mutandis*, they apply with equal force against infant-baptism. A child born in the house of a believer is not now, as formerly, made thereby an integral part of the church. The application of your course of reasoning to servants proves that there is a flaw somewhere, which we must now search out. I repeat my firm conviction, that "the analogy furnished by the history of the Old-Testament church" (§ 17) will guide us to the truth, if we make no mistake in tracing that analogy; and the flaw in your reasoning, I am inclined to think, will be found to consist in a departure from the path

of that analogy. Let us examine the principle involved in the argument by which you attempt to support infant-baptism.

§ 70. *Mr. C.* The argument consists of resemblance of relations; and the principle involved may be expressed in the words of a mathematical proposition which has been demonstrated by Legendre: ¹ “If there be four proportionals, and four other proportionals having the same antecedents, the consequents will be proportional.” If we apply to the consequents the third and fifth propositions of the same book, we will find them still proportional when taken first alternately, and then inversely.² If this be too abstract, take this illustration: —

B is to **N** as **C** is to **O**, and
B is to **X** as **C** is to **S**: therefore
X is to **N** as **S** is to **O**;

that is, **X** stands in the same relation to **N** in which **S** stands to **O**.

§ 71. *Mr. A.* As this mode of exemplification

¹ “Elements of Geometry,” b. ii. prop. 4.

² Things are proportional when the first has to the second the same ratio or relation which the third has to the fourth, the fifth to the sixth, &c. The first and third of four proportionals are called the antecedents; the second and fourth are called the consequents. Proportionals are taken alternately when antecedent is compared with antecedent, and consequent with consequent; they are taken inversely when the consequents are made antecedents, and the antecedents are made consequents. Thus, in the proportionals $N : O :: X : S$, the antecedents are N and X ; the consequents, O and S . Taken alternately, the proportionals stand thus, — $N : X :: O : S$. These, taken inversely, stand thus, — $X : N :: S : O$.

may not be perfectly clear, let us apply this truth to figures. Two examples will suffice : —

$$\begin{array}{l|l}
 2 : 1 :: 6 : 3, \text{ and} & 3 : 12 :: 5 : 20, \text{ and} \\
 2 : 3 :: 6 : 9; \text{ therefore} & 3 : 6 :: 5 : 10; \text{ therefore} \\
 3 : 1 :: 9 : 3. & 6 : 12 :: 10 : 20.
 \end{array}$$

Here the correctness of the proposition is exemplified and experimentally demonstrated.

§ 72. *Mr. C.* Now, to apply it to the question before us, let **B** represent **B**aptism; **C**, **C**ircumcision; **N**, the **N**ew-Testament church; **O**, the **O**ld-Testament church; **S**, the **S**ubjects proper for circumcision in the Old-Testament church; and **X**, as in Algebra, must represent that unknown result for which we seek; that is, *the proper subjects of baptism in the New-Testament church*. Then the argument stands thus : —

Baptism stands to the **N**ew-Testament church in the same relation in which **C**ircumcision stood to the **O**ld-Testament church (§ 51); —

Baptism stands to (**X**) the proper subjects of baptism in the same relation in which **C**ircumcision stood to the proper **S**ubjects of circumcision (§ 51); therefore —

(**X**) The proper subjects of baptism stand toward the **N**ew-Testament church in the same relation in which the proper **S**ubjects of circumcision stood toward the **O**ld-Testament church.

§ 73. *Mr. A.* The result may be more conveniently expressed thus: Those persons are proper

subjects of baptism who stand toward the Christian church in the same relation in which the proper subjects of circumcision stood toward the Israelitish church.

§ 74. *Mr. B.* Here three questions are presented, which must be disposed of before we ascertain who are proper subjects of Christian baptism.

§ 75. *Mr. C.* Very true. We must ascertain, firstly, Who were proper subjects of circumcision; secondly, In what relation they stood toward the Israelitish church; thirdly, What persons stand in the same relation toward the Christian church. Whoever those persons may be, they are the proper subjects of Christian baptism. Firstly, then, Who were proper subjects of circumcision? We need notice only that "the infant child of Israelitish parents, if a male, was circumcised" (§ 25).

§ 76. *Mr. B.* I will not require you to keep up the distinction as to sex, but admit that females will come in under the same right as males; for in Christ there is neither male nor female.

§ 77. *Mr. A.* The other questions are just as easily disposed of; for it will not, it cannot, be denied, that exactly the same relation exists between Christian parents and their infant children which existed between Israelitish parents and their infant children.

§ 78. *Mr. C.* No proposition can be more obviously correct; and the conclusion is inevitable,

that the infant children of Christian parents are proper subjects of baptism in the Christian church.

§ 79. *Mr. B.* How is that? Permit me to review our ground. I cannot discover that the relation in which the proper subjects of circumcision stood toward their parents forms any part of the process of reasoning by which we propose to ascertain who are proper subjects of baptism. The conclusion at which you just now arrived speaks of their relation, not to their parents, but to the Israelitish church (§ 73). The second question, growing out of that conclusion, is, In what relation they stood, not toward their parents, but toward the Israelitish church (§ 75). And the next question is, What persons stand in the same relation, not toward their parents, but toward the Christian church (§ 75). You cannot substitute the parents for the churches till you show that a child occupies the same relation toward its parents as toward the church of which the parents are members. Perhaps we will find here that flaw which evidently exists in your chain of reasoning, — that by-path which leads us astray from the true road pointed out by “the analogy furnished by the history of the Old-Testament church” (§ 17).

§ 80. As the relation of parents so confuses itself with our investigation, let us, at a proper time, consider two other questions, — fourthly, In what relations Israelitish children stood toward their parents;

fifthly, Toward what persons the proper subjects of baptism stand in similar relations.

§ 81. *Mr. A.* Very well: it will only be a longer road to the same result. The answer to our first question brings us at least one step farther; and we may now argue syllogistically thus: Those persons are proper subjects of baptism who stand toward the Christian church in the same relation in which the proper subjects of circumcision stood toward the Israelitish church (§ 73). The infant children of Israelitish parents were proper subjects of circumcision (§§ 25, 75); therefore —

§ 82. Those persons are proper subjects of baptism who stand toward the Christian church in the same relation in which the infant children of Israelitish parents stood toward the Israelitish church.

§ 83. *Mr. C.* The next question is, “In what relation did they” — the infant children of Israelitish parents — “stand toward the Israelitish church?” (§ 75.) The answer is, They “stood toward that church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth” (§ 23). In like manner, the children of professing Christians are church-members in virtue of their birth.

§ 84. *Mr. B.* Well, well: you seem to be leading me to your opinion rapidly enough, without hurrying me through any near cuts. Let me reach it, if at all, by the regular path marked out. I will “follow the testimony, and fair deductions there-

from, whithersoever they may lead" (§ 16). So are you bound to follow, and not jump at conclusions in advance.

§ 85. *Mr. C.* Then, from the conclusion already reached, we may reason thus: Those persons are proper subjects of baptism who stand toward the Christian church in the same relation in which the infant children of Israelitish parents stood toward the Israelitish church (§ 82). The infant children of Israelitish parents stood toward the Israelitish church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth (§ 83); therefore —

§ 86. Those persons are proper subjects of baptism who stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth.

§ 87. Now, the children of professing Christians are not to be reckoned as part of the world, but of the church,—a holy, not a common and unclean seed. They are born members of the church. So this certainly closes the argument.

§ 88. *Mr. B.* It does, indeed, if your assertion be true; but whether or not the children of professing Christians be born members of the church is involved in our third question, which now naturally presents itself for consideration: "What persons stand in the same relation toward the Christian church?" (§ 75)—that is, What persons stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth? You reply, The

children of professing Christians. But this conflicts with several of the propositions which we have agreed upon as unquestionably true; namely, that, though the church is still the same as under the old dispensation, it has undergone some changes; and that "it no longer consists of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, but of his spiritual seed" (§ 36); — that, under the old dispensation, Israelitish children became members by the fact of carnal birth; but that, since the church has been given to the spiritual seed, no one can enter the kingdom of God, or church, without another birth, which is a spiritual birth (§§ 36, 41). Remember also the remarks which you both recently made on this point. Mr. C. said that Jesus demonstrated to Nicodemus, "that they who are born of the flesh, as the Jews were born of Abraham, cannot enter into the kingdom of God without another birth;" that they "must have another birth before they could even see it" (§ 38); that they "must be born again, must become new creatures, or they will not, they cannot, enter into the kingdom of God" (§ 44); and much more to the same effect. Mr. A. was no less strong. He said, among other things, that "the entrance into the Jewish church was by natural birth; while the entrance into the Christian church, properly so called, is by faith and a spiritual birth;" — that, in our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, "he declares the necessity of a new birth, in contra-

distinction to our natural birth, in order to our entrance into the kingdom of God; and lays it down, that the Spirit of God is the sole author of this change" (§ 39). Does this mean something, or nothing? If any thing, it points out the new, the spiritual birth as the only birth by which any one can enter into the kingdom or church of God (§ 31); and, of course, it designates those who are thus born anew as the only persons who are born into the church, and occupy toward it the relation of "membership by the fact of birth." No one can be a member until admitted into the body of which he becomes a member. If infants become members by their birth, then being born of the flesh does admit them into the kingdom of God, in contradiction of our agreed doctrine (§ 41),—in contradiction of the Lord Jesus Christ, who says expressly, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."¹ Therefore no carnal infant is a member. Then who is? In one of our agreed points, as also in your remarks of which I have just quoted a part, we find the reply, that those only are the spiritual seed of Abraham who have been born again,—born of the Spirit; that, without such spiritual birth, no one can enter the church (§ 41). Then the answer to our third question (§ 75) is as follows:—

§ 89. Those persons, and none other, who have

¹ John iii. 3.

been regenerated and born anew, stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth.

§ 90. These are the only persons who occupy, in the Christian church, a position analogous to that of infants born into the Israelitish church: in other words, they are the “new-born babes” of the gospel, as carnal infants were the “little ones” of the law. The analogy we have traced leads me irresistibly to the conclusion that these spiritual “new-born babes” have the same right to baptism that the carnal “little ones” had to circumcision. You have thus convinced me that infants are proper subjects of baptism; and I now declare myself a Pedobaptist;¹ or, if that title have been too exclusively appropriated by the advocates of the baptism of carnal infants, I must invent a new name, and call myself a Tecnobaptist,²—one who advocates the baptism of “new-born babes in Christ.”

§ 91. *Mr. C.* I understand you as urging that that carnal infancy which was ingrafted into the fellowship of the church by circumcision prefigured those spiritual infants of the New Testament, who, by the word of God, are regenerated to an immortal life. In this language we discover, indeed, a small spark of truth. We confess, indeed, that the natural seed of Abraham did, for a time, hold the place of

¹ From *paidōn baptisma*, the baptism of children.

² From *tecnōn baptisma*, the baptism of children.

those spiritual children which are incorporated with him by faith ; for we are called his children, notwithstanding there is no relationship between him and us. But if you understand, as you certainly do, that no spiritual blessing was promised by God to the carnal seed of Abraham, you are greatly deceived.

§ 92. *Mr. B.* You mistake me. What I asserted does not involve, or even remotely touch upon, the opinion which you attribute to me ; and I am willing to concede to you all that you can demand on that point, — that the carnal seed of Abraham, before Christ, were saved by faith in Christ as being to come, just as we are saved by faith in Christ as having come already, — their faith being prospective, ours retrospective ; that every spiritual and eternal blessing was promised to them which is promised to the spiritual seed, and a thousand-fold more, if you will. All this I willingly concede in our present inquiry ; but I insist that it is wholly irrelevant. All that I assert is, what you have already laid down as unquestionably true (§§ 21, 23, 36, 41), that, under the old dispensation, carnal descent from Abraham made one a member of the church, and carnal birth brought him into the church ; but that now a carnal descent from Abraham, or from any other person, cannot bring a child into the church ; — that “ those who are born of the flesh, whoever may be their progenitors, are not

the spiritual seed of Abraham, and cannot enter into the kingdom of God, or church, without a regeneration and another birth, which is a spiritual birth, or being "born of the Spirit" (§ 41). From this it follows, as a necessary consequence, that "those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated and born anew, stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth" (§ 89). This does not conflict with the doctrine, that in days of yore, when persons occupied that relation by reason of mere carnal birth, they had a promise of the same blessings which are now offered to persons who attain to that relation by a spiritual birth. This may be true or false; but it is aside from our present inquiry.

§ 93. We may not find a more suitable time to complete the parallel between the carnal seed of the Levitical and the spiritual seed of the evangelical dispensation, by disposing of our fourth and fifth questions. The fourth is, "In what relations did Israelitish children stand toward their parents?" (§ 80.) Not in what *relation*, but in what *relations*? For you will perceive that they occupied two relations, — first, as having been brought into the world by those parents, which we may call their carnal relation to their parents: secondly, as having been brought by those parents into the house of Israel, the kingdom or church of God; and this we may call their ecclesiastical relation to their parents.

They stood toward their parents, in the carnal relation, as members of the human family; in the ecclesiastical relation, as members of the Israelitish family, or church of God. The next question is (§ 80), "Toward what persons do the proper subjects of baptism stand in similar relations?" And, firstly, toward what persons do they stand in the carnal relation of child to parent?

§ 94. *Mr. C.* Of course, toward the father and mother by whom they came into the world,—by whom they became human beings,—by whom they became flesh.

§ 95. *Mr. B.* Very true. Then, secondly, toward what persons do the proper subjects of baptism stand in the ecclesiastical relation of child to parent?

§ 96. *Mr. A.* Very obviously, toward those persons by whom they were brought into the church, the spiritual house of Israel, the kingdom of God. These may be called their spiritual, and the former their carnal or natural parents. And here I perceive the original of the institution of sponsors. The terms "godfather" and "godmother" are given because they promise before God that they will be as spiritual parents to the infant, being such at his initiation into the church. They are parents to the children in what concerns their duty to God, their best interest, their spiritual life. As he that showed mercy on the man who fell among thieves, though a stranger, was truly his neighbor; so in the eye of

faith, and in what concerns religion, they are fathers and mothers, though of no worldly kindred, who bring infants to Christ, bring them up in his nurture, and are instrumental in making them the sons of God, and joint-heirs with their Saviour of an everlasting inheritance.

§ 97. *Mr. B.* I agree with you as to the origin of the institution of sponsors, but will presently attempt to show that it is a most unworthy scion of such a noble stock. The ecclesiastical or spiritual parent, as you say, is the person by whom the spiritual child of Abraham is brought into the spiritual house of Israel; in other words, by whose instrumentality he becomes one of the spiritual seed of Abraham. In the Israelitish church, as we have seen, the same individuals who brought the child into the world brought him also into the church, and hence were both his natural and ecclesiastical parents. And, in the Christian church, a person may unite the characters of natural and ecclesiastical parent; and it is to be regretted that it is not more frequently the case. The reason is, that two separate births are necessary,—the first carnal, to bring the person into the world; the second spiritual, to bring him into the kingdom of God,—to make him one of the seed of Abraham, one of the children of God; and parents are too frequently neglectful of that religious training and instruction by which the latter result may be effected.

§ 98. *Mr. C.* The distinction is very correct. It is a necessary consequence of the fact, that, in the covenant with Abraham, God promised him two kinds of seed,—the one by natural descent, and the other by faith; and we find it constantly recognized in the epistles of the apostles. Thus, by reckoning Caius in the number of his children (*ematecna*), St. John means to tell us that Caius was converted by him.¹ For the same reason, I suppose, St. Peter calls Mark his son;² so that he was his son according to the spirit, and not according to the flesh. And St. Paul calls Timothy his son, because he had converted him, and thereby conveyed to him a new nature.³ He applies the same phraseology to Titus; and to Onesimus, whom he had begotten in his bonds.⁴ Also, in his Epistle to the Galatians,⁵ “my little children” (*tecnia mou*) is an expression of the tenderest affection; but, as coming from St. Paul, it likewise insinuates that he had been instrumental in their conversion. He tells the Christians at Corinth, that, though they had ten thousand instructors in the Christian doctrine, yet they had not many fathers; for he was their only spiritual father, having begotten them through the gospel.⁶ In those days, the unbelieving Jews (and some even among the believing Jews) thought themselves the children

¹ 3 John 4.

² 1 Pet. v. 13.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Tim. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 2.

⁴ Tit. i. 4. Philem. 10.

⁵ Gal. iv. 19.

⁶ 1 Cor. iv. 15; and see 2 Cor. xii. 14.

of God, because they were descended from Abraham by Isaac, and possessed the knowledge of the true God ; but the Apostle John assured both, that, God having attested Jesus to be the Christ, the only thing under the gospel dispensation which made men his children, was their believing on Jesus as the Christ, or Son of God, and their loving the children of God.¹

§ 99. *Mr. B.* You have well remarked, that God promised Abraham two kinds of seed, — the one by natural descent, and the other by faith. The former constituted the church under the old dispensation : the latter constitute it under the new. It is impossible for one to be of the seed which is by natural descent, if he be not really of the lineage of Abraham ; and it is equally impossible for one to be of the seed which is by faith, if he be not actually a believer. This, indeed, you distinctly assert when you say, that, “ under the gospel dispensation, the only thing which makes men God’s children is their believing on Jesus as the Son of God, and their loving the children of God.” Of these things no carnal infant is capable. But I anticipate.

§ 100. The apostles, or any other persons who had effected the conversion of Christians, stood toward those Christians “ in the faith,” or “ in Christ ” (that is to say, in the church), in the same relation in which the Israelites stood in the church

¹ 1 John v. 2.

toward their infant children. This was a familiar idea with the primitive Christians, as we see from the writings of the apostles; and I agree with Mr. A., that this is the origin of god-parents in the churches of Rome and England; a usage which they derive, not from Christ, but from Pope Hyginus, whose pontificate commenced about A.D. 138. They have here preserved something of consistency even in their errors; for they bear in mind that birth implies, not only a person born, but parents also. The apostles and evangelists were styled fathers of those whom they had "begotten through the gospel," — whom they had been instrumental in converting to Christ; and, in vain and feeble imitation of this holy relation, we find persons assuming the name of spiritual fathers and mothers of infants, not because they have begotten them through the gospel, or travailed in birth till Christ were formed in them¹ (for the infants are unconverted, nay, incapable of conversion), but because they were present at the christening, and went through a form of words! When the infants attain an age at which they are capable of being "begotten through the gospel," their putative fathers and mothers in Christ may be in some far-distant place, where they cannot conduce to the religious education of the children, or they may be in their graves; and, spite of the appointment of godfathers and godmothers, the true spirit-

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 15. Gal. iv. 19.

ual parents of a child are those who in after-life become instrumental in effecting his conversion to Christ. But let us return from this digression, and form another argument from the conclusions already reached.

§ 101. *Mr. A.* This may be done syllogistically, thus: Those persons are proper subjects of baptism who stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth (§ 86). Those persons who have been regenerated, and born anew, stand toward the Christian church in that relation (§ 89). Therefore, —

§ 102. Those persons who have been regenerated, and born anew, are proper subjects of baptism.

§ 103. *Mr. B.* You very properly omitted the words “and none other” from the minor and conclusion of the syllogism, since they are not in the major proposition.

§ 104. *Mr. C.* And the syllogism, after all, proves nothing but what we knew before we commenced the investigation, — that those who are born again through faith in the gospel are entitled to baptism. Here we are all agreed. We hold to believers’ baptism as much as you, and so expressly stated at the outset (§ 53); but the question in dispute is in regard to infants. Is infant-baptism wrong because believers’ baptism is right? No more, I insist, than believers’ baptism must be wrong if infant-baptism be right.

§ 105. *Mr. B.* All that I admit. I am not attempting to strain our last conclusion beyond its true import. It is nothing more than we all knew before ; yet it has an important bearing in our present inquiry. We started out with the design of establishing, by the analogy derived from the rite of circumcision, that infants are proper subjects of baptism (§§ 12-14) ; yet a fair course of syllogistic reasoning from that point has not, thus far, been sufficient to evolve more than the proposition, that regenerate persons are proper subjects of baptism. Notwithstanding the truth of this proposition, it may also be true that infants are proper subjects. All that I insist on at present is that the argument has entirely failed to establish the proposition, that infants are proper subjects of baptism ; which proposition it was designed to establish.

§ 106. *Mr. A.* You say rightly, that the conclusion we have reached, by no means settles that infants are not proper subjects of baptism : for the question is still open on the analogies to be drawn from the other subjects of circumcision ; and, if neither of these will avail us, then the question remains, whether infants may not be regenerate persons.

§ 107. *Mr. C.* Well, then, let us test this argument as our first argument was tested (§§ 65-67), and see if we cannot reduce it to the same absurdity. " A servant whom an Israelite bought of a stranger must needs be circumcised " (§ 28). Does not the

analogy which we are to follow require that a servant bought by a Christian shall be in like manner baptized? Does not our train of argument lead to this?

§ 108. *Mr. B.* Very clearly so, if, firstly, there be persons standing in the same relation, not to their masters, but to the Christian church, in which those servants stood, not toward their masters, but toward the Israelitish church; and if, secondly, there be no prohibition, either direct or inferential. But, in the first place, there are no persons occupying a similar relation toward the Christian church. Here I might quote the remarks of *Mr. C.*, to the effect, that, when the church of God was a distinct state of the earth, bond-servants, as such, constituted a portion of the subjects of that state,—a distinct class, yet not the less subjects; but that now “the bond-servant is the Lord’s freeman,” and is to be baptized upon the profession of his own faith and obedience (§ 53). The gospel does not interfere with the relations of master and servant as they may chance to exist in civil society; for Paul says, “Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it.” He sent back Onesimus, a fugitive slave, to his master Philemon. He and other apostles enjoin diligence and obedience upon servants in several epistles, and treat as often of the duties of masters, without once urging them to liberate their servants, or intimating that it was sinful to keep them in bondage; yet, in

the church itself, the relation of master and servant is abrogated. In the world, the servant is servant still; but in the church, if he be regenerate, he is "above a servant,—a brother beloved:"¹ for in Christ "there is neither bond nor free."² Then our argument, if applied to servants, must fail, because we can find nothing in the Christian church analogous to their position in the Israelitish church.

§ 109. In the second place, there is an express prohibition of their entering the church as servants, or by reason of their being bought with money. You hold that baptism is an ordinance of the church, not existing out of the church. Then it can be properly applied only to those over whom the church has acquired jurisdiction,—who have come within the church itself by some means. That a servant cannot enter into the church merely by being bought into a Christian family is declared by one of your preliminary truths: "Those who are born of the flesh cannot enter into the church, without a regeneration and another birth, which is being born of the Spirit" (§ 41). It is declared by the Lord from heaven, when he says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."³ Not being within the jurisdiction of the church without regeneration, the servant cannot be baptized; but if you hold that baptism is an initiatory rite, by means of which the servant is brought into the

¹ Philem. 16.

² Gal. iii. 28.

³ John iii. 3, 5.

church, then he enters without being “born of water and the Spirit,” by being born of water alone. If he become regenerate, he is within the body and jurisdiction of the church, because he is bought, not with the master’s money, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He comes to baptism in right, not of pecuniary purchase, but of spiritual birth; not as a servant, but “above a servant,—even a brother beloved.” Just so the infant of a Christian cannot come into the church by his carnal birth, but must be born again. I will here remark, that, even if you should reduce our argument to an absurdity, you will not thereby advance the cause of infant-baptism, but only show that the process by which we have reached the conclusion, that regenerate persons are proper subjects of baptism, is fallacious. But the effort at the *reductio ad absurdum* is not successful.

§ 110. *Mr. C.* The other analogy is not so easily disposed of. The distinction of youth and age is not abolished in the church. While the apostle says that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free, he does not say there is neither old nor young. Now, not only the infant Israelites were circumcised, but also any sojourner wishing to keep the passover was required to be circumcised, with all his males (§ 26). Will not the course of argument we have followed prove, that, when any stranger to the church of Christ

wishes to partake of the Lord's supper, he must be baptized, with all his males, — or, rather, with all his children, since in Christ “there is neither male nor female”?

§ 111. *Mr. B.* I reply, as in the other case, that our argument leads inevitably to that conclusion, if, firstly, there be persons standing in the same relation, not to their parents, but to the Christian church, which those children occupied, not toward their parents, but toward the Israelitish church; and if, secondly, there be no prohibition, either express or inferential. Let us first assume that such relation does exist, and that there is no prohibition. Then the children of converts, born previous to the conversion of the parents, are entitled to baptism; but this is no warrant for the baptism of any children whose parents are believers at the time of their birth. This argument for baptizing the children of Christian proselytes, to the exclusion of the children of believers, might be plausibly strengthened by the examples of household-baptisms which are usually adduced in support of infant-baptism. Let it be admitted that infants were baptized with Lydia, with the jailer, and with Stephanas; yet it might be insisted, that, as all these were new converts, these examples confirm the right of the children of new converts to be baptized; while the absence of a single recorded instance in which infants, born subsequently to the conversion and bap-

tism of the parents, were baptized, is *primâ facie* evidence that such infants were not entitled to baptism; and this *primâ facie* evidence is corroborated and confirmed by the positive evidence which we have examined, that the infants of believers do not occupy a position analogous to that of the infant Israelites. Some actually hold this doctrine, or something near akin to it. Certain it is, that the children born to believing parents bear no analogy to servants, none to the children of proselytes, nor to any persons in the Old-Testament church, unless it be the infants of the Israelites; and here, as we have seen, the analogy is not real (§§ 88–96). So the case of the infants of proselytes proves nothing in favor of the baptism of any infants, unless it be the infants of Christian proselytes.

§ 112. Secondly, then, let us see whether there be indeed in the Christian church any persons occupying the same relation to that church in which the children of proselytes stood toward the Israelitish church. Those children entered the church, not by the fact of birth, but by the fact of the conversion of their carnal parents to the Hebrew faith. Then are there in the Christian church any persons who have entered it, not by the fact of spiritual birth, but by the fact of the conversion of their carnal or of their spiritual parents? There are not, and cannot be, such persons; because,—

§ 113. Thirdly, they are expressly prohibited

from entering the church by any means other than spiritual birth (§ 41). A convert cannot bring his children into the church because he is born again; for the regeneration must be their own. They cannot be initiated into the church, without regeneration and new birth; for that would be to annul the express prohibition pronounced by the Saviour, when he said, so positively and solemnly, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;” “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”¹ Here he expressly prohibits any one to enter his kingdom, expressly declares it impossible for any one to enter therein, not only as a servant, or as a child of a proselyte, or as a child of professing Christians, but in any other right, or by any other method, than that of being born anew. All this is fully recognized and affirmed in the remarks which you both made concerning the discourse with Nicodemus, and which led to the adoption of some of our points of agreement (§§ 38, 39, 43, 44). One of those agreed points declares the same thing: “Those who are born of the flesh, whoever may be their progenitors, cannot enter into the kingdom of God, or church, without another birth, which is a spiritual birth” (§ 41). As this spiritual birth is the only means of entering the church, and becoming subject to its jurisdiction, it is the

¹ John iii. 3, 5.

only means by which one can become entitled to receive any ordinance within the church. Hence none are entitled to baptism but those who have been regenerated and born anew, and thus stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth. Then we are authorized to insert the words "and none other" in the major proposition of our last argument (§§ 101, 102), which will stand thus:—

§ 114. Those persons, and none other, are proper subjects of baptism, who stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth. This addition must be also carried into the conclusion of that argument.

§ 115. *Mr. A.* The syllogism will stand thus: Those persons, and none other, are proper subjects of baptism, who stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth (§ 114). Those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated and born again, stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth (§ 89); therefore,—

§ 116. Those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated and born again, are proper subjects of baptism.

§ 117. Thus our inquiry is reduced to the single point of baptismal regeneration. If you be right on that point, the argument is complete, and antipedobaptism may march under it as a triumphal

arch ; but, if I be right, the strong arch of argument must fall to the ground for want of its key-stone.

§ 118. *Mr. B.* Before considering the subject of baptismal regeneration, let us briefly review the analogy which we have followed, and see how far the position we have reached by syllogisms is supported by the teachings of Christ and his apostles. Firstly, the church now consists of the spiritual descendants of Abraham, and not, as formerly, of his carnal descendants. John the Baptist hinted at this change, when he said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father ; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."¹ It was more plainly alluded to by our Saviour, when he said to the chief priests and elders, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."² When the Jews said, "Abraham is our father," Jesus replied, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."³ And to Nicodemus he said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."⁴ So also Paul says, "They are not all Israel who are of Israel ; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children.

¹ Matt. iii. 9.

² Matt. xxi. 43.

³ John viii. 39, 44.

⁴ John iii. 6, 7.

They who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”¹ And to the Christians of Galatia he says, “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.”² Again he says, “He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly.”³ And again, “There is neither Jew nor Greek; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And, if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”⁴

§ 119. *Mr. A.* Undoubtedly it is important to keep this distinction always in view, when we consider the Jews with reference to the Christian church. In general, if the various terms used in Scripture concerning Israel as a nation be in the same or nearly the same sense applied to Christians under the New Testament, where is the type, and where the antitype? Where is “the true Israel,” as distinguished from “Israel after the flesh”? and where are we to learn either the character, privileges, or duties, of true believers? But I interrupt you. Proceed with your parallel.

§ 120. *Mr. B.* Secondly, when the church consisted of the carnal descendants of Abraham, they became such, of course, by carnal birth; but, since it has been transferred to the spiritual seed of Abra-

¹ Rom. ix. 6-8.

³ Rom. ii. 28, 29.

² Gal. iv. 28.

⁴ Gal. iii. 28, 29.

ham, all who come into existence by carnal birth must be born again, — a spiritual birth, — or they cannot become true descendants of Abraham, nor enter into the true church. Thus Jesus says, “Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”¹ Consider to whom he addressed this remark, — to Nicodemus, of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, a master or teacher of Israel, and believing himself assuredly already in the church or kingdom of God; yea, that he was born into it. But Jesus announced that the new dispensation was at hand; under which, being born of the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — how much more being born of any other lineage! — will not bring one into the kingdom of God; that even “an Hebrew of the Hebrews” — how much more a Gentile! — “must be born again,” “born of water and the Spirit,” or “he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” So John tells us, that, to as many as received the word, “he gave power to become the sons of God; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”² And Peter speaks to the same effect.³

§ 121. *Mr. C.* The language of Peter may be paraphrased thus: Having been regenerated, not by “corruptible seed,” not by virtue of descent from human parents, “but by incorruptible;” not laying

¹ John iii. 3, 5.

² John i. 12, 13.

³ 1 Pet. i. 23.

the stress of your confidence on your pedigree from Abraham, if you had the honor to descend from that illustrious patriarch; for that descent could not entitle you to the important blessings of the gospel. It is by means of the efficiency of the "word of God" upon your hearts, even that powerful word "which lives and endures for ever," that you are become entitled to these glorious evangelical privileges.

§ 122. *Mr. B.* Thirdly, we have seen that the spiritual children have their spiritual parents in the spiritual church, as formerly the carnal children had their carnal parents in the carnal church (§§ 93-98). I will not repeat the texts quoted by *Mr. C.* (§ 98).

§ 123. Fourthly, the spiritual parents are supplied with the means by which they may bring spiritual children into the spiritual church. They may beget them "through the gospel," as Paul begot the Corinthians."¹ In the parable of the sower, Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God;"² and though he then spoke of vegetable generation, yet the analogy holds good. Again: James says of Christians, that God begat them "with the word of truth;"³ and Peter speaks of them as "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."⁴

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 15.

² Luke viii. 11.

³ James i. 18.

⁴ 1 Pet. i. 23.

§ 124. *Mr. A.* In the fifth place, I would remind you of a practice, noticed in the Old Testament, at the birth of an infant, which is common to the humbling circumstances in which all human beings are brought into the world, and which will farther illustrate baptism. In Ezekiel, the commencement of the Jewish nation is compared to the birth of an infant; and the Lord is represented as saying, "Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee."¹ We may hence gather the designed analogy of Christian baptism. From the absolute bodily wants of a new-born babe, we are taught the spiritual wants of the soul; from that which the new-born babe requires to be done for its preservation and health, we are led onward by baptism to consider what blessings are requisite for the soul at its spiritual birth, for its preservation and health. Thus the Christian father, Jerome, remarks, that "as the bodies of infants, as soon as they are born, need to be washed, so our spiritual birth needs this salutary washing."

§ 125. *Mr. B.* Your remarks are very just; and I was about to remark, that, fifthly, the spiritual infants thus born of spiritual parents bear a strong analogy to carnal infants. As the latter have need to be washed so soon as born; so, not before, but after, the second birth, the spiritual infant needs "the washing of regeneration:" wherefore Ananias

¹ Ezek. xvi. 5, 9.

said to Saul, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."¹ Thus it seems that the spiritual infants are not freed from the defilement of their sins till they have manifested an humble and obedient spirit, and made open profession of their faith, by submitting to the command of Christ. And they do not come from the spiritual birth full grown and matured in strength, as Pallas is fabled to have sprung from the brain of Jove; but as the carnal babe is physically weak, so the spiritual babe is spiritually weak. As the carnal babe cannot use strong meat, but must be nourished by milk; so the spiritual babes "have need of milk, and not of strong meat: for every one," says Paul, "that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age; even to those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."² And so Peter, after reminding the Christians whom he addressed that they were born again, of incorruptible seed, exhorts them thus: "Wherefore, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."³ As the carnal infants grow and strengthen, so do the spiritual infants "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."⁴ Though at first "weak in faith," they

¹ Acts xxii. 16.

² Heb. v. 12-14.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 18.

come at last “unto a perfect man,—unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”¹ They are “no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,”² but “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” This early weakness and gradual growth are not sufficiently borne in mind in judging the conduct of professors. * When a Christian falls into some of those sins to which all persons are more or less liable, so long as they remain in this mortal state, it is generally considered as an aggravation, rather than a mitigation, of the fault, that “he has but recently professed religion.” He is expected to be strongest during the period of his spiritual infancy.

§ 126. Sixthly, the analogy may be applied to the results of the two births. Birth placed the carnal seed of Abraham in a certain relation to the church: second birth places his spiritual seed in the same relation now. By being born, those carnal infants became little children; by being born again, the spiritual infants “become *as* little children.” Here it is not I, but the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, who points out the analogy; and this he has done so often and so plainly, it is wonderful that any one should go astray. He says, “Ye must be born again;” “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;”

¹ Eph. iv. 13.

² Eph. iv. 14.

and, in explanation, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."¹ On another occasion, he says, what seems to be a paraphrase of these words, intended to make his meaning still more plain, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."² Again: "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."³ And yet again: "Suffer little children to come unto me; for of such (*toiouṭōn*) is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein;" or, as the same passage is rendered in Prof. Murdock's translation of the Syriac Testament, "Suffer little children to come to me; for of those that are like them, of such is the kingdom of heaven. Verily I say to you, that he who shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will not enter it."⁴

§ 127. Seventhly, if baptism be substituted for circumcision, it is not a mere out-of-doors matter, but is a rite within the church,—a sign which designates the seed of Abraham. On this assumption, all the passages which I have quoted show that no one should receive baptism till he has been born again. We have seen that John and Peter speak of

¹ John iii. 3, 5, 7.

² Matt. xviii. 3.

³ Matt. xviii. 4.

⁴ Luke xviii. 16, 17. See also Mark x. 14, 15. Matt. xix. 14.

all Christians as being “born again ;” that Paul speaks of all Christians as “Abraham’s seed ;” that Jesus declares, that except one be born again, of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, — that he must receive it “as a little child,” or he “shall in no wise enter therein.” This, in connection with the idea that baptism is now what circumcision was formerly, fully confirms our conclusion, which we reached by a logical process from our premises : “Those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated and born again, are proper subjects of baptism” (§ 116). They must first, by a spiritual birth, become the “seed of Abraham,” as Jewish children did formerly by a carnal birth. Having become Abraham’s seed, they must be outwardly designated as such by baptism, as formerly by circumcision ; for Abraham’s spiritual seed are not entered into the visible church without baptism. They must “be born of water and the Spirit.” Thus, without baptism, the spiritual child of Abraham will be “cut off from his people,” deprived of all church-privileges, as formerly the carnal seed were cut off if they were not circumcised.¹

§ 128. *Mr. A.* I agree with you here, and think that *Mr. C.* erred in saying that the children of believers are members of the church in virtue of their birth (§§ 83, 87). It is certain that all men are conceived and born in sin ; that what is

¹ Gen. xvii. 14.

born of the flesh is flesh ; that they who are in the flesh cannot please God ; and that none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew, of water and the Holy Ghost. What then ? Shall the child be excluded from baptism because he was not born in the church ? By no means ; for baptism is the child's spiritual birth into the church of Christ.

§ 129. *Mr. C.* I do not suppose that the ordinance, whenever legitimately administered, is necessarily accompanied with any physical or moral influence upon him who receives it. Yet a gracious God may, even at the moment in which the ordinance is administered, accompany the outward emblem with the blessing which it represents,—even “the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” This indeed may not be, and most commonly, so far as we can judge, is not, the case.

§ 130. *Mr. B.* Whether, by saying that God “may accompany the outward emblem with the blessing which it represents,” you mean to assert his power, or our want of positive knowledge on the subject, I agree with you. This may be ; for all things are possible with God. He has power to endow an infant, at the moment of birth, with all the faculties of the most mature intellect, and all the learning of the ripest scholar. Yet, should we hear of some work of deep erudition purporting to have been written by a little babe, we would not hesitate

to pronounce it incredible, impossible ; meaning that it is impossible, as God has been pleased to regulate the intellect of man. On the other hand, our finite reason may be in error as to the whole matter which we are considering ; and things may be which to us seem quite impossible. But, in regard to our opinions and actions, we must be guided, not by possibilities, but by certainties, so far as we can attain them ; and by probabilities, when certainties cannot be had.

§ 131. *Mr. C.* No one should be satisfied with a faith which rests on mere probability, no matter how high its degree. If infant-baptism be not taught in the Scriptures, there can be no reason for continuing the ordinance.

§ 132. *Mr. B.* Certainly we must not assume, that, because God *may* do a thing, therefore he *does* that thing, and, on that bare assumption, found our conduct in momentous things. We must not assume, that, because he *may*, therefore he *does*, confer “an inward and spiritual grace,” and for this only reason, without a spark of evidence, proceed to confer an “outward and visible sign” of that grace ; especially when it is acknowledged, that “most commonly, so far as we can judge,” God does not “accompany the outward emblem with the blessing which it represents,” and more especially when we cannot assert so much as a probability that it is ever otherwise.

§ 133. *Mr. A.* It is very true, that we must look at man as God has created him, in considering the question now before us. But is not an infant as capable of receiving spiritual blessing now as eighteen and a half centuries ago? John the Baptist received the Holy Ghost at his birth, and was therefore born again,—was a child of God, a new creature, an heir of God, sanctified by the Spirit, and prepared for the kingdom of God; for it is said, “He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.”¹

§ 134. *Mr. B.* Which Watson, the great Methodist theologian, explains as meaning, not that he was born of the Spirit, but that “he was placed under the spiritual influence and training of the Holy Ghost, for his great office, from the earliest period of life.”² It is very certain that being filled with the Holy Ghost is far different from being born of the Spirit. The former was a favor bestowed upon comparatively few; while all true Christians enjoy the latter. The former conferred miraculous powers;³ while the latter does not. The latter is a means of entrance into the kingdom of God, as reformed by the Messiah: therefore, if John was born again “from his mother’s womb,” he was in that spiritual church or kingdom. But he was not in it; for Jesus said, “Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John

¹ Luke i. 15. ² Watson’s Exposition, Luke i. 15. ³ Acts ii. 4.

the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”¹ Beside, we know that John died before the new dispensation commenced. Yet I am willing to concede that John was born of the Spirit in his infancy. We must bear in mind, however, that he was selected and marked out by the Lord for a special purpose.

§ 135. *Mr. C.* It is true that John was an extraordinary character. He was to be great in the sight of the Lord: he was a prophet; yea, and more than a prophet. But it is also true that he was no more than a man, of the fallen race of Adam, and by nature no better than others; and in him the fact is established, that an infant may receive the Holy Ghost.

§ 136. *Mr. B.* It is certainly an instance in which God was pleased to exercise the power of filling an infant with the Holy Ghost,—a power which I have already admitted that he possesses (§ 130); but we cannot thence infer that all children, or that any other children, are thus spiritually blessed. I admit that children “are as capable of receiving spiritual blessing” now as then (§ 133); and so is water as capable of being converted into wine, if the same almighty Word should be pleased thus again to manifest his power. Yet we must not thence infer that such transubstantiation is of frequent occurrence, nor even that it ever happens in

¹ Matt. xi. 11.

our days. If it were so, we would cease to regard it as wonderful, or as an evidence of the divinity of Jesus. And thus the case of John the Baptist affords no argument for your cause, but rather against it: for every thing connected with the conception and birth of this great forerunner of Christ was miraculous; and this peculiarity of being filled with the Holy Ghost at such an early period of life would scarcely have been mentioned among the wonders of his youth, if it had been a thing which frequently happens to children. It was evidently promised as something unusual, remarkable, marvellous, miraculous,—the very crowning miracle of all.

§ 137. *Mr. A.* It is nowhere determined at what time of life, or under what circumstances, the gift of the Spirit is imparted; nay, the contrary is intimated, by comparing it to the blowing of the wind, which, in its mode of action, is out of the reach of our rules and calculations: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”¹ Who can pretend accurately to draw the line, or assert the period it first becomes possible for the Spirit of God to be stamped upon an immortal soul? Who can declare the manner in which the Father of spirits acts upon our spirits, or the rules by which he is guided?

¹ John iii. 8.

§ 138. *Mr. B.* Who can, indeed? And therefore who shall dare pronounce that the Father of spirits, in any given instance, has been pleased to regenerate an unconscious infant, and, on that presumption, give it the water-birth, the sign of the spiritual birth? It is strange to plead our unavoidable ignorance as a reason for acting as though we had that very knowledge which you say we cannot possibly have; to assume that the Spirit of God is stamped upon the soul of an infant, for the sole reason that we cannot pretend to know when, in the usual economy of God, it first becomes possible for it to be so stamped! And your citation proves nothing as to infancy, youth, or age; but only that the Spirit of God, like the kingdom of God, “cometh not with observation.”¹ Indeed, I might urge that your quotation is more in my favor than against me; for though we cannot tell of the wind “whence it cometh, or whither it goeth,” yet, as Jesus says, “thou hearest the sound thereof.” We have evidence that it is blowing; its effects are obvious to the senses; for we see the leaves shaken by the zephyr, hear the gale rushing through the forest, and feel it fan our cheeks. In commenting on this passage, the great John Wesley, the learned Adam Clark, Archbishop Tillotson, Dr. Whitby, Beausobre, and, I believe, all other glossographers, concur in explaining it to express, that, as the wind itself is

¹ Luke xvii. 20.

imperceptible to the sight, while its effects are obvious; so, though the Holy Spirit and his operations cannot be perceived, yet the effects of his operations are clearly discernible. Then, when one is born of the Spirit, we will have evidence of the Spirit's operation. And we must have evidence that God has been pleased to bestow the blessing of regeneration, before we give baptism; which you call the sign of regeneration. We must have some assurance that the spiritual infant is born, before we proceed to circumcise him with "the circumcision of Christ." I do not say that we must know: the Searcher of hearts alone can know in any case that a soul is regenerate. We have Scripture warrant for baptizing such as confess that they believe with all the heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. We must receive the profession of faith, though it may be false. Yet, if the subject be insincere, it is his own want of faith, and not another's, which invalidates his baptism; and this is strictly just. Whenever the Spirit shall manifest his presence and regenerating power with an infant, I insist that such infant should be baptized; but not before. If we assume, that, because God may regenerate an infant, therefore he does regenerate the infants of believers, why not assume the same of all other infants, since his power extends equally to all? And, if we assume it of such infants as we wish to baptize, will we not baptize thousands of unregenerate persons?

Can you deny that such is the actual result of your practice ?

§ 139. *Mr. C.* That baptism is not more generally connected with, or followed by, that spiritual benefit of which it is a striking emblem, is indeed to be lamented. I do not ascribe to this sacrament that kind of inherent virtue of which some who bear the Christian name have spoken and inferred so much. I do not believe that baptism is regeneration, but consider this a doctrine having no foundation in the word of God, and eminently fitted to deceive and destroy the soul. It may, without impropriety, be said to be indigenious in the Roman-Catholic system ; but, in the midst of the general principles of Protestants, it ought to be regarded as a poisonous exotic. The most objectionable form of the doctrine is, that the spiritual change which the Scriptures designate by the term "regeneration" is always attendant upon, and effected by, the rite of baptism, when duly administered.

§ 140. *Mr. B.* I think that the doctrine, in all its aspects, may be easily disposed of by applying to it the truths we have already agreed upon, or established by syllogistic deductions from your own premises. Under the old dispensation, the church consisted of the carnal descendants of Abraham, who were brought into the church by carnal birth (§§ 21, 23). Under the new dispensation, the church consists of his spiritual descendants, who

are brought into it by a spiritual birth (§§ 36, 41). Thus regeneration and spiritual birth are to the spiritual descendants of Abraham what natural generation and carnal birth were to the carnal descendants. The spiritual descendant is “begotten through the gospel,” and “born of the Spirit,” “not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God” (§§ 46–48). Keeping these truths in view, let it now be assumed that baptism is an infant’s spiritual birth into the church (§ 128); in other words, that baptism is the same thing as regeneration and the new birth; the recipient of baptism being regenerated and born anew in and by the act of baptism. The following are the results: —

§ 141. Firstly, baptism being the child’s spiritual birth, it is not regenerate and born anew until it be baptized. Then it is not regenerate and born anew when first presented for baptism: if not, it is not a proper subject of baptism (§ 116). Then it must be actually baptized in order to make it a suitable person to be baptized. But, if it be not a proper subject when presented, the minister has no authority to baptize it, though it would be regenerated and born again in and by the act of baptism, and thus become a proper subject.

§ 142. Secondly, if an infant be baptized (that is, regenerated and born anew), and afterward, when it becomes capable of receiving instruction, be instructed in “the word of God” (which is the “incor

ruptible seed" through which it is begotten), such infant, as to its spiritual nature, is first quickened and born, and afterward begotten; which is absurd.

§ 143. Thirdly, judging the Old-Testament church by the analogy thus furnished by the New-Testament church, we must conclude that circumcision was the infant's carnal birth into the church; in other words, that birth and circumcision were the same thing,—that the infant was quickened and born in and by the act of circumcision. This is untrue; for common sense tells us it could not be. The command of God, and the history of the church, teach that it was not so, but that circumcision did not take place till eight days after the birth.

§ 144. Fourthly, therefore, the analogy furnished by the history of the Old-Testament church teaches us that baptism cannot take place till after regeneration and the new birth. But baptism is regeneration and the new birth; therefore regeneration and the new birth cannot take place till after regeneration and the new birth; which is absurd. Or, what is the same thing, and equally absurd, baptism cannot take place till after baptism. Thus every one who holds that a person is regenerated in and by baptism must be an Anabaptist, in order to be consistent. But, as before stated (§ 141), the minister has no authority to give the first baptism, in order to prepare the subject for the second.

§ 145. To me this seems to dispose of the first

hypothesis. When it is acknowledged that the "in-corruptible seed," "the word of God," is the means which must be used in order to effect the regeneration and spiritual birth of a soul, nothing can be so absurd as to suppose that one is regenerate and spiritually born who is incapable of receiving the word of God.

§ 146. *Mr. A.* Without question, the proper means must be used, or the child will lose the spiritual life which it gained at baptism.

§ 147. *Mr. B.* What! use the means after the end is attained? Must the spiritual seed of Abraham be first born, and then begotten? When the child is baptized according to the Episcopal ritual, the minister says, "Seeing now that this child is regenerate," &c.; and then follows the thanksgiving, that it "hath pleased" God to regenerate the infant with his Holy Spirit. The end, therefore, having been attained, must we then begin to use the proper means? Did Asa set the battle in array after God gave him the victory? Not so; and to what purpose would it have been afterward? Remember, we are speaking of the means which must be used "in order to effect the regeneration of a soul" (§ 145). When the soul is once regenerated, there is no necessity to continue our efforts to effect regeneration, which is already effected. The persons thus regenerated should use the spiritual food, the means of sustaining the spiritual life gained by regeneration

and spiritual birth; and that food is "the sincere milk of the word." But it is not then used as the means of effecting regeneration and spiritual birth.

§ 148. The absurdities into which we are led by the hypothesis, that baptism is the child's spiritual birth, proves the hypothesis false. How, indeed, is it possible to regard baptism as a spiritual birth? Truly, if one be baptized "with the Holy Ghost," it might seem consistent to call such baptism a spiritual birth. But who administers such baptism? John the Baptist did not pretend to do more than "baptize with water;" but he told of ONE mightier than he, who should "baptize with the Holy Ghost."¹ Who is this mightier than John the Baptist? Is it the priest who now administers the rite of baptism? By no means. It is none other than "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." The priest, like John the Baptist, baptizes "with water." But will you say that baptism is the instrumental cause of the spiritual birth? If so, the cause must not be confounded with the effect; and it is strange that the effect should be a prerequisite to the cause (§ 116). Again: if this position be correct, then, in the Israelitish church, circumcision was the instrumental cause of carnal birth; for what baptism is, circumcision was (§ 51). But baptism is not the cause; for "the word of God" is the "incorruptible seed," and immediate cause of the birth (§ 48).

¹ Mark i. 8.

§ 149. *Mr. A.* May it not be that baptism is not actually the spiritual birth of the child, but that the spiritual birth is coetaneous with the baptism; that, in the same instant, the Lord Jesus baptizes “with the Holy Ghost,” and so justifies the minister in saying, immediately after the baptism, that the child “is regenerated, and grafted into the body of Christ’s church”?

§ 150. *Mr. B.* Suppose this to be true: still the water-baptism is not the child’s spiritual birth, and should not be called so. It is merely a thing which happens at the same time with the spiritual birth. But how does the minister know that the spiritual birth takes place at the same moment with the water-baptism? If he think so, what is his reason? If he have no reason, why does he not merely think so, but assume that it is certainly true, and act and speak on that assumption? The infant gives no indication of it at the time; and there is no promise in the Scriptures that it shall be so. Whence, then, is the knowledge derived? But we can prove that this idea is erroneous, by testing it as we did the first hypothesis (§ 140). Let it be assumed that baptism is a distinct thing from regeneration and the new birth, yet that the recipient of baptism is regenerated and born anew at the same time that he is baptized. The results are as follows:—

§ 151. Firstly, the child, when presented for baptism, is not regenerate and born anew. If not,

he is not a proper subject of baptism (§ 116). Then he must be actually baptized, in order that he may, by reason of the regeneration which accompanies the rite, become a suitable person to be baptized. After he becomes a proper subject, he may be baptized; but, as one baptism is required to make him a proper subject, two baptisms would in all cases be necessary, — thus making Anabaptists of all Pedobaptists. But, the child not being a proper subject when presented for the first baptism, the priest has no authority to give the first, in order to qualify him for the second baptism. It is absurd to baptize children (and even adults) on the strength of a doctrine which proves that they cannot be proper subjects till after they are baptized.

§ 152. Secondly, if an infant be baptized (being at the same time spiritually regenerated and born), and afterward, when it becomes capable of receiving instruction, be instructed in the word of God (which is the “incorruptible seed” through which it is spiritually begotten), such infant, as to its spiritual nature, is first quickened and born, and afterward begotten; which is absurd.

§ 153. Thirdly, judging the Old-Testament church by the analogy furnished by the New-Testament church, we must conclude that circumcision was a distinct thing from carnal generation and birth, yet that the recipient of circumcision was carnally generated and born at the same time that

he was circumcised. But the express command of God, and the history of the church, show that circumcision did not take place until the eighth day after birth.

§ 154. Therefore, judging the New-Testament church by the analogy furnished by the Old-Testament church, we must conclude that baptism should not take place till (eight days, or at least till some time) after regeneration and the new birth. This is the true doctrine, if it be true that "baptism is to the New-Testament church what circumcision was to the Old-Testament church" (§ 51). Here we may ask, Why were circumcision and the carnal birth separated by the space of eight days? It may be that the All-wise designed, among other things, to forestall the error, into which some have fallen, of confounding the spiritual birth with the token of it, — the Christian birth with the Christian circumcision. If the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which the Saviour administers, be the spiritual birth, and if water-baptism have taken the place of circumcision, and if both baptisms happen at once, then the infant, as we have just seen, is spiritually born and circumcised at the same moment, contrary to "the analogy furnished by the history of the Old-Testament church" (§ 17).

§ 155. *Mr. A.* Perhaps I went too far. I admit that we have no authority for supposing the moral nature of the child is changed, or that any peculiar

deposit, or lodgment of grace, is made in the heart at the time. But baptism translates the child from the kingdom of darkness into the visible kingdom of God on earth. Its relations to God and to the world are changed by it. Thus the child is, in a certain sense, born again; that is, put into an entire new state of spiritual relations, and made an heir of a new inheritance.

§ 156. *Mr. B.* But is the child born again in that sense in which we say that none but those who have been regenerated and born anew are proper subjects of baptism? If not, it has nothing to do with our inquiry. The sense in which we use it, taken from one of your own premises (§ 41), is that of being "born of the Spirit," and in no less exalted sense. You say, also, that the child, by baptism, is "put into an entire new state of spiritual relations." So long as we agree that the premises are correct, I must object to this expression, as savoring of the doctrine, from which you have just receded, that baptism is spiritual regeneration. Baptism "with the Holy Ghost" (if being born of the Spirit may be so called) changes one's spiritual relations; makes those, who are instrumental in his conversion, his spiritual parents; in a higher sense, makes God his father, the church his mother, and all true Christians his brothers and sisters. But such is not the effect of water-baptism. As it can have no effect upon the spirit, neither can it upon the spirit-

ual relations. But suppose it does change them ; to what extent ? Does the change amount to regeneration, — to being “ born of the Spirit ” ? If not, the child is not regenerate and born anew ; and hence he is not a proper subject of baptism. The idea which you advance was expressed by Mr. C. some time since. He said that “ baptism visibly initiates into the kingdom of God, as natural birth makes one a subject of that government in which he is born ” (§ 38). If it were only intended that baptism is a visible sign or token of the spiritual birth by which we are brought into the kingdom of God, this does not conflict with our premises, nor the conclusions deduced from them. It is, no doubt, the full extent to which Mr. C. would go : but his expression goes farther, making baptism into the Christian church occupy the place of birth into the Jewish church ; whereas, if our premises be correct, it is not baptism, but the spiritual birth, which occupies that place. This is plainly stated in one of the propositions to which we have agreed (§ 41).

§ 157. *Mr. C.* The native tendency of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is to beget a superstitious reliance on an external ordinance ; to lower our estimate of that inward spiritual sanctification which constitutes the essence of the Christian character ; to supersede that change of heart of which the Scriptures speak so much. It makes a work,

not faith, the instrument of justification. It is a heresy, bearing the same relation to baptism which transubstantiation bears to the Lord's Supper; and is, perhaps, the more perilous of the two. Transubstantiation puts the eucharistic bread and wine in the room of Christ; and baptismal regeneration, or a change of heart necessarily associated with this sacrament, places a material element—the water in the font—in the room of the Holy Spirit. In practice, it fosters the most deadly delusions. How many may have gone to the eternal state relying on an outward rite as their only title, to discover their fatal delusion at the judgment-seat! Beyond all question, there is no teaching more calculated in the present day to welcome and encourage the principles and the progress of Romanism than that which places a sacrament, however precious in its own place, in the room of the Holy Spirit of God. In truth, the doctrine is, in substance, the *opus operatum* of the Papists, which all evangelical Protestants have opposed as a mischievous delusion. Its Popish character and tendency have been acknowledged by many bishops and pious divines of the church of England, and of the same denomination in this country.

§ 158. *Mr. A.* Inseparable baptismal regeneration is the *opus operatum* of Popery; but the only limitation, in administering ordinances which seal blessings to those who receive them, is moral unfit-

ness. There is no such unfitness in infants. True, there are some operations of the Holy Spirit — as working actual faith, repentance, &c., in the heart — of which an infant is not capable. But when God applies the pardon of original guilt, transfers a person out of the state of nature into the state of grace, unites him as a member of the mystical body of Christ, accepts him for his child, &c., these things are spoken of in Scripture as done, sealed, and applied to the person by the Spirit. Now, of these latter an infant is capable ; and a person capable of some of the great ends for which baptism is designed may be baptized for them.

§ 159. *Mr. B.* We are not discussing the capability of infants ; but, if we were, the question would be, whether they are capable, not of some of the ends wrought by the Spirit, but of regeneration and spiritual birth ; for we have settled that persons regenerated and born anew, and none other, are proper subjects of baptism (§ 116). You are familiar with the legal distinction between acts, or instruments of writing, which are void, and those which are voidable ; that is, capable of being made void. A similar distinction exists between persons regenerated and born anew, and persons capable of being regenerated and born anew. The former are already so : the latter may, or may not, become so. It is only those who are already regenerated and born again who are proper subjects of baptism (§ 116).

§ 160. *Mr. C.* I understand *Mr. A.* as now asserting only that baptism is that rite which marks and ratifies the introduction of its subject into the visible kingdom of Christ; that, in this ordinance, the baptized person is brought into a new state or relation to Christ and his sacred family; and that this is designated in the Scriptures by the term “regeneration,” being intended to express an ecclesiastical birth, — that is, being born into the visible kingdom of the Redeemer. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration, when it goes only to this extent, is less pernicious than in the views which have been examined; but, even thus limited, it is calculated to mislead, and, of course, do essential mischief. The least objection to this theory is, that it makes an unauthorized use of an important theological term, such as would give a new aspect to those passages of Scripture which mention either regeneration or baptism; making some unmeaning, others ridiculous. But there is a more serious objection. If men be told that every one who is baptized is “born of God,” “born of the Spirit,” is “regenerated by the Holy Ghost,” will not the mass of mankind, in spite of every precaution and explanation that can be employed, be likely to mistake on a fundamental point; to imagine that the disease of our nature is trivial, and that a trivial remedy for it will answer; to lay more stress than they ought upon an external rite; and to make a much lower

estimate than they ought of the nature and necessity of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord ?

§ 161. *Mr. A.* Regeneration, in its highest sense, is a new inward principle of spiritual life, which our Lord describes when he says, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" which St. Peter describes when he says, that, by God's promises, we are "partakers of the divine nature," — that we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible;" and which St. John describes as "being born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." But there is also a state of spiritual privilege in covenant-grace, with admission to church-privileges, and this as a sign and pledge of the inward principle of spiritual life; "the washing of regeneration" before "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," — the being "born of water" before being "born of the Spirit." In this view, the church of Christ admits and recognizes the regeneration of the baptized. Regeneration, as an entrance into church-privileges, always accompanies baptism, whatever the future course of the baptized may be.

§ 162. *Mr. B.* Regeneration, in that sense, is baptism, — mere baptism. The Christian's descent from Abraham is the result of his being "born of the Spirit;" and, if our premises be true, as a sign and pledge of that descent, he is visibly "born of water." In this sense, baptism is regeneration,

according to the meaning which theologians give to the word "regeneration;" or, more properly, baptism is a new birth. This I assert on the authority of the Lord Jesus, who says we "must be born again;" and explains his meaning by saying we must be born, not only "of the Spirit," but also "of water." A man is not required to "enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born;"¹ but he must enter into water, and "be born of water," as a symbol that he has been "born of the Spirit," and thus become a child of Abraham, an heir according to the promise. If this spiritual child of Abraham wilfully omit the sign of his regeneration, he disobeys a positive command of God, as much as the Jew who omitted circumcision. He is "cut off from his people," from the house of Israel, from church-privileges, just as "the uncircumcised man-child" was "cut off from his people;" for "he hath broken God's covenant."² Beyond this we cannot say that there will, or that there will not, be other punishment: nor will one, who has the spirit of obedience, stop to inquire; but he will implicitly obey the command of Him who gave himself a ransom for our sins. But to return. As Jesus has called baptism being "born again," and being "born of water," it may, in strictness of theological phrase, be called a regeneration; and regeneration, in this sense, is accompanied by admission into church-privileges.

¹ John iii. 4.

² Gen. xvii. 14.

§ 163. *Mr. A.* As I before remarked, it is in this sense that the church admits and recognizes the regeneration of the baptized (§ 161).

§ 164. *Mr. B.* If that be all, then the church admits and recognizes only the very obvious truth, that every baptized person is baptized. But is this the sense in which we say that none but persons regenerate and born anew are proper subjects of baptism? If so, we involve ourselves in the same difficulty already noticed (§§ 141, 151); we establish that no person is a proper subject of baptism who has not been already baptized. But it is not lawful to baptize any but a proper subject; then none can be baptized the first time so as to be made a proper subject. And, if this hypothesis be tested like the others, it will be found to lead to even greater absurdity. We must bear in mind, that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, — that the spiritual descendant of Abraham is “begotten through the gospel,” and “born of the Spirit.”

§ 165. Then let it be assumed, that though regeneration and the new birth, in the highest sense, do not take place at the time of baptism, but only after one is “begotten through the gospel,” yet in the sense of an ecclesiastical birth, an admission into church-privileges, they accompany baptism, and, on this account, baptism should be administered to infants. It follows, as a necessary

consequence, that the infant that is baptized, and lives to be instructed in the word of God and become a true Christian, is first baptized; secondly, begotten spiritually; thirdly, quickened and born spiritually. Therefore, judging from analogy, under the old dispensation, the carnal descendants of Abraham were, firstly, circumcised; secondly, begotten carnally; thirdly, quickened and born carnally; which is absurd. Common sense, agreeing with God's command and church history, teaches us that they could not be, and were not, circumcised, not only before their birth, but even before they were begotten; but that, on the contrary, they were, firstly, begotten carnally; secondly, quickened and born carnally; and, thirdly, circumcised. Therefore, by analogy, we infer that the spiritual descendants of Abraham must be, firstly, begotten spiritually, "through the gospel;" secondly, quickened and born spiritually; and, thirdly, baptized. This is consistent and reasonable; and, if baptism be now all that circumcision was under the old dispensation, this is the true doctrine.

§ 166. Again: in this sense, a person is "born of water" only. Then the minister, in giving thanks, should say, "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful God, that it has pleased thee to regenerate this infant," not "with thy Holy Spirit," but "with water." This water-regeneration is not our means of descent from Abraham, but only the

mark of it. We must distinguish between this and the spiritual regeneration. Which of the two is it that brings us into spiritual life, makes us children of God, the seed of Abraham? Not the water-regeneration; else Jesus would have said, "That which is born of the water is spirit." But it is the spiritual regeneration; for Jesus said, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is supposed by many that spiritual regeneration is sometimes spoken of as a baptism of the Spirit. If this be so, it may be called a baptism with the same degree of propriety as baptism may be called a regeneration. Yet it is more usual and more convenient to appropriate the name of "baptism" to the water-birth, and "regeneration" to the spiritual birth, or the quickening influence of the Spirit. When we use the word "regenerate" or "regeneration," unless by express terms or necessary implication we limit our meaning to the water-birth, we must be understood to mean spiritual regeneration, — not the sign, but the thing signified. There is no utility in the other use of the word; and it creates confusion and obscurity. Let us confine its meaning, therefore, to that spiritual regeneration by which alone we can attain to spiritual life. Persons who are not regenerate, in this sense, are to the kingdom of God as the unborn babe is to the civil state or kingdom in which its parents reside.

§ 167. *Mr. C.* The child is not till it be gene-

rate, and the man has no being in grace till he be regenerate.

§ 168. *Mr. B.* And the man must have a being, an existence, in relation to the church, before the church can properly administer to him the ordinances usually called "sacraments." As a child was not permitted to be circumcised, under the old dispensation, until there could be no doubt that he was born and living; so must we have reasonable evidence that the Christian is regenerate, before we give him "the washing of regeneration." That his parents are believers does not entitle him to baptism, unless the faith of the parent constitutes the regeneration of the child; which no one will assert.

§ 169. *Mr. A.* To carry out your analogy perfectly, one must be baptized on the eighth day after the spiritual birth; for the infant was circumcised on the eighth day after the carnal birth. And how is one to tell the exact date of his spiritual birth?

§ 170. *Mr. B.* A similar question seems to have arisen in the middle of the third century: but the analogy applied to baptism was not extended to the spiritual birth; in which respect, it was defective. The inquiry was made of the council held at Carthage, A.D. 250, whether infants should be baptized before the eighth day after birth. The decision was, "that the mercy and grace of God are not to be denied to any one so soon as born." The response (to say nothing of the terms in which it is couched)

would have been very appropriate, had the inquiry been concerning such "new-born babes" as the Apostle Peter exhorts to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby."¹ That we are not confined to the eighth day, or any other specific time, is evident from the practice of the apostles. The baptism of the eunuch by Philip; of Lydia and her household, and of the Philippian jailer and all his, by Paul and Silas; and of Cornelius, and his kinsmen and near friends, at the command of Peter, — all took place immediately after they turned to Christ. Some of these were previously godly and righteous persons; but there is a remarkable example in which many wicked persons were converted, and forthwith baptized. Soon after the resurrection of the Redeemer, Peter preached, not to godly and righteous men, but to the murderers of the Lord, whom they had taken but a short time before, "and by wicked hands had crucified and slain." When their hearts were penetrated, they asked, "What shall we do?" Peter told them to repent, and be baptized; and there were added to the church, the same day, about three thousand souls. It is believed that all these were baptized that day. Here, then, is sufficient warrant for baptizing without delay those who are regenerate.

§ 171. *Mr. A.* By chance, I have met with another theory of regeneration, which is advocated by

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 2.

a certain heretical sect; yet it may not be amiss to consider it in this connection. They urge that the words of Jesus, "Ye must be born again," mean that we must be born, not again and again, not twice or thrice, but once again; yet this one new birth must be "of water *and* the Spirit;" — that water-baptism is the act of the church, through her agent the baptizer; but this baptism alone is not the new birth, neither is being "born of the Spirit" alone; but the Christian must be "born of water *and* the Spirit," just as a child, by one carnal birth, is born of its mother and its father. He must be begotten by the Spirit "with the word of truth," the incorruptible seed, and be born of the water. The seed, God's word, which has been given by inspiration of the Spirit, is deposited in the heart; the Spirit quickeneth;¹ and baptism is a symbolic birth, by which the church becomes the Christian's mother, and God his father.

§ 172. *Mr. B.* All my early religious impressions having been received from the Methodist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian denominations, I am strongly inclined to the opinion, that Christians are spoken of as begotten by, and as born of, the Spirit; that baptism is a sign of the spiritual regeneration and rebirth, and that it has taken the place of circumcision. But so many of my early impressions have melted away like snow, when

¹ John vi. 63.

brought into the sunlight of the word of God, that I do not feel very secure in any of my opinions to which I have not applied the gospel test. I do not feel at liberty to pronounce any denomination of Christians heretical, till I have received accurate information as to their doctrines, considered the reasoning by which they attempt to support them, and found them at variance with the word of truth. The theory which you mention may possibly be correct; but an examination of its merits is foreign to our present object, nor have I ability to discuss a subject so abstruse. I must content myself with considering its bearing on the question of infant-baptism. It plainly involves the absurdities of the first and second hypotheses, if we are to regard baptism as taking the place of the carnal birth and also of circumcision.

§ 173. *Mr. A.* But those who hold this doctrine discard the idea, that baptism takes the place of circumcision.

§ 174. *Mr. B.* And thus they escape, at least, the absurdities which have been pointed out as following from the first and second hypotheses (§§ 141–144, 151–153). Their doctrine conflicts but slightly, and in no essential part, with the conclusion which we have reached. Generation, in the most comprehensive sense given to it by medical science, includes not only birth, but lactation. We, however, have used it, in a more limited sense, to signify the

begetting, quickening, and complete formation, of an infant previous to its birth; and, of course, regeneration is employed in an analogous sense. The doctrine under consideration, therefore, establishes our conclusion, if we omit the words "and born again," thus: "Those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated, . . . are proper subjects of baptism" (§ 116). Our argument can lose none of its force by such a change. Their doctrine makes baptism the Christian's birth, while our conclusion recognizes it as his circumcision. If baptism be the new birth, regeneration must go before rebirth, since generation goes before birth: if baptism be Christian circumcision, both regeneration and rebirth must go before this circumcision, since generation and birth went before Jewish circumcision. Thus either view precludes the possibility of admitting infants to baptism: for, before they are born of water, they must be begotten with the incorruptible seed, the word of God; and carnal infants are incapable of being thus begotten. But I anticipate. Without discussing whether this last theory be right or wrong, we may so modify our conclusion as to suit every aspect of the subject. Thus: Regenerate persons, and none other, are proper subjects of baptism.

§ 175. Here we may drop this theory of the new birth, and return to our former positions. Then, assuming once more that all our former positions

are true, we are now prepared to trace correctly the analogy between the two churches, and see how beautifully they harmonize. We agree that they are the same church, but that a reformation has taken place, by which carnality has been discarded, and spirituality substituted. This change will be found to run through the whole parallel. Thus:—

In the Old-Testament church.

1. The carnal descendants of Abraham were the chosen people of God.

2. The carnal descendants were begotten with carnal and corruptible seed.

3. The carnal descendants were carnally generated, and entered the kingdom of God, or church, by a carnal birth.

4. The outward sign of membership was circumcision, — a carnal ordinance, performed by cutting the flesh of the subject.

5. The carnal descendants were required to be circumcised, not before nor at, but after, their carnal birth.

In the New-Testament church.

1. The spiritual descendants of Abraham are the chosen people of God.

2. The spiritual descendants are begotten with spiritual and incorruptible seed.

3. The spiritual descendants are spiritually regenerated, and enter the kingdom of God, or church, by a spiritual birth.

4. The outward sign of membership is baptism, performed with water, which you believe to be an emblem of the Spirit.

5. The spiritual descendants should be baptized, not before nor at, but after, their spiritual birth.

§ 176. Here all is symmetry and consistency; but they are marred if we retain the idea that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, yet insert that baptism is to the infant now what carnal birth was formerly in regard to the church, or that the spiritual descendants of Abraham should be baptized

before, or at the time of, their spiritual birth. We have now seen the absurdities into which, from our premises, we will be led, by either the doctrine that infants should be baptized before regeneration (§§ 66, 67, 165), or the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, however modified (§§ 140–168). Here we might close the argument. Even the doctrine of baptismal regeneration could not change the result, since it would involve the absurdity of making baptism happen at the same time with its prerequisite. But let us go farther, and inquire, Are infants, as God has been pleased to create them, capable of being regenerated; that is, can they be regenerate persons? We cannot doubt the power of God so to change the constitution of things as to regenerate any person, old or young, just as he has power to enable any one to convert water into wine; but, as he has actually constituted infancy, and as he has actually ordained regeneration, are infants capable of regeneration? To reach this point, let us inquire what is regeneration.

§ 177. *Mr. C.* It is described in the Sacred Scripture as a new birth, a new creation, a resurrection from the dead. These are emphatic expressions, and convey the idea of a marvellous transformation. Such, in truth, it is, evincing in every feature the mighty power of God. Spiritual things are discerned by a heart once blind and averse to them. Love to God succeeds to enmity;

holy habits are substituted for habits earthly, sensual, devilish; in a word, old things pass away, and all things become new.

§ 178. *Mr. B.* The Rev. Richard Watson, the great theologian of the Methodist Episcopal church, says, "It will not bear disputing whether regeneration begins with repentance." Again: "Conviction of the evil and danger of an unregenerate state must first be felt. From this arises an altered view of things," &c. Such are some of the antecedents of regeneration. The same theologian gives a description of regeneration itself, which shows that infants are not capable of it. The passages are too long to read at present.¹ It is so described also in Boston's "Fourfold State," and several other works, published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication. But one of our agreed truths is decisive of this point; for it is, that "regeneration is the work of the Spirit of God, wrought by means of his word" (§ 48). And we know that God has so created man, that in infancy the word of God can have no effect upon him, because of the feebleness of his intellect.

§ 179. *Mr. A.* I have already admitted, that infants are not capable of regeneration in that high sense in which you now use the term (§§ 158, 161); and that, indeed, is the only sense in which we can

¹ Watson's "Institutes," vol. ii. part ii. chap. 18, 23, 24, pp. 71, 72, 253, 254, 267, 268.

understand the term in our premises (§§ 41, 48), and consequently the only true sense of it in our conclusion (§§ 116, 174).

§ 180. *Mr. C.* Then we must now conclude that infants cannot be regenerate persons.

§ 181. *Mr. A.* If so, we have reached the solution of our first problem (§ 55); and it is very different from what I expected. I acknowledge myself unable, at present, to escape the conclusion to which our inquiry leads us; yet I would not be understood as abandoning my former views. I must have time to review our chain of argument, and to ponder the subject in all its phases. With this explanation, I will proceed to apply the truth, if truth it be, which we last reached. The syllogism will stand thus: Regenerate persons, and none other, are proper subjects of baptism (§§ 116, 174). Infants cannot be regenerate persons (§ 180); therefore infants cannot be proper subjects of baptism. In other words, infant-baptism is not a divine institution. (See § 55.)

§ 182. *Mr. C.* My friends, the thought of severing parents from their offspring in regard to the most interesting relations in which it has pleased God, in his adorable providence, to place them, is equally repugnant to Christian feeling and to natural law. The voice of nature is lifted up, and pleads most powerfully in our cause. The close and endearing connection between parents and their chil-

dren affords a strong argument in favor of the church membership of the infant seed of believers.

§ 183. *Mr. B.* The very strongest that can be adduced; indeed, I am satisfied, the main support of infant-baptism. It is not so properly an argument as a strong persuasion for parents to believe in the church membership of their children, and for children to believe that their parents did right in having them baptized in infancy, and therefore refuse to be baptized when they become proper subjects. It belongs to the domain of rhetoric, not of logic. It addresses itself, not to the reason, but to the hearts, of parents and children, and thus leads many astray. The Saviour tells us, that he who loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than him, is not worthy of him.¹ Parental affection amounts to impiety, to a degree of unbelief, when it makes parents unwilling to trust their infants to the loving-kindness of God. If our argument be correct, it has not "pleased God, in his adorable providence," to place parents and children in the relation of church membership, till both be regenerate. It is He who severs them "in regard to this interesting relation;" and to what "natural law" is it "repugnant"? What natural law is there to which the God of nature and of nature's law shall be subjected? Shall we believe, with Spinoza, that God himself is bound by certain immutable laws?

¹ Matt. x. 37, 38.

and shall we decide that one of those immutable laws is, that parents shall not be severed from their offspring in regard to the relation of church membership? There is, indeed, a "natural law" in every heart, "warring against the law" by which "Christian feeling" should be regulated;¹ and such is that parental affection which so far oversteps the humility of Christian faith as to desire to do more and better for children than He will do who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." When God has been so good as to call the parent, and make him nigh by the blood of Christ, and to offer the like grace to his children when they shall be able to accept it, is it yet repugnant to the feelings of that parent that God will not depart from his established course of procedure, and bring the children now into the church, notwithstanding they are not qualified? It is very unchristian feeling which will murmur against the will of God, instead of saying, "Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt." The "voice of nature" is often lifted up against the voice of grace, — often against the will of God. In the heart of faithful Abraham, it cried aloud for Ishmael; in the heart of Isaac, for Esau. But the cry availed nothing; for God would not accept "the children of the flesh" to be "the children of

¹ "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." — Rom. vii. 23.

God." As little will the voice of nature now avail against the will of nature's God.

§ 184. *Mr. C.* Children, in virtue of their birth, are plenary citizens of the State in which their parents reside at the time of their birth. Why should this great principle be set aside in the church of God? Surely it is not more obvious or powerful in nature than in grace.

§ 185. *Mr. B.* Why should this great principle be set aside in the Masonic fraternity? Children are not, in virtue of their birth, members of the lodge of which their fathers are members at the time of their birth. Why not? Because, according to the laws regulating the Masonic institution, they must attain an age of legal responsibility, and possess certain qualifications, before they can be admitted to membership. And so, according to the laws regulating the Christian institution, they must attain an age of moral responsibility, and possess certain qualifications, before they can be admitted to membership. A State usually receives as citizens those who are born within certain geographical limits; and, when the church was a State among the nations of earth, your "great principle" operated in the church. Yet this is a mere conventional rule, and not a principle founded "in nature," as you intimate; and the true church has no geographical limits. We cannot say of it, "Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

We all acknowledge the change in the church, discarding the carnal, and substituting the spiritual, seed of Abraham. According to your theory, it is a change without a difference; for the child of the flesh is still born into the church. Again: in the early part of our conversation, you remarked that "there was a time when Christ's people were separate from him, and afterwards there is a time when they are found in union with him. Then it follows, of course, that there was a time, with every one of them, when they were brought into union with Christ" (§ 44). If infants, "in virtue of their birth," be members of the church, which is "the body of Christ,"¹ the moment they are born is the time when first "they are found in union with him." Then when were they "separate from him"? You say "the child is not till it be generate" (§ 167); and that which is not, which does not exist, cannot be either separate from Christ, or in union with him. You say that "regeneration is inseparably connected with the union of the believer with Christ" (§ 44). Is it also connected with the union of the infant with Christ? Is the infant at the same moment both born, and "born again"? That cannot be; for the word "again" implies that the one birth happens after the other birth. Moreover, we have seen that infants cannot be regenerate (§ 180). If, however, the child be not born again,

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 27. Col. i. 18, &c.

yet we say it is united to Christ, being a member of his body, the church, "we make him a liar;" for he tells us, except one be born again, he cannot enter his kingdom, or church. Lastly, even in the civil state, the child is not a citizen before it is born; and, according to your own statement (§ 167), those who have only been born of the flesh, and not born again of the Spirit, are to the church as one unborn is to the State, — having no being, no existence, and hence incapable of being citizens of the kingdom, or church.

§ 186. *Mr. C.* The unborn babe has certain capacities in the State. Property may be given or bequeathed to it on condition of its birth.

§ 187. *Mr. B.* And here the analogy is striking. Unregenerate persons have similar capacities. An estate has been devised to all such persons "on condition of their birth," — their spiritual birth, — an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, which they are not capable of receiving in their unregenerate state. Until their spiritual birth, though the parent be in the church, the children are not.

§ 188. *Mr. C.* It is not so in any other society that the great moral Governor of the world ever formed. The analogies which pervade all the works and dispensations of God are too uniform and striking to be disregarded in an inquiry like the present. Can it be, that, when the stem is in the church, the branch is out of it?

§ 189. *Mr. B.* I am not aware of “any other society that the great moral Governor of the world ever formed;” unless you abandon your opinion, that the church is now the same as under the old dispensation. If by “other society” you refer to the Jewish church, the analogy furnished by that church has been found to favor my view. As “the analogies which pervade the works and dispensations of God are uniform,” this one analogy ought to have been sufficient. But you next attack me with an analogy derived from the State in which an infant is born (§ 184). This analogy also favors my view; so you throw me at large upon “the analogies which pervade *all* the works and dispensations of God.” Let us first notice a few of his dispensations which have been already alluded to (§ 183). “The voice of nature” cried aloud for Ishmael; and it was “very grievous in Abraham’s sight” that his first-born could not “be heir with Isaac.” Whom has God honored as he did Abraham? Who else has been recognized as “the friend of God”? Yet God preferred Isaac; and Ishmael was never in the kingdom of God on earth. Again: “the voice of nature” pleaded in Isaac’s heart for Esau, his first-born and best-beloved; yet Esau never entered the kingdom.¹ The unregenerate child of the church

¹ “Paul adduces illustrations of the principle of selection from the history of the patriarchs themselves; from Abraham’s children; and even from Esau and Jacob, whose parentage, unlike that of Isaac and Ishmael, was the same on both sides. The general principle is then

member is his first-born, his Ishmael, his Esau, but is not the child of promise. He should strive to become his spiritual parent, — to beget him “through the gospel;” and then the child, having become “a new creature,” will be his Isaac, his Jacob, the child of promise. It is on all sides admitted, that Isaac is a type of the spiritual seed; Ishmael, of the carnal: so also Esau is a type of the unregenerate; and Jacob, of the regenerate. Thus I have more minutely traced these analogies of “the dispensations of God,” and find that they support my opinion. Next as to “the analogies which pervade all the works of God.” In considering these, I will confine myself to the example which you suggest, — the tree. You ask, “Can it be, that, when the stem is in the church, the branch is out of it?” This not only can be, but such is exactly the model on which the church itself is constructed, according to the description of it which you and Mr. A. a while ago borrowed with much approbation from the Apostle Paul (§§ 33, 34). He selected the same work of God to illustrate, by analogy, how the stem is in the church, while “the natural branches,” the unbelieving Jews, are out of it, — broken off, as he expresses it.

announced in all its latitude; viz., that God chooses as objects of spiritual mercy whomsoever he wills. Hence he is perfectly just in rejecting the great mass of the Jewish people, and in selecting the body of the Gentiles in their stead, especially as his promises were only intended for the spiritual children of Abraham.” — *An Introduction to the New Testament*, by Samuel Davidson, D.D. LL.D., vol. ii. p. 204; on Rom. ix. 6-13.

§ 190. *Mr. C.* Yes ; but he tells us they were broken off “because of unbelief.” They were, we may say, excommunicated ; as the offspring of members may now be, if they indulge in a course of error, immorality, or negligence.

§ 191. *Mr. B.* Very true ; yet they were not the less branches, out of the church, while the stem was in it ; and so are the excommunicants of whom you speak ; which shows that this can be. Moreover, while Paul says of the Jews, that “because of unbelief they were broken off,” does he add that Christians stand by carnal descent from believing parents ? Not so. He says, “And thou standest by faith.”¹ How, then, do infants stand, who have not faith ?

§ 192. *Mr. C.* By faith also, — the faith of their parents.

§ 193. *Mr. B.* How can parental, instead of personal, faith avail them more than it availed the Jews, whose parents were true believers, enjoying the like spiritual blessings as Christians, according to your recent assertion ? (§ 91.)

§ 194. *Mr. A.* The infants have not arrived at the period when it is possible to believe ; therefore faith is not required of them.

§ 195. *Mr. B.* Very true. Neither have they arrived at the period when it is possible to obey ; therefore obedience is not required of them, — obedience to the command, “Be baptized ;” a command

¹ Rom. xi. 20.

which cannot be obeyed without some active agency on the part of the subject. Well, we see that the church itself is a perpetual monument and witness that the stem may be in the church, and the branch out of it. The history of the Old-Testament church shows the same. Abraham was in; Ishmael, the children of Keturah, and their descendants, were out: for "the children of the flesh,—these are not the children of God." Isaac was in the church: Esau and the Edomites were out of it. The history of the New-Testament church shows the same. It sometimes happens, even in Christian communities, that the parents of infidel or unconverted adults are converted; and in Pagan lands it frequently occurs. Thus the stem is in, and the branch out of, the church. The same model teaches that the branch may be in, and the stem out; for the wild olive-branches are cut away from their native stem, and grafted into the stem of the good olive-tree. Experience accords with this also. The children of Pagans, infidels, and unconverted persons, are often brought into the church by regeneration, while the parents remain in outer darkness. Thus the branch is in the church, and the stem out of it; which is no less strange than that the stem should be in, and the branch out.

§ 196. *Mr. C.* Can it be, that, when the parent is within the visible kingdom of the Redeemer, his offspring, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, have no connection with it?

§ 197. *Mr. B.* Your inquiry has been already answered; and it contains within itself the reason for the answer. You say well, “bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.” They are indeed flesh, and of his flesh; and, for this very reason, have no connection with the kingdom of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” says the Redeemer.¹ And “they which are the children of the flesh,—these are not the children of God,” says the apostle of the Gentiles.² Then, however faithful the believer, “his offspring, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh,” are not the children of God, but are flesh, and have no place in the church until they be “born again,” and become “new creatures;” for Jesus tells us that one cannot enter into the kingdom, except he be born again. Who is it that is so much more highly favored than “the father of the faithful,” “the friend of God,” that the children of his flesh, because they are “flesh of his flesh,” are therefore “the children of God”? Who is this Christian Abraham? Does not every Pedobaptist claim to be such a person, when he says, “Because *I* am a believer, therefore my child, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, is born a member of the church,—enters the kingdom of God by his mere carnal birth”? This high distinction has been taken from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; indeed, as we have seen (§ 189), was never fully given to them. But,

¹ John iii. 6.

² Rom. ix. 8.

if the offspring of church members be members in virtue of their birth, the distinction is now fully given to Christian patriarchs; and the church is once more, as it was of old, a church of carnal descent. But the Lord of righteousness and truth says otherwise; and, if we assert this, “we make him a liar.” It was agreed between us, that the church is no longer a church of carnal descent, but is now spiritual (§ 41); and its divine Head has declared the necessity of a new and spiritual birth, in order to get admittance into it.

§ 198. *Mr. C.* True, — very true. We are once born sinners: we must be born again, that we may be saints.

“Whate’er may be his birth or blood,
The sinner’s boast is vain:
Thus saith the glorious Son of God,
‘Ye must be born again.’”

And regeneration is a spiritual, real change of the whole man, fitly compared to corporal generation, — a change without which we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

§ 199. *Mr. A.* If Christ were now on earth, and we brought an infant to him, we cannot doubt that he would receive and embrace it. Yet you would have us suppose, that, if we bring the infant to be admitted into his church, or mystical body, he will reject it for incapacity!

§ 200. *Mr. B.* A child may well have a capacity

for one thing, yet not for some other thing, — a capacity to be received into the arms, embraced, prayed for, blessed; yet not to be made a soldier, or professor of mathematics, nor yet to be admitted into a church which none can enter without regeneration. We may well believe, that, were Jesus on earth, he would still love the innocence of childhood; would give his benediction to little children; would “lay his hands upon them, and pray,” according to the usual manner of the Jews. Yet this would create no necessity, that, in order to avoid inconsistency, he should also give them admittance into his church by other means than he has appointed, — admit them without those qualifications which he has made prerequisites to membership. This would itself be gross inconsistency. As well might we say, that, having said to the adulteress, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more;” having cleansed the ten lepers, of whom but one returned to give glory to God; having raised from death the son of the widow of Nain, — for these favors he was under obligation to admit the adulteress, the lepers, the widow and her son, “into his church, or mystical body;” nay, that, since we cannot doubt he would do the like favors if he were now on earth, therefore every adulteress, leper, widow, and widow’s son, ought to be baptized, and received into the church. I have sometimes heard this application of the old maxim, that “one good

turn deserves another," but never before with any thing like seriousness.

§ 201. *Mr. A.* But our Saviour bids us to suffer little children to come unto him, and forbid them not. And, since he is now present with us only in his ordinances and sacraments, what way have we to bring our children to him, as he orders, but, by baptism, to offer and dedicate them to him ?

§ 202. *Mr. B.* An invalid might as reasonably say, "My physician has restricted me to vegetable diet; therefore I can eat nothing but cucumbers." As there are other vegetables beside cucumbers, so there are other ordinances beside baptism. We should not only suffer children to go to Christ, but use our utmost diligence to bring them to him. Let parents bring their children to God, in frequent, fervent prayers; if you will, let them present them in the congregation for the prayers of the church; above all, let them lead the little ones to Christ by instruction and example: but, by baptism, they cannot be brought to him. God has been pleased to constitute the church of such as, by a spiritual birth, have become the spiritual seed of Abraham. He has been pleased to create infants with such feeble and unexercised faculties, that they are not capable of that spiritual birth; yet, in his great benevolence, Jesus blesses them. Is he, therefore, guilty of inconsistency, if he go not so far as to admit them

into his church, though they are incapable of the prerequisites?

§ 203. *Mr. A.* Surely you would not maintain that a whole class of individuals would be proper for one church, who ought to be discarded from the other?

§ 204. *Mr. B.* If not, we must admit all servants bought with money, whether converted or not; for such received circumcision in the Old-Testament church (§ 28). The "whole class" of carnal infants, if they be regenerate, are not discarded from the church: if not regenerate, they are discarded from it by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as part of "a whole class" which is still larger; that is, the whole class of unregenerate persons, whether bond or free, male or female, infant or adult.

§ 205. *Mr. A.* What, then, shall we conclude as to infant-salvation?

§ 206. *Mr. C.* The most probable opinion is, that infants are all saved, through the merits of the Mediator, with an everlasting salvation. This has nothing in it contrary to the perfections of God, or to any declaration of the Holy Scriptures; and it is highly agreeable to all those passages which affirm, that, where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded. On these principles, the death of Christ saves more than the fall of Adam lost.

§ 207. *Mr. B.* My supposition is, that only those who might have believed, but did not believe the

Lord, will be refused admittance into the heavenly Canaan ; while all adults, who, like Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, have wholly followed the Lord, together with the little ones, the children which had no knowledge between good and evil, — they shall go in thither ; unto them it shall be given, and they shall possess it.¹

§ 208. *Mr. A.* But, if infants be unfit for the purer order of things, must they not also be excluded from heaven ? Or may they possibly be admitted into the society above, while it would be proper to exclude them from that on earth ?

§ 209. *Mr. B.* You cannot argue from infant-salvation to infant-baptism. Before we condemn the doctrine, that infants must not be baptized, or admitted into the church, on account of the other doctrine, that those who die in infancy cannot be saved, we must establish, firstly, that the former doctrine involves the latter ; secondly, that the latter doctrine is false. If both points be admitted, my doctrine must fall. But the force of the objection is not exhausted here. Like a demurrer in law, it must be carried back to the first error. The doctrine, that infants should not be baptized, is a conclusion logically deduced from certain premises. If the premises have led to a wrong conclusion, it is necessarily because they are false. If false, away goes the chief corner-stone of the doctrine, that

¹ Deut. i. 39.

infants may properly be baptized ; for our premises consist of the very points for which Pedobaptist writers contend, and from which they argue — illogically, it is true — that infants are proper subjects of baptism. But are the premises true? If so, we must follow fair logical deductions from them, “whithersoever they may lead” (§ 16), though it be to the doctrine, that all infants, or all mankind, are damned. If logical deductions from true premises lead to that conclusion, the doctrine is incontestably true ; and we cannot destroy its truth by burying our heads, ostrich-like, beneath the sand of error. We ought to believe God’s truth, however painful the belief may be. Nor should we reject any doctrine as false because it involves another doctrine which is true, and against which we can urge no better objection than that it pains us to believe it. But can we assert that the doctrine is false, that persons dying in infancy cannot be saved? Is it certain that infants are admitted into heaven? I defy you to show any promise of salvation to infants, whether baptized or not.

§ 210. *Mr. A.* You have already declared your belief that they are saved ; and, as for myself, I gladly admit, in opposition to the Calvinistic Baptists, that all children, dying before actual sin committed, are admitted into heaven through the merits of Christ.

§ 211. *Mr. B.* I stated only my own supposi-

tion. I may even say, that I firmly believe infants are saved,—not only the baptized, but all who die in infancy. Yet this faith is not founded on such evidence that I can assert infant-salvation as unquestionably certain, and pronounce every doctrine false which conflicts with it; but I could find no more difficulty in believing that all are damned, than that one is damned. The condemnation of innocence is contrary to my conception of divine character; and, where all are equally innocent, I can see no reason for making a distinction,—condemning some, and not all. While I assert that you cannot prove that all infants are not damned or annihilated, I assert that there is no reason to believe that one is damned or annihilated. The all-wise and merciful God has revealed all that is necessary, but nothing which will serve merely to gratify curiosity. For those who are capable of faith and obedience he has revealed a way of salvation, because such revelation is necessary to guide their actions, and enable them to follow the way. But, as he has been pleased to create babes incapable of faith and obedience, no revelation is necessary for them; and he has not condescended to reveal to adults what his loving-kindness has prepared for those who die in infancy. Hence all that I might say on that subject would be mere speculation. I know nothing about it; and it is my opinion that both you and “the Calvinistic Baptists” know just as

little. But when I contemplate the ways of Providence, and consider the attributes of God as revealed in his word, I cannot feel the slightest fear for infants who die before the commission of sin. My faith is such, that I am willing to trust the little innocents to Him whose way is equal; whose compassions fail not; who hath no pleasure in the death of even the wicked; but so loved the world as to give his own dear Son, the only-begotten, to suffer agony and a felon's death, that, through him, even the chief of sinners might be redeemed and saved. I cannot fear that the just, the compassionate God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, will bless one child with the joys of heaven, without any personal deserving, yet doom another to the pains of hell, or Limbo, without any personal undeserving, and all because of the fortuitous circumstance, that the one was born of believing parents, the other of unbelievers, though neither was permitted to make choice of parentage; or because the one was baptized, and the other was not, though neither understood, rejected, or desired, the ordinance. "Behold, all souls are mine," saith the Lord God; "as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, is mine: the soul that sinneth, *it* shall die."¹ I cannot believe that the just, the merciful God will condemn any infant; and, if one shall be condemned, I can see no reason why all

¹ Ezek. xviii. 4.

should not be. This is merely an opinion, however, and would yield to logical deductions from sound premises. But let us now consider the other branch of the subject; conceding, for all the purposes of the argument, that it is a known truth, that “all children, dying before actual sin committed, are admitted into heaven, through the merits of Christ.”

§ 212. *Mr. A.* If they be admitted into heaven, for this very reason it follows that infants are proper subjects to be introduced into the church on earth.

§ 213. *Mr. B.* Does it follow for that very reason? Does the doctrine, that infants cannot properly be baptized, or received into the church, involve the doctrine, that they cannot be saved? In other words, is the admission of infants into heaven inconsistent with their exclusion from baptism or from the church? If so, the admission of infants into heaven was inconsistent with their exclusion from circumcision under the old dispensation. If the rejection of infant-baptism be equivalent to the rejection of infant-salvation, it must be because the salvation of infants depends upon their baptism. If so, then, under the old dispensation, the salvation of infants depended on their circumcision: for baptism has taken the place of circumcision,—means the same thing as a moral emblem; and “whatever belonged to circumcision, except the difference of visible ceremony, belongs also to baptism” (§§ 49–51). All females were excluded from circumcision: were

they therefore damned? God would not permit infants to be circumcised before the eighth day; yet, no doubt, he permitted many to die before that time. Shall we conclude that he thus caused them to be damned, though he might have either prolonged their lives to the eighth day, or permitted their circumcision before that time? There is no more reason to fear that those will be lost who die without baptism, before they are capable of sin, than to believe that infants were lost who died uncircumcised before the eighth day; and there is no more reason to suppose we can benefit infants now by baptism, than to believe that an infant, dying before the eighth day, would have been benefited by circumcision. Nay, more: we have no more reason to believe that unbaptized infants are damned, than to believe that all infants are damned; and we have as much reason to believe that all infants are saved, as that baptized infants are saved.

§ 214. *Mr. A.* God did not require infants to be circumcised before they were proper subjects; which they were not, till the eighth day.

§ 215. *Mr. B.* God does not require any one to be baptized before he is a proper subject; and, if our argument be correct, no one is a proper subject till he be regenerate (§§ 116, 174). But God himself has so constituted infants, that they are incapable of regeneration (§ 180).

§ 216. *Mr. A.* By the same rule, adult infidels

ought to be received into heaven ; for they are not proper subjects of baptism, and hence are not required to be baptized.

§ 217. *Mr. B.* If the “ rule ” be bad, you must bear the blame ; for it is yours. I did but apply it to baptism ; which you say is the same as circumcision, except in form. But the rule does not apply to infidels as to infants. The rule which excuses persons from obedience because of incapacity does not by any means excuse disobedience in persons who are capable of obeying. The adult is condemned, not for want of baptism, but for want of faith. He is capable of believing, while the child is not. He rejects the “ great salvation,” while the child does not. He falls within the rule, that “ he that believeth not shall be damned.” A thousand baptisms could not save him without faith. His case differs widely from that of the infant.

§ 218. *Mr. A.* The infant is necessarily excused from faith and repentance, for want of capacity ; but it is not so in regard to baptism. What promise is there of life and salvation but to those who believe and are baptized, and devote themselves to the service of God ?

§ 219. *Mr. B.* None ; none whatever. Must we therefore conclude that the unbaptized infant cannot have life and salvation ? By parity of reasoning, we must deny life and salvation to all babes that do not believe, and “ devote themselves to the service of

God." No infant can do either : shall we say that all are therefore damned ? We may as reasonably conclude thus, as that they will be damned for want of baptism. What injustice do we attribute to the just God, when we suppose he will condemn those for want of faith who have not capacity to believe or disbelieve ; that he will condemn those for want of service who cannot serve either God or Mammon ! Equal injustice would it be in him to eternally damn the helpless innocents because others neglect to sprinkle water on them. That the innocent should be as the wicked, — that be far from God. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?¹

§ 220. *Mr. A.* Although the phrase, "kingdom of God," is most frequently used by our Lord to denote the church on earth, some believe, that, in the discourse with Nicodemus, that phrase is used, in its highest sense, to express the future state of felicity ; and hence that the doctrine, that infants may be saved without baptism, conflicts with the rule given by our Saviour : "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This includes children and all.

§ 221. *Mr. B.* That rule, so interpreted, excludes infants from salvation, even if they be baptized : for it requires them to be "born of the Spirit ;" which, as we have seen, is impossible (§ 180). And, if your text prove that they will

¹ Gen. xviii. 25.

be lost without baptism, I can prove by a text, which, in its terms, equally "includes infants and all," that they will be lost with baptism. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." This shows that baptized infants are saved, provided they believe. But the text goes farther, and says, "He that believeth not shall be damned."¹ Then, though the infant be baptized, yet, if he believe not, he is damned; and all infants, being incapable of believing, are necessarily damned. In this view, they cannot be benefited by baptism. Again: Jesus said to the Jews, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."² Here your mode of interpretation would lead us to conclude, with Augustine, and other eminent fathers of the church, as they are called, that infants cannot be saved unless they partake of the Lord's supper; and to argue, with him, that since, according to the general opinion, none may do so but those who are baptized, therefore infants not baptized cannot have life. You may easily show that these texts do not touch the question of infant-salvation; and I can show, by the same argument, that the other text touches it quite as little. And I can add this farther argument, that, while my texts relate unquestionably to the subject of salvation, in some sense, the other relates only to entrance into the church; for you properly interpreted the

¹ Mark xvi. 16.

² John vi. 53.

phrase "kingdom of God," in John iii. 3, 5, to signify the church (§ 31).

§ 222. *Mr. A.* The church on earth is but the vestibule of the glorified church above. If the great Head of the church regards infants worthy to enter his church in its highest state of perfection, I cannot divest myself of the impression, that it is inconsistent, absurd, to suppose that man may not admit them into the church below, where even the best adult cannot pretend to half their purity.

§ 223. *Mr. B.* Man must submit to the exclusion of infants from the church on earth, because such is the will of "the great Head of the church." If God reject infants from the church on earth, and receive them into heaven, is this inconsistent or absurd? I will not pronounce it so, until it be proved, that, when infants' souls are released from their clay tabernacles, they are under the like incapacity to enter heaven as infants are to enter the church, and that they are received into heaven notwithstanding that incapacity; which would itself be an inconsistency. It is not dealing fairly with the Lord to assume that he does this, and, on that ground, either to charge him with inconsistency, or to make it a precedent for ourselves to run into the same inconsistency, which, without proof, we attribute to him, and charge all Christians with inconsistency who will not follow our example. Some Christians think they are justified by Paul

in believing, that "when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law," they will be saved.¹ Are such Christians inconsistent in not admitting such Gentiles into the church of Christ without that faith which Christ himself requires of those who enter his church on earth? They are not more inconsistent who believe infants are received into heaven, yet will not admit them into the church. It is for God to receive into heaven whom he sees fit, and for man to reject from the church all who manifestly do not possess those qualifications which God has taught us are necessary to their membership. If it were positively certain that all who die in infancy are admitted into heaven, it would afford no reason why living infants should be admitted into the church, at least until we are also certain that living infants are equally proper for the church militant as their disembodied souls are for the church triumphant; that they are as well qualified to fight the good fight of faith as their souls to enjoy the victory which Jesus Christ has achieved for them.

§ 224. The privileges and duties of the church on earth are intended for our probationary state, and are designed only for such persons as are capable of participating in them. It has pleased God so to create us, that, in our early days, we are not capable of enjoying those privileges or per-

¹ Rom. ii. 14.

forming those duties. The physical organs implicated in the operations of mind are such, that reason cannot be exercised upon the truths of Christianity. The soul is, as it were, in a dark prison-house, fettered and manacled; but when the death-angel comes to the imprisoned soul as the angel of the Lord came to Peter in prison, and the chains fall from his hands and feet, we cannot know what is the condition of that soul. My own conjecture is, that it becomes instantly capable of participating in the delights of heaven. One thing, at least, we see, — that, before that release, the infant is not capable of performing any duty, enjoying any privilege, or understanding any obligation, of church membership. It is only during the period before death that we have to do with the infant; and, for the rest, we may safely trust to God, that whatever change is necessary for the soul after its release from the clay tenement, in order to prepare it for heaven, he is able to effect, and that he will effect it if it please him to receive the soul into heaven, and that he will so effect it as not to be guilty of inconsistency.¹

¹ Since writing the above, I have met with the following excellent remarks by Chillingworth: "The rule of the law is also the dictate of common reason and equity, — that no man can be obliged to do what is impossible. We can be obliged to do nothing, except by virtue of some command. Now, it is impossible that God should command in earnest any thing which he knows to be impossible: for to command in earnest is to command with an intent to be obeyed; which is not possible he should do, when he knows the thing commanded to be impossible. Whosoever

§ 225. *Mr. A.* My reluctance to admit your doctrine is caused by the evils to which it must lead. Parents, not having dedicated their child to God by baptism in infancy, want much of what they otherwise would have to stimulate them in the religious training of the child.

§ 226. *Mr. C.* Baptism furnishes pious parents with a good argument for an early dedication of their child to God.

§ 227. *Mr. B.* Leaving you to determine between yourselves whether baptism is a dedication of the child to God, or merely an argument for such dedication, I will remind you, that, a few moments ago, you thought "the voice of nature" was very importunate for the baptism and church membership of children (§ 182); yet now you seem to think its pleadings are not sufficient to induce parents to train their child for God, but that the additional argument or stimulant of baptism is necessary to urge them to the performance of this duty. Surely "the voice of nature," which is so clamorously lifted up in behalf of infant-baptism, and makes parents so eager to secure church membership for their child, — surely it must plead still more earnestly

is obliged to do a thing, and does it not, commits a fault: but infants commit no fault in not procuring to have baptism; therefore no obligation lies upon them to procure it. We must believe that God will not deal unjustly with them: but how in particular he will deal with them concerns not us; and therefore we need not much regard it." — *Religion of Protestants.*

with them to secure for him all those things which are great blessings without baptism or church membership, but without which these are nothing; that true faith and love for the Saviour which will lead the child to seek baptism of his own accord, when he is ready to receive it; which will, after death, secure him eternal life. Is that pleading voice so easily satisfied, that its clamors can be silenced by a few drops of water? 'Tis here, indeed, I think the danger lies. Security does not excite solicitude. A peril known creates anxiety; a sense of safety lulls. Parents are eager to have their infants baptized into the church, as an ark of safety; and, when they delude themselves into the belief that the little ones are in that ark, they are often too well satisfied with the security which they suppose they have provided, to exert themselves properly to insure a real security. Thus, instead of "stimulating them in the religious training" of their child, it has the contrary tendency.

§ 228. *Mr. C.* By this rite, the assurance is given them, in a solemn and impressive manner, that the great privileges and promises bestowed upon Christians will be imparted to their child also; and thus religious feelings, pious thoughts and resolutions, are promoted in them.

§ 229. *Mr. B.* If they be not satisfied from the word of God that those privileges and promises "will be imparted to their child," and to all others,

provided they fulfil the conditions which God requires, it is difficult to imagine how that assurance can be given them by any mere rite performed by man, however solemn and impressive.

§ 230. *Mr. C.* But by this rite they are engaged and encouraged to educate their child in a Christian manner, in order that he may receive those privileges, and attain one day to the actual exercise and enjoyment of them.

§ 231. *Mr. B.* I cannot conceive how they can be "engaged and encouraged" by any rite to give their child a Christian education, if the best interests of the child have failed thus to engage, and the promises of the word of truth to thus encourage them. If the love which an all-good and all-wise Creator has implanted in parental hearts be not sufficient to secure for the child the best religious training which the parents are able to give, the deficiency can never be supplied by the argument or stimulant of any momentary ceremony, however solemn and imposing; or the impression on hearts so clay-cold and unnatural as to need such extraneous incitements would be so fleeting, as to require the frequent repetition of the warming ceremony. But there is no way to impart to water such properties, that, by applying it to an infant's body, it will warm a parent's heart, and still less keep it warm for years. Parents who deserve to be blessed with

children will need no such incitement, and others will not be affected by it.

§ 232. *Mr. A.* But those whose child has not been baptized have not the same faith as those parents who believe that God will certainly bless the course of training they are pursuing.

§ 233. *Mr. B.* I cannot perceive why they should have less faith than others, or should not equally believe that God will bless their efforts to train their child religiously, or should want any thing which others possess to stimulate their efforts (§ 224). On the contrary, regarding it important that all persons should have the benefits of baptism so soon as it may properly be administered, they will be the more strenuous in their efforts to prepare their children for the enjoyment of those benefits; to beget them "through the gospel," so that they may be "born of the Spirit," and receive "the circumcision of Christ."

§ 234. *Mr. A.* It is certain that baptizing a child does him no harm; it debars him from no right; it subjects him to no manner of inconvenience. It confers upon him blessings only, and binds him but to his own best good. This reason for bringing children into covenant with God was given, not only by ancient Jewish writers, but also by the early Christians, who, as they ought, acknowledged that great benefits were bestowed on baptized children. If children were left, as too many are left,

unbaptized, still they are bound, at the peril of everlasting perdition, to believe and to do all those things which in baptism they engage to do. Who, that lives in a Christian land, is not bound to live as a Christian? Who, without hazard to his immortal soul, can "neglect so great salvation"? There is no engagement in the baptismal covenant in behalf of a child which he is not bound, in duty to God and regard to his own eternal welfare, as soon as he is capable of understanding his duty, to perform.

§ 235. *Mr. B.* Your zeal for a sinking cause has outstripped your usual discretion, and makes you fight "as one that beateth the air." Even if it were true that infant-baptism does no harm, there is no rational motive to apply it, if it will do no good. You say it confers only blessings on the child, yet have failed to prove that it confers one; while our argument proves that it is absolutely void, and therefore confers no blessing. You urge that baptism brings the child under no new obligation to pursue a Christian path in life; which only shows, that, in this regard, it does neither good nor harm. If there be no engagement in the baptismal covenant which the child is not bound to do, whether baptized or not, with what propriety can it be said that baptism "binds him but to his own best good"? It simply binds him to nothing; while, with or without baptism, he is bound, "so soon as

he is capable of understanding his duty, to perform" all those things which are for "his own best good." It is therefore much better that each person should wait until his baptism may be regarded as a rational act, — a voluntary acknowledgment of his obligation to perform those engagements in the baptismal covenant to which you allude.

§ 236. *Mr. A.* None can deny that this is what each one must do for himself. Does it follow that there is nothing which we must do for each other? Is there no communion of saints?

§ 237. *Mr. B.* There are many things which we must do for each other: "does it follow" that baptizing infants is one of those things? And what if there be a communion of saints: "does it follow" that infants must be baptized? The corollary is utterly inconsequent; or, at least, I am unable to perceive its logical sequence, or to imagine a third proposition by which these two can be joined in a syllogism.

§ 238. *Mr. A.* Are we not bound to promote the salvation of others by all possible means?

§ 239. *Mr. B.* Assuredly. But does that obligation require us to do what will not have the slightest tendency to promote their salvation? To make that obligation an argument for infant-baptism is a *petitio principii*, a begging the question; for it assumes that the baptism of infants will promote their salvation, and is therefore a divine institution. Establish

this, and I presume all will urge the necessity of infant-baptism as warmly as yourself.

§ 240. *Mr. A.* The wisdom which is from above teaches us to “train up a child in the way that he should go,” and declares, that, “when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

§ 241. *Mr. B.* True. But does that wisdom say that this training may be done or promoted by baptizing the child?

§ 242. *Mr. A.* The most decided experience has shown that no means of establishing men in the faith and fear of God are more effectual than bringing them up from childhood in his nurture and admonition. And to say that this should be neglected, with a view to leaving them free to seek God for themselves, is to reject the wisdom of experience; it is pretending to be wiser than God; and, on the same principle, we may neglect to preach to men, to pray for them, or to exhort one another.

§ 243. *Mr. B.* You give us now a striking example of what logicians call *ignoratio elenchi*, or irrelevant conclusion. You most earnestly contend, with diverse forcible arguments, that we should bring children up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” When was that subject put in issue between us? How is it involved in the question, whether children are proper subjects of baptism? When it is shown that they cannot be brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” with-

out having been first baptized, I will cry aloud for infant-baptism; but, for the present, I prefer that they should be thus brought up, in order to qualify them for the reception of the baptismal rite.

§ 244. *Mr. A.* If it is our duty to use any means to save others, it is our duty to use all means which God has put in our power, and which he is pleased to bless to that happy effect.

§ 245. *Mr. B.* Most indubitably. But that is nothing to the point in question, until it be first established that infant-baptism is one of the means "which he is pleased to bless to that happy effect."

§ 246. *Mr. C.* Baptism binds the parents to teach their child, so soon as he becomes capable of receiving instruction, the importance and necessity of regeneration, and all other fundamental truths of our holy religion. It causes the child to be recognized as bearing a most important relation to the church of God, and thus places him in a situation in which the parents are bound to train him up for God.

§ 247. *Mr. B.* Is not every parent so bound? They are no Christians whom God has blessed with children, yet who do not, to the best of their ability, "train them up for God." But your idea is, I suppose, that those whose children are baptized are responsible to the church for the performance of this duty. And those church members, whose infants are not baptized, are equally amenable to the

church for the neglect of this duty ; and those who are not church members are not the less amenable to God. Will not the church hold its members responsible for the violation of any Christian duty ? And is it not a Christian duty for parents to bring their children up “ in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ” ? The apostles solemnly urge the duties of parents as among the chief of Christian duties. Paul declares, that “ if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”¹ If worse than an infidel for neglecting to provide the necessaries and comforts of this life, he is scarcely better than a devil if he strive not to provide the heavenly manna,—the food for the soul.²

§ 248. *Mr. C.* But is it of no advantage to parents, in educating their children, to be able to remind them from time to time that they have been symbolically sanctified or set apart by the seal of Jehovah’s covenant, and to plead with them by the solemn vows which they have made on their behalf ? Assuredly it is good that they should be taught from their childhood that they are under a covenant engagement to be the Lord’s, and have the promises of God ; that they have obtained by bap-

¹ 1 Tim. v. 8.

² The Rev. E. M’Millan, a Presbyterian, and an ingenious advocate of infant-baptism, says, “ Let it be set down, that neither baptism nor circumcision creates or imposes any obligation, but merely declares and confesses obligations already existing.” — *True Baptist*, vol. i. p. 325.

tism a share in all the great and divine blessings and promises which are given to Christians ; and that they are solemnly obligated by baptism, through God's assistance and guidance, to fulfil all the conditions on which Christians receive these great promises ; that they are of the household of faith, the children of the kingdom, fellow-citizens of the commonwealth of Israel, and are therefore bound to honor and obey their Father in heaven, and be true and faithful subjects to Christ, their King.

§ 249. *Mr. B.* I hold it to be indisputable, that truth is the best aliment for the mind. If, then, these things be true which you propose to teach children, there must be some advantage in such instruction. But our argument has proved that they are not true ; that none but the regenerate are "of the household of faith," "citizens of the commonwealth of Israel ;" and the Lord Jesus himself has told us, that, except one be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom. Then, if your children be not born again, not of water only, but of water and the Spirit, they are not "children of the kingdom." If you teach them, that, in consequence of their baptism, they "have the promises of God," this implies that none but the baptized have a promise ; whereas Peter says, the promise is "to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."¹ Nor does our obligation "to

¹ Acts ii. 39.

honor and obey the Father, and be true and faithful subjects to Christ," depend upon any "covenant engagement to be the Lord's." It is not by baptism that we are obligated to fulfil these duties; but all of God's rational creatures, with or without baptism or covenant, owe him honor, obedience, truth, and fidelity, because he is our Creator and constant Benefactor, and Christ gave his life for our redemption. It is but a moment since Mr. A. very truly asserted, that children who are left unbaptized are not the less bound to live as Christians (§ 234): but your instruction would imply that none but the baptized owe these duties to God; which is a full justification of wickedness in all who are not baptized. As the things which you propose to teach are untrue, I conclude there is no advantage in teaching them. Or if this be an exception to the otherwise universal rule, and this teaching be calculated to lead children into the way of good living, yet we cannot teach what is untrue, unless we adopt that most antichristian principle so strongly reprobated by the Apostle Paul,—"Let us do evil, that good may come."¹

§ 250. I think the want of truth in what you suggest as suitable to be taught to children is sufficient proof that there can be no advantage in teaching thus. I believe, moreover, that the argument may be introverted, and the teaching be proved false

¹ Rom. iii. 8.

by its tendency to evil, instead of that advantage which you think would result from it. It is vain to appeal to experience; for here we would conflict. We must therefore apply reason to acknowledged truth, and thus deduce a conclusion. We know that "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil;"¹ it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;"² and that, among the evil things which proceed out of the heart and defile the man, one, and not the least, is pride.³ So strong is this evil principle within the heart, that even the humble Christian is not without danger of yielding to it, — nay, of becoming proud of his very humility. There is a strong tendency to Pharisaic exclusiveness and self-exaltation. When we reflect how much more likely this principle is to spring up in the heart of one too young to be under the restraint of a well-regulated judgment, it is not difficult to imagine how these evil propensities would be affected by such teachings. The child being told, "You are a member of the church, which is the kingdom of heaven; you must therefore conduct yourself as a child of God; you have been symbolically sanctified, and must strive to become spiritually sanctified," — the old Adam would rise up within the child; he would remember only that he is in the kingdom of heaven, that he is sanctified (without knowing what it means), and that he is a child of God. Then,

¹ Eccl. ix. 3.

² Jer. xvii. 9.

³ Mark vii. 22.

with Pharisean pride, he would thank God that he is not as others are : for, while he is in the kingdom of God, they are in outer darkness ; while he is sanctified, they are unholy ; while he is a child of God, they are “ children of wrath.”

§ 251. *Mr. C.* Parents must watch for, and carefully repress, such feelings.

§ 252. *Mr. B.* Better keep the evil seed from falling on the heart, than attempt to eradicate the tares when they grow up from the seed. You think it is good that children should be taught “ that they have been symbolically sanctified or set apart by the seal of Jehovah’s covenant ; that they are of the household of faith, the children of the kingdom, citizens of the commonwealth of Israel,” &c., &c. (§ 248.) Would there be any material difference between teaching these things, and teaching that “ every one who is baptized is born of God, — born of the Spirit ; is regenerate by the Holy Ghost ” ? Your own words as to the latter teaching shall condemn the teaching which you propose ; for I will only substitute the one teaching for the other. “ If children be told that all who are baptized are ‘ symbolically sanctified or set apart by the seal of Jehovah’s covenant ; are of the household of faith, the children of the kingdom, fellow-citizens of the commonwealth of Israel,’ — will not the mass of mankind, in spite of every precaution and explanation that can be employed, be likely to mistake on a

fundamental point; to imagine that the disease of our nature is trivial, and that a trivial remedy will answer; to lay more stress than they ought upon an external rite; and to make a much lower estimate than they ought of the nature and necessity of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"? (§ 160.)

§ 253. A much better way, because it is the appointed way, is that which my view of the subject suggests. Tell the child the truth, — that he is, by nature, a child of wrath, even as others are;¹ but God has mercifully provided that he may become a child of God through faith.² Exhort him to pray that he may be sanctified through the truth,³ justified by the blood of Christ, and saved from wrath through him.⁴ Tell him, to borrow an expression from Mr. A. (§ 29), that the true kingdom of God on earth is but the “gate” of the kingdom above; tell him, not that he has already entered in at that gate, but that he must “strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”⁵ These are the words of Him who is himself *the way*. Add to these his other words, — that none can enter in at that gate, except he be born again.⁶ None will be able to enter who “seek to enter in” by baptism alone; yet when one is begotten through the gospel, and quickened by the

¹ Eph. ii. 3.

³ John xvii. 17.

⁵ Luke xiii. 24.

² John v. 1.

⁴ Rom. v. 9.

⁶ John iii. 3, 5.

Spirit, he must obey the Lord, and be “born of water” also, thus confessing Christ before the world. By such instructions, you give the child great incentives to exertion ; a strong inducement to seek that narrow way which few shall find ; to strive to enter in where few shall be able ; to seek regeneration and sanctification, that he may be prepared in heart to obey Christ in receiving the symbol, and in all things else ; in a word, to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,”¹ instead of deluding himself into the belief that he has already found them.

§ 254. *Mr. C.* I am inclined to think that we have mixed some leaven of error in our premises, which has leavened the whole lump, and brought us to an erroneous conclusion.

§ 255. *Mr. B.* That may be : but the premises were fixed by yourselves ; and you should have been careful to exclude errors which prove so fatal to the doctrine which you were about to advocate. But as truth, not triumph, is my object, I am willing that you should revise the premises, and correct any deviation from the truth.

§ 256. *Mr. C.* I cannot discover that there was any error in what we assumed ; but we ought to have distinctly stated in our premises, that God made two covenants with Abraham, — the one national, and the other spiritual. No greater error

¹ Matt. vii. 33.

can be committed than to confound the two, and thus identify the commonwealth, founded on the one, with the church, founded on the other. Under the New Testament, the external theocracy was abolished, and the church continued, to consist of true believers, in which the only condition of membership is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The rite of circumcision was attached to both the covenants, and answered the double purpose of securing the benefits of the theocracy, and putting in a claim to those higher benefits to be secured by that seed of Abraham in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

§ 257. *Mr. B.* This addition to our premises might have shortened our argument, but could not have changed its result. If the distinction which you draw existed before the advent of Christ, it is obvious that we erred in speaking of the relations in which servants and infants stood toward the Old-Testament church, with which they could have had no connection whatever. If the church was continued unchanged, it could have been entered by no other means under the old dispensation than under the new. Servants, then, unless regenerate, were circumcised, not with reference to the church, with which they had no connection, but because of the relation in which they stood toward the external theocracy. This view would have cut off all that was said about the circumcision of servants (§§ 108,

109). Again: the children of proselytes, by the act of their parents, — and even Israelitish children, by their carnal birth, — were brought into connection, not with the church, which was spiritual, but with the external theocracy, which was national. Neither the children of Hebrews or proselytes could enter into the church otherwise than by being born again; for, as we have seen, that is the only way for them to enter it now; and, if there were no change, it must have been the only way then.

§ 258. *Mr. C.* Yet, under the old dispensation, it was not necessary to wait until the children were regenerated and born anew, before they were circumcised.

§ 259. *Mr. B.* Very true. Upon being brought into connection with the external theocracy, they were legally circumcised, as a seal of the national covenant; for you say that the rite was attached to both covenants; and it was of such a nature that it could not be repeated. I think, however, that your hypothesis is contravened by the fact, that there was not a separate and distinct seal for the spiritual covenant, — a seal in the administration of which the subject should exercise volition. But, taking your hypothesis for true, if no change had been effected by the coming of Christ, except the substitution of baptism for circumcision as the seal of both covenants, then infants would properly be baptized on entering the external theocracy, and the practice

under the former dispensation might justify us in deeming it unnecessary to repeat the ceremony upon the entrance of the same individual into the church. But you say the theocracy is abolished; so that baptism is attached only to the spiritual covenant, upon which the church is founded. Hence there is nothing to entitle one to baptism before he enters into and becomes a member of the spiritual church, which has been continued, "to consist of true believers," and "in which the only" — and I may add, the indispensable — "condition of membership is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (§ 256).

§ 260. I cannot entirely indorse your theory; and it cannot be adopted without rejecting some of the points which we agreed to take for truths (§§ 21, 23). There were, indeed, "two covenants with Abraham, — the one national, and the other spiritual." But I do not believe, that, under the old dispensation, the church was separate from and co-existing with the national theocracy; but that they were identical, and were founded upon the national covenant. Upon the abolition of the national theocratic features, God "set up" his spiritual kingdom, founding it upon the spiritual covenant. It was grafted upon the old stock; but the old branches were broken off to make room for it. Nationality, carnality, were cast out, and spirituality took their place. But, even if we receive your hypothesis as true, we have seen that it would argue nothing in

favor of infant-baptism (§ 259). Is there any thing else in which you would amend our premises?

§ 261. *Mr. C.* It may be that the Rev. E. M'Millan is right (though I cannot say I am satisfied that he is right) in saying that the hypothesis which takes circumcision for an initiatory rite is false (§ 24). "If it were an initiatory ordinance," says he, "no female was ever in the Jewish church; which is contrary to many recorded facts, and plainly so contrary to the Scriptures generally, that no one can believe it. It is an error to suppose the rite is withheld from females because of impracticability; for it has been, and is still, administered to them by some nations, who do not understand the design of the ordinance, — the Arabs, for example.¹ Then, if the prime intention of circumcision was to be an initiatory ordinance into the church, why was it performed upon the male, and not upon the female? and how could our Lord declare that no man could enter the church, without baptism? This hypothesis gives no answer; but if we suppose that baptism initiated the recipient, and then circumcision, like a type, illustrated the generation of the great Messiah, in whom the baptized professed to believe as the Son of God, the hypothesis and the facts agree. God taught most of the doctrines of religion in the old dispensation

¹ The Abyssinians, and the Mohammedans of Egypt, are said to circumcise both sexes. (See *Encyc. Amer.*, art. "Circumcision.")

by symbols ; and every symbol was chosen on the principle of analogy, — that is, the prominent idea in the symbol was itself significant of the idea intended to be conveyed by it. If this principle be applied to circumcision, we see it, by a very easy analogy, pointing to the generation of the Messiah, not by man, but by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing the female. The Messiah had a human mother, but no human father : hence the male was circumcised by cutting off the foreskin ; while the rite was not applied to the female, because woman was not cut off from participation in giving humanity to the Son of God. These reasons for the rite are perfectly obvious, and commend themselves to the human understanding ; while no human ingenuity can ever devise any other reason for it, and especially for its peculiar application. This explanation agrees also with the fact, that circumcision commenced when the promise of the Messiah was made, and terminated at the fulfilment of the promise in the gift of the Messiah. If it had not referred to him, it would not have ceased like all the rites which terminated in him ; but, like baptism, the sabbath, the religious assembly, &c., it would still stand, to point to its future truth. It is difficult to conceive how it can refer to the Messiah otherwise than as I have explained.”

§ 262. *Mr. B.* In what you quote, I perceive nothing inconsistent with the belief that circumcision

was a rite of initiation. It seems reasonable that a change of dispensations should be accompanied with a change of initiatory rites ; and the declaration of our Lord most probably refers to the kingdom which he was about to "set up ;" that is, the new dispensation : for if baptism had been the rite of initiation under the old economy, and none could enter the church without it, this would have been known to Nicodemus, and he would not have asked, "How can these things be ?" ¹ It seems reasonable, also, that, under both dispensations, the initiatory rite should be made to symbolize those great facts, the belief of which most prominently distinguished the church from the uninitiated. Under the old dispensation, those great facts were, that the Messiah should come, and be born of a virgin. This was believed by the Jews, but not by the surrounding nations ; and circumcision was sufficiently significant of the prominent fact ; but its significance would have been destroyed by applying it to females. As "woman was not cut off from participation in giving humanity to the Son of God," a rite indicating such cutting-off could not properly be administered to females. Under the new dispensation, the great facts, the belief of which distinguished the church from the Pagans and unbelieving Jews, were that the same Messiah was already come ; that he "died for our sins, according to the Scriptures ;

¹ John iii. 9.

and that he was buried ; and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.”¹ Baptism, as administered by the apostles, was sufficiently significant of these great facts ; and the facts do not preclude the baptism of females. Mr. M‘Millan’s theory as to the signification of circumcision is perfectly new to me, and so plausible, that, if not correct, I am not now able to disprove it. It seems more probable than any other theory which has been brought to my notice ; and I will adopt it, unless farther investigation should prove it to be erroneous.

§ 263. *Mr. C.* Mr. M‘Millan says also, “ Circumcision was administered to infants because they were, by obstinate and natural necessity, to be progenitors of the same Prince of whom their parents were progenitors ; and it was the duty of all having the precious promise to acknowledge its truth by circumcision, which was the only scriptural acknowledgment of it. But baptism has always been administered to infants, both under the old and new dispensations, because they belong by obstinate and natural necessity, during their minority, to the same government to which their parents belong ; and really are, and must be, the subjects of the same king to whom their parents are subject. And it is the duty of all parents openly to acknowledge this truth by baptism, which is the only scriptural

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

acknowledgment of it." Thus he maintains that the infant of Christian parents is to be baptized, "not because that of the Jewish parent was circumcised, but because baptism has been administered to the infants of believers from time immemorial, and that under the sanction of divine authority and example."¹ Mr. M'Millan gives, also, very ingenious arguments in support of his theory, that infants were baptized under the old dispensation.

§ 264. *Mr. B.* Though I have conditionally adopted Mr. M'Millan's opinion as to the signification of circumcision, I cannot agree with him as to the reasons for administering that rite, and the rite of baptism; that is, his theory of "obstinate and natural necessity." Not all the Israelites were progenitors of Jesus, even though their parents were. Among the twelve sons of Jacob, only Judah was a progenitor of the Messiah; among the five sons of Judah, only Pharez; and so of others. Nor does this theory furnish a reason for circumcising proselytes and their infants, and slaves, who were not among the progenitors of Christ; nor does it afford a reason for baptizing converts whose parents were not believers. The true reason for them, and

¹ In §§ 261 and 263, the language of the Rev. E. M'Millan has been condensed, and his sentences slightly re-arranged. The original may be found in the "True Baptist," vol. i. pp. 322-328. His theory, which was not met with until after the foregoing argument was written, seemed, at the first blush, to confute the argument by destroying one of the premises. It is deemed advisable, therefore, to consider its bearing, on the supposition that it is true.

all others, I conceive to be, that those rites were the appointed methods of acknowledging the truths to which they respectively pointed. But though I should adopt Mr. M'Millan's opinion (which I am far from doing), that baptism has been continued from the old dispensation to the new, and should even admit, that, under the old dispensation, infants were proper subjects of baptism, yet I could not thence deduce his conclusion, that infants must now be baptized. His theory would destroy some of our premises ; but, though these have been employed in our argument, they are by no means necessary or important ingredients. It was supposed, indeed, when we entered upon the inquiry, that the substitution of baptism for circumcision was an important link in the argument for infant-baptism ; but, even with that admission, the argument resulted unfavorably to infant-baptism. Hence the argument, that infants must be baptized now, because they were circumcised under the old dispensation, must be abandoned ; but, as we assumed in our argument that circumcision was exactly the same thing in the Israelitish church that baptism is in the Christian church, except the difference of visible ceremony (§ 56), it is evident that the result cannot be changed by supposing that baptism itself was practised in the former church, and continued to the latter. Though the transfer of the kingdom from the carnal to the spiritual seed of Abraham, and the

change of the initiatory rite, were concomitant, neither was dependent upon the other, but both upon the will of the King. I agree with you, that the change of the initiatory rite could make no change in the subjects (§ 56). If the change of the rite could not have such effect, how much less could the perpetuation of the rite, whether it were circumcision or baptism! But it is not enough to deny the change of the rite. We must go farther, and deny that there has been a change in the constituents of the church itself; we must deny your assertion, that, “in the covenant with Abraham, God promised him two kinds of seed,—the one by natural descent, and the other by faith” (§ 98); we must deny that “the Christian church consists of the spiritual seed of Abraham,”—that is, his seed by faith, instead of his seed by natural descent (§ 36); we must deny that “those who are born of the flesh, whoever may be their progenitors, are not the spiritual seed of Abraham, and cannot enter into the kingdom of God, or church, without another birth, which is a spiritual birth” (§ 41). Let us now trace the argument with a view to Mr. M‘Millan’s theory; and this will serve also as a recapitulation. We must discard all the premises which relate to circumcision, and assume in their stead, that,—

§ 265. Baptism was the outward sign of membership in the Old-Testament church, or Jewish church.

§ 266. The infant children of Israelitish parents were proper subjects of baptism in the Old-Testament church.

§ 267. In the New-Testament church, or Christian church, baptism is still retained as the outward sign of membership, and is to the New-Testament church and to the proper subjects of baptism now what it was to the Old-Testament church and to the proper subjects of baptism under the old dispensation.

§ 268. *Mr. C.* To me it seems that these concessions are fatal to your position. They positively admit the propriety of infant-baptism; for they show, that, in this respect, there is no difference between the two churches.

§ 269. *Mr. B.* None as to the rite of initiation; and none as to the subjects of baptism, except such as results from that important difference, just mentioned, as to the constituents of the two churches. It is by forgetting this important difference that you are a second time led into a fallacy of that kind which Mill pronounces to be perhaps the most common, and certainly the most dangerous, of the fallacies of ratiocination, and which consists in changing the premises. I have already shown that you were guilty of this fallacy, when, having assumed in your premises that it is one's relation to the church of God which entitles him to the rite of initiation, you afterward overlook this fact, and refer his title to

the rite of initiation to his relation to individual members of the church; that is, to his parents (§ 79). The instance now under consideration is, according to Mill, one of the obscurer forms of this dangerous fallacy, which "is committed, when, in the premises, a proposition is asserted with a qualification, and the qualification lost sight of in the conclusion."¹ Thus you assume the proposition, that the Christian church is the same as the Jewish church; but with this qualification, that the Christian church is rendered more spiritual, consisting no longer of the seed of Abraham born of the flesh, but of his spiritual seed (§ 36; and see §§ 32-35). But, when you come to employ that proposition, you lose sight of the qualification; setting it aside on the ground that the difference "is not essential" (§ 35). To assume that it is not essential is to beg the question. The difference is so essential, that it is the very pivot upon which the whole matter turns. It is the very thing which excludes carnal infants from baptism, whether we proceed upon the hypothesis, that baptism takes the place of circumcision, or that it has been continued from the old dispensation. Let us now proceed to ascertain what effect, if any, this important change in the constitution of the church has upon the subjects of baptism; in doing which, we will pursue the same logical process which you before marked out (§ 72).

¹ Mill's "System of Logic," book v. chap. 6, § 4.

Baptism now stands to the **N**ew-Testament church in the same relation in which **B**aptism formerly stood to the **O**ld-Testament church (§ 267); also, —

Baptism stands toward (**X**) those who are now proper subjects of baptism in the same relation in which **B**aptism formerly stood toward those who were then proper **S**ubjects of baptism (§ 267). Therefore, —

(**X**) Those who are now proper subjects of baptism stand toward the **N**ew-Testament church in the same relation in which those who were formerly proper **S**ubjects of baptism stood toward the **O**ld-Testament church.

Or, to adopt the more convenient form of expression before suggested by Mr. A., —

§ 270. Those persons are proper subjects of baptism in the Christian church who stand toward the Christian church in the same relation in which those persons who were proper subjects of baptism in the Israelitish church stood toward the Israelitish church (§ 73). We have now to inquire, as formerly, —

§ 271. Firstly, Who *were* proper subjects of baptism in the Israelitish church? (§ 75.) To which the answer is, “The infant children of Israelitish parents were proper subjects of baptism in the Israelitish church” (§ 266).

§ 272. Secondly, In what relation did they stand toward the Israelitish church? (§ 75.) To which the answer is, “In the relation of membership by the fact of birth” (§ 23).

§ 273. Thirdly, What persons stand in the same

relation toward the Christian church? Whoever they may be, they are the proper subjects of baptism in the Christian church. We know that carnal descent from Abraham, or from any other person, cannot bring one into the church; that no one can enter it unless he be born again (§§ 36, 41). Then the answer to the third question is, "Those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated and born again, stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth" (§ 89).

§ 274. The argument may be thrown into a *sortes*, thus: Those persons are proper subjects of baptism in the Christian church who stand toward the Christian church in the same relation in which those persons who were proper subjects of baptism in the Israelitish church stood toward the Israelitish church (§ 270). The infant children of Israelitish parents were proper subjects of baptism in the Israelitish church (§§ 266, 271); therefore, —

§ 275. Those persons are proper subjects of baptism in the Christian church who stand toward the Christian church in the same relation in which the infant children of Israelitish parents stood toward the Israelitish church (§ 82).

They stood toward that church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth (§ 272); therefore, —

§ 276. Those persons are proper subjects of bap-

tism in the Christian church who stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth (§ 86).

Those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated and born again stand in that relation to the Christian church (§ 89); therefore, —

§ 277. Those persons who have been regenerated and born again are proper subjects of baptism in the Christian church (§ 103).

§ 278. This is the only legitimate deduction which we can make from the fact that infants were baptized in the Jewish church. It may also be true, that infants are proper subjects; but the argument derived from the fact, that they were proper subjects of baptism under the old dispensation, has, thus far, entirely failed to establish the proposition which it was designed to establish; that is, that infants are proper subjects of baptism under the new dispensation (§ 105). If this argument fail to establish that proposition, it is difficult to conceive of any by which it can be established.

§ 279. But let us go farther, and inquire whether any one who is not regenerate is a proper subject of baptism. If our premises be true, baptism is an ordinance of the church, not existing out of the church (§ 109).

§ 280. *Mr. C.* That is very true. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, until they profess their faith in

Christ, and obedience to him. On such profession of faith and obedience, they should be baptized, and received into the visible church.

§ 281. *Mr. B.* And none but the regenerate have such faith as entitles them to baptism. The Saviour expressly prohibits any one to enter his kingdom — expressly declares it impossible for any one to enter therein — by any other right or by any other method than that of being born anew. As this new spiritual birth is the only means of entering into the church, and becoming subject to its jurisdiction, it is the only means by which one can become entitled to receive that church ordinance which is the outward sign of membership in the church (§ 267). Our argument may proceed thus: —

§ 282. Those persons, and none other, are proper subjects of Christian baptism, who stand toward the Christian church in the relation of membership by the fact of birth (§ 114). Those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated and born again, stand toward the Christian church in that relation (§ 89). Therefore, —

§ 283. Those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated and born again, are proper subjects of baptism in the Christian church (§ 116).

§ 284. Here we are brought again to the subject of baptismal regeneration, which has been already sufficiently considered. But, indeed, that doctrine

cannot affect our argument; since the recipient of baptism must be regenerated — already regenerated and born again — in order to be a proper subject. The new birth being a prerequisite to the admission of any person to baptism, being necessary previously to such admission, it would be preposterous to say that one is a proper subject of baptism who is not already actually regenerated and born anew, whether on the assumption that regeneration is effected *ex opere operato*, or merely that it is coetaneous with baptism. If infants were baptized in the Old-Testament church, it is certain they were not baptized till they were born into the church. So, now, no one should be baptized till he be born into the Christian church; which can only be done by the second or spiritual birth (§ 273). We know that this birth results from the proper use of the means supplied by divine grace; that is, the incorruptible seed, the word of God (§ 48). Hence one must have sufficient understanding to receive the word of God into the mind and heart before he can be born again; and hence, finally, infants cannot be born again, since they have not that degree of understanding. Then the final syllogism (as formerly) stands thus: —

§ 285. Those persons, and none other, who have been regenerated and born again, are proper subjects of baptism in the Christian church (§ 283). Infants cannot be regenerated and born again (§§ 180, 284);

therefore infants cannot be proper subjects of baptism. In other words, infant-baptism is not a divine institution (§ 181; see § 55).

§ 286. We have now traced the “resemblance of relations”¹ in the old and new dispensations of the church (§ 70). We assumed, that, under both, the church is the same, yet with a change, by which, under the new dispensation, it became more spiritual (§ 36). In keeping with this, we assumed originally that the sign and seal of membership, the initiatory rite, is the same in all things, except a change of outward form, or “visible ceremony” (§§ 51, 56). Our investigation leads to the discovery of exact proportion and consistency with respect to the members of the church, the proper subjects to receive the rite of initiation under both dispensations. We have found the like sameness, with the like change. Being equally the seed of Abraham, they are the same, yet with this change,—that they are no longer of the lineage of Abraham, but are his seed by faith; they are no longer Jews “outwardly,” but “inwardly;”² they are, when first they enter the church, infants, but no longer carnal infants, being born into the church, not of the flesh, but of the Spirit. Thus the legitimate result of our argument is the belief that infants are proper subjects of baptism in the New-Testament church; not, indeed, carnal infants, but only spirit-

¹ See Appendix.

² Rom. ii. 29.

ual infants, — new-born babes in Christ, begotten through the gospel, born of the Spirit, nurtured with the sincere milk of the word; such babes as those to whom it pleased the Lord of heaven and earth to reveal those things which he concealed from the wise and prudent.¹ Such is the doctrine which I have named *Tecnobaptism*.²

§ 287. *Mr. A.* The course of argument which we have pursued is new to me, and cannot be answered without investigation and reflection, which will require time.

§ 288. *Mr. C.* I also must sue for an armistice, and acknowledge that our inquiry has resulted very differently from my anticipation.

§ 289. *Mr. B.* Of course, it is but fair that all of us, acting no longer as advocates, but as impartial jurors (§ 12), should take all the time necessary for mature deliberation. I would here recall your very just remark, borrowed from Stewart and Mill, that, provided our premises were true, we might “obtain a series of conclusions as certain as those of geometry, and as irresistibly compelling assent”³

¹ Matt. xi. 25. Luke x. 21.

² From *τεκνων βαπτισμα* (*tecnōn baptisma*), “baptism of children.”

³ “Hence it appears it might be possible, by devising a set of arbitrary definitions, to form a science, which, although conversant about moral, political, or physical ideas, should yet be as certain as geometry.” “From these principles, a series of consequences may be deduced by the most unexceptionable reasoning; and the results obtained will be perfectly analogous to mathematical propositions.” — *Stewart's Philosophy of the Mind*,” part ii. chap. 2, ¶ 4. “The opinion of Dugald

(§ 14). If, then, the series of conclusions which we have obtained do not possess that degree of certainty, it must be owing to inaccuracy in our process of reasoning. - If the process of reasoning be correct, yet the conclusions be not true, it must be owing to untruth in our premises. Hence there is but one of three things for us to do, — firstly, to detect some flaw in the statement of our syllogisms; or, if that cannot be done, then, secondly, to detect untruth in those of our premises for which Pedobaptists most strenuously contend, and, abandoning them as false, look for some other basis upon which to rest the cause of infant-baptism. If either of these things can be done, and you can then show by any valid argument that carnal infants are entitled to baptism, I will be much your debtor for removing my error, since I desire to believe only what is true. But if you cannot show that our premises are false, or our argument illogically conducted, nothing remains but, thirdly, to give our full assent to the conclusion, that carnal infants are not proper subjects of baptism in the Christian church. If God have been pleased to exclude them

Stewart, respecting the foundations of geometry, is, I conceive, substantially correct, — that it is built upon hypothesis; that it owes to this alone the peculiar certainty supposed to distinguish it; and that in any science whatever, by reasoning from a set of hypotheses, we may obtain a body of conclusions as certain as those of geometry; that is, as strictly in accordance with the hypotheses, and as irresistibly compelling assent on condition that those hypotheses are true." — *Mill's System of Logic*, book ii. chap. 5, § 1, ¶ 4.

from this rite, it becomes us to say, "Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt."¹ I know too well your candor, and love of truth, to doubt, that you will, in the spirit of our primary rule (§ 16), keep constantly in view "the investigation of truth for its own sake; and to that end" will follow "testimony, and fair deductions therefrom, whithersoever they may lead," though it should be to the doctrine of TECNOBAPTISM.

¹ Matt. xxvi. 39.

A P P E N D I X.

A P P E N D I X.

We have now traced the "resemblance of relations" (§ 286).

§ 290. "There is no word," says Mr. Mill, "which is used more loosely, or in a greater variety of senses, than *analogy*." To avoid vagueness, the foregoing argument is not said to be analogical; but it is designated by one of the definitions of analogy (§ 70). "It sometimes stands," continues Mr. Mill, "for arguments which may be examples of the most rigid induction. Archbishop Whately, for instance, following Fergusson and other writers, defines analogy conformably to its primitive acceptation, that which was given to it by mathematicians, — resemblance of relations."¹ He proceeds to show, that, when the circumstance in which the two cases resemble is the material circumstance, — that on which all the consequences, necessary to be taken into account in the particular discussion, depend, — the argument has the force of a rigid induction. In the foregoing argument, the writer concedes the resemblances for which Pedobaptists contend, and also the materiality of those resemblances, and attempts to trace the argument with accuracy. Its conclusiveness depends upon the success of that effort. The observations quoted from Mill show that the mathematical principles which have been adopted are the same as those to which Archbishop Whately and others give the name of "analogy;" and that they are applicable, not only to the relations of magnitude and number, about which mathematics are conver-

¹ "System of Logic," book ii. chap. 20, § 1.

sant, but generally to any relations where comparison can be definitely made, and proportion discovered. These principles will now be more fully developed and exemplified.

§ 291. Three mathematical propositions are adopted, and applied to the subject in dispute, — firstly, that proportionals, taken alternately, are still proportional; secondly, that, taken inversely, they are still proportional; and, thirdly, that if there be four proportionals, and four other proportionals having the same antecedents, the four consequents will be proportional (§§ 70–72).

§ 292. It is obvious, that where the consequents in any four proportionals are equal, with respect to the qualities of which the relations are compared, the antecedents also must be equal with respect to those qualities. This may be illustrated by comparing numerical relations. If each consequent be equal to 20, and one antecedent be equal to 5, so also must the other be; for no other number can bear the same relation to 20 which 5 does. Also, in exact proportion as the first consequent differs from the second, the first antecedent must differ from the second. For example: Suppose the first consequent is equal to 12, the second to 20, and the second antecedent to 5. As 12 is three-fifths of 20, the first antecedent must be three-fifths of 5; that is, it must be 3, which is the only number equal to three-fifths of 5, and the only number having the same relation to 12 as 5 to 20.

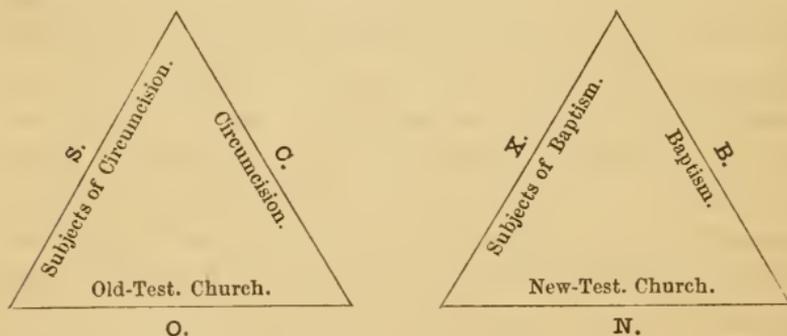
§ 293. For the purposes of the argument, it was conceded to the Pedobaptist colloquists, that baptism, the New-Testament church, circumcision, and the Old-Testament church, are four proportionals; also that the subjects of baptism, the New-Testament church, the subjects of circumcision, and the Old-Testament church, are four proportionals. Therefore, if the consequents — namely, the churches — be identically the same, or exactly equal, so must the antecedents be: that is, baptism and circumcision must be identically the same, or exactly equal, in the one case; the subjects of baptism and of circumcision, in the other case. And, in exact proportion as the New-Testament church resembles or differs from the

Old-Testament church, baptism must resemble or differ from circumcision, and the subjects of baptism must resemble or differ from the subjects of circumcision. The churches resemble in this, — they both consist of “the seed of Abraham.” In this also the subjects of baptism resemble the subjects of circumcision, except such of the latter as have been cut off from the New-Testament church, who will be presently noticed. And the rites resemble in sealing the covenant; in marking or distinguishing those who are the elect, or church, of God. The churches differ in this, — that the New-Testament church is enlarged, and rendered more spiritual. We will notice now the change as to spirituality. The New-Testament church is not a nation, as the Old was: hence slaves, &c., are excluded as such, since none can enter it save by birth. And the church no longer consists of “the seed of Abraham” by carnal descent, but by faith; and is therefore no longer entered by carnal birth, but by spiritual birth. Accordingly, those persons who are excluded, as such, from the church, — as slaves, &c., — are to the same extent excluded from baptism. The other subjects of circumcision were such as really descended from Abraham according to the flesh; while the subjects of baptism are such as actually have faith, — that is, actually believe that the Son of God came in the flesh, suffered, died, and rose from the dead. And, if the theory of circumcision borrowed from the Rev. E. M’Millan (§ 261) be correct, circumcision pointed to the then future incarnation of Messiah; while baptism points to his past death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism differs from circumcision in form, and in this, — that it cannot properly be given to any, merely because they are the slaves or the carnal offspring of certain individuals.

§ 294. It may be advisable to illustrate these principles by diagrams, in order to “assist the mind in keeping its ideas distinct, and to help in comparing them together with readiness and correctness.”¹ It will be interesting also to observe how mathematical figures and principles may be made subservient to moral investigation.

¹ Upham’s “Elements of Mental Philosophy,” § 285.

§ 295. For the first illustration, let two rectilinear figures represent the two dispensations of the church. The lines will be designated by letters placed at their middles; the angles, by the letters of the lines including them; and the triangles, by the letters of their three sides. Let the Old-Testament church be represented by the line O; the rite of circumcision, by the line C; the proper subjects of circumcision, by the line S; and the old dispensation, by the triangle SOC. Let the New-Testament church be represented by the line N; the rite of baptism, by the line B; the proper subjects of baptism, by the line X; and the new dispensation, by the triangle XNB. When two lines meet, their positional relation constitutes an angle; or, as Prof. Davies remarks, angles "arise from the relative positions" "of lines and planes by which they are bounded."¹ Therefore the reciprocal relations of the church, the initiatory rite, and the proper subjects to be initiated under each dispensation, will be represented by the angles formed by their respective lines.



§ 296. We have seen that the relations of circumcision and baptism to the churches, and to their respective subjects, are the same (§§ 51, 73). Hence NB is equal to OC; and XB, to SC. But, when two angles of one triangle are equal to two angles of another, the remaining angle of the one is equal to the remaining angle of the other.² Therefore NX is equal to OS; that is, the relation of X [the proper subjects of baptism] to N [the New-

¹ "Logic of Mathematics," §§ 250, 273. ² Euclid, book i. prop. 32.

Testament church] is the same as the relation of S [the subjects of circumcision] to O [the Old-Testament church]. Thus the first conclusion of the foregoing argument is illustrated by the positional relations of the lines of the two triangles (§ 73).

§ 297. As the angles of the triangles are equal, if one side of one triangle be equal to one side of the other, either opposite or adjacent to the equal angles, the other sides of the one triangle are equal to the other sides of the other, each to each; the equal sides being opposite to the equal angles.¹ Then, if N [the New-Testament church] be equal to O [the Old-Testament church], B [baptism] is equal to C [circumcision], and X [the proper subjects of baptism] to S [the proper subjects of circumcision]. (See § 292.)

§ 298. Let these principles be further illustrated by the relations of the lines with respect to length or quantity. The angles of the one triangle being equal to those of the other, each to each, the sides about the equal angles are proportionals; and those which are opposite the equal angles are homologous sides; that is, are the antecedents and consequents of the ratios.² Therefore B [baptism] is to N [the New-Testament church] as C [circumcision] is to O [the Old-Testament church]; and B [baptism] is to X [the proper subjects of baptism] as C [circumcision] is to S [the proper subjects of circumcision]; and X [the proper subjects of baptism] is to N [the New-Testament church] as S [the proper subjects of circumcision] to O [the Old-Testament church]. Thus we again reach our first conclusion (§§ 73, 296).

§ 299. Or if the line C be taken as representing carnal birth, and the line B as representing spiritual birth, the same process will show that X [the proper subjects of baptism] is to N [the New-Testament church] as S [the proper subjects of circumcision] is to O [the Old-Testament church]; and B [spiritual birth] is to N [the New-Testament church] as C [carnal birth] is to O [the Old-Testament church]; and B [spiritual birth] is to X [the proper subjects of baptism] as C [carnal birth] is to S [the proper

¹ Euclid, book i. prop. 26.

² Euclid, book vi. prop. 4.

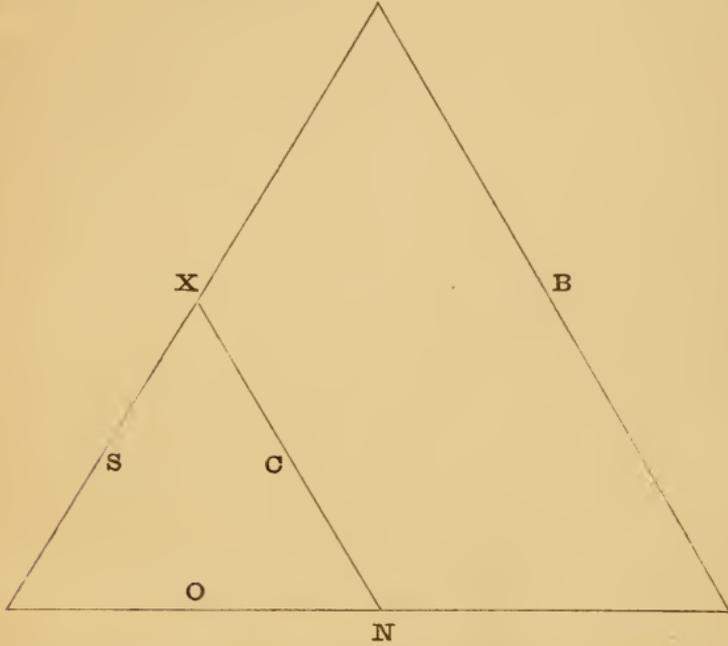
subjects of circumcision]. Here we find substantially three others of our series of conclusions (§§ 86, 89, 102).

§ 300. Here again it is obvious, that, if one side of the one triangle be equal to the homologous side of the other, the other sides of the one are equal to the homologous sides of the other (§ 297). Since $B : N :: C : O$, and $X : N :: S : O$, if N be equal to O , B must be equal to C , and X to S . For example: If C be equal to one-half of O , B cannot bear the same relation to N , unless it be equal to one-half of N ; for that is the ratio or relation of C to O . And, if N be equal to O , one-half of the one is equal to one-half of the other. So also of X and S . Then, if N [the New-Testament church] be equal to O [the Old-Testament church], B [baptism] is equal to C [circumcision], and X [the proper subjects of baptism] to S [the proper subjects of circumcision] (§§ 290, 291, 296). In like manner, it may be shown, that, in exact proportion as N [the New-Testament church] resembles or differs from O [the Old-Testament church], B [baptism] resembles or differs from C [circumcision], and X [the proper subjects of baptism] resembles or differs from S [the proper subjects of circumcision] (§§ 292, 293).

§ 301. Some of the resemblances and differences between the church, under the old and new dispensations, have been pointed out. Under the latter, it has been enlarged, and rendered more spiritual (§§ 35, 36). The latter point of difference having been noticed (§ 293), let us now confine our attention to the difference which consists in the enlargement of the church. It will be found that a corresponding enlargement must follow in baptism and its subjects.

§ 302. Let the old dispensation be represented, as before, by the triangle SOC ; and let the lines and angles have the same signification. The enlargement of the church may be represented by enlarging the line O ; that is, producing it to a sufficient length. The whole line N , which includes the line O , will represent the New-Testament church. The relation of baptism to that church is the same as the relation of circumcision to the Old-Testament

church : therefore, baptism may be said to be parallel to circumcision (§ 55). Accordingly, by drawing B parallel to C, from the end of the line N, we make NB equal to OC.¹ Produce S till it meet B; and let the whole line, thus enlarged, be called X, and represent the subjects of baptism.



§ 303. In the triangles XNB and SOC, the angles XB and SC are equal, because the parallels B and C are intersected by X;¹ also because NB is equal to OC, and OS is common to the two triangles.² Hence the triangles are similar; the three angles of the one being equal to the three angles of the other, each to each. Therefore³ N [the New-Testament church] is to O [the Old-Testament church] as B [baptism] is to C [circumcision]; that is, baptism is enlarged beyond circumcision in the same proportion as the New-Testament church is enlarged beyond the Old-Testament church. Also, as O [the Old-Testament church] was enlarged into N [the New-Testament church], it became necessary

¹ Euclid, book i. prop. 29. ² Euclid, book i. prop. 32, cor. 4.

³ Euclid, book vi. prop. 4.

to enlarge also S [the subjects of circumcision] into X [the subjects of baptism], in order to complete the triangle XNB [the new dispensation]. And this enlargement is exactly proportional to the enlargement of the church; for, in the triangle XNB, C is parallel to B: therefore¹ X [the subjects of baptism] is to S [the subjects of circumcision] as N [the New-Testament church] is to O [the Old-Testament church].

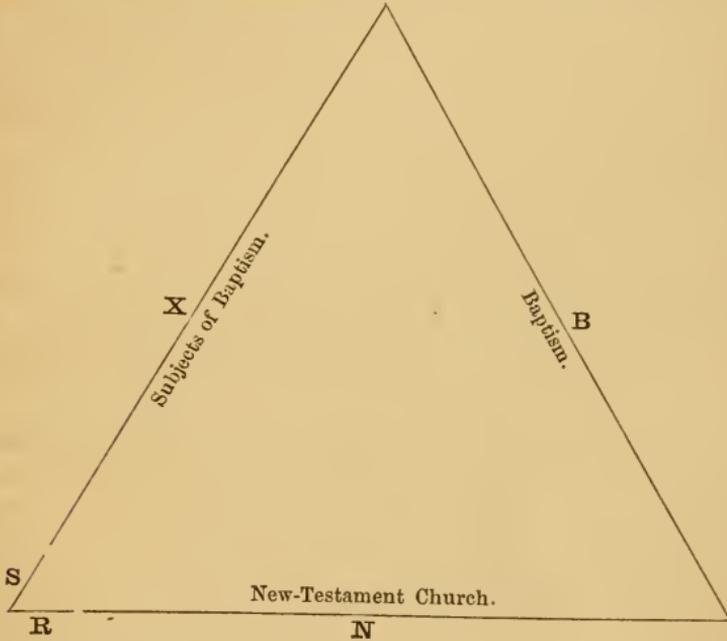
§ 304. This may be thought proving too much; for slaves, and others who were admitted to circumcision, are excluded from baptism. This is a curtailing, instead of an enlargement, of the subjects. Very true: but, on the other hand, females are admitted to baptism, but were excluded from circumcision; which makes the subjects, thus far, at least equal. But equality is not enlargement. The enlargement is exactly the same which has taken place in the church. Once the church embraced only Israelites, but is so extended as to embrace all believers, whether Jew or Gentile; and baptism is properly administered to all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free.

§ 305. Our last diagram, however, is defective in two particulars. Firstly, the triangle which represents the new dispensation is intersected by the line C, which represents circumcision, — the best emblem of “the middle wall of partition,” which formerly separated the Israelites from the Gentiles; that is, the ritual law of Moses. As “the middle wall of partition” has been “broken down;”² that is, as the ritual law, including circumcision, has been discarded from the new dispensation; in order to represent that dispensation more correctly, the dividing line C must be removed; leaving the triangle XNB undivided, — “one body.” Secondly, N, representing the New-Testament church, embraces the whole line O, which represents the Old-Testament church; whereas the greater part of the latter were “broken off,” and only “a remnant” saved in the church. The same remark applies to the lines X and S. Therefore, to represent the new dispensation more correctly, X must embrace but a part of S,

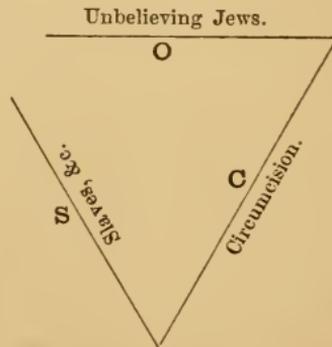
¹ Euclid, book vi. prop. 2.

² Eph. ii. 14.

excluding slaves, &c., as such; and N must embrace but a part of O; that is, the remnant, which the line R may represent. The part "broken off because of unbelief," consisting of the larger portion of the Jewish nation, "who say they are Jews, and are not,"¹ together with circumcision, "the middle wall of partition," which is overthrown and cast out of the scheme, must be removed from our triangle. Accordingly, they are represented by the



lines O and C, below the triangle. R, the remnant of the "good olive-tree," must be enlarged by the branches of the "wild olive." Let this enlargement be represented by producing the line R to a sufficient length; and, from the end of the line thus produced,



¹ Rev. ii. 9; iii. 9.

draw the line B, making the angle NB equal to the angle OC. The lines B and S being produced, make the triangle complete. B represents baptism; X, the proper subjects of baptism; N, the New-Testament church, consisting of the remnant of Jews, and all the Gentiles who have been brought into the church with them by faith. Thus the triangle XNB represents the gospel dispensation, — the church, the initiatory rite, and the subjects of it.

§ 306. This triangle is similar to the triangle SOC, which, in the other diagrams, represents the old dispensation; that is, all the angles or relations are equal, though the sides are not. Consequently, the sides about the equal angles are proportionals; and those which are opposite the equal angles are homologous sides.¹ In other words, B [baptism] is to N [the New-Testament church] as C [circumcision] is to O [the Old-Testament church]; and B [baptism] is to X [the subjects of baptism] as C [circumcision] to S [the subjects of circumcision]; and X [the subjects of baptism] to N [the New-Testament church] as S [the subjects of circumcision] to O [the Old-Testament church]. Thus, once again, we have reached the first of our series of consequences (§§ 73, 296, 298).

§ 307. Our last diagram will illustrate the discarding of membership by carnal birth from the Christian scheme, and the substitution of membership by spiritual birth. Let the line C again represent carnal birth; and B, spiritual birth. Then B [spiritual birth] is to N [the New-Testament church] as C [carnal birth] is to O [the Old-Testament church]; and B [spiritual birth] is to X [the proper subjects of baptism] as C [carnal birth] is to S [the proper subjects of circumcision]. And it is thus exemplified, that, in exact proportion as N [the New-Testament church] differs from O [the Old-Testament church], B [spiritual birth] differs from C [carnal birth], and X [the proper subjects of baptism] from S [the proper subjects of circumcision]. We thus see, also, that the distinction between Jew and Gentile, arising out of carnal birth, is

¹ Euclid, book vi. prop. 4.

abolished in the church ; that Christ Jesus, our peace, "hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition;"¹ that those "who say they are Jews, and are not,"² together with the carnal birth in which they gloried, have been cast out of the Christian scheme ; under which, "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew who is one inwardly ; and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God."³ And so Jesus told the Jews, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."⁴ This idea shines forth in almost every page of the New Testament ; and this it was which gave such offence to the unbelieving Jews, such joy to the believing Gentiles.

§ 308. The above diagrams are designed, not for proof, but for illustration ; yet it is believed that the principles which control the mathematical truths employed in these illustrations will hold equally in all cases where there is an equal resemblance of relations. These are evidently the principles which Pedobaptists assume, and attempt to apply, when they contend that the church is now the same as under the old dispensation, but is spiritualized and enlarged (§ 36), or "expanded to a nobler form ;"⁵ and that baptism is the same thing as circumcision, except in outward form (§§ 49-51). If these premises be true, the Pedobaptists are right in believing that the principles above illustrated are applicable. But they commit a very natural error, a very slight yet important oversight, in attempting to apply those principles. They overlook the truth, that it is one's relation to the church of God, not to individual members of it, which entitles one to receive the rite of initiation. They are also guilty of a fallacy of that kind which Mill pronounces to be perhaps the commonest, and cer-

¹ Eph. ii. 14.

³ Rom. ii. 28, 29.

² Rev. ii. 9 ; iii. 9.

⁴ John viii. 39.

⁵ Rev. William Ingraham Kip, "Double Witness of the Church," p. 241.

tainly the most dangerous, of the fallacies of ratiocination, and which consists in changing the premises. "Instances of this fallacy," says he, "will be found in almost all the argumentative discourses of unprecise thinkers; and we need only here advert to one of the obscurer forms of it. . . . This is committed, when, in the premises, a proposition is asserted with a qualification, and the qualification lost sight of in the conclusion; or, oftener, when a limitation or condition, though not asserted, is necessary to the truth of the proposition, but is forgotten when that proposition comes to be employed as a premise."¹ Thus the Pedobaptists, as already remarked (§ 269), assume the proposition, that the Christian church is the same as the Israelitish church, but with this qualification, — that the Christian church is rendered more spiritual; consisting no longer of the seed of Abraham born of the flesh, but of his spiritual seed (§§ 32–36). But, when they come to employ that proposition as a premise, they lose sight of the qualification; setting it aside on the ground that the difference "is not essential" (§ 35). "To assume that it is not essential is to beg the question. The difference is so essential that it is the very pivot upon which the whole matter turns. It is the very thing which excludes carnal infants from baptism," whether baptism is the same as circumcision, or is continued, as an initiatory rite, from the old dispensation (§ 269). In the foregoing pages, the effort has been made to point out the error of the Pedobaptists, and apply correctly the principles which they are believed to misapply.

¹ "System of Logic," book v. chap. 6, § 4.



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