

# Benjamin Kurtz

## The Necessity and Advantages of Infant Baptism



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"The history of the Church confirms and illustrates the teachings of the Bible, that yielding little by little leads to yielding more and more, until all is in danger; and the tempter is never satisfied until all is lost. – Matthias Loy, *The Story of My Life*

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1840 ARGUMENTS,

DERIVED FROM

SACRED SCRIPTURE AND SOUND REASON,

EXHIBITING THE

NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES

OF

**INFANT BAPTISM;**

AND PROVING

SPRINKLING OR AFFUSION

TO BE THE MOST SCRIPTURAL AND APPROPRIATE MODE OF  
ADMINISTERING IT;

TOGETHER WITH A NUMBER OF

ESSAYS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

CONNECTED WITH BAPTISM.

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## P R E F A C E .

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THE following pages have been written in obedience to a “*Resolution*” of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland, and in accordance with the reiterated requests of personal friends.

In preparing them, it has been our uniform endeavor to concentrate the largest possible amount of conclusive evidence and useful information, within the narrowest limits; and also to adapt our language and reasoning to the capacity of the plain unlettered reader, in order thus to meet an important desideratum in the church.

If in some cases, the nature of our subject compelled us to depart from this course, and to enter into a train of abstruse argument and philological criticism, the merits or demerits of which can only be fully estimated by the learned, those instances are by no means so frequent as to interfere materially with the popular utility of the work. We therefore indulge the hope, that our investigations may present some claim to the attention of those, whose want of time or inclination forbids the task of poring over ponderous tomes of scholastic erudition, and

be found not altogether unworthy the notice of the student and divine.

To say that we are indifferent as to the judgment that shall be pronounced upon our efforts, would be mere affectation;—we are not indifferent. We cordially desire that they may be well received by the church generally, and particularly by that class of individuals for whose special benefit we have mainly labored; and above all, that the **MASTER**, whose glory we trust we are most anxious to advance, may in great mercy, smile upon them, and by his blessing, make them instrumental in promoting correct views on the interesting questions which we have discussed.

**THE AUTHOR.**

# INFANT BAPTISM.

## PART FIRST.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### BAPTISM IN GENERAL.

BEFORE we proceed to the investigation of the subject of the present work, a few preliminary remarks explanatory of our view of the nature of baptism in general, are deemed necessary.

*Christian baptism is a sacrament ordained by Christ as the sign and seal of God's covenant with his people, and a formal recognition of their right of membership in his church.*

1. Whether we define a *sacrament* merely as an ordinance by which we are formally brought under an obligation of obedience to God, and which obligation is equally sacred with an oath,<sup>1</sup> or as "an outward and visi-

<sup>1</sup>The word sacrament is derived from the Latin word *sacramentum*, which was adopted to signify an oath, particularly the oath taken by soldiers to be true to their country and general. This word has other significations, but it is in this sense mainly, if not exclusively, that it is used in reference to baptism and the Lord's supper, in which Christians may be said to bind themselves as by an oath, or the most sacred vows, to obedience to God.

ble sign of an inward and spiritual grace ;”—baptism is equally a sacrament. For in it the subject either personally or by sponsors acknowledges God’s claims on his obedience, and solemnly devotes himself to his service ; and it is obvious that the water applied to the subject, is “an outward and visible sign,” and that the covenant of which it is the seal, guarantees the richest spiritual blessings. Hence baptism is to all intents and purposes a *sacrament*.

2. If it be maintained that a sacrament is a *means of grace*, we add that such is plainly the nature of baptism. It symbolically represents some of the most important truths of the gospel, and that too in a very striking and forcible manner ; and as *divine truth* is the principal means of grace, it is evident that baptism must necessarily partake of this nature. Moreover, its administration is connected with God’s word and prayer, which in themselves are the most efficient means of grace ; hence it follows that it must likewise be a means as well as a seal of grace.

3. It is also a *sign and seal of God’s covenant with his people*. The covenant here alluded to, is that which was solemnly entered into with Abraham, nearly two thousand years anterior to the Christian era :<sup>1</sup> “*And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*” Of this covenant, *circumcision* was the original sign and seal :<sup>2</sup> “*And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised,*” &c. But when Christ appeared, the old dispensation, having fulfilled its grand design, was set aside to give place to the new one ; the church

<sup>1</sup>Gen. xvii. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. xvii. 12.

assumed a different aspect ; its external ordinances, its ceremonies, sacrifices, etc., which referred to and pre-figured him especially in his mediatorial character, were necessarily abolished, because they all centered and received their accomplishment in him. Circumcision, one of the ordinances of the old economy, shared the same fate ; it was annulled to make room for Christian baptism, an institution better adapted to the simplicity, increased light and more “easy yoke” of the New Testament economy. The Abrahamic covenant however, usually denominated “the covenant of grace,” was not and could not be abrogated, because that was designed to be an “*everlasting* covenant.” While the covenant therefore, by which the church of God was organized, continued substantially the same, the sign and seal of that covenant was altered ; circumcision was repealed and baptism substituted, as will hereafter be more fully proved. Hence baptism is, as we have defined it, *a sign and seal of God’s covenant with his people.*

4. It is further *a formal recognition of membership in the church of God.* Baptism is almost universally spoken of as an *initiatory rite*, or a means of *introducing* individuals to membership in the church. With certain limitations, this mode of representing it may be admissible, but if strictly interpreted it is calculated to convey, and in numerous instances has conveyed, an unscriptural and consequently erroneous view of the subject. Children are members of the visible church of God *through the merits of Christ’s atonement and in virtue of their birth from Christian parents or of their being brought under Christian guardianship*, and therefore have no need to be made members by baptism. With

regard to adults, whether heathen or inhabitants of a Christian country, they are always previously instructed in the precepts of the gospel and required to *profess* their faith in it, prior to their baptism; and it is this *profession*, and not their baptism, that constitutes them members of God's true church. By baptism they are, in a very solemn and impressive manner, recognized and publicly proclaimed as members of the church; hence we prefer describing baptism as *a formal recognition of church-membership*, rather than as an *initiatory rite*.

The idea here advanced may be illustrated by the following fact: In Europe there is a "Traveller's Society," the constitution of which declares that every person of good character who has travelled in foreign countries to a certain extent, shall be a member. The mode of admission is thus: the member subscribes the constitution; a mark is made on his right arm with indelible ink; his name is added to the list of recorded members, and he receives a certificate of membership. (This may in some sense be termed an *initiatory ceremony*.) If he neglect to lay claim to his membership in due time, he forfeits it. From this statement it is evident, that every traveller of a certain description is a member of the society, and can *demand* admission; that if he neglect to do so he loses his membership, which however, by a compliance with certain requisitions, may be regained; and that before he can participate in the rights and honors of the society, he must submit to a prescribed form in which his membership is openly recognized and his obligations as one of the parties constituting the association are sealed. It is manifest that it is not *the ceremony of initiation*, but his having performed certain journeys, visited certain cities, &c., that made him a member; and

his initiation is no more than a formal recognition and ratification of membership previously possessed. So children are members of God's church in virtue of Christ's merits and their birth from Christian parents; God's covenant with Abraham, made nearly forty centuries ago, and never revoked, constitutes them members, and when baptized their membership is set forth and solemnly certified. We indeed readily admit that the analogy in the foregoing illustration is not perfect, but we think it sufficiently so to answer our purpose.

In support of this view, we must be permitted to offer a few remarks. The covenant with Abraham, which is confessedly still in force, being emphatically an "*everlasting covenant*," embraces his "*seed in all generations*," as well as himself, consequently his infant offspring and that of all his posterity were included as subjects of this covenant, or in other words, as members of the church of God, and that by virtue of their birth from a chosen and godly parentage, or of their being placed under a godly influence. It was not circumcision therefore, that entitled the pious patriarch and his children, or the slave-child born of worthless parents but brought under Jewish protection,<sup>1</sup> to church-membership, but the stipulations of the covenant. Circumcision however was the sign and seal of the covenant, and must therefore be regarded as a solemn token of membership. Apply this elucidation to baptism, and the idea we wish to impart will be easily apprehended.

<sup>1</sup>It should be borne in mind that God also required the children of heathen parents to be circumcised, if by slavery or otherwise, those children were brought under Jewish control. "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." Gen. xvii. 12, 13; see also Exod. xii. 48.

This exhibition of the subject receives irresistible force from the fact that God ordained, that if any, whether infant or adult, should not be circumcised, "*that soul should be cut off from his people;*" because, it is added, "*he hath broken my vow.*" Here then it is clearly manifest, that the individual so "cut off," in consequence of non-circumcision, must previously and independently of circumcision, have belonged to God's people;—have been a subject of the covenant, and member of the church; or how, on any other supposition, could he be *excinded*, or be said to *have broken his vow*? Who then must not plainly perceive, that church-membership existed prior to circumcision,<sup>1</sup> and that the latter was, strictly speaking, only the recognition of the former? In like manner, the children of Christian parents are by birth, in virtue of God's covenant, members of his church, and when baptism is administered, their membership is publicly signified and the covenant of grace sealed.

Some additional light may be reflected on this subject, by a reference to the established usages of civil life. A number of individuals in a state are chosen members of Congress; they are termed "members elect," and are members in full so far as "the sovereign people," the source of all power in a republic, can make them such; but they cannot claim a right to the exercise of their official privileges, until they shall have complied with certain forms prescribed by the constitution. Evidently it is not these forms that elevate them to their office, but the voice of the people; the forms however may be regarded in a sense as a seal of their membership, and should they refuse to comply with them they

<sup>1</sup>Abraham was a subject of God's covenant fourteen years before circumcision was instituted.



would be “cut off” or excluded from the enjoyment of their membership. So children of Christian parents are members of God’s church in virtue of his election of them through Christ to that dignity in the covenant of grace, and baptism is the seal of that covenant, the vow of fidelity to it, and of course, a public recognition of their membership.

This is perhaps as suitable a place as any other to observe, that the common English version of the words of the institution of baptism,<sup>1</sup> is confessedly erroneous;—the word, *μαθητευσατε* means, *to disciple or make disciples*, and hence the passage should be rendered thus: “Go ye therefore and disciple (or make disciples of) all nations, *baptizing* (or, *and baptize*) them in the name,”<sup>2</sup> &c.; the monosyllable “by” frequently inserted immediately before baptizing, is an interpolation not found in the original and conveys a wrong idea.

These words present baptism to us as an ordinance to be administered originally by the apostles, and subsequently by the ministers of the gospel; for what was the duty of the apostles in this case, is equally the duty of all succeeding ministers. Moreover, the office of baptizing was entrusted to the same individuals who were commissioned to “teach” or preach the gospel, and these were the pastors of the church, hence they and they alone are warranted under ordinary circumstances to per-

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup>There can be no dispute concerning this translation, as the ablest and most respectable philologists bear harmonious testimony to its correctness. Examples of a like construction of the present participle are of constant occurrence in the New Testament. Thus, Matt. xv. 25, “*Ἡ δὲ ἐλθούσα προσέκυνε αὐτῷ λέγουσα*,” “but she came and worshipped him *and said*,” &c. See also Matt. xix. 3, and many other similar instances.

form this office; and the more so, as a commission to perform any specific work, on prudential grounds at least, excludes all upon whom that commission has not been conferred.

We hope we shall be pardoned for here introducing a few remarks, which, though not perhaps legitimately connected with the argument, are yet not irrelevant. In some of the ancient liturgies of the Lutheran church in Germany, we find provision made for the administration of baptism in cases of "extreme necessity" by *midwives*. This practice was originally introduced by the church of Rome. In that church it is maintained that children, dying without baptism, are not saved, but have a place allotted them in *Limbus*, the ante-chamber of hell; and hence the intense solicitude of its members to have their children baptized even by a female, rather than that they should die without receiving the ordinance. This unscriptural view has been rejected by the Lutherans, but they nevertheless hold in Germany to what is termed "*Nothtaufe*," that is, private baptism by the midwife *in cases of extreme necessity*. They do not pretend that there is a divine command or any express authority for this doctrine. Baptism, they conceive, is a consecration of the child, not to a secular but to a spiritual kingdom, yea to God's eternal kingdom in glory, and hence, it is deemed highly proper that every infant should be baptized, though its temporal existence should endure but for an hour. Moreover, it is regarded as a source of precious consolation to parents to reflect, that their children, who are hurried hence immediately after they open their eyes upon this world, have received the seal of God's gracious covenant, and been solemnly dedicated to him in his own appointed ordinance. The hope of a

glorious re-union seems to be thereby strengthened, and thus an invisible bond between the living and the dead is cherished through the power of the gospel. From all this it is inferred, that children should by all means be baptized if they survive their birth long enough to admit of it; and if the services of a minister of the gospel cannot be procured in time, it is thought better that the ordinance should be administered by a pious midwife than be altogether neglected.

But in the church in Germany where this practice still obtains, the most judicious measures are pursued in order to secure the assistance of midwives of adequate professional and moral qualifications. The civil authority takes cognizance of the subject, and has adopted wise and efficient regulations in reference to it. A midwife is required to be an educated and intelligent woman, who has herself given birth to children; she must not only be in high repute for patience, meekness, diligence, skill, &c. but also afford undoubted evidences of piety. Physicians duly appointed for the purpose, examine and decide as to her professional ability, and the clergy must pronounce upon her moral and religious character. They must moreover be women of *ample* experience in other respects as well as in personal religion, and it is a part of the duty assigned them, to impart consolation and encouragement to the patient, to pray with her, &c. Every species of superstition and quackery is strictly prohibited. Such is the character of licensed midwives in Germany; and in special cases, such as have been mentioned above, it belongs to their office to administer baptism. But if a regular minister can possibly be procured during the probable lifetime of the child, they are relieved from this duty.

Should the child after such baptism be restored to health, it is subsequently carried to the church, where testimony is publicly borne to the fact of its baptism; the ordinance however, is not repeated, but sanctioned and confirmed by the officiating minister. The ceremony on such occasions is exceedingly interesting and impressive; but it would lead to too long a digression to repeat the form.

One of the arguments adduced in support of the foregoing usage, is the fact that on occasion of the sickness of *Moses*, his wife *Zipora* performed circumcision on their child, which in ordinary circumstances, was the prerogative of the father. But our object is not to defend the practice, but simply to state it, and to remark, that though we are not aware that it prevails in the Lutheran church in this country, yet there are some who approve of it. That it obtains in the church of England, is known to most readers. We do not at present either advocate or condemn it, and think we have expressed ourselves with sufficient definiteness in a preceding paragraph, as to the class of individuals to whom in ordinary circumstances, the duty of administering baptism properly belongs. After this slight digression, we return to our main subject.

Water was selected by our Lord as the sign in baptism, for very obvious reasons. It is a striking emblem of moral purification, and therefore admirably adapted to set forth the import of this sacrament and the obligations of its subjects; it was in previous use at the "divers baptisms" which existed among the Jews under the law, and it may be had without cost and in all countries. Having been wisely chosen by the Divine Author of baptism, we have no more right to substitute sand or milk or

any thing else for water, than we have to change the outward elements of the holy supper. If these elements cannot be procured, the irremediable want of them absolves us from the obligation of celebrating the sacraments. Our Lord never required impossibilities from his disciples.

The water must be applied in the name of the *Trine God*,—Father, Son and Holy Ghost; the baptism of all those who do not believe in the Trinity, and cannot therefore consistently baptize in the name of the *Great Three-One God*, is unscriptural,—is not Christian baptism.

The practice of baptizing organs, bells and other inanimate objects, is so gross a perversion that it is not worthy of serious refutation; the command of Christ as well as the example of the apostles and their immediate successors, plainly limits its administration to human beings.

*Adults* are required in the Scriptures to profess their faith in Jesus Christ prior to baptism, that is, to make a public declaration of their cordial belief in the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, which is usually in this country denominated a *Profession of Religion*; for the command in reference to them is, *to disciple them*, not however by *baptizing them*, as is generally maintained, but by preaching the gospel to them; and so soon as they embrace the gospel or profess faith in the Messiah, baptism is to be administered. The apostles undoubtedly understood Christ's command thus; for Peter called upon the Jews to repent and then be baptized; Philip did not baptize the *eunuch* until he professed faith; Lydia was not baptized until the Lord had opened her heart; the jailor was baptized in consequence of his faith; so was Paul; so were Cornelius and his household.

Infants obviously come under a different rule. They are incapable of professing faith, and are accordingly baptized on the profession of their parents, or of those who offer them to God in baptism, and who are their proper and authorized representatives in this transaction.

All the Israelites made public profession of the religion of the Scriptures; all were circumcised and regularly celebrated the passover; if they neglected to do so they were "cut off;" hence, in ordinary circumstances no children but those of professing Jews and those under Jewish guardianship could lawfully be recognized as members of the church and receive the seal of the covenant of grace under the old dispensation; and unless that covenant in this respect has been altered, (which has not been, and never can be proved,) it follows irresistibly that no children but those of professing Christians and such as are brought under Christian influence can lawfully receive the seal (which is baptism) of the same covenant under the new dispensation. Peter declares that *the promise* is to *as many* (and their children) *as the Lord our God shall call;*<sup>1</sup> as all are bound to *obey the call* he must have alluded to such; but obedience to the call implies a profession of faith, hence baptism, strictly speaking, belongs only to those who profess the religion of the Bible, and to *their children* and wards, or such as are under their care; so affirms the apostle in language that can hardly be misunderstood. Paul teaches, that if both parents be unbelievers, that is, heathens, *their children are unclean,*<sup>2</sup> that is, are not members of the visible church of God, and may not be offered to him in baptism, unless made clean by their adoption into a Christian family or by their being brought under Christian in-

<sup>1</sup>Acts ii. 39.

<sup>2</sup>1 Cor. vii. 14.

fluence. But if any one of them be a believer, then are the children *holy*, (*in an ecclesiastical sense*,) that is, they are members of the church of God to which the believing parent is united in virtue of his or her profession, and must in consequence of this relation, be devoted to him in baptism.

It is in vain to object to this view of the subject on the supposition that children are entitled to baptism *in their own right* and independently of any relation to their parents; for not only can no such right be found in the original stipulations of the covenant, but the very idea is subversive of the great design of baptism. On the above supposition ministers would be bound to administer it to the children of infidel and heathen parents, whether they renounced their infidelity and heathenism or not!—and would not this defeat one of the principal objects of this holy ordinance?—No, like circumcision, it is “a seal of the righteousness of faith,” and therefore presupposes the exercise of at least historical faith; but it is impossible for infant children to believe, and hence it is on a profession of faith made by those who present them in the ordinance, that they can be baptized. If it be contended that as children were *universally* circumcised under the law, so they ought to be *universally* baptized under the gospel; our reply is, that the circumcision of children was precisely co-extensive with a profession of the religion of the Bible on the part of parents, and the same rule should govern in the administration of baptism; for it is in every case, this profession which gives the right, in the church, to this ordinance. If parents refuse to believe in the gospel, how can they dedicate their children to the service of its divine Author? if

*their* heart be radically wrong in the one case, can it be right in the other?—In vain will it be pretended that they love their offspring more than themselves, or that they can perform an act of religious duty on their behalf, which they cannot perform on their own.

It is hardly necessary to add concerning this profession, that it should be sincere; or that those who make it ought to mean all that is ordinarily intended by the profession.

The want of such sincerity however, though it inculcates the hypocritical professors, cannot affect the validity of the ordinance. It is to be feared that Jewish children were often circumcised while their parents did not exercise genuine faith, yet the circumcision was neither invalidated nor rendered unmeaning on that account. It is sufficient for the visible administration that faith is visibly professed. The Baptists no doubt often administer baptism to adults who are not honest in their professions, but they do not consider such dishonesty as divesting the ordinance of either its warrant or its meaning.

We cannot close this chapter, written more than a year ago, without quoting a passage from an article in a late number of the *Biblical Repository*, which, so far as it goes, entirely accords with the views just expressed: “It is a common sentiment,” says that writer, “that the baptism of children makes them members of the church, but this is an error; their baptism does not make them members, it only recognizes their right of membership already existing; their membership is not founded upon their baptism, but their baptism upon their membership; and whether that seal of the covenant be applied to them or not, they are (in the case of believing parents) not “without” but within the pale of the church. Is any



one here disposed to object, "how can children be members of the church without their own consent?" I reply, that with equal propriety it might be asked, how can they be members of the civil state, or created rational beings, without their own consent. It is their "birth-right," their privilege, and none the less such because it is a common one or greatly perverted." See Bib. Rep. for Oct. 1839, Art. III. by Rev. S. Helfenstein, p. 314.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CHURCH OF GOD.

HAVING had repeated occasion to use the phrase, *church of God*, and as it will often occur in our future investigations, it may be useful to ascertain the several meanings attached to it.

The expression, *church of God*, is frequently synonymous with *kingdom of God* and *kingdom of heaven*.

1. The visible church or kingdom of God signifies the aggregate body of all those who profess the true religion, and of their infant offspring, 1 Cor. xii. 28 ; xv. 9, &c. The whole of this body comprehends all Christian nations, but constitutes only ONE *society*, of which the Bible is the statute book ; Jesus Christ the Head ; and a covenant relation the uniting bond.

2. The invisible church comprises all those of every denomination in the world, who are thoroughly converted to God, whether in a state of imperfection and conflict on earth, or of perfect holiness and glory in heaven. Eph. v. 24—27 ; Heb. xii. 23.

3. The term church also denotes any body of professing Christians who live together in the same city or vicinity, and worship in the same or in different houses. Acts xi. 22 ; xiii. 1 ; 1 Cor. i. 2 ; Gal. i. 2.

4. It is also used in a denominational sense, signifying a whole Christian community, who hold to the same creed or confession and are united in the same mode of worship or discipline. This is a more modern application of the

word, and it is in this sense that we speak of the Lutheran church, the Presbyterian church, the church of England—of Scotland—of Rome, &c.

5. It yet further designates a congregation of Christians who worship together in the same place and under the same minister. Col. iv. 15; Rom. xvi. 5.

We cannot recollect that the phrase is ever used in the Bible to denote the *building* or *house of worship*, although by metonymy it is often thus employed in the present day; some think it is used in this sense in 1 Cor. xi. 22; but to us it appears very doubtful, especially as we do not read that houses of public worship were erected at so early a period as that at which the apostle penned his Epistle to the Corinthians.

Accordingly, when we say that baptism is a formal token of membership in the church of God, we do not mean that a baptized person is *necessarily* a member of the invisible church, or of the Lutheran church, or of the Presbyterian church, &c., but of the church of God in its most enlarged acceptation; and he may also, and indeed is bound to be, a member of the invisible church; at the same time he may be a member of the Lutheran, or of some other denominational church.

Again, a person baptized in the Romish or Greek church, or in the church of England, and communing in that church, is not of course a member of the church of Scotland, or of the German Reformed church.

Further, a person baptized in the Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, and in good standing there, is not necessarily a member of the Presbyterian church in Baltimore, for he has no right to vote or perform any other act of membership in that church on the mere ground of his

membership in the former place, unless it be occasional communion, and that by special permission.

Once more, an infant baptized by a particular minister is not necessarily a member of the church over which that minister presides; it may be the child of parents belonging to some other church, or even some other Christian denomination, and must be regarded as a member in the church of its parents or guardians.

A Lutheran from New York may, in adult age, be baptized by a Lutheran minister in Baltimore, and thus receive the token of membership in the visible church of God, and yet have no intention of becoming a communicant in the Lutheran church, or, in other words, never acquire a right to perform acts of membership in it.

Thus also a student of divinity may be solemnly set apart to the gospel ministry, but this does not constitute him a minister of a particular church, but of the church of Christ at large. As a minister he stands in the same relation to the church which an adult in a private point of view sustains who has just been baptized. The one becomes the minister of a particular church, solely by the fact, that a congregation is committed to his charge in conformity to proper ecclesiastical authority; and the other becomes a member of a particular church solely by his agreeing with some particular body of Christians to worship God in connection with them, in the same manner and in accordance with the same principles; and to unite together in the same communion and under the same discipline. In the Evangelic Lutheran church this latter act is made public by the solemn rite of confirmation, which is regarded as a voluntary and personal ratification of the original covenant sealed in baptism, and as

a peculiarly appropriate and impressive mode of admitting individuals to adult denominational membership.

From all these facts it is obvious, that a person may be a member of the church of God at large, and not a member of a particular church; and that something apart from baptism, and even from a general profession of religion, is required to constitute an adult a member of a particular church. Let us suppose a case: A man offers himself for baptism, he is examined, and if found defective in Christian knowledge, receives instruction; he then professes his faith and promises obedience, and this constitutes him a member of God's church at large. He next voluntarily receives baptism, as a seal on the part of God, of his covenant with the man, and of his acceptance of him into his family; and also as a seal on his own part of his own covenant with God. Here then we have him a member of the church of God in general, and it remains for him to become a member of a particular church in the manner specified above. Precisely similar to the case just supposed, was that of the Ethiopian *eunuch*. He made a profession of religion, and was accordingly baptized by *Philip*. By his profession he became a member of the church catholic; by his baptism his membership was formally recognized, but he was not a member of any specific church, for he could not have acted in the ecclesiastical measures of any specific church, nor voted in the regulations of worship, communion or discipline.

These observations were thought necessary in order to explain the views we entertain on this subject in general. If they be well founded, then it is not a strictly appropriate application of language, to call baptism an *initia-*

*tory*<sup>1</sup> ordinance, or to exhibit it as a means of *introduction* into the church of God. It is, accurately speaking, no such ordinance or means; but it is a *holy sacrament*, an appointed *means of grace*;—a *solemn sign and seal of the glorious covenant of God with his people*,—and an *impressive recognition of membership in the church general*.

<sup>1</sup> If the word *initiatory* be used in the popular sense of *introducing* or *entering*, it is erroneous to prefix it to baptism; but if only to designate a *formal* setting forth and acknowledgment of a right to privileges previously possessed, it may not be particularly objectionable.

# ARGUMENTS, &c.

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## CHAPTER III.

HAVING dwelt at some length on the nature of baptism and the church of God in general, we shall, after one more preliminary observation, proceed to the argument. In advocating the baptism of *young children* we by no means wish to be understood to intimate that *adults* have no right to this ordinance; on the contrary, they are solemnly bound, if unbaptized, to lay claim to it without delay, and if they afford evidence of repentance and faith in Christ, it is the duty of the minister of the gospel to whom they apply, to administer it to them.

Thus prepared for investigation, our first object shall be to prove **THE NECESSITY OF INFANT BAPTISM**. And we shall endeavor to arrange the arguments in that order which commends itself to our mind as the most natural and easy of apprehension.

### FIRST ARGUMENT.

*Christ has commanded infant baptism.* The command is recorded Matt. xxviii. 19—20, “Go ye therefore and disciple or make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name,” &c.

Here we have a universal precept embracing "all nations," or according to Mark, "every creature;" and in our judgment children are included in this precept as well as adults. If they are not it belongs to anti-pedobaptists to prove it, either by adducing other texts of Scripture of a contrary import, or by showing that the circumstances under which the command was given, necessarily restrict its meaning. But they do not pretend to find a single passage in all the sacred writings, debarring infants from the privilege of baptism, and so far from restricting the application of the precept, all the circumstances of the case conspire not only to prove its universality, but to afford the clearest additional evidence that neither the apostles nor the Jews could possibly have understood the injunction in any other sense than as comprehending infants.

They *must* have thus interpreted it, because—

1. It had been a general and long continued practice among the Jews to *baptize* as well as circumcise the children of proselytes when they received them as members of the church, so that in fact infant baptism prevailed prior to its divine institution by Christ. If therefore our Lord had designed that infants should be excluded, it would have been indispensably necessary, expressly and positively to forbid their baptism, but as he did not add a prohibitory clause, it follows that his command embraced them, and all who heard it must most indisputably have so understood it.

That baptism prevailed among the Jews prior to and at the time of Christ's incarnation, is a historical fact susceptible of abundant proof. They practised it on various occasions, but it is sufficient for our purpose to



show that they were in the habit of baptizing all proselytes to their faith, whether adults or children.

The testimony of Maimonides,<sup>1</sup> the great interpreter of the Jewish law, is very satisfactory on this subject. "Israel," he states, "was admitted into covenant by three things, namely, by circumcision, baptism and sacrifice. Baptism was in the wilderness, before the giving of the law." Again, "Abundance of proselytes were made in the days of David and Solomon before private men; and the great Sanhedrim was full of care about this business; for they would not cast them out of the church, because they were baptized." MAIMONIDES. *Issure Biah*, c. 13. "Once more, whensoever any heathen \* \* \* will take the yoke of the law upon him, circumcision, *baptism* and a voluntary oblation are required. \* \* \* \* That was a common axiom, no man is a proselyte until he be circumcised and *baptized*. *Jevamoth* fol. 46.

Dr. Gill has indeed ventured the assertion that *no mention is made in the earlier writings of the Jews of admitting proselytes by baptism*. But the evidence of this fact does not rest solely on the testimony of Jewish records; it was known even to the heathen. "Why," says Epictetus in reproving those who professed to be philosophers while they did not live as such, "why do you call yourself a Stoic? Why do you deceive the multitude? Why do you pretend to be a *Greek* when you are a *Jew*, a *Syrian*, an *Egyptian*? And when we see any one wavering we are wont to say, this is not a *Jew*, but acts one. But when he assumes the sentiments of one who hath been *baptized* and *circumcised*, then he both really is, and is called a Jew. Thus we, falsifying

<sup>1</sup>Maimonides lived in the 12th century.

our profession, are Jews in name, but in reality something else."<sup>1</sup>

As our Baptist brethren have labored hard to prove, that the baptism of proselytes was not practised anterior to the Christian era, we shall add the testimony of other distinguished writers :

“The Jews require three things to a complete proselyte ; *baptism*, circumcision and sacrifice ; but for women only baptism and sacrifice.”—*Calmet's Dictionary, art. Pros.*

“Whenever gentiles were proselyted to the Jewish religion, they were initiated by circumcision, the offering of a sacrifice, and *baptism*. They were all *baptized*, males and females, adults and *infants*. This was their *constant practice*, from the time of Moses to that of our Saviour, and from that period to the present day.”—*Dr. Wall.*

“The custom of the Jews, *in all ages*, has been to receive their heathen proselytes by *baptism*, as well as by sacrifice and circumcision.”—*Stackhouse.*

“When a gentile becomes a proselyte of righteousness, three ceremonies were used, viz., circumcision, *baptism* and sacrifice.”—*Witsius.*

“The apostles knew well, that the Jews not only circumcised the children of proselytes, but also *baptized* them. The *children* and even *infants* of proselytes were baptized among the Jews. They were in consequence, reputed clean, and partakers of the blessings of the covenant.”—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

<sup>1</sup>Epictetus lived according to Dr. Lardner A. D. 109, and according to Le Clerc A. D. 104. He was about sixty years old when he penned the quotation, and obtained his information probably thirty or forty years earlier, which brings it up to the apostles.

But the testimonies are too numerous to be quoted; we refer those who wish for further proof, to Lightfoot's *Hor. Heb.* on Matt. 3 and John 3; Gale's *Reflections on Wall's History*; Michaelis' *Dogm.* § 180; Iahn's *Archæology*; Witstein on Matt. iii. 8; Gill's *Body of Divinity*; R. Robinson's *History of Baptism*, and other works.

Dr. Woods' reflections on this question, deserve a place here. In regard to this subject, says he, let the following things be well considered :

“First. The rabbins unanimously assert that the baptism of proselytes had been practised by the Jews in all ages, from Moses down to the time when they wrote. Now these writers must have been sensible that their contemporaries, both Jews and Christians, knew whether such a practice had been prevalent or not. And had it been known that no such practice had existed; would not some Jews have been found, bold enough to contradict such a groundless assertion of the rabbins? At least, would there not have been some *Christians*, fired with the love of truth, and jealous for the honor of a sacred rite first instituted by Christ, who would have exposed to shame those who falsely asserted that a similar rite had existed for more than a thousand years? But neither of these things was done.

“Second. Had not the Jews been accustomed to baptize proselytes previously to the Christian era; it is extremely improbable that they would have adopted the practice afterwards. For their contempt and hatred of Christianity exceeded all bounds, and must have kept them at the greatest possible distance from copying a rite peculiar to Christians.

“Third. It seems to have been perfectly *consistent* and *proper* for the Jews to baptize proselytes. For

their divine ritual enjoined various purifications by washing or *baptism*. And as they considered all gentiles to be *unclean*, how could they do otherwise than understand the divine law to require, that when any of them were proselyted to the Jewish religion, they should receive the same sign of purification, as was, in so many cases, applied to themselves?"

Here then we have proof positive, that in all cases of *adult* proselytes to the Jewish church, *baptism* was inseparably joined to circumcision. That such was also the fact in reference to *infants*, is no less certain. For the same distinguished and learned Jewish writer, Maimonides, states: "They baptized also young children. They baptize a little proselyte according to the judgment of the Sanhedrim; that is, as the gloss renders it, if he be deprived of his father, and his mother brings him to be made a proselyte, they baptize him (because none becomes a proselyte without circumcision and baptism) according to the judgment, or rite, of the Sanhedrim; that is, that three men be present at the baptism, who are now instead of a father to him. And the Gemara, a little after says, if with a proselyte, his sons and his daughters are made proselytes also, that which is done by their father, redounds to their good.

"If a heathen woman is made a proselytess while in gravitation, the child needs not baptism; for the baptism of his mother, serves him for baptism. Otherwise he were to be baptized, Jevam. fol. 78.

"If an Israelite find a gentile child, or a gentile infant, and baptize him, \* \* \* behold he is a proselyte." Maim. in Avidim. c. 8.

It is accordingly a fact well attested, that when proselytes to Judaism were gained from the surrounding

nations, all the children of a family were invariably regarded as members in the church as well as the parents, and on the faith of their parents, all the males whether children or adults were circumcised, and in connection with circumcision, the whole family, male and female, were baptized, and incorporated in the community of God's people. Nearly all the most competent judges in the Jewish and Christian church, from Selden and Lightfoot down to Dr. Ad. Clarke regard the testimony to this historical fact as abundant and conclusive. Even Mr. Booth, a distinguished Baptist writer, admits that, "*the children of proselytes were baptized along with their parents.*" Moreover, it seems plain that the Jews must have been accustomed to the rite of baptism and expected the Messiah, when he came, to practise it, or how can we account for their propounding to John this question: "Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not the Christ?"

It is further obvious that Christ's language must have been thus understood by the apostles because—

2. They knew that infants had from time immemorial been regarded as members in the church of God. When Jehovah made his covenant with Abraham, he expressly included them in that covenant, and ordained circumcision as the sign and seal of it.<sup>1</sup> Even Baptists do not and indeed cannot deny this fact. For nearly two thousand years therefore, the practice of acknowledging children as members of God's visible church, in the ordinance of circumcision, had existed, and still existed at the very time the command in question was issued. Hence the apostles had no idea of a church from which children were excluded. They knew that the covenant

<sup>1</sup>Gen. xvii. 10—14.

with Abraham continued in force and was to be “*an everlasting covenant*,” that the church of God under the new dispensation was not a different church from that under the old, but essentially the same, and hence they could not do otherwise than believe, that as children were considered members of the church by virtue of the covenant with Abraham, therefore,—that covenant having never been abrogated,—they must continue to be so considered; and accordingly, “when the Saviour uttered the universal, unlimited and unqualified command: “Go ye and make disciples of all nations,” they could not in the nature of things have understood that command “to convey a new and unheard of restriction, which was contrary to all their prepossessions, feelings and opinions, and of which (restriction) they could not know any thing, unless it had been explicitly communicated to them.” Add to this statement, the fact already mentioned, that baptism had been previously connected with circumcision, and was applied to infants, and it appears to us it must have been utterly impossible to understand these words of Christ in any other sense than as comprehending children.

## CHAPTER IV.

### OBJECTIONS TO THIS ARGUMENT.

**FIRST OBJECTION.**—The command of Christ does not *expressly* require the baptism of infants.

**ANSWER.** It has already been abundantly proven that an *express* requirement was, under the circumstances of the case, altogether unnecessary, and would have been superfluous. The apostles needed no such requirement, and could not fail to understand what was their duty in reference to children, without it.

Moreover, if no obligation can be imposed without an *express command*, why do our opponents attend public worship, keep the first instead of the seventh day holy unto the Lord, and administer the holy supper to females?—Why do they pray with their children and families, or teach them to read?—Why do rulers provide the means of defending the country they govern, or punish a twentieth part of those crimes, which, if left unpunished, would ruin the country? They cannot find in all the Scriptures of God, one solitary express injunction demanding these duties. The extent to which this principle would lead, if fairly pursued, would astonish even those who urge it.

Dr. Lightfoot has spoken well on this point: “To the objection, It is not commanded to baptize infants, therefore they are not to be baptized;—I answer: It is not forbidden to baptize infants, therefore they are to be baptized. And the reason is plain: for when *pedo-baptism*

in the *Jewish* church was so known, usual, and frequent in the admission of proselytes, that nothing almost was more known, usual and frequent: there was no need to strengthen it with any precept, when baptism was now passed into an evangelical sacrament. For Christ took baptism into his hands and into evangelical use, as he found it: this only added, that he might promote it to a worthier *end* and a larger use. The whole nation knew well enough that *little children* used to be *baptized*; there was no need of a precept for that, which had ever by common use prevailed. \* \* \* On the other hand, therefore, there was need of a plain and open prohibition that *infants* and *little children* should not be baptized, if our Lord would not have had them baptized. For since it was most common in all preceding ages, that *little children should be baptized*; if Christ had been minded to have that custom abolished, he would have *openly forbidden* it. Therefore *his silence* and the silence of the *Scripture* in this matter, confirms *pedobaptism* and continues it to all ages.

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SECOND OBJECTION.—The very command that prescribes the baptism of all nations, also requires their instruction: “teaching them,” &c.; but young children cannot be taught, and for this reason ought not to be baptized. Moreover, adds the objector, the exercise of “*faith*” is connected with baptism, but children cannot *believe*, therefore it is preposterous to baptize them.

ANSWER.—If the principle involved in this objection were universally adopted, it would prove the greatest absurdities. For example, the apostle declares, “that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”<sup>1</sup> Here

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 10.



*working* for our bread is connected with eating; but children cannot work, therefore they have no right to eat;—neither aged and infirm people, nor others confined to bed by sickness labor for subsistence, therefore they also ought not to be permitted to eat. Again, the exercise of faith is equally connected with salvation: “He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;”<sup>1</sup> but children and also idiots and insane persons cannot exercise faith, therefore they cannot be saved, but must all without a single exception be “*dammèd.*” Further, when children were circumcised under the Mosaic dispensation, they were thereby in a formal manner obligated to observe the whole law, moral, ceremonial and civil; for, “every man,” says the apostle, “that is circumcised is a debtor to the whole law;”<sup>2</sup> but as children it was impossible to fulfil this obligation, therefore it was wrong to circumcise them. Thus, the principle assumed in the foregoing objection, when carried out, not only leads to the most palpable absurdities, but absolutely arrays its advocates in open hostility to God’s express command!

But a syllogistic statement of the argument contained in the objection, will present its utter fallacy in a still more glaring light.—“*He that BELIEVETH and is BAPTIZED shall be saved;*” thus far our Baptist brethren quote. We continue the quotation: “*But he that BELIEVETH not shall be DAMNED.*” Now for the syllogism.

*Their argument is this:*

1. Faith is required in order to baptism:
2. But infants cannot exercise faith:
3. Therefore, infants cannot be baptized.

<sup>1</sup>Mark xvi. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Gal. v. 3.

*We turn this argument thus :*

1. Faith is required in order to salvation :
2. But infants cannot exercise faith :
3. Therefore, infants cannot be saved.

Thus, the objection begins by *shutting out* our children from the church of God; and ends with *shutting* all of them who die in infancy in the prison of hell forever!<sup>1</sup>

Our readers will observe that these several refutations of the objection are legitimately drawn from our Baptist brethren's own principles, in bringing them to bear against themselves; and may well be said to rank among the *argumenta ad hominem*, which constitute the strongest sort of argument. Thus, in attempting to wound us, they absolutely destroy themselves, and should they prevail by means of this weapon, the victory must be fatal to their own cause; for in the moment that it is achieved, they meet their own death on the point of their own sword.

Now we candidly appeal to every unprejudiced mind, whether a position that necessarily conducts to results so

<sup>1</sup> We acknowledge ourselves indebted to the late distinguished Dr. Mason of New York, for this mode of stating the subject, though we have not chosen to adhere to his phraseology. In a note of reference to the latter syllogism, he remarks: "We do not say that the opposers of infant baptism hold such an opinion. Their most distinguished writers disown and repel it. But we say, that it necessarily results from their requiring faith, in all cases, as a qualification for baptism. They do not follow out their own position. They stop short at the point which suits their system. We take it up where they leave it, and conduct it to its direct and inevitable conclusion. Therefore, though we do not charge the *men* with maintaining that those who die in infancy, perish; yet we charge this consequence upon their *argument*: for it certainly proves this or it proves nothing at all."

grossly inconsistent with the clearest dictates of common sense and sound religion, can by any possibility be founded in truth?—and yet such is the nature of the objection now under consideration.

How then do we understand the injunction to *teach*, to *believe*, to *repent*, &c., when in juxtaposition with baptism?—There is not the slightest difficulty in the subject, when viewed aside from preconceived opinion. All those requisitions manifestly refer to *adult persons*, and when called upon to baptize such, we always consider it a duty to *teach* them, and to require them to *repent* and *believe*; our language to them is: “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized.”<sup>1</sup> But this evidently has nothing to do with *infant* baptism. Infants are incapable of being taught, of believing &c. and of course, these duties cannot be consistently demanded from them preparatory to their baptism, any more than the duty to work, in order to entitle them to food. It may be laid down as a rule, that *absolute* inability to perform a duty exonerates us from the obligation to perform it. Thus a blind man is not bound to read the gospel, nor a deaf man to hear it preached, nor an insane man to repent, nor a sick man to labor, unless the absolute inability in the several cases can be remedied. God does not require impossibilities.—On the same principle, infants cannot be required to believe, for the purpose of giving them a right to baptism or to salvation. “It is a dictate of common sense, which all men observe (and the opponents of pedo-baptism also, in all cases except this,) that any passage of Scripture, requiring a qualification or action of which children are incapable, is intended to be applied only to adults;” and consequently their inability

<sup>1</sup>Acts viii. 37.

to believe, is no more a barrier to their baptism than to their future salvation; if it were, it must also have formed an insurmountable obstacle to their circumcision.

It is however urged again and again, that as baptism is a “seal of the righteousness of faith”<sup>1</sup> and as infants are incapable of acting either intelligently or voluntarily in any respect whatever, it is not only useless but downright *folly* to baptize them.—The whole of this language applies with equal force to circumcision. It is admitted by all that *infants of eight days old* were by divine appointment circumcised, and thus declared members of the church of God; it must also be conceded, because expressly declared by the apostle, that circumcision as well as baptism was, “a seal of the righteousness of faith.”<sup>2</sup> Here then, we would ask, were children of eight days old more capable of exercising faith when they were circumcised, than they are now when they are baptized? Surely this objection is as valid in the one case as in the other, and hence every charge of *folly, absurdity, &c.*, brought against infant baptism on the score of incapacity to exercise faith, lies with equal force against infant circumcision. Do our adversaries then say, “the baptism of infants who know nothing of believing in

<sup>1</sup>As this quotation will be frequently found in this volume, it may be well to define its meaning. A seal is an instrument used to make an impression on wax, annexed to some writing, containing the engagement of him whose seal it is. The design of the seal is to make known that the writing is his writing, or the act his act and sets forth his pleasure. Thus bonds, deeds, &c. are sealed to authenticate the instrument itself and furnish obligatory proof of the engagements of the sealer. We therefore understand the quotation to imply, that baptism is a solemn exhibition and evidence of the fundamental truth, that we become righteous in the sight of God, or are justified, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>2</sup>Rom. iv. 11.

Christ, is a nullity and mockery; an absurd and foolish ceremony:" then it follows, that the circumcision of infants who knew nothing of that righteousness of faith which it sealed, was also a nullity and mockery, was also an absurd and foolish ceremony; and the divine command which enjoined it, (with reverence be it spoken) *a foolish and an absurd commandment!*

Are Baptists then, willing to say, that the application of a 'seal of the righteousness of faith' to unconscious infants, of eight days old, was so wickedly preposterous? "Are they prepared thus to 'charge God foolishly?'— Yet they must do it, if they would be consistent. They cannot escape from the shocking alternative. Every harsh and contemptuous epithet which they apply to infant baptism, must, if they would adhere to the principles which they lay down, be applied to infant circumcision. But that which unavoidably leads to such a consequence cannot be warranted by the word of God."<sup>1</sup>

The fallacy of the preceding objection is exposed by Edwards in a very lucid manner. "That particular rule, against which this argument offends, is this: '*Non debet plus esse in conclusione quam erat in premissis. Ratio manifesta est, quia, conclusio educenda est ex premissis.*' That is, 'There should not be more in the conclusion than was in the premises. The reason is plain, because the conclusion is to be drawn from the premises.' We will try to make this plain, by examples both of true and false reasoning.

"1. In the Baptist way of reasoning. When the Scriptures say, 'Repent and be baptized;' and, 'If thou believest thou mayest,' &c., they address only sinful adults; and then, an argument formed upon them should

<sup>1</sup>See Dr. Miller on Baptism.

reach no farther than adults of the same description. But the Baptists form their fallacious argument on these passages, by bringing infants into the conclusion, who, as they are not addressed, are not at all concerned in the premises. This will appear plain by three instances on the Baptist plan.

“The Baptist argument runs thus: The Scriptures require faith and repentance in order to baptism; but infants have not faith and repentance; therefore they are not to be baptized. Now as the Scriptures require faith and repentance only of adults, we must place that word in the argument, and then it will stand in this form: The Scriptures require faith and repentance of **ADULTS** in order to baptism; but **INFANTS** cannot have these: therefore infants are not fit subjects of baptism. In the same way, we may form the two following instances, *viz.*—The Scriptures require faith and repentance of adults in order to salvation; but infants cannot have these: therefore infants cannot be saved. Again, He [an adult] who will not work, neither should he eat; but an infant cannot will to work, therefore an infant should not eat. The reader may perceive, that by placing the word adults in one proposition, and infants in the other, (which makes it a sophism) there are three things proved in the same way, *viz.* That infants cannot be saved—that infants should not eat—that infants should not be baptized. And so, for the same reason, that an infant cannot be saved, that an infant should not eat; it will follow, that an infant should not be baptized. For all these are equally true, and supported by the same reasoning. And it is in the same way, that this argument proves against the baptism of Christ, and the circumcision of infants. We will now view these three instances,

“2. In the Pedobaptist way of reasoning. We will place the same word in each proposition, thus: ‘The Scriptures require faith and repentance of adults in order to baptism; but some adults have no faith, no repentance; therefore some adults are not to be baptized. Again, ‘The Scriptures require faith and repentance of adults in order to salvation; but some adults do not believe nor repent; therefore some adults will not be saved. Once more—He [an adult] who will not work, neither should he eat; but some adult will not work; therefore some adult should not eat. Now by placing the word adult in each proposition, without which it would be a sophistical argument, the reader may see, that as infants can have no place in either, there is nothing to forbid their support, their salvation, or their baptism. They only prove, that an idle adult should not be supported; that an impenitent adult will not be saved; and, that he has no right at all to baptism.

“Once more—As I have nothing in view so much as truth, I have a great desire to make this matter plain to the meanest capacity. For if I am clearly understood in this part, my end, on the present argument, is attained; and what I have before advanced upon it, will be in a great measure, useless. The reader, therefore, is desired to observe, that the design of this argument is to conclude against the baptism of infants. Then, as infants are to be in the conclusion, they must also be in the premises; for the rule says, ‘there should not be more in the conclusion than was in the premises; because the conclusion is to be drawn from the premises.’

“Now to make the argument of the Baptists consistent with itself, we must place infants in the premises as well as in the conclusion; and then the argument will

stand thus: The Scriptures require faith and repentance of infants in order to baptism; but infants have not faith, &c.; therefore infants are not to be baptized. The reader may discern an agreement, in the parts of the argument, with each other; it has infants in each part, as well in the premises as in the conclusion. But then the fallacy of it is more strikingly evident than before: for the error, which before crept into the middle, does here stand in front; it is in this proposition, the Scriptures require faith and repentance of infants in order to baptism, which is not true; for infants are never required to repent or believe, in order either to baptism or salvation. Whereas before, when it was said the Scriptures require faith and repentance of adults in order to baptism; but infants have not faith, &c., the error consisted in putting in the word 'infants,' who have no concern at all in the requirement.

“By placing one thing in the premises, and another in the conclusion, which is done by the Baptists, in this argument, we may be able to evince any absurdity, however glaring. This being the manner of the Baptist argument, nothing more is necessary to take off its force against infants, but to make the premises and conclusion to correspond with each other. That is, while it continues to be a sophism, it proves against infants; but it ceases to prove against them, as soon as it is made a good argument. *e. g.* Faith and repentance are required of adults in order to baptism; but infants have not these: therefore infants are not to be baptized. This is nothing more than a pure sophism, and, as such, it concludes against infants; but all its force against infants is set aside by making it good, thus: Faith and repentance are required in adults in order to baptism, but some adults



have not faith and repentance; therefore some adults are not to be baptized. The reader may see, that now it is a fair argument, all its force against infants is gone.

“Having said thus much on the fallacy of this argument, I shall only add one specimen of its mode of operation; and that is a specimen, in which it will conclude two contrary ways, on one place of Scripture, Rom. ii. 25. ‘For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.’

“Now the Baptist argument, on the first member of this text, will operate thus: Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but infants could not keep the law; therefore their circumcision must be unprofitable, that is, as no circumcision, a mere nullity; and this reflects on the wisdom of God. But if we form the same argument on the other member, it will be no nullity either, for thus it will run: If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision; but infants could not break the law; therefore their circumcision could not be made uncircumcision, *i. e.* a nullity. Such is this Baptist argument, that it will prove infant circumcision to be something or nothing, according to that part of the text on which it is formed; and it is therefore evidently no more than a sophism.

“I have endeavored to make the reader see, not only, that this argument is false, but wherein that fallacy consists. That it is false, appears in this, that in every instance it opposes a known truth; it opposes the circumcision of infants—the baptism of Jesus Christ—the salvation of infants—and, their temporal subsistence. The nature of the fallacy is the placing of adults in the pre-

mises, and infants in the conclusion ; which any person, who has the least knowledge of the art of reasoning, must see instantly to be repugnant to the laws of truth."

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**THIRD OBJECTION.**—In those passages in which Christian graces are connected with baptism, the former always precede the latter in the collocation of words. Thus it is said, "He that believeth and is baptized," &c.—"Teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you." Now as repentance, faith, &c. are placed before baptism in the arrangement of the words enjoining it, so they must be anterior to it in practice ; but in the case of children they cannot be anterior in practice, therefore it is reversing the order plainly marked out by Christ to make children partakers of this ordinance.

**ANSWER.**—This is indeed a very flimsy objection, but as it is often urged it must be noticed. It supposes that acts of obedience to the gospel must succeed each other in the precise order of the several words employed in prescribing those acts ;—in other language, that the order of words and the order of things are exactly the same. A few plain facts will abundantly expose the utter untenableness of this position.

It will be admitted by all, that in Christian experience, justification precedes sanctification, and yet in the order of words used by the apostle, the latter has a priority of place ;<sup>1</sup> "But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name," &c. Again, in every conceivable sense Christ is infinitely above the prophets and apostles, and in point of

<sup>1</sup>Cor. vi. 11.

antiquity the former were prior to the latter; and notwithstanding, in the arrangement of words, the first is named last and the last first: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."<sup>1</sup> Ham was the youngest of Noah's sons, and yet he is always named before Japhet. The three persons of the Holy Trinity are equal, but the name of the Father always precedes that of the Son, and the name of the Son that of the Holy Ghost. It is written, "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance;"<sup>2</sup> but will any one be so intolerably silly as to infer from this, that he actually commenced his ministry by baptizing?—If things take place agreeably to the order of the words employed in stating them, then all the antediluvian patriarchs uniformly begat their sons first and afterwards their daughters; for it is written, they lived so many years and "*begat sons and daughters.*"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Eph. ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Mark i. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Gen. 5.

## CHAPTER V.

### SECOND ARGUMENT.

Baptism is the *appointed token of church membership*.—In order to appreciate this argument in all the length and breadth of its force, several important points must be previously established.

1. *That children were entitled to membership in the church of God under the old dispensation, and that circumcision was the sign of that membership.*

By the church of God here, we understand the collective body of all those who profess the true religion, and their infant offspring. (See page 20.) Such a church always existed, but it was not formally organized until the days of Abraham, and nothing is more plainly taught than that at its organization God ordained that infants should be members of it, and receive the rite setting forth their membership. A full account of God's covenant with the ancient patriarch and his posterity, may be found in the 17 ch. of Genesis. In examining this covenant, the following particulars are obvious:

*First.* It had respect to *spiritual* as well as temporal blessings, for according to the stipulations, Abraham was to be "the father of many nations;" God was to be a "God to him and to his seed after him," and in Abraham's "seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed." In these provisions the richest spiritual blessings that God could bestow, were comprehended, and for this reason circumcision, which was the seal of this cove-

nant, is expressly declared by the inspired apostle<sup>1</sup> to have been “a seal of the *righteousness of faith.*”

*Second.* This covenant embraced in the most explicit terms, the infant seed of Abraham, and was never to be revoked: “I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and *thy seed* after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting covenant*, to be a God unto thee and to *thy seed* after thee.”<sup>2</sup>

*Third.* The sign and seal of this covenant was **CIRCUMCISION**,<sup>3</sup> which was to be administered to children when they were only eight days old, and was actually administered for nearly nineteen centuries at that tender age, in token of their church-membership and their consequent title to the privileges of the church, or in other words, of their relation to God’s covenanted family and their right to the privileges of that covenant.—Here then, we have our first point clearly established; viz.: *that by the express appointment of God children were constituted members of the church, (or, which is the same, subjects of his covenant with Abraham), and when eight days old, received the ratifying ordinance, (or, which is the same, the sign and seal of the covenant,) which was circumcision.* We wish our readers to bear this in mind, for it is a fact of the utmost importance, to which we shall often have occasion to refer in this discussion;—a fact acknowledged by all and incapable of refutation by any; on which, as on an immovable and everlasting foundation, we are enabled to rear a superstructure which all the skill and might of man cannot subvert. For if it was fit and necessary, in the judgment of God, to declare children to be members of his church of old, and bestow upon them the seal of mem-

<sup>1</sup>Rom. iv. 11. <sup>2</sup>V. 7; see also vs. 8, 9, 10. <sup>3</sup>See vs. 10 and 12.

bership (which was “a seal of the righteousness of *faith*”) before they were capable of exercising faith, we ask in the name of common sense, why it should not be equally fit and necessary now?

The next point to be established in order to develop our argument is—

2. *That the church of God under the former and present dispensation, or in other words, in the Old and New Testament is substantially the same.*

We do not assume here, that the exterior aspect of the church is the same now that it was formerly, for when Christ died many divine appointments of an external character received their accomplishment, and were therefore of no more use. But the identity of the church under both dispensations, has been unalterably preserved. We still have the same Lord and Saviour as head of the church, the same Holy Spirit, the same atoning sacrifice, (which all the sacrifices of old prefigured as their grand antitype), and are strictly under the same covenant; we are required to exercise the same faith and to practise the same moral duties, all which are summed up in love supreme to God, and love to our neighbor equal to that which we bear to ourselves. True, we enjoy a larger amount of light and privilege than did God’s people of old; but this does not touch the *identity* of the church, any more than an accession of rights and immunities conferred upon an individual, or corporation, or a town, affects their identity. They are still the same individual, corporation or town notwithstanding the enlargement of their powers and privileges. A man of fifty years of age is the same individual that he was when an infant at his mother’s breast, and the sturdy oak of a century is the same tree that it was when a yielding sapling, and

yet it is known that both the man and the tree have again and again changed their component particles. So the church of God now in her maturity and in the plenitude of her light and privilege, is the identical church that she was in her nonage and in the paucity of her light and privilege.<sup>1</sup> Under the former just as well as under the present dispensation, she was therefore, to all intents and purposes, A GOSPEL CHURCH.

In reply to the objection, that the Old and New Testament church is totally distinct, and that the old was abolished, and an entirely new church erected in its stead; so that if infant membership were intended to be retained, it must needs be commanded anew; the Rev. Doctor Schmucker thus remarks: “The New Testament, however, teaches a different doctrine, representing the Christian church as built on the Jewish, as being only the more perfect and complete economy of the one church of God. ‘Think not,’ says the blessed Saviour, ‘that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill;’ or rather, *to make perfect*, ( *παραγεραται*, to complete.<sup>2</sup>) The Apostle Paul, also, speaking of the future restoration of the Jews, says: They also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in *again*.—For if thou (gentile) wert cut out of the olive tree, that is wild by nature (heathenism); and wert grafted contrary to nature, into a good olive tree (the Jewish church); how much more shall these (Jews), who are natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree (church)? The good olive tree here must signify the Jews, either as a nation or a religious community, a church of God. It cannot mean the former, for the gentiles never were grafted on

<sup>1</sup>Gal. iv. 1—6.

<sup>2</sup>Matt. v. 17.

the Jewish nation. It must then mean *the church*. Now the apostle teaches, that the Jews were cut off from this church by unbelief, and the gentiles received or grafted into it; and in the fullness of time the Jews shall again be received into their own church, or olive tree, which must therefore be still standing: that is, the Christian and Jewish churches are essentially one and the same church. When therefore an ordinance is once established, it remains in force until revoked by God. Hence, as infant membership has confessedly not been revoked by God, our conclusion irresistibly follows, that we are not at liberty to reject it."<sup>1</sup>

The third point to be made out in this chain of reasoning, is—

3. *That children are, in virtue of their birth from Christian parents, members of the church under the new dispensation.*

Having abundantly sustained this position in reference to children born under the old economy, it is self-evident that they occupy the same relation to the church under the existing economy, (the covenant establishing it, being of perpetual obligation,) unless it has been rescinded. But we boldly challenge the world to produce one particle of evidence in proof of its revocation. We take high ground here and use strong language, but we do it without fear of successful contradiction. If God, who nearly four thousand years ago, by an express statute, constituted the children of believing parents, members of his church, has annulled that statute, or by any direct or indirect, positive or implied warrant, withdrawn the privilege which it vouchsafed to them, let the testimony be forthcoming. But there is no such testimony to be found either in the Old or New Testament, and therefore the church-mem-

<sup>1</sup>See Popular Theology p. 212.



bership of infants remains unrevoked, unimpaired, untouched, and in all the primitive force with which divine authority originally invested it.

The Rev. Dr. Schmucker's (junior) statement of this argument is alike remarkable for its cogency and its brevity: "An ordinance which God himself appointed in his church, and which he never revoked, we have no right to reject ;

" But God did confessedly appoint infant membership in his church, and did never revoke it ;

" Therefore *we* have no right to revoke it."<sup>1</sup>

The language of Dr. Mason on this branch of our subject is too eloquent to be omitted.

" Conceding, then," says he, " to the opposers of our children's claim as members of the Christian church, all that they ask with regard to the *silence* of the New Testament, that very concession works their ruin. If their views are correct, it could not have been thus silent. Out of their own mouths we draw their conviction ; and cast them in the judgment by the very evidence which they offer in their vindication.

" The case is now reversed. Instead of *our* producing from the New Testament such a warrant for the privileges of our infant seed, as they require, we turn the tables upon them ; and insist, that *they* shall produce scriptural proof of God's having *annulled the constitution under which we assert our right*. Till they do this, our cause is invincible. He once granted to his church the right for which we contend ; and nothing but his own act can take it away. We want to *see the act of abrogation* ; we must see it in the *New Testament* ; for there it is, if it is at all. Point it out, and we have done. Till then

<sup>1</sup>See Popular Theology, p. 211.

we shall rejoice in the consolation of calling upon God as our God; and the God of our seed. \* \* \* \*

“The case is still stronger when we reflect that the children of believing parents participate in all the *disasters* of the external church. If she be corrupted, the corruption infects them; if she be persecuted, the persecution smites them; if her mercies be sinned away, the punishment of the sin lights on them. Could they suffer more upon the supposition of their being really members? It seems, then, that they are to share in all her afflictions, without sharing in her privileges: that when evil overtakes her, they are to be treated as citizens; but when immunities are dispensed, as aliens. So that the Lord our God *suspends* a leading principle of his physical and moral order, for the sake of barring the seed of his people from *privilege*; and permits it to take its full course for the infliction of calamity! ‘This is more than incredible!’”<sup>1</sup>

We come now to the last particular to be established, which develops the gist of the whole argument, and in fact is the argument that stands at the head of this article, viz.—

3. *That baptism is the appointed token of church membership in the New Testament.*

This is evident from the fact, that as circumcision was confessedly the sealing ordinance in the former economy, and baptism has been *substituted* for it, therefore baptism is now the sealing ordinance, and must of course be administered to infants, because infants are the declared members of God’s church and subjects of his covenant.

Our Baptist brethren however deny this position, maintaining that as there are some points of difference between

<sup>1</sup>See Christian Mag. II. 27, &c.

circumcision and baptism, therefore the latter cannot be a substitute for the former. But does it follow, when one thing is put in the place of another, that there must be in every respect a perfect resemblance between them?—by no means. All that is requisite to constitute a substitute is, that there should be a general agreement as to the main object in view, or the great end to be accomplished; this being the case, there may be a variety of discrepancies without in the least affecting the principle of substitution. For instance, in time of war a man may be drafted to proceed to the frontiers to defend his country; he employs another to take his place; there is a considerable difference between them in age, stature, complexion, temper, habits, physical and mental powers, and other respects; yet the great object to be attained, being the same, the latter goes in the room of the former, and is properly and legally his *substitute*. A superintendent of a Sunday school, about to leave home for a few weeks, requests his Christian neighbor to supply his place during his absence; there may and probably will be numerous points of even striking dissimilarity;—perhaps in person and appearance, talents and acquirements, intellect and endowments, aptness for imparting instruction, piety and fervor, &c.; yet the principal end to be answered, being identical, the one is justly regarded as the substitute of the other. So our houses of worship are represented as coming in the place of the Jewish temple and synagogues, because they contemplate the same great object, which is to afford convenience for public worship and religious instruction; yet in their construction, dimensions, mode of worship, &c., they differ vastly. The Lord's supper is often referred to as having come in the place of the passover; gospel ministers in the room of Levitical

priests; the simplicity of Christian worship instead of the gorgeous services of the temple, &c. Certainly, in all these exemplifications of substitution there is a general concurrence as to the main object, but in numerous instances the contrast is exceedingly glaring. In like manner, our Lord himself became a substitute; he assumed our form and nature, put himself in our place and “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” What an infinite disparity between him and us, in dignity, the mode and duration of suffering for sin, &c. &c.; yet the great purpose of suffering being the same, namely, the vindication of divine justice and the fulfillment of divine law, he was emphatically the substitute of a rebel world. The illustration may be extended to civil matters. An old law is repealed and another enacted in its stead; but according to the new enactment, the constituents of the crime contemplated, the evidence required to establish it, the penalty, the mode of inflicting it, &c., may all differ from the provisions of the former statute; yet the object being precisely similar, viz. the prevention of some particular species of felony, the one is termed and published as a *substitutę* for the other.

We have dwelt at some length on this point, because it is of the utmost importance, and we desire to be distinctly understood. Having now a clear apprehension of what is meant by a substitute, or one thing coming in the place of another, let us proceed to inquire whether there be a general agreement in the great object contemplated by circumcision and baptism,—a sufficient resemblance in the leading purpose, to warrant the doctrine of *substitution*. Circumcision had a spiritual meaning, so has baptism; circumcision was a seal of a covenant guarantying not only temporal but also and chiefly spiritual blessings,

so baptism is the badge of an external relation and outward advantages, but is mainly the seal of spiritual blessings. "Circumcision," says an eminent divine, "was an emblem of moral cleansing and purity. So is baptism. It refers to the remission of sins by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by his Spirit; and teaches us that we are by nature guilty and depraved, and stand in need of the pardoning and sanctifying grace of God by a crucified Redeemer. Surely, then, there is the best foundation for asserting that baptism has come in the place of circumcision. The latter, as all grant, has been discontinued; and now baptism occupies the same place, means the same thing, seals the same covenant, and is a pledge of the same spiritual blessings. Who can doubt, then, that there is the utmost propriety, upon principle, in applying it to the same infant subjects?"

We may here add, that an early father, Justin Martyr, takes the same view of the substitution of circumcision by Christian baptism: "We gentiles," Justin observes, "have not received that circumcision according to the flesh, but that which is spiritual—and moreover, for indeed we were sinners, we have received this in *baptism*, through God's mercy, and it is enjoined on all to receive it in like manner."

"Yet, though baptism manifestly comes in the place of circumcision, there are points in regard to which the former differs materially from the latter. And it differs precisely as to those points in regard to which the New Testament economy differs from the old, in being more enlarged and less ceremonial. Baptism is not ceremonially restricted to the eighth day, but may be administered at any time and place. It is not confined to one sex, but like the glorious dispensation of which it is a seal, it

marks an enlarged privilege, and is administered in a way which reminds us that ‘there is neither Greek nor Jew, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, in the Christian economy; but that we are all one in Christ Jesus.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Miller on Infant Baptism, p. 13.

## CHAPTER VI.

### OBJECTIONS TO THIS ARGUMENT.

FIRST OBJECTION. The circumcision of infants was an *express and positive institution*, but their baptism is not, and however admissible it may be, in a general point of view, to argue the necessity of moral duty by *inferential reasoning*, yet in cases of *positive institution* it is insufficient; nothing short of *the most direct and explicit authority* can avail in matters of this character.

ANSWER.—This is a new principle set up by our Baptist brethren, in order to escape the irresistible argument based on the church-membership and circumcision of infants under the Mosaic dispensation. But it is as *unsound* as it is novel. As circumstantial evidence in a court of justice may be and often is as clear and strong as positive, so inferential and analogical reasoning is frequently as conclusive as any other. This point is too obvious to require further illustration, and hence we find that our Baptist brethren themselves tacitly admit it at the very moment that they profess to be governed by the principles assumed in the objection. For it is conceded that the Lord's supper is a positive institution, and that females are positively bound to partake of it, but where in the Sacred Scriptures do we find a direct precept, or even an explicit example to warrant them in doing so?—How then do our opponents arrive at the

conclusion that it is the duty of females to commune?—Undoubtedly by *inferential reasoning*, and that too of the most convincing nature which can never be refuted, and yet not more convincing or irrefutable than that chain of logic by which we prove infant baptism. As often then as they admit women to a participation of the holy supper, they fly from the principle involved in their own objection, and yield, in reference to a positive institution, to the force of argument derived altogether from inference and analogy. Would it not be better to abandon the unsound principle and succumb to the power of solid logical deduction?

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**SECOND OBJECTION.**—“If baptism succeeded in the place of circumcision, how came it that both of them were in full force at the same time, that is, from the commencement of John’s ministry to the death of Christ? For one thing to come in the room of another, and the latter to hold its place, is an odd kind of succession. Admitting the succession pretended, how came it that Paul circumcised Timothy, after he had been baptized?” Thus far Mr. Booth,—but in order to make this objection still more cogent, we add,—how shall we account for Paul’s silence on the subject, when it was known to him that some of the Hebrew believers still practised circumcision?

**ANSWER.** Baptism could not be made the sign and seal of the perfected covenant of grace, until that covenant was both perfected and proposed for acceptance, which did not take place until after “the blood of the everlasting covenant” was shed, and our Lord, after his resurrection, had opened its full import to the apostles,



who were to publish it “to all nations.” Accordingly, we find that baptism was formally made the seal of this covenant for the first time when our Lord commissioned his disciples to “go and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,”—“he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” John’s baptism was upon profession of repentance and faith in the speedy appearance of Him who was to baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire; and our Lord’s baptism by his disciples was administered to those Jews that believed on him, as the Messiah, all of whom, like the apostles, waited for a fuller development of his character and offices; both therefore looked for something yet to come, and was not certainly that baptism in the name “of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” which was afterwards instituted as the standing, confirmatory rite of membership in the Christian church.

As for the circumcision of Timothy, and the practice of that rite among many of the Hebrew believers, we observe, that there are two grounds on which circumcision may be conceived to have been *innocently*, though not wisely, practised among the Christian Jews. The first was that of preserving an ancient national distinction on which they valued themselves; and were a converted Jew in the present day disposed to perform that rite upon his children for this purpose only, renouncing in the act all consideration of it as a sign and seal of the old covenant, or as obliging to ceremonial acts in order to justification, no one would censure him with severity. It appears clear that it was under some such view that St. Paul circumcised Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess; he did it because of “the Jews which were in

those quarters," that is, because of their national prejudices, "for they knew his father was a Greek." The second was a lingering notion that, even in the Christian church, the Jews who believed would still retain some degree of eminence, some superior relation to God; a notion which, however unfounded, was not one which demanded direct rebuke, when it did not proudly refuse spiritual communion with the converted gentiles, but was held by men who "rejoiced that God had granted to the gentiles repentance unto life." These considerations may account for the silence of St. Paul on the subject of circumcision in his Epistle to the Hebrews. Some of them continued to practice that rite, but they were probably believers of the class just mentioned; for, had he thought that the rite was continued among them on any principle which affected the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, he would no doubt have been equally prompt and fearless in pointing out that apostasy from Christ which was implied in it. We have a remarkable proof of the correctness of this view of the subject in the fact, that on another occasion Paul resolutely refused to permit circumcision to be administered to a gentile convert. We read in the epistle to the Galatians, that certain Judaizing teachers, whom the apostle terms "false brethren," were anxious that he should circumcise Titus; their object appears to have been, had they succeeded, to use the authority of the apostle's example to practise the rite among other converts from the gentiles, and so bring them under bondage to the law of Moses. But when the rite was to be administered with this view; when the motive was not simply to preserve a favorite national distinction, but to oblige the subject to observe the Mosaic ceremonies as a partial ground of justification before

God; then Paul promptly resisted it with great decision; he at once took high ground and maintained that ground with his usual boldness, observing in relation to those Judaizing teachers: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."<sup>1</sup>

Circumcision might therefore be practised with views so opposite, that on one occasion it might be wholly innocent, although an infirmity of prejudice; while on the other, it would involve a rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. This remark will apply with equal force to the observance of "days and months, and times, and years" for which the Galatians were reprov'd. If Baptist writers could show that the apostles sanctioned the practice of circumcision as a seal of the old covenant, then there would be some force in the argument that one could not succeed the other, if both were continued under inspired authority. But we have the most decided testimony of the Apostle Paul against any such use of circumcision; and he makes it, when practised in that view, a total abnegation of Christ and the new covenant. It follows, then, that when circumcision was continued by any *connivance* of the apostles,—and certainly they did no more than *connive* at it,—it was practised upon some grounds which did not regard it as the seal of any covenant;—from national custom or prejudice, a feeling to which the Apostle Paul himself yielded in the case of Timothy. He circumcised him, but not from any conviction of necessity, since he uniformly declared circumcision to have vanished away with that dispensation of the covenant of which it was the seal through the bringing in of a better hope.

<sup>1</sup>Gal. ii. 1—5.

THIRD OBJECTION.—If baptism has been substituted for circumcision, why is it not as *universal* in the Christian church as circumcision was in the Jewish church?

ANSWER.—Because professing Christians are not as mindful of this duty as they ought to be. The precept to administer baptism is at least coequal in extent of application, to that requiring circumcision, and every father and mother who hear the gospel are bound to embrace it, to profess it and to comply with its invitations, and if they would yield to duty, we should not have a child in the land growing up without this sacramental seal. This objection then does not militate against infant baptism, but against the remissness of many who profess to believe in it; at the same time it pronounces a censure upon the Baptists who urge it, for they too as well as inconsistent professors, aid in restricting the prevalence of the practice in question. In one respect however, baptism is more universal than circumcision was; it is administered to both sexes, whereas the seal of the old covenant was confined to males. But this suggests another objection, the very reverse of the one under consideration.

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FOURTH OBJECTION.—If baptism has come in the place of circumcision, why is it not limited to *male* infants;—*females* were excluded from circumcision, must they not then by consequence be debarred from the seal of the new covenant?

This apparent difficulty has already been anticipated and fully met on a preceding page, by a correct exhibition of the constituent feature of a *substitute*.<sup>1</sup> But a few additional remarks will place the subject in a still clearer light.

<sup>1</sup> See pages 53 and 54.

The objection before us, like many others, proves too much; for as *adult* females did not receive the seal of the covenant any more than infant females, it would necessarily exclude the former also from a covenant relation to God, and this is doubtless more than the objector would like to see established. Will our Baptist brethren deny that *adult females* were members of the visible church of God under the old dispensation? and yet they received not the token of membership!

We readily grant that there was no external ordinance of divine appointment by which infant females were personally recognized as members of the Jewish church, and yet they were plainly included in the stipulations of the covenant, and were members, and when they attained a proper age, enjoyed all its privileges. If a gentile family became proselytes, the adult and infant males were circumcised; but the females, adult as well as infant, became members of the church without any external rite other than proselyte baptism, by virtue of their connection with the males. In this, as in many other cases, they were evidently considered as represented by the men, and virtually included with them. Even in the present day females are in numerous instances regarded as being represented by males; they have no vote, are not eligible to office, &c.; these restrictions prevailed to a still greater extent among the Jews. Both in church and state their rights were in some respects absorbed in those of the men;—circumcision furnishes an illustration of this very fact. Consequently the meaning of circumcision must have been the same as though it had been applied to both sexes. But under the new dispensation Christ has appointed an ordinance, alike applicable to males and females; hence, the distinction that once

existed (which was only in form and not in substance) is now done away, and God requires the seal to be applied to adults of both sexes, and of course to all their children whether sons or daughters. The extension of this ordinance to female children, is no greater enlargement of privilege than might be expected from the superiority of the new economy over the old; and it impressively reminds us that in this new, more expanded and glorious dispensation, "there is neither bond nor free, neither *male* nor *female*, but that we are all one in Christ Jesus."

There is however another very obvious reason why the new seal of God's covenant should be conferred on females. Under the old dispensation, no messengers were sent forth to proselyte the gentiles, so that when proselytes were made, the whole family came together; whilst among the Jews all professed faith. But now the gospel is preached "to every creature," and it often occurs, that the females in a family are converted, while the head of the family and all the males continue unbelievers. It is manifestly proper therefore that every individual should receive baptism. Accordingly, as adult females are recognized as members of the church by a divine ordinance, which was formerly not the case, so infant females receive the seal of the covenant, which they formerly did not.

To conclude, does not this objection involve a denial of the advantage of circumcision?—and if so, must not our Baptist brethren be "hard run" for objections to infant baptism, that they should run counter to God's word?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Rom. ii. 25, and iii. 1, 2.

**FIFTH OBJECTION.**—If now as formerly infants are by virtue of their birth, members of the church of God, and consequently entitled to the sacramental seal of membership, why are they not treated as such ;—church members, whether young or old, should be instructed, watched over, and disciplined when circumstances require it, by the church ; but are infant members thus treated by the advocates of their baptism ?

It must be acknowledged that there is great force in this objection, not however against the membership or baptism of children, but in its application to individual churches and their officers. Doubtless it is the official duty of ministers, elders and deacons to look well to the moral education of the children of the church, who by their baptism have been recognized and proclaimed as members ; and it is a matter of serious regret and deep reproach that this most important obligation is so generally neglected. Was it not God's design in instituting the church, to "purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works?"—Are not children just as emphatically as their parents, comprehended in that covenant which contemplates the separation of a holy people from the world that lieth in wickedness, and the training up of a spiritual and godly seed for the glory of the Lord?—And is not the sealing ordinance intended to mark and distinguish all those whom he designed to purify ? Upon what grounds then can the church justify or apologize for its delinquency in this respect ? It is unquestionably a most important duty to provide for the religious instruction of adult members, and to exercise spiritual inspection and discipline in relation to them ; and by what process of reasoning can the church be exempted from the discharge of like duty in regard

to infant and juvenile members?—Verily, Pedobaptist churches are inconsistent, and more or less guilty in this respect, and it behooves them to inquire how they may more faithfully discharge their obligations to “the lambs of the flock.” We think we shall do an essential service here by presenting to our readers the excellent remarks of Dr. Miller of Princeton on this subject:

“Let all baptized children, from the hour of their receiving the seal of God’s covenant, be recorded and recognised as infant disciples. Let the officers of the church, as well as their parents according to the flesh, ever regard them with a watchful and affectionate eye. Let Christian instruction, Christian restraint, and Christian warning, entreaty and prayer ever attend them, from the mother’s lap to the infant school, and from the infant school to the seminary, whatever it may be, for more mature instruction. Let them be early taught to reverence and read the word of God, and to treasure up select portions of it in their memories. Let appropriate catechisms, and other sound compends of Christian truth, be put into their hands, and by incessant repetition and inculcation be impressed upon their minds. Let a school or schools, according to its extent, be established in each church, placed under the immediate instruction of exemplary, orthodox, and pious teachers, carefully superintended by the pastor, and visited as often as practicable by all the officers of the church. Let these beloved youth be often reminded of the relation which they bear to the Christian family; and the just claim of Christ to their affections and service, be often presented with distinctness, solemnity, and affection. Let every kind of error and immorality be faithfully reproved, and as far as possible suppressed in them. Let the pastor convene



the baptized children as often as practicable, and address them with instruction and exhortation in the name of that God to whom they have been dedicated, and every endeavor made to impress their consciences and their hearts with gospel truth. When they come to years of discretion, let them be affectionately reminded of their duty to ratify, by their own act, the vows made by their parents in baptism, and be urged, again and again, to give, first their hearts, and then the humble acknowledgment of an outward profession, to the Saviour. Let this plan be pursued faithfully, constantly, patiently, and with parental tenderness. If instruction and exhortation be disregarded, and a course of error, immorality, or negligence be indulged in, let warning, admonition, suspension, or excommunication ensue, according to the character of the individual, and the exigencies of the case. 'What!' some will be disposed to say, 'suspend or excommunicate a young person, who has never yet taken his seat at a sacramental table, nor even asked for that privilege?' Certainly. Why not? If the children of professing Christians are born members of the church, and are baptized as a sign and seal of this membership, nothing can be plainer than that they ought to be treated in every respect as church members, and, of course, if they act in an unchristian manner, a bar ought to be set up in the way of their enjoying Christian privileges. If this be not admitted, we must give up the very first principles of ecclesiastical order and duty. Nor is there, obviously any thing more incongruous in suspending or excluding from church privileges a young man, or young woman, who has been baptized in infancy, and trained up in the bosom of the church, but has now no regard for religion, than there is in suspending or excommunicating one who

has been, for many years, an attendant on the Lord's table, but has now forsaken the house of God, and has no longer any desire to approach a Christian ordinance. No one would consider it as either incongruous or unreasonable to declare such a person unworthy of Christian fellowship, and excluded from it, though he had no disposition to enjoy it. The very same principle applies in the case now under consideration.

“It has been supposed, indeed, by some Pedobaptists, that although every baptized child is a regular church member, he is a member only of the general visible church, and not in the ordinary sense, of any particular church; and, therefore, that he is not amenable to ecclesiastical discipline until he formally connects himself with some particular church. This doctrine appears to me subversive of every principle of ecclesiastical order. Every baptized child is, undoubtedly, to be considered as a member of the church in which he received baptism, until he dies, is excommunicated, or regularly dismissed to another church. And if the time shall ever come when all our churches shall act upon this plan; when infant members shall be watched over with unceasing and affectionate moral care; when a baptized young person, of either sex, being not yet what is called a communicant, shall be made the subject of mild and faithful Christian discipline, if he fall into heresy or immorality; when he shall be regularly dismissed, by letter, from the watch and care of one church to another; and when all his spiritual interests shall be guarded, by the church, as well as by his parents, with sacred and affectionate diligence; when this efficient and faithful system shall be acted upon, infant baptism will be universally acknowledged as a blessing, and the church will shine with new and spiritual glory.

“The truth is, if infant baptism were properly improved; if the profession which it includes, and the obligations which it imposes, were suitably appreciated and followed up, it would have few opponents. I can no more doubt, if this were done, that it would be blessed to the saving and conversion of thousands of our young people, than I can doubt the faithfulness of a covenant of God. Yes, infant baptism is of God, but the fault lies in the conduct of its advocates. The inconsistency of its friends has done more to discredit it, than all the arguments of its opposers, a hundred fold. Let us hope that these friends will, one day, arouse from their deplorable lethargy, and show that they are contending for an ordinance as precious as it is scriptural.”

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**SIXTH OBJECTION.**—If children are members of the church by virtue of their birth, and are publicly recognized as such in their baptism, what is to hinder them from coming to the Lord’s supper? Indeed, continues the objector, as members it is their duty to come and no one has a right to raise up any barrier whatever, or to require their compliance with any further condition. And yet some churches do not permit them to come, until they submit to a course of religious instruction and the rite of confirmation, while others require them to make a formal profession of religion in some other way prior to their communing.

**ANSWER.**—The fallacy of this objection lies in the supposition that there can be no gradation of capacity for the enjoyment of church-membership, or that every member, irrespective of age, condition or qualification,

must necessarily be entitled to the same privileges. If this supposition were well founded, the objection would not be without force; but as it proceeds from an entirely erroneous view, the difficulty is altogether imaginary.—How was it among the Jews? Their children were members of the church, and recognized as such by circumcision; but was it therefore lawful for them to come to the passover (the ordinance which has been succeeded by the holy supper) without regard to age or any other qualifications?—By no means; they were not permitted to share in that ordinance until they were thought to be old enough to understand its nature, and not even then unless they were also ceremonially clean. Previously to their admission to the passover, they were instructed, trained up to religious exercises, and ascertained to be worthy to engage in that solemn festival. The age fixed upon for their first celebration of it, was for a female twelve and for a male thirteen years. Anterior to their first participation, they were regarded as infant members and not under obligations to the law or subject to its penalties, but subsequently they were viewed as adult members, and denominated “sons or daughters of the congregation of Israel.”—Here then, we have an illustration derived from the Sacred Scriptures, precisely in point. Jewish children were members of the church, but not allowed to share in all its privileges until they arrived at the age of discretion, had received instruction and could voluntarily and intelligently assume the obligations of the law and the engagements of the covenant. What then becomes of the objection stated at the beginning of this paragraph?

But the sophistry of this objection may yet further be exposed, by a reference to the established regulations of

civil society. Our children are all citizens of the state in which they are born; they are plenary citizens by virtue of their birth, but do they as children enjoy all the rights of citizenship? No, as infant citizens, the constitution and laws guaranty to them a certain and adequate amount of privilege, such as personal protection, provision for subsistence and education if they are in want, &c. ; when they reach the age of twenty-one, this amount is greatly enlarged; they are then authorized to exercise the elective franchise, to make contracts, to hold certain offices, &c. ; but even then they cannot enter into office until they have been appointed or elected, and also taken certain prescribed oaths; after they advance a few years more, they become eligible to other and more responsible posts of honor and trust. Thus we perceive that there is a difference in the aggregate of civil rights vouchsafed by the state to citizens of dissimilar ages and qualifications; but notwithstanding this relative inequality or limitation of prerogative, which is as necessary for the good of the state collectively, as it is wise in reference to the individuals more immediately concerned, all without distinction are universally regarded as citizens. We might add other illustrations, taken from the restrictions and expansions of privilege prevalent in military, or naval, or even social life, but the foregoing is sufficient for our purpose. Now let these remarks be applied to the objection before us: all baptized children are recognized members of the church, and as such entitled to certain advantages already specified; (see answer to last objection); but it would be preposterous to maintain, that they have, as infant members, a claim to all the privileges, which the church in the exercise of its legitimate authority, has accorded only to adult members. When

they attain to suitable age and capacity for the exercise of additional privileges, when they become qualified to “examine themselves and discern the Lord’s body,” and profess a sincere desire to fly from the wrath to come, accompanied by a corresponding life, then they receive an accession of privilege,—they are *confirmed*, thereby taking the oath or assuming the pledge of allegiance to their Divine King, and are admitted as guests at his table. If in after life they prove faithful and evince suitable qualifications, their rights are increased; they may at a proper age be elected to office, &c. If on the other hand, they backslide and fall into gross error, their rights are curtailed; if they persevere in open vice they are entirely excinded from the church, just as citizens of the state, who, when they commit certain criminal actions, are deprived of their freedom by imprisonment, and in aggravated cases, cut off from all their civil rights.

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**SEVENTH OBJECTION.**—If children of Christian parents are born members of the church, they have no need of baptism, they belong to the church without it, and it becomes a work of supererogation.

**ANSWER.**—Children of believing Jews were in like manner born members of God’s church, and yet he appointed them to be circumcised in ratification of it; on the same principle and for the same end, he now requires our children to be baptized. If indeed, it were maintained that baptism was simply instituted as an initiatory rite, and contemplated no other end, the objection in question might not be thought altogether so specious; but both suppositions are erroneous. The ordinance under consideration is not a constituting, but a setting forth and

certifying of membership. Moreover, it has other and more important designs; it is the *seal of God's everlasting covenant*, which is a matter of the utmost moment, and hence the objection is also on this account equally void of point and force; but even on the mistaken hypothesis involved in it, it is a sophism. For by a similar process of reasoning, the necessity of the Lord's supper, and indeed of every duty not in all cases absolutely essential to salvation, might be invalidated. For the great condition of justification before God, is faith in Jesus Christ, and if a man *believes* with all his heart, it might with equal propriety be urged, he will inherit eternal life without communing. But faith is active in good works and evinced by obedience, and thus ensures a ready and joyful compliance with all other Christian duties. The believer accounts it a high privilege to show forth and strengthen his faith by celebrating the eucharist, and in the exercise of the same faith, he esteems it no less a privilege to proclaim and ratify the membership of his infant offspring, and seal their title to the covenant of grace by devoting them to the Triune God in baptism.

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**EIGHTH OBJECTION.**—If infants are members of the church by birth, and are not baptized, they forfeit their membership, and hence, on the Pedobaptist principle, all unbaptized children are excluded from the church of God, and therefore lost.

**ANSWER.**—There is a strange admixture of truth and error in this statement. The major and minor propositions are doubtless correct, but the last branch of the

deduction is an egregious blunder. It is true, the children of Christian parents do forfeit their membership if they grow up without baptism; but is this a hard case?—if so, it may be easily remedied, for we are now speaking of children, the neglect of whose parents is *voluntary*; (how far the want of an opportunity to present them in baptism, may operate in changing the relation of unbaptized children, it is not for us now to inquire.) If however, it be still insisted,—that the doctrine is cruel in relation to children, who must be regarded as innocent notwithstanding the remissness of the parents; then we refer the objector to the God of Israel;—with Him,—not with the humble writer, let the contest be waged, if an impotent worm of the dust can be found sufficiently reckless to enter into conflict with the *Lord God of hosts!*—He it was that ordained that the uncircumcised child “*should be cut off from his people;*” and if baptism has been substituted for circumcision, which can never be successfully gainsayed, then it follows that unbaptized children are “*cut off*” from the visible church, and whoever desires to have an altercation on the question, must submit to have, not feeble man, but the omnipotent Jehovah for his antagonist.

But here the query arises: what is meant by this *cutting off from God's people*? Does it imply exclusion from heaven?—God forbid!—it imports neither more nor less than a shutting out from external church privileges. The individual cut off from the people,—(that is, from the Jewish people who were emphatically God's people,) had no right to partake of the passover, and of some other religious exercises, but if he died in infancy, would be received into heaven, on the ground of Christ's merits, just as certainly as the unoffending child of a



heathen. Thus also, if any individual in a Christian land grows up to adult age without sealing the covenant of grace in God's own appointed way, he has no right to celebrate the Lord's supper, nor to perform other acts of membership in any Pedobaptist church, so long as he remains unbaptized; he has lost his membership; his own voluntary neglect ejects him from God's people.

The aspect presented by the denomination, called "Friends," (who reject baptism altogether as well as the holy supper,) in this view of our subject, is a peculiar one, for if rigidly carried out in all its extended bearings, it will in a sense *unchurch* them; but whatever be the mistakes of men, they do not alter the truth of God. For the orthodox portion of that denomination, we entertain high regard; in various respects they are an amiable and exemplary people, and we hope a goodly proportion of them are genuine Christians. How far their want of correct apprehensions of baptism, which is the foundation of its rejection among them, will tend to extenuate the guilt attaching to its neglect, does not belong to our province to investigate. The new dispensation is confessedly more *spiritual* in its general character than the old; in some respects a conformity to *the spirit of the gospel* may apologize for the omission of a rigid conformity to its letter, more effectually than it would have done under the inexorable requisitions of the law; but still no human writer is to be held responsible for the ultimate results of truth, whithersoever it may lead, or whatever want of charity those results may seem to indicate. "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THIRD ARGUMENT.

*We find numerous passages in the Sacred Scriptures, which cannot be consistently explained without admitting the right of infants to baptism.*—As a consideration of all those passages would carry us far beyond our prescribed limits, we must be content with a brief reference to a few of them.

1. “Then were brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray : but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them and departed thence.”<sup>1</sup> Observe here, that the children spoken of were “*little children* ;” according to Mark x. 16, they were so young that our Saviour “took them up in his arms,” and in Luke xviii. 15, they are expressly called “infants.”<sup>2</sup> They must accordingly have been children not only in temper, docility, &c., but also and emphatically in age and stature.—Notice next, that our Lord positively affirms respecting them, that, “*of such is the kingdom of heaven* ;” that is, *of such little children* is the kingdom of heaven,—to them it

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xix. 13—15.

<sup>2</sup>Τα βρεφῆ—very young children, and this was probably the reason that the disciples rebuked the parents, thinking them *too young* to receive any good.

belongs, or theirs this kingdom is. "It is well known," says PROFESSOR SCHMUCKER, "to those acquainted with the phraseology of the New Testament, that the expressions 'kingdom of God' and 'kingdom of heaven' are familiarly used to designate the church of God under the New Testament economy. Thus, John the Baptist preached, saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It will not be supposed that heaven was literally descending to the earth and had almost arrived amongst us; but the Saviour evidently meant, that the time for remodeling his church into its New Testament form was at hand." ROBERT HALL, a distinguished and learned Baptist minister, explains this phrase in the same manner, his words are: "'The kingdom of God, a phrase which is *constantly employed in Scripture*, to denote that state of things which is placed under *the avowed administration of the Messiah.*"—If then the expression, "kingdom of heaven," signifies the visible church of God, as distinguished both from the heathen world and the old economy, and this church, as Christ declares, is composed in part of "little children," or embraces them as members, then of course they are entitled to baptism as the sign of their membership.

In order to escape the force of this argument, Antipedobaptists maintain, that the words, "of such," designate not little children, but adults who *resemble them in spirit*. But why, in this event, did Christ wish little children to be brought to him? Could he not have taught without their presence, that adults of a child-like disposition were the subjects of his kingdom? According to this exposition our Lord's language, paraphrased, would be to this effect: Suffer little children to come unto me,

<sup>1</sup>See Hall's Works, vol. 1. p. 372.

for my kingdom belongs not to them, but only to adult persons who resemble them in spirit.—It would not have been more preposterous for him to say: suffer *doves* and *lambs* to come unto me, for my kingdom consists not of them but of adults of *dove-like* and *lamb-like* temper. Such absurdity is its own refutation. The inconsistency of this gloss will be made still more apparent, by referring to parallel language in other parts of Scripture. “Blessed,” says our Lord, “are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>1</sup> The form of expression here is precisely the same in the Greek, as that under consideration. We might therefore with equal propriety expound these texts thus: the kingdom of heaven does not belong to those who are “poor in spirit,” but only those who resemble them; it does not belong to those who are “persecuted for righteousness’ sake,” but only those who are like them in temper. Who does not see the folly and wickedness of thus trifling with inspired truth? But we are sometimes told that the expression, “kingdom of heaven,” implies the kingdom of glory, or a heavenly state;—suppose it does,—our argument is only strengthened by this construction, for if our little children belong to the kingdom of *glory*, much more do they belong to God’s kingdom on *earth*; and if so, why not administer to them the appointed seal of that interesting relation? If they have the thing signified, which is membership in the church, why withhold the sign of it, which is baptism?—After all, it will perhaps be asserted, that those children were brought, not that Christ should baptize them, but heal them of diseases. We are, however

<sup>1</sup>Matt. v. 3—10.

not left to *conjecture* what was the motive, for we are plainly told, that it was that our Lord might bestow his blessing upon them; accordingly, the sacred writer informs us, that “he put his hands upon them and *blessed* them.” Whether he baptized them or not, is a matter perfectly immaterial to the validity of our argument. It is sufficient for our purpose to know, that little children belong to God’s church and therefore have a right to its privileges.

2. “Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized, every one of you. \* \* \* For *the* promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off,”<sup>1</sup> &c. It is worthy of notice that the apostle here uses the definite article *the*,—not *a* but “**THE** promise,” that is, the promise of God to Abraham, “to be a God unto thee and unto thy seed after thee,” is equally “unto you and to your children.” Now in order to decide what Peter meant by the expression, “your children,” it is only necessary to ascertain the import of the words “thy seed” in *the* promise referred to. It is universally admitted and has never been denied, that the latter comprises small children “eight days old,” and hence it follows with all the clearness and certainty of a mathematical demonstration, that the former embraces the same description of individuals. Every one knows that the word *seed* means children; and that *children* means seed; and that they are precisely the same. The promise then, in which God engages to be our God and to constitute us his people, extends equally to our children, and of course gives them as well as us, a right to the privileges of his people. And if they have a right to those privileges, what further argument need we to show

<sup>1</sup>Acts ii. 38—39.

that they are entitled to the outward token and seal of those privileges?

It will avail nothing here to inform us, that *τις*, children, means posterity;—suppose it does,—*σπέρμα*, seed, also means posterity, but both include our earliest as well as our latest posterity, our youngest children as well as our most distant successors. Admitting that the word *children* does not always signify infants; the question is whether it can mean any thing else but infants in this passage? Peter speaks to all who were capable of understanding him. These he calls *you*. Now, whom can he possibly mean by the children of these hearers but the infant offspring which they either had or might have? And if the promise to the adults be a reason for submitting to be baptized, it must also be a reason for baptizing the children; since the promise is said to be equally to both; and this is made the foundation of their baptism. Our Baptist brethren would make Peter a weak reasoner indeed. According to them he says to his audience, “The promise is to you,” therefore be ye baptized: the promise is also to your little ones, therefore let them *not* be baptized?—Spirit of party! what havoc hast thou made of the Holy Scriptures! But that our tenderest offspring are included is even evident from the grammatical construction; for the apostle says: the promise *is* to you, and your children, not *is* to you, and *will* be to your children when they reach manhood; but *is* even now to you parents and your little ones, &c. *Edwards*, commenting on this passage, remarks: “We should more certainly come at the truth, if instead of idly criticising, we could fancy ourselves Jews, and in the habit of circumcising infants, and receiving them into the church; and then

could we imagine one of our own nation and religion to address us in the very language of Peter, in the text, 'the promise is to you and to your children;' let us ask ourselves whether we could ever suppose him to mean adult posterity only!"<sup>1</sup>

3. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."<sup>2</sup> The apostle is speaking of a mixed marriage, in which one of the parties is a heathen and the other a professing Christian. In what light are the offspring of this connection to be regarded;—as *holy* or as *unclean*, that is, as members of the church or as heathen? He decides that they are members; for says he, the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and *vice versa*, that is, the one is so purified by means of his relation to the other, that their mutual offspring are not *unclean*,—not heathen—but *holy*,—that is, separated from the gentile world and in covenant with God, or members of that church with which the believing parent is, in virtue of his profession, united. But if both parents were unbelievers or pagans, then their children would be *unclean*, that is, they could not be regarded as included in the covenant of grace, and belonging to the visible church of God. It will be noticed, that "*holy*" and "*unclean*" are here converse terms.

After this exposition, we need scarcely remind the intelligent reader, that the words *sanctified* and *holy* in the above text, are employed, not in a spiritual, but in an *ecclesiastical* sense, and designate something set apart to a holy or sacred use, that is, separated from a common or profane, to a holy purpose. Thus, the Jews

<sup>1</sup>Edwards on Baptism.

<sup>2</sup>1 Cor. vii. 14.

were called a "holy people," the "people of God," &c., not because they were all or even a majority of them spiritually holy, and really united in heart to God, but because they were separated from the rest of the world by God's covenant with them, and constituted his professing people. In the same sense the Christian world may be regarded as *holy*, or as *God's people*, because severed from the heathen, and professing his name. So the Lord's day is holy, being set apart from a common to a religious use; so the vessels of the temple, the vestments of the high-priest, &c., were holy. To maintain on the strength of this passage, that a very pious husband or wife is always instrumental in conferring on an unbelieving partner, spiritual purity or sanctification of heart; or that every child born of parents of whom one is a believer, will necessarily become the subject of gospel holiness; would be to assert that which history and experience but too often and too sadly contradict. The opinion that this text decides a question of legitimacy respecting children born from mixed marriages, and that agreeably to this decision, the offspring of parents, one of whom is pious, are no longer bastards, but to be considered as begotten in lawful wedlock; is such a wild and far-fetched fancy, that we cannot stop to notice it, except with this single remark, that the word "holy" is no where in the Bible applied to legitimacy of birth. And as to the idea that piety in one party is necessary to render a marriage contract valid; it is too ridiculous to deserve confutation.

Should it be contended that our exposition of this passage proves too much for our purpose, since if the children are "holy," or members of the church because either of the parents is a *believer*, then also the *belief* of



one parent makes the other "holy" or a member of the church, even while he or she still remains a heathen, ("unclean,") because it is plainly said, that "the unbelieving husband is *sanctified* by the wife," and vice versa;—our reply is, that however ingenious this objection is, it has no foundation in truth. Its fallacy lies in the idea that the *sanctification* of the unbelieving husband (by his alliance with a believing wife) is in every respect precisely the same with the *holiness*, which children derive from their descent from a believing parent. But this supposition is altogether gratuitous. We indeed readily grant, that the believing wife does, in some sense, sanctify the unbelieving husband, but by no means to an extent sufficient to confer upon him the right of church-membership; for this would be a gross violation of the covenant, and could therefore never have been intended by the apostle. But the membership of infants, on account of the faith of any one of the parents, would be no such violation, but in perfect accordance with the covenant, and is therefore not only admissible, but an absolute corollary. The language of the passage itself suggests this explanation; for the sanctification spoken of, is imputed to the unbelieving parent, evidently not on *his own account*, but for the *sake of the offspring*, or in other words, not with the view to constitute him a member, but to transmit membership to the children of a believing parent. This construction, as already intimated, is perfectly consistent with the original terms of the covenant. According to those terms, church-membership was the invariable *birthright* of the children of God's people, but in no event was it based upon the mere fact of intermarriage with that people; nay more, adults could not under any circumstances become members without a profession of their faith. Who then must not

perceive, that the "sanctification of the unbelieving by the believing parent, and the external or ecclesiastical "holiness" of the children, conferred by the same cause, are two distinct things, and that, to understand them as implying the same, would involve a contravention of the stipulations of the covenant?

"The passage thus explained," says an able writer, "establishes the church-membership of infants in another form. For it assumes the principle that when *both* parents are reputed believers; their children belong to the church of God as *a matter of course*. The whole difficulty proposed by the Corinthians to Paul, grows out of this principle. Had he taught, or they understood, that *no* children, be their parents believers or unbelievers, are to be accounted members of the church, the difficulty could not have existed. For if the faith of *both* parents could not confer upon a child the privilege of membership, the faith of only *one* of them certainly could not. The point was decided. It would have been mere impertinence to teaze the apostle with queries which carried their own answer along with them. But on the supposition that when both parents were members, their children, also, were members; the difficulty is very natural and serious. 'I see,' would a Corinthian convert exclaim, 'I see the children of my Christian neighbors, owned as members of the church of God; and I see the children of others, who are unbelievers, rejected with themselves. I believe in Christ myself; but my husband, my wife, believes not. What is to become of *my* children? Are they to be admitted with myself? or are they to be cast off with my partner?'

"'Let not your heart be troubled,' replies the apostle: 'God reckons them to the believing, not to the unbelieving, parent. It is enough that they are *yours*. The

infidelity of your partner shall never frustrate their interest in the covenant of your God. They are 'holy' because you are so.

“This decision put the subject at rest. And it lets us know that one of the reasons, if not the chief reason of the doubt, whether a married person should continue, after conversion, in the conjugal society of an infidel partner, arose from a fear lest such continuance should exclude the children from the church of God. Otherwise it is hard to comprehend why the apostle should dissuade them from separating, by such an argument as he has employed in the text. And it is utterly inconceivable how such a doubt could have entered their minds, had not the membership of infants, born of believing parents, been undisputed, and esteemed a high privilege; so high a privilege, as that the apprehension of losing it made conscientious parents at a stand whether they ought not rather to break the ties of wedlock, by withdrawing from an unbelieving husband or wife. Thus, the *origin* of this difficulty on the one hand, and the *solution* of it, on the other, concur in establishing our doctrine, that, by the appointment of God himself, *the infants of believing parents are BORN members of his church.*”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Essays on the Church of God, by Dr. J. M. Mason. *Christian's Magazine*, ii. 49, 50.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FOURTH ARGUMENT.

*The ancient practice of family baptism, which was continued in the apostolic age affords very strong presumptive evidence on this subject.*

That this practice prevailed under the Old Testament economy, that is, that gentile parents when they renounced idolatry and professed the true religion, were with all the members of their families, including the youngest children, baptized and circumcised in token of their ablution from heathenism and their title to the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, is a historical fact already sufficiently proved.<sup>1</sup> The children were uniformly embraced in this solemn transaction, on the profession of faith made by their parents. This interesting practice (with the exception of circumcision) was not set aside, but continued in the apostolic age. We have no doubt that hundreds of families, the heads of which were converted by the preaching of the gospel, were baptized, embracing thousands of infants. The very language in which the baptism of families is mentioned in the New Testament, affords proof that such instances were of frequent occurrence, and constituted a standing practice. Witness, for example, the case of Lydia: "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us," &c. It is obvious to the plainest reader, that the baptism of "her household," is recorded not as an uncommon event, but as

<sup>1</sup>See p. 20 sqq.

a natural and very ordinary one, following her own profession of faith as a matter of course. The language of Clemens Alexandrinus, A. D. 190, is in perfect accordance with this fact: "The doctrine of the Master of Christianity did not remain confined to Judea, only, as the philosophy of the Greeks was confined to Greece; but it spread itself over the whole world converting equally Greek and barbarian, in every nation and village, and in all cities ENTIRE FAMILIES (literally *whole households*) and SEPARATE INDIVIDUALS."<sup>1</sup>

Most writers on this subject, refer only to three cases of family baptism, recorded in the New Testament; viz. those of Lydia, the jailor and Stephanas. But an attentive examination will justify the assertion, that there were many more. The church at Philippi, though evidently small, certainly furnishes two cases, that of Lydia and that of the jailor;<sup>2</sup> how many others were baptized as families, we cannot say. The church at Corinth also affords two baptized families, that of Crispus and that of Stephanas;<sup>3</sup> besides a number of others, plainly glanced at but not expressly mentioned. The family of Crispus is not positively declared to have been *baptized*, but its baptism will no doubt be readily conceded, being recorded as a *believing* family; and to have left this believing family *unbaptized*, would, on the one hand, have been a strange and unaccountable neglect on the part of the apostles to fulfil their divine commission, (which involved the duty of baptizing all who should believe,) while on the other hand, it would cut up by the very roots the baptism of believing adults no less than that of infants. We wil-

<sup>1</sup>Οικοὺς ὅλης, καὶ ἰδίᾳ ἑκάστου.—Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi. p. 927.

<sup>2</sup>Acts. xvi. 15, and xvi. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Acts. xviii. 8, and 1 Cor. i. 16.

lingly leave our Baptist brethren to decide according to their own judgment; if they maintain that "Crispus with all his house," though said to be a "believing family," *were not* baptized, they virtually impute to the apostles a most flagrant disregard of the plainest duty, and uproot their own favorite scheme; but if they say they *were* baptized, then they admit inferentially what is not expressly on record, and vastly strengthen the presumption in favor of infant baptism, as will presently be shown. They can choose whichever horn of the dilemma they please.

But if they grant the baptism of the family of Crispus, because we find it reported as *believing*, then ensues another inference no less certain and still more fatal to the Baptist cause, namely, we must admit the same of all other families which we find marked as Christian, but not described as baptized. Such were the families of Onesiphorus,<sup>1</sup> Aristobulus,<sup>2</sup> Narcissus,<sup>2</sup> Aquila and Priscilla,<sup>3</sup> Nymphas,<sup>4</sup> and Philemon.<sup>5</sup> It is true that in the case of Aristobulus and that of Narcissus, the word *οικος*, family, does not occur, yet the phrase evidently implies family, and all translators have so rendered it.<sup>6</sup> In order to present this subject more satisfactorily to our readers, we shall lay before them a tabular view of it.

<sup>1</sup> Tim. i. 16—18, and iv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xvi. 10—11.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xvi. 3—5.

<sup>4</sup> Col. iv. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Phil. i. 2.

<sup>6</sup>It is worthy of remark, that the apostle does not greet Aristobulus and Narcissus, but only those of their households or families—from which Clarke infers, that either they were dead or were not converted to Christianity, and hence he limits his salutations to their families.

CHRISTIAN FAMILIES MENTIONED IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.

I. *Families expressly stated to have been baptized:*

1. That of Cornelius, Acts x. 1—48, and xi. 14.
2. ——— Lydia, Acts xvi. 15.
3. ——— the jailor, Acts xvi. 33.
4. ——— Stephanas, 1 Cor. i. 16.

II. *Families NOT EXPRESSLY stated to have been baptized:*<sup>1</sup>

5. That of Aquila and Priscilla, Rom. xvi. 3—5.
6. ——— Nymphas, Col. iv. 15.
7. ——— Philemon, Phil. i. 2.
8. ——— Crispus, Acts xviii. 8.
9. ——— Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. i. 16—18, and iv. 19.

III. *Families NOT EXPRESSLY represented as families nor as having received baptism.*

10. That of Aristobulus, Rom. xvi. 10—11.
11. ——— Narcissus, *ibid.*

Now then, we have fairly made out no less than ELEVEN believing families; *four* of them explicitly affirmed to have been baptized; *five* spoken of in the capacity of families, and as having embraced the gospel; and the remaining *two* also alluded to as believing families, but not literally so represented. The last seven either received baptism or they did not; if not, the apostles, as already intimated, stand chargeable with a palpa-

<sup>1</sup>We might have increased this number by adding the family of the nobleman at Capernaum, see John iv. 53; but as Christian baptism was not then appointed, we have omitted it, though no doubt he and all his family received baptism as soon as it was instituted.

ble dereliction of official duty, in not administering it to them, and "believer's baptism," so called, as far as these examples go, is torn to shreds and cast to the winds. But if they did receive baptism, of which in our opinion there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, then let us give to this argument just as much weight as it deserves.

Have we *eleven* instances of the administration of the Lord's supper?—not a fourth of that number. Have we *eleven* instances of the change of the Jewish Sabbath to the Lord's day?—not a fifth of that number. In fact, there is not a single doctrine, principle or practice, derived from the example of the apostles, which can be supported by a more numerous series of clear and decided precedents. How then can our Baptist neighbors, in the face of all these examples, deny infant baptism? Is there any other case, besides this, in which they would take eleven families promiscuously and deny the existence of young children in them? Take eleven families indiscriminately in Charles street, or any other street in Baltimore:—take eleven pews in any house of worship, containing eleven families:—take eleven family-groups at a zoological exhibition or a public concert, and in every instance they will afford *more than one child*. The estimated *average* of children in each family, may be fairly set down at *six*; these six in each one of those families, amount to *sixty-six*; now it is more than ten hundred thousand times to one, that among sixty-six children, there will be at least one infant. But absolute infancy is not necessary to make out our point;<sup>1</sup> suppose children of two or three years old, and the chances will be many millions to one that some *infants* were

<sup>1</sup>The Greek church extends baptismal infancy to *three years* or to *four*; the Romish church to *seven years*.



found among the sixty-six children belonging to eleven families. Or put the question in another form : suppose eleven families, each containing six children,—how many young children would probably be found among them ?

In order to invest this argument with still more force, we must be permitted to indulge in a criticism on the meaning of the word *family*. The Greek term *οικος*, corresponds precisely with the word *house* in English ; both are variously used to express the same ideas. Our object now, is not to analyze all the numerous applications of this term, (*οικος*;) but merely to ascertain its import in reference to family baptism. House or *οικος* then, signifies, metaphorically, a *family* living contemporaneously and mostly under the same roof.<sup>1</sup> With the addition of a syllable and a change of the termination to the feminine gender, *οικη*, it also changes its application, and comprehends attendants on a family, servants, &c.<sup>2</sup> While the former therefore answers to the word *house* or *family*, the latter conveys the idea of *household*,—including all that *hold* to the house. Strictly speaking, there is not a single instance on inspired record of the baptism of an entire *household*, as such, though individuals comprising it may have been baptized as individuals. We are therefore narrowed down in this investigation to the Greek term *οικος*, in the sense of FAMILY, and with

<sup>1</sup>Scripture regularly employs this term (family) to import the nearest possible degree of kindred ;—by consanguinity generally ; yet not excluding marriage, &c. ; and by descent generally, but we do not know a passage in which it includes servants, or the **HOUSEHOLD**.

<sup>2</sup> Marriage indeed, or adoption, might engraft an individual of the **HOUSEHOLD** into the *family* ; but even that is not according to the appointment of nature, but is an unexpected incident.

this word it perfectly corresponds, and should always have been so rendered when used in relation to family baptism. Such a translation would have prevented all error on the subject of baptism. There can, correctly speaking, be no family without *children*. A man and his wife do not constitute a family, any more than a single old gentleman who dwells under the same roof with his maiden sister. When a woman is in a state of gravitation, she is said to be “in a *family-way*,” and when she gives birth to her child, she *has* a family. This criticism applies exactly to the Greek word *οικος*. No where in the New Testament, does it mean a married pair without children, (of course we here allude to the term in its metaphorical sense, as applying to *persons*, and not a place of residence,) but in several instances it imports *children distinct from their parents*. For example, the apostle salutes the *families* of Onesiphorus, of Aristobulus, and of Narcissus, but not the heads of these families; and he further tells us that he baptized the *family* of Stephanas, but he did not baptize Stephanas himself. Here then we find the word *οικος* (house or family) employed to denote the children even to the exclusion of the parents. Again, Noah was saved with his *family* by means of the ark. The family saved, comprehended Noah with his wife, and his three sons with their wives. Now the writer to the Hebrews, states that Noah “prepared an ark to the saving of his (*οικος*) house”<sup>1</sup> or family. This case points out to us with sufficient plainness the meaning of house or family.

But as in the example just cited, the children composing the family, were all adults; we proceed to show that this word also denotes *small children*.

<sup>1</sup>Heb. xi. 7.

“The apostle, describing the qualifications for a Christian bishop,<sup>1</sup> insists that he should be ‘one who RULETH well HIS OWN *family*, having *his children* in subjection with all gravity—(for if any man know not how to RULE his own *family*, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Here it is evident, the *children* are the *family*; and that they are in a state of non-age, pupilage, and youth, such as requires parental *ruling* and guiding.

“Continuing our perusal of the same chapter, we find a precept which directs a deacon to ‘be the husband of one wife, RULING well his *children*, EVEN HIS OWN FAMILY’—his nearest of kin—his issue. Lest this should admit the possibility of equivocation, the apostle expressly marks the family as *his own*. Nothing can be more a man’s *own* than his children; and the force of the Greek term warrants any degree of strength that can be annexed to it: it therefore, in both these places and connections, fixes the parties designed by it, (equally in reference to the bishop, as to the deacon) to natural issue, *i. e.* a *family*. Nor can these children be *adults*, for the same reasons why the bishop’s children could not be adults.

“But, these children being under the *rule* of their father, though young, are *somewhat* advanced in life. In proof that the term *family* imports *babes and sucklings*, consult the advice of the apostle to the young women, in a following chapter. ‘I would have the *young* widows to—1. marry—2. bear children—3. guide their offspring; literally, *despotise* their *family*.’<sup>3</sup> Most certainly this order of the words is definite; ‘marriage,—child-bearing,—child-*despotising*.’ This third term *must* of necessity mark that guidance, that care of, that assiduity concerning *infant children*, which mothers feel, with the

<sup>1</sup> Tim. iii. 2.<sup>2</sup> Tim. iii. 12.<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. v. 14.

most lively anxiety. Who interferes with a mother's solicitude for her *infant*?—the father may sympathize with it when indisposed; he may express his fondness in kisses, when it climbs his knee; but, it is the mother who must *despotise* it, that is, direct all its motions, and watch all its ways, &c. This is the appointment of nature; or rather of God in his providence. They could not be foster-children to which the apostle refers; for he speaks of *child-bearing*,—bearing children of *their own body*, immediately before: nor could they be adults, as is evident to the humblest capacity, for then, neither could their mother *despotise* them; nor could she be *young*, if her children were of mature age. Observe, also, the change of term: the father (bishop or deacon) is to *rule* his family: the mother must *despotise* her offspring, her *infant*, with strict, unremitting, indefatigable—in one word, with maternal solicitude. Evidently, the *infant* family is of necessity attached to their mother; and equally evidently, the mother is attached to the *infant* family.

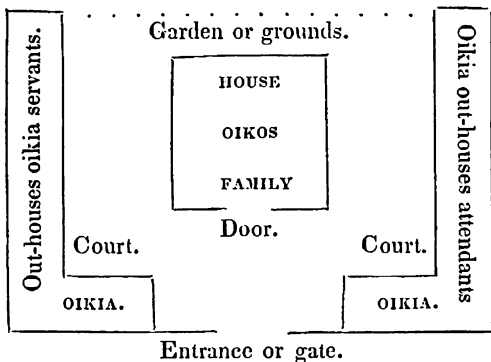
“I demand therefore VALID REASONS why the *family* attached to their mother, Lydia,<sup>1</sup> was not a YOUNG family? for it is a contravention of nature to *assume*, without evidence, that it was adult.”

In addition to all this, the Editor of Calmet offers no less than *fifty* examples in proof of the fact, that *oikos* (house) when used in application to persons, denotes a family of children, including children of all ages, and assures us that as many as *three hundred* instances have been examined, and have proved perfectly satisfactory.<sup>1</sup>

With the view to a more satisfactory illustration of the preceding remarks, we shall present to our readers the

<sup>1</sup>See Ed. of Cal. p. 155.

oulines of a *house*, as such buildings are commonly constructed in Greece; and as we have every reason to believe, they were generally constructed in ancient ages. Certainly we do not mean to infer, that every house corresponds to this plan, but the draft will enable us to form a tolerable conception of such an establishment.



The first thing to be noticed in this figure is, the separation of the out-houses from the principal dwelling. It is plain that the *house* does not include the grounds and adjacent tenements; the house might be built up or pulled down, enlarged or diminished, without affecting the appendant buildings in the least. But the out-houses may be said, without any force on language, to include the *house*;—and certainly the whole may be expressed by one comprehensive term, viz: establishment, residence, premises, &c. The *house*, οἶκος, does not comprehend the whole establishment; but the *establishment*, οἶκος, includes the house. Thus, to baptize the whole house, meant to administer the ordinance to all who

dwelt in the inner or centre edifice, whether young or old; and to preach the gospel to the household, or *oikos*, implied its being declared to servants, retainers, &c.; in a word, to all who belonged to the establishment, including the family proper.

## CHAPTER IX.

### OBJECTIONS TO THIS ARGUMENT.

**FIRST OBJECTION.**—With respect to the jailor it is said, that the apostles spake the word of the Lord “to all that were in his house,” and that “he rejoiced, believing in God with his house.” Now, says the objector, as the word of the Lord cannot be spoken to children, and as they cannot rejoice and believe in God, it follows that no children belonged to his house.

**ANSWER.**—This inference is by no means justified by the circumstances of the case. From all that we can learn, the jailor was in the prime of life. We are informed that “he drew his sword and would have killed himself,” which is not an act characteristic of age but of a fervid mind and a hasty temper. Again, “he called for lights and *SPRANG IN* ;”<sup>1</sup> which in the original expresses the vigorous action of a strong and robust body,—the vehement burst of an individual full of strength. Moreover, it is said, “he was baptized and *ALL HIS*, straight-way, that is, he and his *numerous* family.”<sup>2</sup> It is therefore at least *probable* that his family contained young children. But there is another circumstance which ren-

<sup>1</sup>Εἰσπρῆσσε.

<sup>2</sup>The Editor of Calmet has abundantly established the fact, that the words, *all* and *whole*, in Scripture, and especially when prefixed to families, import *many* and *numerous*. He cites some dozen or more cases in support of this truth. See p. 113—114.

ders it in our view *certain*. When the apostle says, v. 31, "thou shalt be saved and thy house," he used the word, οἶκος, which in this case means only children, or children in connection with their parents; but when the individuals to whom the word of the Lord was preached, are included, οἶκος is dropped and οἰκία substituted, signifying *household*, including servants, prisoners, &c.; and finally, when the fact of baptism is mentioned it is simply said, "he was baptized and all his."

Now let any unprejudiced reader observe the *nice discrimination* of the sacred penman, in varying and adapting his language, according to the precise idea he wished to convey,—using the word *house* or *family* at one time,—to denote the jailor and his children, and the term *household* at another—to designate servants, prisoners, &c., and then let him impartially decide whether no children were baptized?—The only apparent difficulty that remains, is contained in the assertion that, "*he and all his family rejoiced*;" but may there not be infants in a family that rejoice,—nay, may not young children themselves of four or five years of age rejoice? Do we not read: "Out of the mouths of *babes* and *sucklings*, thou hast perfected praise?"—"Allow," says D. Isaac, "that *the children were baptized on the ground of their father's faith*, and all the mystery and difficulty of the passage vanish at once."

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**SECOND OBJECTION.**—In reference to the baptism of Lydia and her family, it is objected, that it could have embraced no children, because it consisted of those brethren spoken of in the 40th v. of Acts xvi. who were comforted by Paul and Silas.



As the case of Lydia affords one of the strongest exhibitions of the argument derived from family baptism, so the objection to it, is one of the weakest. It is written: <sup>1</sup> “and when she was baptized and her household;”<sup>2</sup> and the objection is based on v. 40, “and they (Paul and Silas) entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them.”—But this verse does not so much as intimate that “the brethren” whom the apostles comforted, were Lydia’s family, and the attempt to induce this belief, is not only unwarranted by the fair construction of the passage, but a liberal mind must find some difficulty in suppressing indignation at witnessing such a shallow subterfuge in order to elude the result of fair and conclusive investigation. Certainly, Lydia had a family, for it is expressly so stated in the text; it is scarcely less certain that her family embraced children, because the Greek word implying that idea, is used to designate her family; and, as from all that we can learn, she had not yet passed the meridian of life, some of her children must have been in an infantile state.<sup>3</sup> But there is a still stronger circumstance connected with the baptism of her family. “In all the other instances in which adults are mentioned as having been baptized along with the head of the family, they are mentioned as ‘hearing,’ and ‘believing,’ or in some terms which amount to this. Cornelius had called together ‘his kinsmen and near friends;’ and while Peter spoke,

<sup>1</sup>Acts xvi. 15.

<sup>2</sup>The Greek word is *οικος*, and should have been rendered *house* or *family*, not *household*.

<sup>3</sup>It is a remarkable fact, that the very best of all versions, namely, the Syriac, which was probably of the first century,—reads, “and when she (Lydia) was baptized WITH HER CHILDREN,” &c. The Coptic version gives the same reading.

‘the Holy Ghost fell on all them *which heard the word,*’ ‘and he commanded them to be baptized.’ So the adults in the house of the jailor at Philippi, were persons to whom ‘the word of the Lord was spoken;’ and although nothing is said of the faith of any but the jailor himself,—for the words are more properly rendered, ‘and he believing in God, rejoiced with all his house,’—yet is the joy which appears to have been felt by the adult part of his house, as well as by himself, to be attributed to their faith. Now, as it does not appear that the apostles, although they baptized infant children, baptized unbelieving adult servants because their masters or mistresses believed, and yet the *house* of Lydia were baptized along with herself, when no mention at all is made of the Lord ‘opening the heart’ of the adult domestics, nor of their believing; the fair inference is, that ‘the house’ of Lydia means her children only, and that being of immature years, they were baptized with their mother according to the common custom of the Jews, to baptize the children of proselyted gentiles along with their parents, from which practice Christian baptism appears to have been taken.”<sup>1</sup>

The various suppositions about Lydia’s household meaning “her partners in her mercantile operations;” or “her journeyman dyers,” as she was “a seller of purple;” or “her travelling companions, as she is said to have resided at Thyatira and been only on a visit to Philippi,”<sup>2</sup> *et id genus omne*, are such a tissue of wretched fictions and pitiful shifts to evade the omnipo-

<sup>1</sup>See Watson.

<sup>2</sup>It is not true that she resided at Thyatira, and was only on an expedition of traffic at Philippi. The facts of the case are these: she was a native of Thyatira, and was now permanently settled at Philippi. See Editor of Calmet, &c.

tent power of truth, that we cannot stop to expose them. They afford melancholy proofs that some men are so bent upon cutting off infants from the church of God, that they will rather betake themselves to empty dreams and airy nothing than yield to arguments founded on stubborn facts. "They will suppose," says the Rev. Mr. Slicer, "that even partners in business, with Lydia, or '*journeyman dyers,*' were baptized, and constituted '*brethren,*' although there is no intimation that she had so much as *one partner or one journeyman*; and if she had, (which we think very unlikely,) then they were baptized and made brethren, without grace; for the passage makes no mention of the heart of any person being opened, except Lydia's; and there is no intimation that those journeymen either repented or believed, and of course could not have received '*believer's baptism.*' I appeal to you, reader, to judge, who would be the most fit for baptism,—the children of a believing mother, or a household of *graceless 'journeyman dyers!'* '*I speak as unto wise men.*'"<sup>1</sup>

The objections offered to prove that there were no young children in the families of Cornelius and Stephanas, are of a piece with those already considered in relation to the jailor and Lydia, and hence we shall not fatigue our readers with a refutation of them. It strikes us, our Baptist brethren are compelled to lay their ingenuity under heavy contributions as well as to make large drafts on public credulity, in order to render it even supposable that not one of all these families contained a single young child. And even if they could satisfactorily dispose of these four families; there are seven others to be gotten rid of;<sup>2</sup> and then, there is that of the nobleman

<sup>1</sup>See Slicer's Appeal on Baptism, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>See page 89.

at Capernaum, who is said to have believed "and all (his numerous) *house*,"<sup>1</sup> and must therefore *with his house* have received baptism; they must prove that in his family also, there were no children, although his sick son is not said to have been his only offspring, and even that son is called by him a *child*, the diminutive term *παιδιον* being used. And after all, admitting that they should be able to disprove the existence of little infants in all these families, still the great practice and principle of *family baptism*, that is, of receiving all the younger members of families on the faith of their parents or domestic head, would remain unaffected and be decisively established. This furnishes a foundation on which the friends of infant baptism may plant themselves, as on a rock that cannot be moved. Well may it be asked: "Was it ever known that a case of family baptism occurred under the direction of a Baptist minister? Was it ever known to be recorded, or to have happened, that when, under the influence of Baptist ministrations, the parents of large families were hopefully converted, they were baptized, they and all theirs straightway? There is no risk in asserting that such a case was never heard of. And why? Evidently because our Baptist brethren do not act in this matter upon the principles laid down in the New Testament, and which regulated the primitive Christians."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Wardlaw's observation on this subject is pithy: "It is a remarkable fact," says he, "that we have no mention of any thing resembling the baptism of households or families, in the accounts of the propagation of the gospel by our Baptist brethren. That the apostle baptized families, no believer of the Scripture history can

<sup>1</sup>John iv. 53.

<sup>2</sup>See Miller, page 15.

doubt; and we have seen, that the manner in which such baptisms are recorded, or referred to, indicates no extraordinary thing. Now it surely *is* an extraordinary thing, that in the journals and periodical accounts of Baptist missions in heathen countries, we should never meet with any thing of the kind. I question, whether, in the thirty years of the history of the Baptist mission in India, there is to be found a single instance of the baptism of a household. When do we find a Baptist missionary saying, ‘when she was baptized and her family’—or, ‘I baptized the family of Krishnoo,’ or any other convert? We have the baptism of individuals; but nothing corresponding to the apostolic baptism of families. This fact is a strong corroborative proof, that there is some difference between their practice and that of the apostles. If the practice of both were the same, there might surely be expected *some little* correspondence in the facts connected with it.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Dissertation on Infant Baptism, p. 109.

## CHAPTER X.

### FIFTH ARGUMENT.

*The uniform practice of the Christian church, from the earliest period down to the present time, affords an unanswerable argument in favor of infant baptism.*

If it can be incontestably proved from history that this sacrament was administered to children during the apostolic age; that it continued to be administered from that time forward, in all subsequent ages by the great body of the church; that during the long space of no less than ELEVEN HUNDRED YEARS after the birth of our Lord, there was not a single denomination on the face of the earth that ventured to call in question the necessity of infant baptism, on any ground or plea whatever; that the first sect that ever did oppose it was a small faction in the twelfth century, headed by a Frenchman, called *Peter de Bruis*, who held to the unscriptural and heartless opinion that infants could not be saved under any circumstances whatever, and therefore ought not to be baptized; that for FIFTEEN CENTURIES it was not opposed at all on any such grounds as are now urged by our Baptist brethren; and that the very first body of people in the whole Christian world, who did reject it on these grounds, were a fanatical sect called *Anabaptists*,<sup>1</sup> who arose in Germany

<sup>1</sup>The word Anabaptist is derived from *ανα*, "anew" and *Βαπτιστης*, a Baptist, signifying that those who have been baptized in their infancy ought to be baptized anew.

in the year 1522.<sup>1</sup> If all this can fairly be made to appear on credible historical evidence, then will infant baptism be founded on a rock, steadfast, immoveable, and ever-during as the visible church of God itself.—We shall now endeavor to establish these facts:—

“Tertullian, about two hundred years after the birth of Christ, is the first man of whom we read in ecclesiastical history, as speaking a word against infant baptism; and he, while he recognises the existence and prevalence of the practice, and expressly recommends that infants be baptized, if they are not likely to survive the period of infancy; yet advises that, where there is a prospect of their living, baptism be delayed until a late period in life. But what was the reason of this advice? The moment we look at the reason, we see that it avails nothing to the cause in support of which it is sometimes produced. Tertullian adopted the superstitious idea, that baptism was accompanied with the remission of all past sins; and that sins committed after baptism were peculiarly dangerous. He, therefore, advised, that not merely infants, but young men and young women; and even young widows and widowers should postpone their baptism until the period of youthful appetite and passion should have passed. In short, he advised that, in all cases in which death was not likely to intervene, baptism be postponed, until the subjects of it should have arrived at a period of life, when they would be no longer in danger of being led astray by youthful lusts. And thus, for more than a century after the age of Tertullian, we find some of the most conspicuous converts to the Christian faith, postponing baptism till the close of life. Constan-

<sup>1</sup>It does not appear that there was any congregation of Anabaptists in England, till the year 1640. See Bishop Tomlin's Elements.

tine the Great, we are told, though a professing Christian for many years before, was not baptized till after the commencement of his last illness. The same fact is recorded of a number of other distinguished converts to Christianity, about and after that time. But surely, advice and facts of this kind make nothing in favor of the system of our Baptist brethren. Indeed, taken altogether, their historical bearing is strongly in favor of our system.

“The next persons that we hear of as calling in question the propriety of infant baptism, were the small body of people in France, about twelve hundred years after Christ, who followed a certain *Peter de Bruis*, and formed an inconsiderable section of the people known in ecclesiastical history under the general name of the *Waldenses*. This body maintained that infants ought not to be baptized, because they were incapable of salvation. They taught that none could be saved but those who wrought out their salvation by a long course of self-denial and labor. And as infants were incapable of thus ‘working out their own salvation,’ they held that making them the subjects of a sacramental seal, was an absurdity. But surely our Baptist brethren cannot be willing to consider these people as their predecessors, or to adopt their creed.

“We hear no more of any society or organized body of *Antipedobaptists*, until the sixteenth century, when they arose as before stated, in Germany, and for the first time broached the doctrine of our modern Baptist brethren. As far as we have been able to discover, they were absolutely unknown in the whole Christian world before that time.

“But we have something more than mere negative testimony on this subject. It is not only certain, that we



hear of no society of *Antipedobaptists* resembling our present Baptist brethren, for more than fifteen hundred years after Christ; but we have positive and direct proof that, during the whole of that time, infant baptism was the general and unopposed practice of the Christian church.

“To say nothing of earlier intimations, wholly irreconcilable with any other practice than that of infant baptism, *Origen*, a Greek father of the third century, and decidedly the most learned man of his day, speaks in the most unequivocal terms of the baptism of infants, as the general practice of the church in his time, and as having been received from the apostles. His testimony is as follows: ‘According to the usage of the church, baptism is given even to infants; when, if there were nothing in infants which needed forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would seem to be superfluous.’ Hom. viii. in Levit. ch. 12. Again: ‘Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or can there be any reason for the laver in their case, unless it be according to the sense which we have mentioned above, viz., that no one is free from pollution, though he has lived but one day upon earth? And because by baptism native pollution is taken away, therefore infants are baptized.’ Hom. in Luc. 14. Again: ‘For this cause was it that the church received an order from the apostles to give baptism even to infants.’”

“The testimony of *Cyprian*, a Latin father of the third century, contemporary with *Origen*, is no less decisive. It is as follows:

“In the year 253 after Christ, there was a council of sixty-six bishops or pastors held at Carthage, in which

<sup>1</sup>Comment. in Epist. ad Romanos, Lib. 5.

Cyprian presided. To this council, *Fidus*, a country pastor, presented the following question, which he wished them, by their united wisdom, to solve, viz., Whether it was necessary, in the administration of baptism, as of circumcision, to wait until the *eighth day*; or whether a child might be baptized at an earlier period after its birth? The question, it will be observed, was *not* whether infants ought to be baptized? *That* was taken for granted. But simply, whether it was necessary to wait until the *eighth day* after their birth? The council came *unanimously* to the following decision, and transmitted it in a letter to the inquirer.

“ ‘Cyprian and the rest of the bishops who were present in the council, sixty-six in number, to *Fidus*, our brother, greeting:

“ ‘As to the case of infants,—whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, that no one should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born; we were all in the council of a very different opinion. As for what you thought proper to be done, no one was of your mind; but we all rather judged that the mercy and grace of God is to be denied to no human being that is born. This, therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the council; that we ought not to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and kind to us all. And this rule, as it holds for all, we think more especially to be observed in reference to infants, even to those newly born.’ Cyprian, Epist. 66.

“ Surely no testimony can be more unexceptionable and decisive than this. Lord Chancellor King, in his account of the primitive church, after quoting what is

given above, and much more, subjoins the following remark: ‘ Here, then, is a synodical decree for the baptism of infants, as formal as can possibly be expected; which being the judgment of a synod, is more authentic and cogent than that of a private father; it being supposable that a private father might write his own particular judgment and opinion only; but the determination of a synod (and he might have added, the *unanimous* determination of a synod of sixty-six members) denotes the common practice and usage of the whole church.’<sup>1</sup>

The famous *Chrysostom*, a Greek father, who flourished towards the close of the fourth century, having had occasion to speak of circumcision, and of the inconvenience and pain which attended its dispensation, proceeds to say, ‘ But *our* circumcision, I mean the grace of *baptism*, gives cure without pain, and procures to us a thousand benefits, and fills us with the grace of the Spirit; and it has *no determinate time*, as that had; but one that is in the *very beginning of his age*, or one that is in the middle of it, or one that is in his old age, may receive this circumcision made without hands; in which there is no trouble to be undergone but to throw off the load of sins, and to receive pardon for all past offences.’ Homil. 40. *in Genesin*.

“Passing by the testimony of several other conspicuous writers of the third and fourth centuries, in support of the fact, that infant baptism was generally practised when they wrote, I shall detain you with only one testimony more in relation to the history of this ordinance. It is that of *Agustine*, one of the most pious, learned and venerable fathers of the Christian Church, who lived a

<sup>1</sup>Inquiry into the Constitution, &c. Part. ii. chap. 3.

little more than three hundred years after the Apostles,—taken in connexion with that of *Pelagius*, the learned heretic, who lived at the same time. Augustine had been pleading against Pelagius, in favor of the doctrine of original sin. In the course of this plea, he asks—‘Why are infants baptized for the remission of sins, if they have no sin?’ At the same time intimating to Pelagius, that if he would be consistent with himself, his denial of original sin must draw after it the denial of infant baptism. The reply of Pelagius is striking and unequivocal. ‘Baptism,’ says he, ‘ought to be administered to infants, with the same sacramental words which are used in the case of adult persons.’—‘Men slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants.’—‘*I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants; for who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and so make them miss of the kingdom of God?*’ Again: Augustine remarks, in reference to the Pelagians—‘Since they grant that infants must be baptized, as not being able to *resist the authority of the whole church, which was doubtless delivered by our Lord and his apostles*; they must consequently grant that they stand in need of the benefit of the Mediator; that being offered by the sacrament, and by the charity of the faithful, and so being incorporated into Christ’s body, they may be reconciled to God,’ &c. Again, speaking of certain heretics at Carthage, who, though they acknowledged infant baptism, took wrong views of its meaning, Augustine remarks—‘They, *mindng the Scriptures, and the authority of the whole church*, and the form of the sacrament itself, see well that baptism in infants is for the remission of sins.’ Further, in his

work against the *Donatists*, the same writer speaking of baptized infants obtaining salvation without the personal exercise of faith, he says—‘which *the whole body of the church holds*, as delivered to them in the case of little infants baptized; who certainly cannot believe with the heart unto righteousness, or confess with the mouth unto salvation, nay, by their crying and noise while the sacrament is administering, they disturb the holy mysteries: and yet *no Christian man* will say that they are baptized to no purpose.’ Again, he says—‘The custom of our mother the church in baptizing infants must not be disregarded, nor be accounted needless, nor believed to be any thing else than *an ordinance delivered to us from the apostles*.’ In short, those who will be at the trouble to consult the large extracts from the writings of Augustine, among other Christian fathers, in the learned *Wall’s* History of Infant Baptism, will find that venerable father declaring again and again that he never met with any Christian, either of the general church, or of any of the sects, nor with any writer, who owned the authority of Scripture, who taught any other doctrine than that infants were to be baptized for the remission of sin. Here, then, were two men undoubtedly among the most learned then in the world—Augustine and Pelagius; the former as familiar probably with the writings of all the distinguished fathers who had gone before him, as any man of his time; the latter also a man of great learning and talents, who had travelled over the greater part of the Christian world; who both declare, about three hundred years after the apostolic age, that they never saw or heard of any one who called himself a Christian, not even the most impious heretic, no nor any writer who claimed to believe in the Scriptures, who denied the baptism of in-

fants. See Wall's History, Part I. ch. 15—19. Can the most incredulous reader, who is not fast bound in the fetters of invincible prejudice, hesitate to admit, first, that these men verily believed that infant baptism had been the universal practice of the church from the days of the apostles; and secondly, that situated and informed as they were, it was impossible that they should be mistaken.

“The same Augustine, in his *Epistle to Boniface*, while he expresses an opinion that the parents are the proper persons to offer up their children to God in baptism, if they be good faithful Christians; yet thinks proper to mention that others may, with propriety, in special cases, perform the same kind office of Christian charity. ‘You see,’ says he, ‘that a great many are offered, not by their parents, but by any other persons, as infant slaves are sometimes offered by their masters. And sometimes when the parents are dead, the infants are baptized, being offered by any that can afford to show this compassion on them. And sometimes infants whom their parents have cruelly exposed, may be taken up and offered in baptism by those who have no children of their own, nor design to have any.’ Again, in his book against the *Donatists*, speaking directly of infant baptism, he says—‘If any one ask for divine authority in this matter, although that which *the whole church practises*, which *was not instituted by councils*, but was *ever in use*, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing delivered by the authority of the apostles; yet we may besides take a true estimate, how much the sacrament of baptism does avail infants, by the circumcision which God’s ancient people received. For Abraham was justified before he received circumcision, as Cornelius

was endued with the Holy Spirit before he was baptized. And yet the apostle says of Abraham, that he received the sign of circumcision, "a seal of the righteousness of faith," by which he had in heart believed, and it had been "counted to him for righteousness." Why then was he commanded to circumcise all his male infants on the eighth day, when they could not yet believe with the heart, that it might be counted to them for righteousness; but for this reason, because the sacrament is, in itself of great importance? Therefore, as in Abraham, "the righteousness of faith" went before, and circumcision, "the seal of the righteousness of faith came after;" so in Cornelius, the spiritual sanctification by the gift of the Holy Spirit went before, and the sacrament of regeneration, by the laver of baptism, came after. And as in Isaac, who was circumcised the eighth day, the seal of the righteousness of faith went before, and (as he was a follower of his father's faith) the righteousness itself, the seal whereof had gone before in his infancy, came after; so in infants baptized, the sacrament of regeneration goes before, and (if they put in practice the Christian religion) conversion of the heart, the mystery whereof went before in their body, comes after. By all which it appears, that the sacrament of baptism is one thing, and conversion of the heart another.'

"So much for the testimony of the fathers. To me, I acknowledge, this testimony carries with it irresistible conviction. It is, no doubt, conceivable, considered in itself, that in three centuries from the days of the apostles, a very material change might have taken place in regard to the subjects of baptism. But that a change so serious and radical as that of which our Baptist brethren speak, should have been introduced without the knowl-

edge of such men as have been just quoted, is *not conceivable*. That the church should have passed from the practice of none but adult baptism, to that of the constant and universal baptism of infants, while such a change was utterly unknown and never heard of, by the most active, pious, and learned men that lived during that period, cannot, I must believe, be imagined by any impartial mind. Now when Origen, Cyprian, and Chrysostom, declare, not only that the baptism of infants was the universal and unopposed practice of the church in their respective times and places of residence; and when men of so much acquaintance with all preceding writers, and so much knowledge of all Christendom, as Augustine and Pelagius, declared that they *never heard of any one who claimed to be a Christian, either orthodox or heretic, who did not maintain and practice infant baptism*; I say, to suppose, in the face of such testimony, that the practice of infant baptism crept in, as an unwarranted innovation, between their time and that of the apostles, without the smallest notice of the change having ever reached their ears is, I must be allowed to say, of all incredible suppositions, one of the most incredible. He who can believe this, must, it appears to me, be prepared to make a sacrifice of all historical evidence at the shrine of blind and deaf prejudice.

It is here also worthy of particular notice, that those pious and far famed witnesses for the truth, commonly known by the name of the *Waldenses*, did undoubtedly hold the doctrine of infant baptism, and practise accordingly. In their Confessions of Faith and other writings, drawn up between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, and in which they represent their creeds and usages as handed down, from father to son, for several hundred



years before the Reformation, they speak on the subject before us so frequently and explicitly, as to preclude all doubt in regard to the fact alleged. The following specimen of their language will satisfy every reasonable inquirer.

“‘Baptism,’ say they, “is administered in a full congregation of the faithful, to the end that he that is received into the church may be reputed and held of all as a Christian brother, and that all the congregation may pray for him that he may be a Christian in heart, as he is outwardly esteemed to be a Christian. *And for this cause it is that we present our children in baptism, which ought to be done by those to whom the children are most nearly related, such as their parents, or those to whom God has given this charity.*’

“Again; referring to the superstitious additions to baptism which the Papists had introduced, they say, in one of their ecclesiastical documents,—‘The things which are not necessary in baptism are, the exorcisms, the breathings, the sign of the cross upon the head or forehead of the *infant*, the salt put into the mouth, the spittle into the ears and nostrils, the unction of the breast, &c. From these things many take an occasion of error and superstition, rather than of edifying and salvation.’

“Understanding that their Popish neighbors charged them with denying the baptism of infants, they acquit themselves of this imputation as follows :

“‘Neither is the time nor place appointed for those who are to be baptized. But charity and the edification of the church and congregation ought to be the rule in this matter.

“‘Yet, notwithstanding, *we bring our children to be baptized*; which they ought to do to whom they are

most nearly related; such as their parents, or those whom God hath inspired with such a charity.'”

“‘True it is,’ adds the historian, ‘that being, for some hundreds of years, constrained to suffer their children to be baptized by the Romish priests, they deferred the performance of it as long as possible, because they detested the human inventions annexed to the institution of that holy sacrament, which they looked upon as so many pollutions of it. And by reason of their pastors, whom they called *Barbes*, being often abroad travelling in the service of the church, they could not have baptism administered to their children by them. They, therefore, sometimes kept them long without it. On account of which delay, the priests have charged them with that reproach. To which charge not only their adversaries have given credit, *but also many of those who have approved of their lives and faith in all other respects.*”

“It being so plainly a fact, established by their own unequivocal and repeated testimony, that the great body of the Waldenses were Pedobaptists, on what ground is it that our Baptist brethren assert, and that some have been found to credit the assertion, that those venerable witnesses of the truth rejected the baptism of infants? The answer is easy and ample. A small section of the peo-

<sup>1</sup>See John Paul Perrin’s Account of the Doctrine and Order of the Waldenses and Albigenses; Sir Samuel Morland’s do.; and also Leger’s *Histoire Generale des Eglises Vaudoises*. Mr. William Jones, a Baptist, in a work entitled, a History of the Waldenses, in two volumes octavo, professes to give a full account of the Faith and Order of these pious witnesses of the truth; but, so far as I have observed, carefully leaves out of all their public formularies and other documents, every thing which would disclose their Pedobaptist principles and practice! On this artifice comment is unnecessary.

ple bearing the general name of Waldenses, followers of Peter de Bruis, who were mentioned in a preceding page, while they agreed with the mass of their denomination in most other matters, differed from them in regard to the subject of infant baptism. They held, as before stated, that infants were not capable of salvation; that Christian salvation is of such a nature that none can partake of it but those who undergo a course of rigorous self-denial and labor in its pursuit. Those who die in infancy not being capable of this, the Petrobrussians held that they were not capable of salvation; and, this being the case, that they ought not to be baptized. This, however, is not the doctrine of our Baptist brethren; and, of course, furnishes no support to their creed or practice. But the decisive answer is, that the Petrobrussians were a very small fraction of the great Waldensian body; probably not more than a thirtieth or fortieth part of the whole. The great mass of the denomination, however, as such, declare, in their Confession of Faith, and in various public documents, that they held, and that their fathers before them, for many generations, always held, to infant baptism. The Petrobrussians, in this respect, forsook the doctrine and practice of their fathers, and departed from the proper and established Waldensian creed. If there be truth in the plainest records of ecclesiastical history, this is an undoubted fact. In short the real state of this case may be illustrated by the following representation. Suppose it were alleged that the Baptists in the United States are in the habit of keeping the seventh day of the week as their Sabbath? Would the statement be true? By no means. There is, indeed, a small section of the Antipedobaptist body in the United States, usually styled "Seventh day Baptists"—probably not a thirtieth

part of the whole body—who observe Saturday in each week as their Sabbath. But, notwithstanding this, the proper representation, no doubt is,—(the only representation that a faithful historian of facts would pronounce correct)—that the Baptists in this country, as a general body, observe “the Lord’s day” as their Sabbath. You may rest assured, my friends, that this statement most exactly illustrates the real fact with regard to the Waldenses as Pedobaptists. Twenty-nine parts, at least, out of thirty, of the whole of that body of witnesses for the truth, were undoubtedly Pedobaptists. The remaining thirtieth part departed from the faith of their fathers in regard to baptism, but departed on principles altogether unlike those of our modern Baptist brethren.

“I have only one fact more to state in reference to the pious Waldenses, and that is, that soon after the opening of the Reformation by Luther, they sought intercourse with the Reformed churches of Geneva and France; held communion with them; received ministers from them; and appeared eager to testify their respect and affection for them as ‘brethren in the Lord.’ Now it is well known that the Churches of Geneva and France, at this time, were in the habitual use of *infant* baptism. This single fact is sufficient to prove that the Waldenses were Pedobaptists. If they had adopted the doctrine of our Baptist brethren, and laid the same stress on it with them, it is manifest that such intercourse would have been wholly out of the question.

“If these historical statements be correct, and that they are so, is just as well attested as any facts whatever in the annals of the church, the amount of the whole is conclusive, is *demonstrative*, that, for fifteen hundred years after Christ, the practice of infant baptism was

universal; that to this general fact there was absolutely no exception, in the whole Christian church, which, on principle, or even analogy, can countenance in the least degree, modern Anti-pedobaptism; that from the time of the Apostles to the time of Luther, the general, unopposed, established practice of the church was to regard the infant seed of believers as members of the church, and, as such to baptize them.

“But this is not all. If the doctrine of our Baptist brethren be correct; that is, if infant baptism be a corruption and a nullity; then it follows, from the foregoing historical statements, most inevitably, that the ordinance of baptism was lost for fifteen hundred years: yes, entirely lost, from the apostolic age till the sixteenth century. For there was manifestly, ‘no society, during that long period, of fifteen centuries, but what was in the habit of baptizing infants.’ *God had no church, then, in the world for so long a period!* Can this be admitted? Surely not by any one who believes in the perpetuity and indestructibility of the household of faith.

“Nay, if the principle of our Baptist brethren be correct, the ordinance of baptism is irrecoverably lost altogether; that is irrecoverably without a miracle. Because if, during the long tract of time that has been mentioned, there was no true baptism in the church; and if none but baptized persons were capable of administering true baptism to others? the consequence is plain; there is no true baptism in the world! But can this be believed? Can we imagine that the great Head of the Church would permit one of his own precious ordinances to be banished entirely from the church for many centuries, much less to be totally lost? Surely the thought is abhorrent to every Christian feeling.

“Such is an epitome of the direct evidence in favor of infant baptism. To me, I acknowledge, it appears nothing short of *demonstration*. The invariable character of all Jehovah’s dealings and covenants with the children of men; his express appointment, acted upon for two thousand years by the ancient church; the total silence of the New Testament as to any retraction or repeal of this privilege; the evident and repeated examples of family baptism in the apostolic age; the indubitable testimony of the practice of the whole church on the Pedobaptist plan, from the time of the apostles to the sixteenth century, including the most respectable witnesses for the truth in the dark ages; all conspire to establish on the firmest foundation, the membership, and the consequent right to baptism of the infant seed of believers. If here be no divine warrant, we may despair of finding it for any institution in the Church of God.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For this interesting history of baptism we gratefully acknowledge ourselves indebted to Dr. Miller;—see Miller on Baptism.

## CHAPTER XI.

### OBJECTIONS TO THIS ARGUMENT.

FIRST OBJECTION.—Infant baptism, says the Rev. Mr. Broaddus, was introduced by the Romish apostacy, and is a relic of papacy; the Rev. Mr. Judson maintains, that it was ingrafted on the church towards the close of the second century, Other Baptist authorities teach, that it took its rise in Africa from the first to the middle of the third centuries.<sup>1</sup>

ANSWER.—It is somewhat difficult to reply to such conflicting opinions, and so long as our adversaries themselves are so at variance, no marvel that we should take the liberty to dissent from them all. If Mr. Broaddus and those who assert with him, that infant baptism is a popish relic, be correct, then Mr. Judson and others who fix its origin in the second century, must necessarily be in error, because popery did not commence until the sixth century; and moreover, infant baptism is practised in the Greek church, which never had any connection with the pope, so that here we have the difference of “the small matter” of only *four hundred years* among our Baptist brethren themselves. If on the other hand, Mr. Judson is to be believed, then of course the testimony of all who date the pretended innovation in the third century, must be rejected. While we leave these gentlemen to settle their own disputes in their own way, we shall proceed to show, that they are all mistified and

<sup>1</sup>See Benedict's History of the Baptists.

groping their way in darkness. We maintain that they are all mistaken.

1. Because there is no evidence of any kind whatever, to prove that infant baptism took its rise as alleged above. We have never met with such evidence; our Baptist brethren have never yet produced it, and never can; we challenge them to bring forth one particle of proof.

2. Because, if this ordinance originated some time between the first and the middle of the third centuries, how shall we account for the fact that from the time of its supposed introduction until the year 416, the subject was permitted to sleep, not exciting one word of controversy, nor awakening one solitary opponent? How shall we account for the fact, that the Christians who fled from Africa into Europe, in the year 429, in order to escape the Vandals, carried infant baptism with them and practised it universally? How shall we account for the fact that the first ecclesiastical canon on the subject in Europe, was as late as the sixth century, and the first imperial law in the eighth century by the emperor Charlemagne?—Farther, if infant baptism was an innovation, it must have attracted attention and provoked controversy, which would have led, if not to the suppression of the error, yet to a diversity of practice in the ancient churches. Our Baptist brethren would surely have taken alarm at the horrible heresy, and raised their voice and “pleaded trumpet-tongued” for its destruction. Where were they at that eventful period of the church, pregnant with such dreadful error? was none—not even one,—found faithful enough to utter a syllable of remonstrance? Methinks we hear old father *Tertulian* lift up the voice of warning,—but alas! even he taught that infants ought to be baptized if “in danger of



death," and objected as much to the baptism of "unmarried believers" as he did to that of children.

But here comes another disputant, who takes a different ground from all whom we have mentioned. Mr. Benedict<sup>1</sup> says: "We date the beginning of our denomination about the year of our Lord, 29 or 30; for at that period, John the Baptist began to immerse professed believers in Jordan and Enon," &c. If such be the case, then we would ask, what became of their denomination afterwards? John baptized thousands,—and tens of thousands;—the apostles and their immediate successors, hundreds of thousands; where were all those myriads when infant baptism was introduced?—we do not hear that one—not even one demurred at it. Surely there could not have been any important opposition to it in all Christendom, in the first centuries, or the annals of the church would furnish some account of that opposition, and of the controversy flowing from it. The dead silence on this subject, on every page of history, from the day of Pentecost to the appearance of Peter de Bruis<sup>2</sup> in the eleventh or twelfth century, sufficiently uproots this baseless theory.

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**SECOND OBJECTION.**—If infant baptism be established by historical evidence, then can infant communion also, for we have equally as good authority for the latter as for the former.

**ANSWER.**—We grant that young children have been admitted to the eucharist in various parts of the church

<sup>1</sup>Benedict's History of the Baptists, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup>Some chronologists maintain that it was towards the close of the eleventh—and others in the beginning of the twelfth century that Peter de Bruis lived; both may be right.

at an early period of its history. The reason of this abuse, was the erroneous opinion, that a participation in the Lord's supper was indispensable to salvation. Even dying persons as well as children, were forced to swallow a crumb of bread saturated with wine, and in some cases the superstition was carried so far, that a morsel of bread thus moistened, was thrust down the throats of deceased persons, who had died without partaking of the ordinance, for the purpose of insuring the pardon of their sins and their acceptance with God. This revolting practice arose from a literal interpretation of the words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."<sup>1</sup> But that we have the same authority for infant communion which we have for infant baptism, is an assertion as void of truth as it is unjust to the cause we are advocating.

There is not a particle of historical evidence for infant communion until the middle of the third century, at which time it was introduced in some of the African churches; but the testimony in favor of infant baptism, is clear, uniform, and comprehensive; it commenced with the apostolic age and remained unimpeached and uncontradicted for more than a thousand years. Moreover, the practice of infant communion was very limited; that of infant baptism was universal; the former was opposed and condemned again and again, the latter was never once resisted for fifteen centuries, (except by the Petrobrussians in the twelfth century, who formed a mere handful of factionists, but was approved and inculcated in books and councils time after time; the one took its rise nearly three hundred years after the other had been in practice throughout the church; the one was abolished,

<sup>1</sup>John vi. 53.

in part, prior to the reformation, and *entirely* by all the reformers ; the other has never been superseded, (except by the Baptists,) but was retained by every one of the great lights of the reformation. The two most distinguished men of the fourth century, (the most learned and eminent of the age,<sup>1</sup>) who had enjoyed the most favorable opportunity of becoming acquainted with the whole church, declared that they had never heard of any professing Christians in the world, either orthodox or heterodox, who did not baptize their children ; but nothing like this has ever been testified in relation to the introduction and practice of infant communion. Independently of all this, there cannot be found from Genesis to Revelation one particle of authority for infant communion, whereas, both the Old and New Testament abound with testimony in favor of infant baptism,—testimony so clear and conclusive, that if all other not found in God’s word, were for ever cancelled, it would notwithstanding rest on a foundation firm as the everlasting hills. How utterly groundless then, the assertion that the evidence for one is as good as that in support of the other!—“And as a miserable superstition destroyed it. When transubstantiation arose some time about the eleventh or twelfth century, the sacred elements (now transmuted, as was supposed, into the real body and blood of the Saviour) began to be considered as too awful in their character to be imparted to children. But in the Greek church, who separated from the Latin before transubstantiation was established, the practice of infant communion still continues.”

<sup>1</sup>Augustine and Pelagius.

## CHAPTER XII.

### SIXTH ARGUMENT.

*The names applied in the New Testament to small children afford evidence of their baptism.*—The disciples of our Lord were stigmatized by his enemies as Nazarenes, Heretics, &c. but they called themselves **CHRISTIANS**. They added moreover the most affectionate appellations, such as, *brother, sister, the called, the elect, the illuminated, holy persons or saints, faithful, &c.* These names however, were given to none but *church-members*, and to them they were applied so soon as they were baptized. The newly-baptized were designated as *new-plants*. If then we can prove that any one of these titles was given to small children, their church-membership, and with that their baptism, is the undeniable consequence.

1. We find in reading the New Testament, that **HOLY persons**, was one of the appellations bestowed on church-members.<sup>1</sup> The apostle also writes on various occasions, to them “who are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus, to the *called*, to the *holy persons*;”—“to the *holy persons* at Ephesus:”—“to the *holy persons* at Colosse;” “to all the *holy persons* in Christ Jesus at Philippi.” Now it is well known that this very same appellation is given to the children of a *church-member*: “Now are your chil-

<sup>1</sup> Acts. xxvi. 10. *Τῶν ἁγίων* saints or holy persons, Rom. xv. 25, *τοῖς ἁγίοις*

dren *holy*,"<sup>1</sup> and we challenge our opponents to refer to a single passage in which any other than members of the church of Christ, are designated by the term "holy." If then little children are declared by the apostle to be *holy*, does it not follow that he regarded them as *members*, and if as members, must they not have been honored with the public sign of membership, or in other words have been baptized?

2. Again, another appellation, given much more frequently and extensively, to church-members was "FAITHFUL;" this was one of their distinctive titles in many countries and during many ages. It was applied to individuals in the singular;<sup>2</sup> the mother of Timothy is called a FAITHFUL;<sup>3</sup> it was also applied in the plural;<sup>4</sup> it is addressed to churches as communities;<sup>5</sup> and when Lydia was baptized with her family, she said: "if you have adjudged me to be a FAITHFUL," &c. &c. From all these examples, it is manifest, that to call an individual *faithful*, in the primitive age, was equivalent to denominating him a Christian brother, or a disciple of Jesus Christ, or by any other appellation denoting his membership in the church. Now if we can show that this same title was given to children, then we think a strong argument is made out. The apostle describing the character of a bishop, writes: "he must be the hus-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 14 *αγια*.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 17; Eph. iv. 21; Col. iv. 9; 1 Peter v. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Acts. xvi. 1 *πιστης* see also 2 Cor. vi. 15 what part hath a FAITHFUL with a *non-faithful*, and 1 Tim. v. 16. If any FAITHFUL (man) or FAITHFUL (woman), &c. *πιστες η πιστη*.

<sup>4</sup> Acts. x. 45 *πιστοι*; 1 Tim. vi. 2, *πιστες*; 1 Tim. iv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Rev. xii. 14; Eph. i. 1, *πισταις*; Col. i. 2, *πισταις*.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. i. 1, *πισταις*; Col. i. 2, *πισταις*.

band of one wife, *having children who are FAITHFULS*;"<sup>1</sup> here then, the recognition by baptism of the membership of children, is charged on the clergy as a *duty*; and the omission is a marked disqualification for ecclesiastical office. To contend that the children alluded to, must have been *adults*, because they are supposed to have been accusable of "riot and unruliness," is a mere subterfuge, because, admitting some of them were adults, it does not follow that all were; and even if all were, they must have previously been infants, and they were required to be *faithfuls* irrespective of age. Further, the children of a bishop might have been *daughters only*, which it is to be hoped, would have exonerated them from the imputation of being riotous, and yet they must be *faithfuls*; for the term children includes both sexes as well as all ages. Moreover, a bishop might have been young himself, and have had none but little children, and these must be *FAITHFULS* also, and hence their membership and baptism follow beyond all possibility of refutation. In conformity to this view, we read that Paul sent his salutations to Priscilla and Aquila \* \* \* and the church in their *family*;<sup>2</sup> also to Nymphas and the church in his family;<sup>3</sup> also to Philemon and the church in his family.<sup>4</sup> And Chrysostom, Theodoret and Theophylact; also all the Greek scholiasts, and Grotius, maintain that the families of these individuals were ALL MADE FAITHFULS, so as to be called churches.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Titus i. 6. <sup>2</sup>The word rendered *τετρα* in this passage, means according to the authority of Robinson, Dr. Gregory, and other distinguished Baptist writers "minors from twenty days old to twenty years."

<sup>2</sup>Rom. xvi. 3. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Col. iv. 15.

<sup>4</sup>Phil. i. 2.

<sup>5</sup>See Whitby in loc.

We might with equal facility prove, that the term *newly planted*, is also an appellation given to church-members, and applied to children,<sup>1</sup> but the foregoing is sufficient. We shall only yet add a few sepulchral inscriptions of the earliest ages, by way of confirming our argument.

ANCIENT APPLICATION OF THE TERM "FAITHFUL" CONTINUED TO CHILDREN.

"A FAITHFUL, *descended from ancestors* who were also FAITHFULS. Here lies *Zosimus*; he lived two years one month and twenty-five days." This inscription bore the symbols of the fish and the anchor, which mark a period of primitive and suffering Christianity. The following are of the same import:

*Cyriacus*, a FAITHFUL; died aged eight days less than three years.

Eustafia the mother, places this in commemoration to her son *Polichronia*, a FAITHFUL, who lived three years.

*Urcia Florentina*, a FAITHFUL, rests here in peace: she lived five years, eight months, and eight days.

ANCIENT APPLICATION OF THE TERM "HOLY" CONTINUED TO CHILDREN.

*Maurentius*, son of *Maurentia*, a most pleasing child, who lived five years, eleven months, and two days: worthy to repose in peace among the HOLY persons.

Sacred to the great God. *Leopardus* rests here in peace with HOLY spirits. Having received baptism, he went to the blessed innocents. This was placed by his parents, with whom he lived seven years and seven months.

<sup>1</sup>Rom. vi. 5, and 1 Tim. iii. 6.

ANCIENT APPLICATION OF THE TERM "NEOPHYTOS"—  
NEWLY PLANTED—CONTINUED TO CHILDREN.

*Rufillo*, NEWLY BAPTIZED, who lived two years and forty days. Quintillian, the father, places this to the memory of his most sweet son, who now sleeps in the peace of Christ.

To *Domitius*, an innocent, NEWLY BAPTIZED, who lived three years and thirty days.

Valerius Decentius, the father, places this to his son NEWLY BAPTIZED, the well deserving *Valerius Vitalianus*, who lived with his parents three years, ten months, and fifteen days.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For these inscriptions we acknowledge ourselves indebted to the Editor of Calmet; in his "Facts and Evidences," &c. many more of the same tenor may be found.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### FURTHER OBJECTIONS.

WE have now presented the principal arguments on this subject, and replied to all the adverse reasoning usually relied on to nullify those arguments. A few other objections remain to be answered, which could not, without considerable digression, be introduced in the preceding investigation. It is further urged in opposition to infant baptism,—

1. That Christ was not baptized until he was thirty years of age.

ANSWER.—This argument, like all others that prove too much, fails to prove any thing. If our Lord's example in this particular is binding, then our Baptist brethren, and all other denominations in Christendom, are sadly at fault, because all administer baptism to adult believers before they attain that age; then also the best Christian in the world, though he profess the clearest testimony of his acceptance with God, and offer the most satisfactory evidence of a change of heart, and of his sanctification by the Holy Spirit, dare not apply for or receive this ordinance, until he is of like age with the Saviour when he entered on his ministry. Such glaring inconsistency and absurdity are sufficiently refuted by their simple statement.

No example is binding without a command to imitate it, and though we are required to walk in Christ's foot-

steps, yet this requirement extends only to his virtues; and not to his specific acts; if it embraced the latter, then it would be our duty to walk on the sea, to silence the winds, allay the waves, to ride on no other animal but an ass, to have no home of our own, as “he had not where to lay his head,” to be baptized with no other water than that of the river Jordan,<sup>1</sup> &c.

But apart from this, the baptism administered to Christ, and that which he enjoins on his disciples, were two distinct things. Those who were baptized by John, were baptized over again “in the name of the Lord Jesus;”<sup>2</sup> not so with those who received Christian baptism. The ministry of John strictly speaking, was not a component part of the old or of the new dispensation, but formed an intermediate step,—a transition from the one to the other;—it may be said to have constituted a dispensation, *per se*, that is, by itself,—belonging neither to one nor the other, and yet, as a connecting link, uniting both.

In order however to place this branch of the subject more fully before the reader, we remark that,—

*First, the baptism of our Saviour did not partake of the character of John's baptism, because—*

1. John baptized his converts “unto repentance;” if the baptism administered to our Lord partook of the nature of John's, he must have previously repented of sin—which is blasphemous to assert.

2. John required of the candidate, faith in the Messiah about to come. If, therefore, Christ was baptized with

<sup>1</sup>Controlled by this absurd notion, *Constantine* the Great, resolved not to be baptized until it could be done at the river Jordan, and as he never came to that place, he did not receive that ordinance till on his death-bed. See *Pierce on Baptism*.

<sup>2</sup>Acts xix. 1—5.

John's baptism, he must have belived in the Messiah to *come*, and to this faith John must have exhorted him. But the absurdity of such a doctrine need not be mentioned.

3. The ultimate design of John's baptism was to "prepare the way of the Lord;" *i. e.* to prepare the hearts of the people for the reception of the Messiah. But could the proper import of this baptism apply to the Saviour in any form?

*Again. The baptism administered to Christ did not partake of the nature of Christian baptism. For,*

1. Christian baptism was not instituted until after the resurrection of our Saviour. If therefore, Christ received Christian baptism the event must have taken place about three years previous to the actual institution of that ordinance,—which is absurd to suppose.

2. Christian baptism is performed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But if Christ had been baptized in this profession, it would have been, to say the least, irrelevant and trifling.

3. The *import* of Christian baptism is totally inapplicable to the person and character of Christ. For, baptism is both a *sign* and *seal*. As a *sign* it witnesseth to our inward washing and regeneration by the Holy Ghost, which from the nature of the case, presupposes defilement by sin. Remove the idea of antecedent pollution by sin, and you annihilate the grand intent of baptism as a sign. As a *seal*, baptism becomes the *pledge*,—

(a.) Of our fidelity to God.

(b.) Of God's fidelity to us in bestowing the blessings of the New Covenant, such as repentance, pardon, regeneration, sanctification, &c. Such then being the true import

of baptism, can any person, in his sober senses, presume it to be applicable to the Saviour of the world?

What then was the real design of Christ's baptism?—He himself furnishes the answer: "*for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*"<sup>1</sup> In these words our Lord may be supposed to use a slight metonymy, putting *righteousness* for *ordinance* or *institute*; or he may be supposed to use *righteousness* in the sense, not of *ordinance*, but of the *fulfilment of law*. In either case the result would be the same, and the whole clause may therefore be better understood by reading it:—"For thus it becometh us to fulfil every ordinance."

But what ordinance or law, then in vogue, required the Saviour to be baptized?—We answer; he was about to enter upon his public ministry. He had attained his 30th year,—the age at which, by the appointment of God, the priests under the law were to undertake the duties of their office,—and he was a "high priest." If we examine the whole code of Moses, we shall find no law that required Christ to be baptized, at this particular juncture, but the law enjoining and regulating priestly consecration.<sup>2</sup> That our Saviour's baptism was a priestly consecration, is corroborated by all the accompanying circumstances recorded in evangelical history. And in addition, we will simply say,—Christ did exercise the office of a priest when he purged the temple; and when the chief priests and the elders demanded of him, on that occasion, by what authority he did these things, Christ appealed to the baptism of John.<sup>3</sup> This is worthy of particular notice, as Christ evidently appealed to John's baptism for a vindication of the authority he had exer-

<sup>1</sup>Matt. iii. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ex. xxix. and Lev. viii.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. xxi. 12, 23—27.

cised. And had the Jews then acknowledged the baptism of John to have been from heaven, our Saviour would probably have replied: "John bore witness of me and foretold you of my authority, and actually consecrated me to the priestly office according to your law." To this the captious Jew could have made no reply; against it he could have uttered no complaint. What was done among the Jews, by an accredited prophet of Jehovah, was as irreversible as the mandate of a Roman dictator.

The baptism administered to Christ was accordingly not the sign and seal of the new covenant, but of his mediatorial office; of course it is altogether irrelevant to the point at issue; it has nothing to do with Christian baptism, and ought not to be forced into the discussion either one way or the other, than as an example of general obedience to the ordinances of God's law.<sup>1</sup>

2. *Again, it is argued that baptism being the seal of a covenant, it is wrong to bind a child in a covenant without its knowledge or consent.*

ANSWER.—The covenant of which baptism is the sign and seal, has been in force, nearly forty centuries, and the children of believing parents are subjects of it by virtue of their birth and not of baptism. They are born into the covenant, and the question is not now, whether they shall consent to become a party to it,—they are that already,—but whether their inestimable birthright guaranteed in the covenant, shall be acknowledged and formally set forth? and surely to this obvious and easy duty, no believing parent can reasonably object.

But if it be wrong to seal a covenant in behalf of an unconscious child, whereby it is solemnly devoted to God, then the controversy is not between the impugners

<sup>1</sup>See "Der Besiegte Weidertaeufer," by Rev. Mr. Goering, p. 66.

of infant baptism and us, but between them and JEHOVAH. For circumcision was also the seal of a covenant, and by the express command of God, administered to babes of eight days old—of course without their knowledge or consent.—The point at issue therefore, must be settled by our Baptist brethren with the God of Israel; for he it was who first constituted children the subjects of his covenant, and commanded that they should be the recipients of a divine ordinance in token and ratification of that covenant, and all this, entirely “without their knowledge or consent.” The objection before us then lies just as strongly against the old as against the new seal, but if it was right to administer the former, how can it be wrong to administer the latter?<sup>1</sup>

Further, this objection is the legitimate offspring of infidelity. It is equally opposed to the religious education of children; and if followed out, would militate against all those restraints, and that instruction which the word of God enjoins on parents. Nay, if the principle of this objection be correct, it is wrong to instil into the mind of our child an abhorrence of lying, theft, drunkenness, malice and murder; lest forsooth, it should be without their consent, or inconsistent with the privilege of every rational being to free inquiry and free agency!—

Again, are not children frequently bound out by indenture to learn a trade, while they are too young to take cognizance of or intelligently yield assent to the contract? Who has ever questioned the propriety of such an act, or

<sup>1</sup>It is worthy of remark, that Christ “laid his hands” on infants, (which was a religious ceremony, and is classed by an inspired writer with the most important doctrines, Heb. vi. 2,) and “blessed them;” and yet no one will pretend that they understood, either the import of the ceremony or the nature of the blessing.

denied to parents or guardians the right to perform it? Why then should we not be permitted solemnly and in accordance with God's own precept, to dedicate our offspring to their heavenly Father? Moreover, Levi, when yet in the loins of his great grand-father, was tithed, and this was a permanent memorial of the superiority of the priesthood according to Melchisedeck over that of Levi. In a civil point of view, Joshua and the heads of Israel bound the whole nation and its posterity in a covenant established with the Gibeonites, and when Saul, several centuries afterwards violated that covenant, the whole people were punished for it. Hannah devoted her son to God, and bound him to comply with all the restraints peculiar to a Nazarite, such as abstaining from wine and intoxicating liquors, permitting his hair to grow, &c. and God was pleased with the act. Our own children are born citizens of the state without *their* knowledge or consent, and on account of their citizenship, are subject to all the restrictions incident to good government, and obligated to perform all the duties associated with that relation.

The truth however of the matter is, baptism imposes no restrictions and devolves no obligations upon us, which we were not previously bound to observe. We are God's property and subjects by creation and redemption, and owe him allegiance independently of baptism. He claims and is entitled to our services on other grounds, and not one solitary liability is added to the list of our antecedent duties by baptism.<sup>1</sup> Hence baptism does not involve new obligations, but is rather an exhibition and acknowledgment of obligations previously existing.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See "Der Besiegte Wiedertaeufer," p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>The declaration found 1 Pet. iii. 21 that "baptism is the answer of a good conscience towards God," does not involve a new obliga-

Away then with the unscriptural notion that in baptizing our children, we bind them in a covenant without their knowledge or consent; if such were even the case, it could form no reasonable ground of objection. But *in fact*, there is not an iota of truth in the assertion, and hence it is doubly preposterous to reason thus against a divine institution.—Among the many examples on divine record, of children's being bound in covenant with God, without their knowledge and consent, we shall quote only the following: “Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, *with* all the men of Israel, your **LITTLE ONES**, your wives, and thy stranger *that is* in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and *that* he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with *him* that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, **AND ALSO WITH HIM THAT IS NOT HERE WITH US THIS DAY.**”<sup>1</sup>

3. *It is further urged, that we cannot find in the whole history of the New Testament, a single example of the baptism of children of professing Christians.*

tion, but simply implies that baptism professes or presupposes a conscience tranquil towards God through (on account of) the resurrection of Christ;—or it may mean, that baptism recognises a covenant in which we are bound to preserve a conscience void of offence towards God. But it does not impose upon us an obligation to preserve such a conscience,—this was our duty previously.

<sup>1</sup>Deut. xxix. 10—15.



ANSWER.—Neither can we find in the whole history of the New Testament a single example of the baptism of an *adult* born of Christian parents; on this score then our objection to “believer’s baptism” is at least as strong as that of our opponents to infant baptism.—It should be borne in mind that the history of the New Testament embraces a period of more than *sixty years* after the introduction of the new economy. Now during this time, at least two or three generations of children arrived at the age of maturity, and if these thousands of children born of believing parents, did not receive the ordinance in their infancy, they must have received it in adult age, *or remained without it*. The latter idea is altogether incredible. But upon the supposition that they were not baptized in their infancy, have we not a right to demand of our Baptist brethren to point out some instances of their baptism as adults? Where do we find on record a solitary example of an individual born of Christian parents, who was baptized as a believing adult? what was his name? where did he reside? who were his parents? The fact is, during the whole three score years after the ascension of Christ, we have not one hint of the baptism of a single individual of this description. In our opinion this silence is no feeble argument in our favor.

That there should be no special record found of the baptism of little children, is easily explained. The great object of the New Testament history is, to narrate the progress of the gospel among Jews and gentiles; to inform us of *their* conversion and addition to the church, and not to specify the baptism of the children of those parents who had already embraced the truth. Accordingly we find, that all the cases of baptism recorded, are those of converts to Christianity, and not of such as

already belonged to the church. Why then should it be expected that the inspired writers would single out cases of the baptism of *infants*?—That they should receive the token of church membership, was a matter of course, —so perfectly natural that it did not call for express record. No wonder then, that we find no example of this kind registered in the the history of the apostolic church. Besides, children do not in general attract particular notice; but when they advance in life, they usually fill up a more important place in the public eye;—some become conspicuous and are extensively known on account of their standing in society, their talents, their skill, their philanthropy, their wealth, &c. and if baptized as adults, and to adopt a common but erroneous form of expression, thus “*made disciples of Jesus,*” it might be expected to be noticed. But such is not the fact, and the difficulty is easily solved. *There were none such to be baptized*; the children of Christian parents all received the ordinance in their infancy; none remained to receive it in manhood, and hence there is no such record to be found.

4. *Once more, it is urged that baptism can be of no benefit to children; what good, says the Antipedobaptist, can it do an “unconscious babe” to sprinkle a little water upon its head?*

ANSWER.—What good could it do a Jewish child, eight days old, to circumcise it? The God of Abraham, who is also our God, must have deemed it advantageous, or he would not have required it; and if circumcision was beneficial to the new-born stranger, why may not baptism be so also? We have a right to demand a *satisfactory* reply to this interrogatory, and inability to furnish such a reply, should for ever seal the lips of gain-

sayers as to the possibility of benefit accruing to children from their baptism.

But if it be asked, "*What profit is there of circumcision?*—we appeal to "the law and the testimony," and in the language of an inspired apostle, answer: "MUCH EVERY WAY;" but "*what if some* (who had been circumcised in their childhood) did not (afterwards) *believe?* shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar;"<sup>1</sup> "for circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision."<sup>2</sup> In like manner, if cavillers tauntingly say: "What profit is there in baptizing your little children?" we answer: "*Much every way,*"—this train of thought however, introduces us to the second branch of our investigation, in which we propose briefly to set forth the benefits of infant baptism. For a full reply to the last objection, we accordingly refer the reader to PART II.

<sup>1</sup>Rom. iii. 1—4.

<sup>2</sup>Rom. ii. 25.



# INFANT BAPTISM.

## PART SECOND.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE BENEFITS OF INFANT BAPTISM.

IN exhibiting these benefits, we shall limit ourselves to a few ; our main object is to sustain the baptism of *infants*, and the practice of administering it by *affusion*. Besides, though some diversity of sentiment prevails as to the benefits, yet that diversity is not so great, nor does it at present form a topic of such general and sharp contention. We shall therefore discuss this branch of the subject rather incidentally, and dismiss it with as little delay as possible.

We do not profess to know *all* the advantages that either *accompany* or *follow* the administration of this Holy Sacrament ; but there are some *obviously* connected with it, both directly and indirectly, and these we shall now endeavor briefly to spread before our readers.

#### FIRST BENEFIT.

1. *Baptism is a sign of many interesting truths, and a seal of numerous and inestimable blessings.*

*It is a sign of many interesting truths.* It holds up to our view, symbolically indeed, but very impressively,

many of the essential truths of the gospel. It exhibits us as a fallen, guilty and polluted race, who need a renovation of our nature and that sanctification which the Holy Spirit alone can accomplish. It magnifies the wisdom and love of God, displayed in the glorious plan of salvation by the atoning blood of the Saviour and the purifying influences of his grace. It presents to our minds the solemn truth, that we "are not our own," but "are bought with a price;" that we are therefore the property of God, bound to be "not the servants of men," but of Him who redeemed us, and to "glorify him in our body and in our spirits, which are his." It reminds us that God is our Father and we are his children; that it is his benevolent design to restore us to the likeness of his image, and reinstate us in the enjoyment of his favor, both which have been forfeited by sin and disobedience. Above all, it is a standing and incontrovertible exhibition of the true nature of the God-head, proclaiming the Deity to the Christian world, as a **THREE-ONE-GOD**; as a Being,—glorious, unsearchable and incomprehensible,—*one* in essence but *three* in person. And so long as baptism is taught and practised according to the Scriptures, there is no danger that the sacred and mysterious doctrine of the Trinity will be obliterated from the Christian's creed, or that the homage which is due alike to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost will cease to characterize his private and his public devotions.

It will perhaps be objected, that however forcibly all these doctrines are represented in baptism, yet the infant subjects of it do not understand them. Our reply is, neither did they understand the meaning of Christ's laying his hands on them, and yet that very act was accompanied by a blessing, imparted by the Saviour. Neither

did Jewish *children* of eight days old comprehend the sacred truths of which circumcision was the sign, and yet it did signify such truths, and it was appointed to be administered to such children. The period will arrive, when they shall be able, and when it shall be their duty, to acquaint themselves with them, and when they may rejoice and thank God for all the advantages resulting from that acquaintance. The individuals who present them in baptism, and the particular church of which they are members, enjoy the benefits of which we are speaking, and when in after life, they are engaged in educating and training them up for God's service, it will be no small advantage to remind the children of those important truths which were thus solemnly typified and inculcated at their baptism.

But baptism is also *a seal of numerous and inestimable blessings*. Here all the rich and ineffable mercies of the new covenant crowd upon our mind. In the original stipulations of the covenant, these mercies were two-fold, temporal and spiritual; at present we shall glance at them only in the latter point of view. The engagements were :

1. That God would "greatly bless" Abraham, which promise, as we learn from Paul, referred more fully to the blessing of Abraham's justification by the recognition or imputation of his faith for righteousness, together with all the spiritual advantages consequent upon the relation which was thus established between him and God in time and eternity.

2. That Abraham should be "the father of many nations," which we are also taught by the apostle, to interpret more with regard to his spiritual seed, the followers

of that faith whereof cometh justification, than to his natural descendants.<sup>1</sup>

3. That "the land of Canaan" should be given to Abraham and his seed, which was manifestly but the type of the higher promise of a heavenly inheritance.<sup>2</sup>

4. That God would always be "a God to Abraham and his seed after him," a promise which is connected with the highest spiritual blessings, such as the remission of sins and the sanctification of our nature. It is even used to express the felicitous state of the church in heaven.<sup>3</sup>

5. That in Abraham's "seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed;" and this blessing we are expressly taught by Paul, was nothing less than the justification of all nations, that is, of all believers in all nations by faith in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Such are briefly the glorious blessings vouchsafed in the new covenant, and of all these blessings, baptism is the appointed seal, that is, the testimony and pledge on the part of God, that they (the blessings) are his free gift to all believers and their infant offspring.

Should it be contended that these benefits would be bestowed on children independently of baptism, we only

<sup>1</sup>Rom. iv. 16. The expression, "father of *us all*," evidently means, "father of all believing gentiles as well as Jews."

<sup>2</sup>Heb. xi. 9. The "faith" spoken of in this passage, did not refer to the fulfilment of the temporal promise; for the apostle adds, Heb. xi. 19, "they looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

<sup>3</sup>Rev. xxi. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Gal. iii. 8—9. To be "blessed with believing Abraham," as expressed in v. 9, imports that they receive the same blessing, which is *justification*, and that by the same means, which is *faith*.



reply, that they could also have been conferred on Hebrew children independently of circumcision, and yet an infinitely wise God required them to be circumcised in ratification thereof. If it be further objected, that in numerous cases, the professing parents who present the children for baptism, have not true faith, and cannot therefore consistently covenant for their children; our answer is, that such was doubtless the case under the old economy, and yet we are not justifiable in believing that circumcision was in such cases unavailable. Moreover, the same objection may be urged in reference to the benefits said to be connected with adult baptism; for its subjects are by no means in every instance sincere in their professions, and yet this want of sincerity forms no argument against the advantages of the ordinance in relation to adults; why then should it in respect to the children of formal professors? The baptized children of such parents are at least brought within the care, the watch and the privileges of the church, which is a very important advantage, and has no doubt often been blessed to their eternal salvation, while the hypocritical parents themselves have gone down to everlasting burnings. Where is the faithful pastor who has not beheld the awful truth of this remark more than once *signally exemplified*? But this is a distinct benefit of infant baptism, and deserves more extended notice.

#### SECOND BENEFIT.

*Baptism is a solemn dedication of our children to God by an appropriate rite of his own appointment.—* Our children are the rightful property of Jehovah, by creation, covenant and redemption. It is therefore our duty to dedicate them to his service. This may indeed

be done privately, and apart from baptism. But in his infinite wisdom and mercy, our heavenly Father appointed a special ordinance peculiarly adapted to this sacred duty, and every way calculated to enstamp upon its performance the highest degree of solemnity and impressiveness. This ordinance was formerly circumcision, under the New Testament it is baptism. And is there no advantage either to parents or to children in thus openly surrendering them up to God, and formally devoting them to his service in his own appointed way, and by his own ordained rite? Is there no advantage in recognizing by an act of religion, God's claim to our offspring, and our covenant engagement to bring them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Is there no advantage, during the subsequent process of educating them, to be able to remind them, that at the early dawn of life, they were religiously consecrated to their heavenly Parent, solemnly obligated to renounce "the world, the flesh and the devil," and to walk in the way of his commandments, and that they therefore belong to the Most High by holy and irrevocable transfer, as well as by various other sacred ties?—And should these precious immortals take their speedy flight to realms of endless day, soon after they have alighted in this wilderness world, will there be no comfort in the reflection, that they were in a peculiar manner, and by a religious and divinely appointed ordinance, *given to Him who gave himself for them and loved them even unto death?*—Verily, those who carelessly neglect the baptism of their offspring, do not consider what a rich chalice of consolation they dash from their lips, and what a mighty lever of moral influence they deprive themselves of in reference to incitements to personal duty, as well as in secur-

ing obedience from their children. They may imagine the offence a venial one because infant baptism is a mooted point, but it is an impeachment of God's perfections,—a setting up of their own "foolishness" against his unerring wisdom,—a delinquency which may plant a thorn in their dying pillow, and give increased pungency to the reproaches of a guilty conscience, in a world of unmitigated despair.

## CHAPTER II.

### THIRD BENEFIT.

It has already been shown, that when a child is baptized, its right of membership in the visible church is recognized and ratified; and *this baptismal recognition and ratification* (without which, according to the tenor of the covenant, it would “be cut off” from God’s people,) *secures several inestimable benefits.*

1. One of these benefits is, *the special instruction and supervision of the church and its pastor.*—Little children are generally, and they should be invariably, the peculiar objects of parental solicitude. Parents are commanded to “train them up in the way in which they should go;” and were all parents and guardians duly penetrated with a sense of this duty, and qualified by grace and wisdom to discharge it, ecclesiastical and ministerial vigilance and instruction in relation to infant members, might not be considered so important a benefit. But many parents are unfortunately not qualified by grace, and some who are not inattentive as to their own personal salvation, are nevertheless unskilful and not “apt to teach.” Does it not then devolve upon the church and its pastor, to supply as far as in them lies, this great lack of service on the part of parents and guardians?—It most unquestionably does; for when children are baptized, they are thereby recognized as belonging to the church; they are as it were solemnly entered as scholars or disciples in the

school of Christ. They are brought into a situation in which they not only may be trained up for God, but in which the church no less than the parents are *bound* so to train them up. Yes, the church,—the church is required, by the most sacred obligations to her covenant Head and to her infant members, to make ample provision for the religious supervision and Christian education of the rising generation.

Every adult member should feel an interest in the welfare of the children, and afford by his example, exhortations and prayers, all needful aid to them. It is incumbent upon the officers of the church especially, to have a constant eye to this important matter. It is their duty to look after the children whose parents neglect them, to follow them in their wild retreats, reprove and admonish and win them over to the side of virtue by gentle treatment and persevering efforts. The pastor is under sacred obligations to visit the families of his church, and both privately and publicly instruct the young, to take them by the hand and lead them in the way everlasting, infusing into their minds that light and knowledge, so necessary to qualify them for usefulness and happiness in this world, and for the enjoyment of eternal felicity in the world to come. And will no advantage arise to infant members, from the discharge of these obligations on the part of the church?—"We speak as unto wise men, judge ye."

It may perhaps be urged that these duties are not faithfully performed by the church,—suppose they are not, this is only an objection to the delinquency of the church and not to the benefits of infant baptism. Conceive of a Christian association in which the standard of piety is duly elevated, and its professors are what the

gospel requires them to be,—a peculiar people, adorning their profession by a well ordered life and conversation, and distinguished for their zeal in the instruction of the young and the conversion of their souls, and then say whether the religious instruction alluded to, is of no value ?

2. Another benefit of infant baptism as a seal of membership, results from the exercise of church discipline. We will not stop here, to prove that every particular church is required to watch over the purity of its members ; to counsel, exhort and reprove the offending ; to comfort the distressed ; strengthen the weak ; reclaim the backslider ; to cut off or suspend those who will not reform ; to restore the penitent, &c. &c. All this will be admitted by most of our readers without further proof ; besides, this is not the proper place to investigate the question of church discipline. All we wish to say at present is, that infant members are entitled to share in the advantages of such discipline ; like the subjects of circumcision they “ must naturally (says Prof. Schmucker) enter on the enjoyment of these privileges by degrees, as the powers of their minds are developed. Yet does their participation in them commence in their earliest years, as soon as they are capable of being assembled for instruction by their pastor ; whilst the unbaptized are not necessarily, nor by virtue of any positive institution, brought under such influence at any particular age during their intellectual minority, nor afterwards until they apply for admission to church-membership. The children of the church are regarded as, in some sense, under the religious supervision of the church, and in our Formula of church government,<sup>1</sup> it is expressly enjoined on pas-

<sup>1</sup>Chap. iv. 10.

tors, to instruct them in the elementary principles of religion, and on the church council<sup>1</sup> to exert themselves to provide suitable and religiously conducted schools, to which they may be sent. They are thus early informed of their relation to the church, and of their obligation at a reasonable age personally to assume, and publicly to *confirm* the promises, made for them at their baptism. Thus, in a well regulated church, the great subject of embracing Christ is necessarily brought before the minds of all those who had been baptized in infancy; presented too in the most solemn and direct manner, commended by the strong influence of religious education, of filial attachment, and of early associations; whilst a very small proportion of those, who grow up without the pales of the church, are ever placed under such advantageous circumstances."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Chap. iv. 10.

<sup>2</sup>See Schmucker's Theology, p. 225, 226.

## CHAPTER III.

### FOURTH BENEFIT.

*Baptism secures to infants the immediate and especial blessing of the Saviour.*—Our Lord evinced, on more than one occasion, during his visible residence on earth, a peculiar regard for little children. He was not only “much displeased” when his disciples attempted to prevent them from being “brought to him,” but positively commanded that they should be suffered to come and not be forbidden. And when they were presented, he kindly took them up in his arms, and prompted by the glowing affection and overflowing benevolence of his divine nature, *he put his hands upon, and blessed them.* Here it must be borne in mind, that “laying on hands,” was, to say the least a very ancient and venerable practice; and is, in the New Testament, ranked with “baptisms, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.”<sup>1</sup> Our Saviour observed this custom when he healed the sick, as well as when he conferred his blessing on children; the apostles likewise laid hands on those upon whom they bestowed the Holy Ghost, and the ceremony, on whatever occasion it was employed, seemed to be a concomitant of the communication of some special grace or blessing. The precise nature and extent of the blessing imparted by our Lord to the children by the imposition of his hands, it is neither possible nor important to

<sup>1</sup>Heb. vi. 2.



our purpose to decide; but it is very certain that *a blessing* was conferred, because it is positively declared that “he laid his hands upon them, and *blessed* them.”

Now in baptism, we emphatically and in strict conformity to his own precept, bring our children to Christ; *we literally* present them to him, laying them, as it were, upon his arms, that he may make them the happy recipients of his special favor. This whole transaction is deeply impressive and of most significant character; it comprehends a solemn consecration of the infant to the service of Jesus Christ; a recognition of its title to all the grace of the new covenant; a symbolical exhibition of the regenerating influences of the Holy Ghost, &c. &c., and is withal connected with believing and fervent prayer in its behalf. To all this must be added the respect which God bears to the believing act of the parents as well as to their cordial prayers on the occasion, in both which the child is interested; as well as in that solemn engagement which the right necessarily implies, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Can it be reasonably supposed that no divine blessing is imparted on such an occasion, or that the blessing is merely nominal and not substantial and efficacious? Is it to be believed that He who in the days of his flesh, said: “suffer little children to come unto me,” and when brought, “*laid his hands upon them, and blessed them,*” will withhold his blessing, when in the present day, we offer our little ones to him in the sacrament of baptism?—*Believe it who can!*—Here then, we have another important benefit secured to children by their baptism.

We have already remarked, that we do not feel warranted to define the nature and measure of this blessing.

It may be for aught we know, the gift of the Holy Spirit, “in those secret spiritual influences by which the actual regeneration of those children who die in infancy is effected; and which is a *seed of life* in those who are spared, to prepare them for instruction in the word of God, as they are taught it by parental care, to incline their will and affections to good, and to begin and maintain in them the war against inward and outward evil, so that they may be divinely assisted, as reason strengthens, to make their calling and election sure.”<sup>1</sup> In partial accordance with this view, Dr. Miller observes, “A gracious God may, even then, (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 the renewing of the Holy Ghost.”—This idea acquires strength from the following considerations.

1. Revealed truth is not only lucidly typified, but also actually employed in the administration of baptism, and it is through the instrumentality of such truth that the Spirit operates, and the sincere use of which he never fails more or less to attend by his gracious influences.

2. Baptism is in an eminent degree the emblem of moral purification by the new birth,<sup>2</sup> and may even become the blessed means of that birth.<sup>3</sup> But the uniform agent in effecting the new birth is none other than the Holy Spirit. These remarks appear to favor the notion

<sup>1</sup>See Watson, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Titus, xiii. 5; 1 Peter, iii. 21.

<sup>3</sup>When among the primitive Christians, an adult was baptized, he was always presumed to be regenerated, and it was upon the strength of this presumption, that the ordinance was administered; and hence, to be regenerated, and to be baptized, were considered to be one and the same thing; and in process of time regeneration and baptism became convertible terms or were used synonymously.

that the influences of the Spirit may possibly constitute the blessing conveyed to children at their baptism. That those influences become immediately active, is not maintained by us, because the infant is not as yet a moral agent or capable of intelligent and responsible action ; but so soon as he arrives at the age of discretion, he may seriously meditate on his relations as a member of the church, and the blessing imparted at his baptism may become effectual to his conversion and salvation ; or if he die before he reaches that age, the same blessing may become alike efficient in renewing his nature and qualifying him for heaven.

#### FIFTH BENEFIT.

5. The fifth and last benefit of infant baptism which we will mention, has respect to the parents. *It renews the assurance to them that God is not only their God, but also "the God of their seed" after them ;* and is a consoling pledge that their dying infant offspring shall be saved ; since he who says : "Suffer little children to come unto me," also adds : "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." They are further reminded of the necessity of acquainting themselves with God's covenant, that they may diligently teach it to their children ; and that, as they have covenanted with God for their children, they are bound thereby to enforce the covenant conditions upon them as they come to years—by *example* as well as by education ; by *prayer* as well as by a profession of the name of Christ.

Let parents think of all this, when they come to present their children in this holy ordinance. And let children lay all this to heart, as soon as they attain to the age in which they are capable of remembering and realizing their solemn responsibility.

# INFANT BAPTISM.

## PART THIRD.

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### THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

#### CHAPTER I.

BEFORE we proceed to our main argument on this branch of the subject, we must be allowed to premise a few general remarks.

1. It is well understood that a difference of opinion exists between our Baptist brethren and the great mass of the Christian world, in relation to the *mode* of baptism; the former believing that it is essential to administer it by submersion or total plunging in water, while the latter maintain that the mode by aspersion or sprinkling, is not only Scriptural and consistent with the best usage of the church of Christ, but also decidedly more suitable and edifying than the other. But it is not so generally known, that while the numerous millions of Christians who hold to the latter method, have no dispute whatever as to the precise manner in which the act of aspersion is performed, submersionists do differ very materially among themselves; some teaching that a sin-

gle plunge under the water is sufficient, and others contending, with the Geek church, that *trine* immersion is absolutely necessary. The “Tunkers” (*Dippers*, usually called Dunkards) insist on an entire triple immersion by a *forward* motion of the subject, but in the judgment of the great Corypheus<sup>1</sup> of another sect, this mode is nugatory, inasmuch as it does not resemble the *burial* of Christ; “we must,” says he, “dip only once, and the motion must be *backwards*.” The advocates of these conflicting practices, ought at least to adjust their own disputes and settle down on some one specific mode, before they can reasonably expect us who prefer aspersion, to renounce our present views and embrace theirs.

2. The proportion of the Christian world who practise submersion, is exceedingly small. The Romish church, comprehending a population of perhaps one hundred and thirty millions, advocate affusion; and the Greek church, amounting to more than half that number,<sup>2</sup> while they baptize children, differ from most others in that they *unite the two modes*. *Deylingius* says: “The Greek church practises affusion after immersion,”<sup>3</sup> that is, they first immerse the subject three times, and then sprinkle him; hence they cannot justly be cited in exclusive support of either mode. The Protestant church is said to contain some sixty millions of mem-

<sup>1</sup>Alexander Campbell.

<sup>2</sup>In a late number of the New York Observer a distinguished writer estimates the Greek and Papal churches at two hundred and fifty millions.

<sup>3</sup>See Editor of Calmet, p. 74, in reference to Booth, vol. i. 286. We ourselves once witnessed the baptism of an infant in the great cathedral in St. Petersburg by *pouring*; the trine immersion, we presumed, had been previously performed.

bers, and of all these, probably not one-sixtieth part practise submersion. Omitting the Greek church then, in the estimate, the number who hold to plunging, compared with those who consider sprinkling more correct, is in the ratio of perhaps *less than a million to nearly two hundred millions*, or as one is to two hundred. We mention this fact more as a matter of information, than with a view to lay stress on it as an argument.

3. Though *infant* baptism has no necessary connection with the *mode* of its administration, yet it is worthy of notice that all those who have adopted the former, regard *sprinkling*, and those who have opposed it, account *submersion*, as the proper mode. The Greek church, so far as we know, is the only exception, and even they, as just remarked, conjoin both methods. But every branch of Christendom that practise affusion, also teach infant baptism. These two appear, in some way, to be almost inseparable; why it is so, it may be difficult to explain. It would therefore seem that if either can be proven to be accordant with Scripture, the other by common consent, follows as a natural consequence; certainly if baptism by affusion be valid, then the universal practice of the world has decided that infants should not be excluded.

4. There is one repulsive fact in the early history of baptism which it is necessary to mention, as we shall have occasion to make use of it in the course of this investigation, but which it is difficult to speak of without infringing on the restraints of delicacy, or seeming to cast ridicule on the primitive mode of administering the solemn ordinance in question. We allude to the circumstance, that as early at least as the third century, and in subsequent ages when the mode of baptism by submer-

sion became more prevalent, the candidate for baptism was, *irrespective of age or sex*, divested of all clothing; we wish to be understood and must therefore speak out; we mean, people were baptized in a state of *perfect nakedness*, not even having an outer garment or a single shred of apparel on. "No exception," says Dr. Miller, "was allowed in any case, even when the most timid and delicate female importunately desired it. This fact is established, not only by the most direct and unequivocal statements, and that by a number of writers, but also by the narration of a number of curious particulars connected with this practice." It is notorious, (says Dr. Stuart,<sup>1</sup>) and admits of no contradiction, that baptism of those days of immersion, was administered to men, women and children, in *puris naturalibus*, naked as Adam and Eve before their fall, &c. &c. Cyril of Jerusalem testifies the same thing, "as soon as ye came into the baptistery, ye put off your clothes \* \* \* and being thus divested, ye stood imitating Christ who was naked upon the cross. \* \* \* A wonderful thing! ye were naked in the sight of men and were not ashamed,<sup>2</sup> &c. &c. The testimony of the Baptist historian, Robinson, is clear on this subject; he says,<sup>3</sup> "Let it be observed, that the primitive Christians *baptized NAKED*. Nothing is easier than to give proof of this by quotations from authentic writings of the men who administered baptism, and who certainly knew in what way they themselves performed it. *There is no historical fact better authenticated than this*. The evidence doth not go on the meaning of the single word *naked*; for then a reader

<sup>1</sup>See Bib. Rep. No. 18, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup>Catch. Myst. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Chap. xv. p. 85.

might suspect allegory : but on many facts<sup>1</sup> reported, and many reasons assigned for the practice. The reasons assigned for this practice are, that Christians ought to put off the old man before they put on a profession of Christianity ; that as men came *naked* into the world, so they ought to come *naked* into the church ; for rich men could not enter the kingdom of heaven ; that it was an imitation of Christ, who laid aside his glory, and made himself of no reputation for them ; and that Adam had forfeited all, and Christians ought to profess to be restored to the enjoyment of all, only by Jesus Christ. That most learned and accurate historian, James Basnage, than whom no man understood church history better, says, ‘ *When artists threw garments over pictures of the baptized, they consulted the taste of spectators more than the truth of the fact.* ’ ” So far Robinson. And Basnage might have added, that ALL the truly ancient representations of baptism which he had ever seen, represented the person receiving baptism, as absolutely naked : not even a wrapper around the middle was thought of, till after the simplicity of the gospel was considerably vitiated. It was because the case is so clear, that Robinson gave no additional quotations ; and Dr. Wall was influenced by the same consideration. His words are, “ The ancient Christians, when they were baptized by immersion, were ALL BAPTIZED NAKED, whether they were men, women or children. Vossius (De Baptism, Disp. i. cap. 6, 7, 8) has collected several proofs of this ; which I shall omit, because it is a clear case.” Hist. Bapt. vol. ii. p. 311.

<sup>1</sup>Robinson relates several of these facts which transpired in the baptism of those days, but they are too disgusting to find a place in our pages.



We must here repeat that we do not advert to this indecorous fact in order to cast odium on the practice of submersion, but because we intend hereafter to make a very grave and important use of it ; since it will appear that we have as good evidence for baptizing in a state of nudity as we have for submersion.

## CHAPTER II.

IN treating the subject before us, we shall carefully examine the following propositions:—

I. Does the New Testament afford any proof that baptism was administered among the early Christians by submersion?<sup>1</sup>

II. Is the mode of baptism of such essential importance, that the example would be binding on us; could it be conclusively shown that either mode constituted the primitive practice?

III. Is the mode by affusion decidedly more Scriptural, appropriate and edifying than that by immersion?<sup>2</sup>

1. Does the New Testament afford any proof that baptism was administered among the early Christians by submersion?

If such proof is contained in the writings of the New Testament, it must be found either in the *literal terms* used in reference to baptism; or in the *circumstances* attending its administration; or in the *metaphorical language* applied to it.

<sup>1</sup>By *submersion*, we understand total plunging under the water;—*immersion*, *dipping* and *plunging* may be *partial* or *entire*, according to the circumstances under which the several terms are used.

<sup>2</sup>We shall employ the words: *sprinkling*, *aspersion*, *pouring*, *affusion* and *perfusion*, interchangeably, not indeed as meaning precisely the same thing, for this is not the fact, but as designating the same general mode of baptism in contradistinction to submersion.

## THE LITERAL TERMS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN REFERENCE TO BAPTISM.

1. It cannot be found in *the literal terms used in reference to baptism*. Where is the express command of Christ or his apostles to baptize by submersion?—we challenge our opponents to point it out. Where is the inspired declaration, that those who received baptism at the hands of the first teachers of Christianity, were plunged entirely under the water?—it has never yet been discovered. The injunction to baptize all, is plain and positive, but respecting the mode of applying the water, *nothing is specified*.

The only terms employed in reference to baptism, from the import of which our opponents pretend to be able to prove submersion, are the verb, βαπτίζω and its cognates, and the prepositions ἐν, ἐκ, ἀπο and ἐκ or ἐξ—Now, to convince our readers that none of these terms afford one particle of evidence in support of submersion, and that if they reflect any light at all on the question, it is in favor of affusion, we shall enter into a fair and impartial investigation of their signification, and state nothing but what we either know or have good reason to believe to be the honest and unvarnished truth.

The Greek term, βαπτίζω (*baptizo*) is derived from βαπτο, (*bapto*), and when used to designate Christian baptism, implies the application of water to the subject of the ordinance, but not the *mode* of its application.—More of this hereafter.

## BAPTO.

Even βαπτο,<sup>1</sup> (*bapto*), the root, which is a stronger

<sup>1</sup>This word is never used in reference to Christian baptism; it occurs but four times in the New Testament, viz. Matt. xxvi. 23, Luke xvi. 24, John xiii. 26, and Rev. xix. 13, and is in every instance

term than its derivative βαπτίζω (*baptizo*), does not uniformly nor necessarily imply submersion. We indeed admit that this may be its most common sense, nay that it is its primitive sense; but it is undoubtedly true that the same word has passed over to other meanings, such as to *sprinkle* or *stain*, to *dip partially* into a fluid, to *wet slightly*, to *dye*, &c., without any reference to mode. This application of the term was once strenuously resisted by our Baptist brethren, but the more learned among them now entirely abandon this ground. Indeed, so far has the word passed from its original sense, that it is even applied to coloring an object superficially by gold, that is, to gilding. A few examples on so plain a subject, must suffice. One of these examples is found in Rev. xix. 13, "And he was clothed with a vesture *dipped* in blood; βεβαμμενον αιματι, that is, *baptized* or *stained* in blood, and that not by being plunged in it, but aspersed or sprinkled with it. That this is a correct paraphrase is manifest from the nature of the case. The allusion is to a conqueror having his garments stained in battle by the blood of his enemies. Now, it is well known that when a chieftain's garment is thus stained, it is not effected by plunging or submersing it in blood, but by sprinkling or aspersing. Or the figure may refer to a vintager; and how is his garment *baptized* or *stained* translated by the English word, *dip*, which does not absolutely imply *total plunging*, and has not this signification in either of those passages. It means to *incline* downward as the magnetic needle; to examine in a *slight and hasty* manner, as dipping in the sciences; to engage *slightly* in any business, as dipping in the funds, &c.; to enter the water with the extreme point of something, as dipping the end of the finger in it. See *Webster* and *Walker*. The idea of *entire plunging* has been attached to it by the fact, that the Baptists have adopted it to designate their *mode* of baptism.

by the juice of the grape when engaged in treading the wine-press?—unquestionably by the occasional sprinkling or effusion of the juice; he does not plunge himself into the wine-vat, but the liquor sometimes gushes out upon him. Thus the apparel of our Saviour was not plunged, nor even wholly dyed in blood, when wrestling with the powers of darkness in Gethsemane, but his blood may be supposed to have oozed out, and to have stained it in places. To be convinced of the correctness of this criticism, we request the reader to compare Rev. xix. 11—15, with a parallel passage, Isa. lxiii. 1—3, “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with *dyed garments* from Bozra. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel *and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine-press*. I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in anger and trample them in my fury *and their blood shall be SPRINKLED upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.*”

Here then we undoubtedly have one case in which the word in question, does not imply submersion.

Another may be found in Matt. xxvi. 23: “He that *dippeth* his hand with me in the dish,” that is, he that baptizeth his hand, ὁ ἐμβάπτει \* \* τὴν χεῖρα. Now no one acquainted with the mode of eating in the east, will pretend that Judas plunged his whole hand in the liquid food contained in the dish; “nothing more can be meant,” says a distinguished writer, “than that he took the bitter herbs which were eaten at the passover, or other articles of food, and with his fingers dipped them in the sauce prepared.” It is a point of etiquette among the Turks and others in Oriental countries, when eating, to present any delicate morsel, in the fingers, to the

mouth of a guest.<sup>1</sup> This accords precisely with John xiii. 26 : “ He it is to whom I shall give a sop (*morsel*, ἄρσμον,) \* \* and when he had dipped the *morsel*, he gave it to Judas,” &c. To dip the hand in the platter, then, was not to bury it up to the wrist in the sauce, but simply to take food from it with the fingers in Asiatic style, instead of using a spoon or fork after the manner of our own country.

The last instance that we shall quote from the Scriptures to prove that βαπτω does not necessarily import submersion, is contained Dan. iv. 33, (see also chap. v. 21) : “ His body (Nebuchadnezzar’s) was *wet* with the dew of heaven.” Here we have a baptism by the descent of dew on him who was the subject of it, and the English word *wet*, fully expresses the idea intended to be conveyed. Now, though we have read of “dew-besprinkled grass,” we never have of dew-*submerged* grass. To urge that the dews in Babylon are copious, and that Nebuchadnezzar was therefore thoroughly drenched, by no means removes the difficulty ; for still it was no total plunging. Moreover, no respectable critic will hazard his reputation by assuming this position ; the dews in that country are not now sufficiently remarkable to attract the attention of travellers.<sup>2</sup> Our Baptist brethren,

<sup>1</sup>Thus Dr. Jowett, speaking of their manners, says, “But the practice which was most revolting to me was this; when the master of the house found in the dish any dainty morsel, he took it out with his fingers and applied it to my mouth. This was true Syrian courtesy and hospitality; and had I been sufficiently well-bred, my mouth would have opened to receive it.”—Christian Researches in Syria, &c.—See Robinson’s Calmet, art. Eating.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Rich, in his “Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon,” though he speaks of gardens and cultivation, says nothing of dews. London, 1815.

in their efforts to show, that to be moistened with the falling dew, is tantamount to submersion, are unwittingly establishing the validity of baptism by sprinkling, for it is virtually proving that sprinkling is equivalent to their ideas of submersion.

We have now adduced three distinct examples, taken from the Sacred Writings, in neither of which the word implies total plunging, or even any thing like it. We might also with equal propriety have referred to the case of the rich man (Luke xvi. 24,) who prayed Abraham to send Lazarus that he might *dip* (*βαπτει*) the tip of his finger, &c. But the foregoing are sufficient for our purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Let us next inquire into the meaning of the word as used by profane authors. "In the battle of the frogs and mice, a mouse is represented as dyeing or coloring the lake with his blood—*εβαπτεισιν αιματι λιμνη*. On this there was once a battle royal to prove that it could be proper to speak of dipping a lake into the blood of a mouse; and all the powers of rhetoric were put in requisition to justify the usage. Hear now Mr. Carson, inferior in learning and research to none of the Baptists: "To suppose that there is here any extravagant allusion to the literal immersion or dipping of a lake, is a monstrous perversion of taste. The lake is said to be *dyled*,

<sup>1</sup>The learned Taylor in commenting on these several cases, uses the following energetic language: "Now, will any man persuade me, that language tolerates the expression 'to plunge the tip of a finger?'—that Christianity tolerates the notion of our Lord Jesus 'wearing a garment plunged in blood?'—that common decency tolerates the plunging of two hands in the same dish, or, for aught I know, no less than thirteen hands, at the same moment? No, sir! what I would not believe of Hottentots, without ample evidence, I will not believe of Christ."

not to be *dipped*, or *poured*, or *sprinkled*. *There is in the word no reference to mode*. Had Baptists entrenched themselves here, they would have saved themselves much useless toil, and much false criticism, without straining to the impeachment of their candor or their taste. What a monstrous paradox in rhetoric is the figuring of the dipping of a lake in the blood of a mouse! Yet Dr. Gale supposes that the lake was dipped by hyperbole. 'The literal sense he says is, the lake was *dipped in blood*. Never was there such a figure. 'The lake is not said to be *dipped in blood*, but to be *dyled with blood*.' p. 67, Am. edition, N. York, 1832. This is well said, and is the more to our purpose on account of its author. Indeed his whole discussion of this point is able, lucid, and decisive. Of the examples adduced by him we shall quote one or two more.

“‘Hippocrates employs it to denote dying, by dropping the dying liquid on the thing dyed: *επειδαν επισταξη επι τα ιματια βατφειαι*: ‘When it *drops* upon the garments they are *dyled*.’ This surely is not dying by dipping.’” Carson, p. 60.

“‘Again. In Arrian—Expedition of Alexander: *τους δε παριανας λεγει Νεαρχος οτι βαπτωνται Ινδοι*: ‘Nearchus relates that the Indians dye their beards.’ It will not be contended that they *dyled* their beards by immersion.’ p. 61.

“He quotes cases in which it is used to describe the coloring of the hair; the staining of a garment by blood; the staining of the hand by crushing a coloring substance in it; for which, and others of a like kind, we refer to him, and to Prof. Stuart.

“In the compounds and derivations of this word the sense to dye is very extensive; to be fully satisfied of



which, let any one examine the *Thesaurus* of H. Stephens, or the abbreviation of it by Scapula on this word.

“It is compounded with colors of all kinds, as *πορφυρεοβαφης* *υαχινηνοβαφης*, of a purple, or hyacinthine dye. It denotes a dyer, a dying vat, a dye-house, etc., *βαφης* *βαφου*, etc., and it even passes, as before stated, to cases in which a new color is produced by the external application of a solid, as *χρυσοβαφης*, colored with gold, or gilded.

“But it is needless to quote at large all the examples which might be adduced to illustrate and confirm these points; and as all that we claim is conceded even by our Baptist brethren, to proceed farther would seem like an attempt at useless display.”<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with the foregoing criticisms, is the testimony of Mr. Edwards and Dr. John Dick. “I would say thus much,” remarks the former, “of the term *βαπτω*, that it is a term of such latitude, that he who shall attempt to prove, from its use in various authors, an absolute and total immersion, will find he has undertaken that which he cannot finally perform;” and the latter adds, “I do not intend to deny that *βαπτω* ever means to *dip*, but that this is its only sense; and hence we may fairly conclude, that although its derivative *βαπτω* means to *immerse*, it does not follow that this is its only signification.”

We close this *critique* by remarking, that the Rev. John Graves, who was undoubtedly an honest and independent Greek lexicographer, with Parkhurst and other distinguished men, says: “*βαπτω* (*bapto*) signifies to *dip*, *plunge*, *immerse*; to *wash*; to *wet*, *moisten*, *sprinkle*; to *steep*, *imbue*, to *dye*, *stain*, *color*.”

<sup>1</sup>See Bib. Rep. for Jan. 1840, p. 50, &c.

## CHAPTER III.

### BAPTIZO.

THE next object of inquiry is, the true import of βαπτίζω (*baptizo*), one of the derivatives of βαπτω; and here let it be observed that by the laws of etymology, derivative words lose some of the force of their primitives. Thus πασχω (*pascho*) to suffer; but παθος (*pathos*), its derivative, signifies *passion, evil affection*; πιπτω (*pipto*) to fall; but its derivative, πταίω (*ptaiō*) means to stumble, or *partly fall*. Hence we may reasonably presume that if βαπτω primarily signifies submerge, plunge, bedew, stain, wet, &c., its derivative, βαπτίζω, may indicate something less than submersing, plunging, &c., just as in English, the word *blackish*, (a derivative of *black*) signifies not *quite black*, and *reddish* (a derivative of *red*) signifies not altogether red, &c.

It is well known that our Baptist friends have confidently maintained, that the only legitimate and authorized meaning of this word, is to submerge; but the fact just adverted to, in reference to its root, affords presumptive evidence to the contrary; and if the testimony of the most profound and competent Greek scholars that ever lived, may be depended upon, there are many examples in the Holy Scriptures, in which it can mean nothing more than affusion, aspersion or partial washing.

If we should even concede that the original or etymological import of βαπτίζω was to submerge, yet would this

by no means settle its sense in relation to Christian baptism. For we all know that words are used in more meanings than one, and that they frequently depart from their primitive ideas and pass over to meanings quite diverse. That a term originally signifying to *submerge* should assume the idea of *sprinkling*, is so natural and probable, that the slightest attention to the laws of the mind and to well known facts will leave no room to doubt. "No principal," remarks President Beecher, "is more universally admitted by all sound philologists, than that to establish the original and primitive meaning of a word, is not at all decisive as it regards its subsequent usages. It often aids only as giving a clue by which we can trace the progress of the imagination, or the association of ideas in leading the mind from meaning to meaning, on some ground of relative similitude, or connection of cause and effect.

So the verb *to spring*, denotes an act, and gives rise to a noun denoting an act. A perception of similitude transfers the word to the issuing of water from a fountain—to the motion of a watch-spring—and to the springing of plants in the spring of the year. Yet who does not feel that to be able to trace such a process of thought, is far from proving that, when a man in one case says, I made a *spring* over the ditch, in another, I broke the *spring* of my watch, in another, I drank from the *spring*, in another, I prefer *spring* to winter, he means in each case the same thing by the word *spring*? And who in using these words, always resorts to the original idea of the verb? Indeed, so far is it from being true that this is commonly done, that most persons are pleased when the track of the mind is uncovered, and the path is pointed out by which it passed from meaning to meaning,

as if a new idea had been acquired—so *conversation*, *prevent*, *charity*, as now used, have obviously departed widely from the sense in which they were used in the days of the translators of the Bible.

“But to multiply words on a point so plain, would be needless, had not so much stress been laid on the supposed original meaning of this word. It is therefore too plain to be denied, that words do often so far depart from their primitive meaning, as entirely to leave out the original idea—and that the secondary senses of a word are often by far the most numerous and important.

The Editor of Calmet quotes some *eighty* examples, taken in part from the ancient fathers and classic writers, but chiefly from the Bible, in every one of which, the word in question implies less than submersion, and in most of them, no more than affusion, moistening, pouring or staining. We can do no more than examine a few of them.

The first that we shall take up is recorded Mark vii. 4. “And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (*βαπτισμους*—the *baptisms*) of cups and pots, brazen vessels and of tables.” The word translated *tables* is *κλινων* (*klinon*), which means beds or couches; thus the word is rendered in the 30th verse of the same chapter and in the other eight passages in which it occurs. “Now,” says Mr. Woods, “the *baptism* or ceremonial purification of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and *couches*, was doubtless performed in different ways. Cups and pots and brazen vessels might possibly be *immersed all over in water*; though this is not probable. But to suppose that *beds* or *couches* were immersed in the same way, would be unreasonable, especially since one of the prescribed modes of ceremonial

purification, and indeed the most common mode, was *the sprinkling of consecrated water.*" We do not deny the abstract possibility of plunging beds under water, but would it have been practicable to do so as often as the superstitious fastidiousness of the Pharisees required a lustration, without at the same time rendering them constantly unfit for use? The orientals have no chairs, they sit or recline on divans or a kind of sofas, which also serve the purpose of bedsteads. Whenever an unclean person sat upon these divans, they were thereby rendered ceremoniously unclean, and every one that touched them previously to their purification, was in like manner defiled. The Pharisees carried their notions on this point to an extravagant length and precision, and frequently *baptized* their beds and other furniture, although they knew of no actual defilement, in order to guard against any possible impurity. But that they on all such occasions plunged their beds under the water, is not only incredible, but absolutely impossible. The testimony of Dr. Fisk and Dr. A. Clarke on this subject is just in point. "There is no reason to think," says the former<sup>1</sup> "that this baptism consisted in immersion. 'Cups and pots, and brazen vessels,' may have been baptized by being plunged into water; but, as the operation could have been performed equally well, by pouring water into them and upon them, we can draw no certain conclusion respecting the mode, and the words βαπτίζειν and βαπτισμος, convey nothing more than the general idea of *washing*. The *last* word in the passage, κλινων, is improperly rendered *tables*, in our version, and the proper translation is *beds* or *couches*.—These were the couches on which they reclined at their meals. They were so large, as to

<sup>1</sup>Theology, Vol. ii. 375.

hold several persons at the same time; and, from their size, it seems reasonable to suppose that they were “*baptized*” not by being *immersed* in water, but by being *washed with the hand*, or *sprinkled*, to remove any real or fancied impurity.”

“As the word βαπτισμους, *baptisms*,” adds Dr. Clark<sup>1</sup> “is applied to all these; and as it is contended, that this word, and the verb whence it is derived, signify *dipping* or *immersion alone*, its use in the above cases refutes that opinion; and shows that it was used, not only to express *dipping* or *immersion*, but also *sprinkling* and *washing*.”

The second passage illustrating the meaning of βαπτίζω to which we ask attention, is found John iii. 25—26 “then there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about *purifying*. And they came to John and said unto him Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, the same *baptizeth* and all men come to him.”

The subject of dispute was a Jewish ordinance, called *purification*; in order to settle the question the parties appealed to John on the subject of *baptism*. This proves that a controversy respecting one, equally involved the other, or else their appeal was totally irrelevant. By the way we would remark, that this passage determines John’s baptism to have been or to have partaken of the nature of Jewish purification. But if baptism and purification are hindred terms, it follows that baptism sometimes denotes *sprinkling*, because the ordinance of purification was in most instances performed by sprinkling.

But Paul is still more explicit on this point. He says concerning the Levitical institutions, that they “stood

<sup>1</sup>Comment on Mark vii. 4.

only in meats and drinks, and divers *washings*, διαφορῶν, βαπτισμῶν, *different baptisms*," &c. 'These different baptisms were different modes of ablution, such as sprinkling, pouring, bathing, &c. and among the rest, sprinkling was the most frequent and prominent. As they were all legal purifications, the law of Moses must decide the mode of performing them. We find full explanations in the Pentateuch, Levit. xiv. 7. "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field." Numbers 8. 7. "And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean." See also chap. xix. 18, &c. "In allusion to this established and well understood mode of baptizing or sprinkling, in order to cleanse or purify, we find Isaiah speaking, in his remarkable description of the atonement of Christ. Isaiah lii. 15, 'So, shall he *sprinkle* many nations.' Hence, too, when Ezekiel describes the future purification of the people of God, he says, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 'Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your *idols* will I *cleanse* you.' Sometimes oil was used for sprinkling (see Levit. xiv. 16,) sometimes blood (see Levit v. 9, Number 19, 1—4,) but the persons or objects to be cleansed or purified were not dipped in oil or blood, since it is always expressly stated, that the oil or blood or water was *sprinkled*. 'These facts speak for themselves—they scarcely need an application. We do not find even the most remote allusion to the act of immersion.'

<sup>1</sup> Essays on the Mode of Christian Baptism by the Rev. Prof. C. F. Schaeffer. See Luth. Obs. Vol. 3, No. 17.

This same subject is referred to by the apostle, Heb. vi. 2, where he enumerates among the principles of the gospel, “the doctrine of baptisms,” βαπτισμων, that is, of ritual purifications under the law, which were still in part adhered to among the Hebrew Christians, and were all emblematic of that purity which a holy God requires in his worshippers, and which in this figurative sense might be classed among the first principles of the gospel. There is however, another use which we wish to make of this passage; our opponents tell us that the passage, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism,”<sup>1</sup> imports that there is but *one mode of baptism*, but if this argument be good, then by parity of reasoning, the plural number, *baptisms*, imports a *plurality of modes*. Our branch of the argument is just as conclusive as the other. But to continue our illustrations of the meaning of the word βαπτίζω in relation to ceremonial purifications; it is said, Luke xi. 38, “And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he (Christ) had not first *washed* εβαπτισθη, *baptized*, before dinner.” So also Mark vii. 4: “And when they come from the market, except they *wash*, βαπτισωσιν, *baptize*, they eat not.” Here we must again remind the reader that these washings or baptisms were not performed for the purpose of physical cleanliness; they were ceremonial purifications, mere superstitious refinings, upon the Mosaic ordinances concerning ablution. The question then, to be decided, in order to ascertain the meaning of βαπτίζω in these passages, is: what was the mode of washing hands among the Pharisees and Jews generally? We maintain that it was by pouring water upon them. 2 Kings iii. 2: “Here is Elisha Ben-Shapat, who *poured water on the hands* of Elijah. The same practice prevailed in the days of

<sup>1</sup>Eph. iv. 5.



Christ, and continues to this day in the east, for customs seldom or never change in that part of the world. “The table being removed,” says Pitts, “before they rise from the ground on which they sit, a slave or servant, who stands attending on them with a cup of water to give them drink, steps into the middle with a basin, or copper pot of water, something like a coffee-pot, and a little soap, and lets the water run upon their hands one after another as they sit. Such service, it appears, Elisha performed for Elijah.” On this subject D’Ohsson remarks: “The Mussulman is generally seated on the edge of a sofa with a pewter or copper vessel, lined with tin, placed before him upon a round piece of red cloth, to prevent the carpet or mat from being wet: a servant kneeling on the ground, pours out the water for his master, another holds a cloth destined for the purifications. The person who purifies himself, begins by baring the arms as far as the elbow. As he washes his hands, mouth, nostrils, face, arms, &c., he repeats the proper prayers. It is probable that Mohammed followed, on this subject, the book of Leviticus.” In the Report of Mr. Oscanyan’s Lectures on Constantinople, contained in the Boston Recorder, Jan. 4, 1839, is this passage: “The Osmanlis are remarkable for their attention to cleanliness. \* \* \* When they wash, the water is poured from a vase upon the hands, over a wide basin—they never make use of a basin or a tub to wash in, as is the practice elsewhere. It is a common observation among the Osmanlis, that cleanliness corresponds with the purity and integrity of the mind.”

Dr. A. Clarke says, on Mark vii. 4, “*βαπτισαντας* may mean either to wash or dip. But instead of the word in the text, the famous *Codex Vaticanus*, eight others, and

*Euthymius*, have *ελυτισονται*, *sprinkle*. According to these authorities, then, the Jews *sprinkled their hands* before eating. And that this was often practised, seems extremely probable from the circumstance that these were mere ceremonial washings or purifications.”

If then in these instances of legal purifications, *baptizing* implies, as it most unquestionably does, the pouring or sprinkling of water on the beds, furniture, hands, &c., common sense tells us that it cannot at the same time mean *submersing* or *total plunging*.

Another instance of the use of *βαπτίζω*, in which the idea of entire immersion is precluded, is contained in the account of the marriage at Cana. On this passage as well as on the three succeeding ones, we have adopted the judicious comments of the Rev. Prof. C. F. Schaeffer.<sup>1</sup> “The six water-pots of stone which our Saviour found at the marriage in Cana, John ii. 6, and which contained ‘two or three firkins apiece,’ held water to be used, as the passage itself tells us, v. 6, for ‘the purifying of the Jews.’ John calls a firkin in Greek *μεγερτης*, a word used by the Septuagint to express the Hebrew ‘bath,’ or ‘ephah.’ See 2 Chron. iv. 5, in the Hebrew and Septuagint. An ephah was equal to seven gallons and a half. See Horne’s *Introd.* vol. iii. p. 555. Suppose that on an average, each pot contained two firkins and a half—the capacity of each would be equal to eighteen gallons and three quarters. Another calculation which we have made (for there is some uncertainty in reducing ancient weights, measures, &c., to the modern standard) would leave even this quantity too large, and agree better with the estimate of Wilson. This writer, whose account we find in Horne’s *Introd.* vol. iii. p. 326,

<sup>1</sup>See *Essays, &c.*, Luth. Obs. vol. iii. No. 17.

says in his *Travels in Egypt and the Holy Land*, p. 339, that the shape of the water-pots in those countries resembled ‘the bottles used in our country for containing vitriol, having great bodies and small necks,’ and that those which he saw *at Cana* contained ‘three firkins,’ that is, *about twelve gallons each*.

“Here we have facts. We know that the guests at the nuptial celebration, baptized, that is, washed their hands. The water was *poured* on their hands by an attendant, an instance of which we find in 2 Kings iii. 11, ‘Here is Elisha—which poured water on the hands of Elijah,’ that is, here is Elisha, who was formerly the attendant of Elijah, who aided the latter in performing his legal ablutions. Of course the guests did not attempt to dip themselves in these bottles or pots, even if the limited quantity of water would have sufficed for the bathing of the large number of guests. We may conclude that they *washed*, that is, in Greek, *baptized*, by having the water applied in the usual way.

“So far we have at least negative proof, that βαπτίζω cannot always mean ‘dip.’ Indeed we see the word applied to the act of sprinkling or pouring, by the sacred writers in such a manner as to convince us that they deemed the word not liable to be misunderstood. Any Jew who read their writings would naturally judge that the Greek ‘βαπτίζω’ was the Hebrew ‘sprinkle.’

“Another instance will confirm this view. We read in 1 Cor. x. 1—2, ‘all our fathers were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.’ The question is: How were the Israelites baptized on the occasion to which Paul refers, i. e. when the Egyptians were in pursuit of them and had reached the sea? As it is not Christian baptism of which the apostle speaks, he calls the application of water to the Israelites a baptism, evi-

dently from the similarity in which water in both cases was applied. Now were they dipped in water—immersed? But Moses expressly says, Exod. xiv. 22, The children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the *dry ground*. How then could they be immersed? Let us, in imagination, represent the scene to ourselves. The waters, flowing to the line, and there checked and rising upward, (for they were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left hand,) dashed their spray upon the Israelites as they walked onward. A dew or rain from the cloud likewise descended. See Psalms lxxvii. 15—20. This sprinkling of the water as it fell on them *from above*, appeared to Paul to resemble so strongly the pouring or sprinkling of water in drops, on the head of the candidate for baptism, that in his usual bold style, he did not hesitate to call it a *baptism*. There was, it is true, on this same occasion, a *genuine case of immersion, but it was the Egyptian army that was so completely dipped under water*, and hence Paul is very careful not to say that they (the Egyptians) were baptized. How shall this passage be otherwise explained? Shall we say that the Israelites, between the two walls of water, *were thus in a manner immersed?* But then the somewhat mysterious conclusion would follow, that a person may be dipped in water, (if βαπτίζω has such a meaning,) *and yet not leave "the dry ground."* If so, then those who dip in the water, especially when sickly persons are to submit to the operation, should provide two large brewers' vessels, fill them with water, and lead the persons who are to be dipped, on "dry ground" between them. The folly of such a procedure is obvious. We must give some rational meaning to the words of the apostle, and we have given the only one which the passage appears to admit."

## CHAPTER IV.

THOUGH the argument contained in 1 Cor. x. 1—2, as illustrated in the preceding chapter, can scarcely fail to prove satisfactory to every unprejudiced mind, yet in order to fortify it still more abundantly, we must add a remark or two. In order to evade the force of this argument, it has been maintained, that the language of the apostle is figurative, and that the “cloud” was over the heads of the Israelites while the waters of the Red Sea stood in walls on either hand,—thus *surrounding* them in a manner, beautifully typical of submersion. With such flights of fancy, our imagination is indeed regaled, but our understanding is not enlightened. Besides, it is distinctly stated, that the cloud, during the passage through the Red Sea, stood not over the heads of the Israelites, but *behind* them. Exod. xiv. 19—20. The fact is, it alternately went *behind* them and *before* them; now hanging in their rear, for the purpose of concealing them from their enemies; and then preceding them in their course, presenting a face of splendor *to them*, and a face of darkness *to their pursuers*.

It seems to have been generally taken for granted that the baptism “in the cloud and in the sea,” took place at the same instant of time; whereas, it is by no means clear that this was the case, the grammatical structure of the passage in Corinthians fairly conveys the idea of *two*

distinct times of baptism,—one “in the cloud” and the other “in the sea;” and with this hypothesis agree the Old Testament accounts.<sup>1</sup>

The apostle says that “all our fathers were *ὑπο τὴν νεφέλην* UNDER *the cloud*, and were all baptized *ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ* IN the cloud,” or *with* the cloud. This shows that the cloud with which they were baptized, stood over their heads at the time, as the psalmist says, “He spread a cloud for a covering.” But this description does not apply to the time of their passing the Red Sea, but to a subsequent period; and the cloud was not the same that gave them light by night. Both the psalmist and Deborah and Baruk, place the time of the “rain” from the cloud subsequently to the passage of the Red Sea, and the latter associates that phenomenon with the scenes of Sinai. Judges v. 5. How beautiful is the sentiment of the psalmist! When that immense multitude were moving over a tract of desert, described by the concurrent testimony of all oriental travellers who have visited it, to be most “horrible,”—exposed to the burning rays of an Arabian sun, and prompted by a parching thirst and numerous privations, to tempt God and doubt the divine legation of Moses; then it was that God “did send a PLENTIFUL RAIN whereby he CONFIRMED his inheritance” in their allegiance to him and Moses their leader. This, we apprehend, is what the apostle calls being BAPTIZED *in the cloud*; and it was with strict philosophical propriety of language, that he says they were baptized *ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ* or *with* the cloud, when that cloud was being distilled upon them in drops of rain.

That the Israelites were literally baptized with water, I can see no just ground to deny. That they were *sub-*

<sup>1</sup>Psalms lxxviii. 7—9; Judges v. 4.

*mersed* in the cloud, no sensible man ought to affirm. As to their baptism in the sea, we *know* it was not by submersion. It seems most probable that, as the climate was oppressively warm, and the people, being closely pursued by the Egyptians, were greatly fatigued, God refreshed them, (baptized them,) by sprays of the sea being blown over them. We indeed know that this must have been a necessary consequence, as "a strong wind prevailed all that night." Exod. xiv. 21. This is the more probable inasmuch as it was so opportune to the necessities of the people, and also so analogous to their baptism in the cloud. Who can help but perceive that the argument against the doctrine, that βαπτίζω always signifies submersion, drawn from the text under consideration, is and must forever remain complete. We will only add, that the new translation of the Campbellite Testament, as well as the Baptist construction, which reads: "And were all *immersed* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea," contradicts the facts in the history no less than it does good sense, and is an imposition on the intelligence and candor of the age.

A few examples taken from other than the inspired writings, to show the meaning of βαπτίζω, shall close this tedious examination. This word is applied to the pouring of a fluid copiously over any thing, so as to thoroughly wet it, though not completely or permanently to submerge it. Thus, Origen referring to the copious pouring of water by Elijah on the wood and on the sacrifice, represents him as baptizing them. In this case then, it evidently means *pouring* and not *submersing*. It is also applied to cases where a fluid without any agent rolls over or floods, and covers any thing, as in Diodorus Siculus, vol. vii p. 191, as translated by Prof. Stuart: "The

river borne along by a more violent current, overwhelmed many (*εβαπτιζέε*.) So, vol. i. p. 107, he speaks of land animals intercepted by the Nile, as *βαπτιζόμενα*, overwhelmed, and perishing. The same mode of speaking is also applied to the sea-shore, which is spoken of by Aristotle as baptized or overwhelmed by the tide. It is also applied in cases where some person or thing sinks passively into the flood. Thus Josephus, in narrating his shipwreck on the Adriatic, uses this word to describe the sinking of the ship. Now, if the word be restricted to the sense it has in some of these quotations, then, to baptize a person, means to drown him. But enough. We have already adduced more than a dozen cases, in which *βαπτιζω* or one or the other of its cognates occurs, and as we think, incontrovertibly proven that it does not in a single one of these instances, imply submersion. One solitary example would have been sufficient for the object we had in view, but in order to guard against every quibble and “make assurance doubly sure,” we have furnished a variety of examples. Our case then is fairly made out, viz. that to *baptize* does not uniformly nor necessarily signify submersion; it simply *implies the application* of water, without specifying the mode of that application. Sometimes it indeed means submersion, but frequently only sprinkling, aspersing, &c., which is all we designed to prove and abundantly answers our purpose. Of course the word itself affords no clue whereby we can determine its precise signification. Nor should the plain English reader be surprised at this, for there are numerous analagous words in the English and other languages. Take for instance as the first that occurs to us, *wash*, which in its primary sense means to cleanse by a purifying fluid, as water, but by no means



defines the mode of applying the water. It may be done by pouring, dropping, sprinkling, rubbing, moistening, bathing, overflowing, plunging, or by some other process; further, it may refer to the body in general or only a part of it; and in every case the act may with strict propriety be termed a washing. But this word also passes over into other meanings, and in its progress, drops its original idea, and assumes a signification that involves neither to purify nor to use a fluid at all. President Beecher's illustrations drawn from this word, are so much to the point that we cannot forbear adding them.

“As washing is often performed by a superficial application of a fluid, it often assumes this sense and loses entirely the idea of cleansing, as when we speak of washing a wound with brandy, or with some cooling application to alleviate inflammation. In this case we aim not at cleansing but at medicinal effect. So we speak of the sea as washing the shores or rocks, denoting not cleansing, but the copious superficial application of a fluid.

“Again, as a superficial application of a fluid or a coloring mixture is often made for the sake of changing the color, we have to white-wash, to red-wash, to yellow-wash; and the substances or fluid mixtures with which this is done, are called washes.

“Next it drops the idea of a fluid entirely, and assumes the sense of a superficial application of a solid—as to wash with silver or gold.

“And here a remarkable coincidence in result, in words of meaning originally unlike, deserves notice as a striking illustration of the progress of the mind in effecting such changes.

In Greek βαπτίζω denotes originally to immerse—action alone, without reference to effect. In English wash denotes to cleanse or purify alone, without reference to

mode. Yet by the operation of the laws of association, both are used to denote coloring, and both to denote covering superficially with silver or gold.

“ Finally, when we speak of the wash of a cow-yard, and call those places where deposits of earth or filth, or vegetable matter, are made, washes, who will contend that the idea of purity is retained ? ”

Similar transitions of meaning could be pointed out in many other English words ; also in Latin terms, as for instance *tingo, lustro, lavo, &c.* Now with such facts before us, to increase the number of which indefinitely, were perfectly easy, who can say that there is the slightest improbability in the idea that the word βαπτίζω should pass from the sense to submerge, to the sense to sprinkle or even to purify irrespective of mode ? Can βαπτίω, tingo and wash, pass through such varied transitions and cannot βαπτίζω ?

The question before us then, is evidently not a purely philological one ; it has indeed been too generally treated as such, and this has no doubt tended to involve it in increased obscurity ; but if we would do justice to it, we must extend our investigations far beyond a mere consultation of our Greek dictionary and grammar ; we must examine the context, the time, occasion, the habits, manners, customs and general ideas of the people, and even their peculiar usages, in fine, all the circumstances that stand in relation to the specific use of the word and to the transaction which it implies.

It is a remarkable fact, that notwithstanding the copiousness of the Greek language, whenever baptism is spoken of in the New Testament, the same words are invariably employed to express it ; and these are the verb βαπτίζω and its derivative noun βαπτισμα. This certainly does not arise from any poverty in the Greek language.

In English (we mean Saxon English,) we have at least four words to express the application of water, viz: *plunge, dip, sprinkle, pour*, to which we may add the general verb *wash*. But the Greek language is much more copious. While we have but one verb to express *entire* immersion, viz. the word *plunge*, the Greek language has five or six. Such as *καταστῆναι, καταστῆναι, καταβαπτίζω, εμβαπτίζω, εμβαπτω*, and perhaps some others. The Greeks had also verbs to express *dip, sprinkle and pour*; and two or three to express *wash*, but they abounded more in verbs to express total immersion than perhaps any thing else. Yet amidst this profusion to express it unequivocally, the writers of the New Testament reject them all, when speaking of baptism, and confine themselves to *βαπτίζω*, and *βαπτισμα*.<sup>1</sup>

When speaking of the ordinance of baptism they do not call it immersion, or sprinkling, or pouring upon, but emphatically *baptism*. It seems that no other verb but *βαπτίζω*, and its derivative noun would answer the purpose. This is a fact worthy of special notice, and shows the importance of ascertaining the exact meaning of this verb, and wherein it differs from other verbs expressing the application of water. To this we have particularly directed our attention, and the result is, that all the Greek verbs which express the use of water, except *βαπτίζω*, and its cognates, refer to the *manner* of using it, without specifying the purpose for which it was used. Considering this verb as indicating the purpose for which water

<sup>1</sup>If they had intended to teach us that baptism was performed by submersion, and they had chosen to use the verb *βαπτίζω* at all, they would have prefixed the preposition *κατα* or *εμ*, which would have given force to the simple term, and thus have placed the matter beyond dispute.

was to be applied, we plainly perceive one reason why it was selected by the writers of the New Testament as the word, and the only word, suitable to express the ordinance of baptism. And we can also easily see why the translators of our Bible chose to retain, in this instance, the original Greek word, only making such a slight change in the letters as would make it conform to the idiom of our language. Indeed they had no other alternative, unless they had chosen to make their translation ridiculous. Suppose they had been Baptists in sentiment, and had determined to reject the Greek words baptize and baptism, and translated the original words into plain Saxon English, and instead of the "baptism of repentance," they had given us the *plunging of repentance*, and instead of Christ's emphatic words, "I have a baptism to be baptized with," the translators had given us, *I have a plunging to be plunged with*, every one must at once see the monstrous absurdity of such a translation.

In corroboration of the foregoing views we shall conclude with an extract from one of the communications of the Rev. Mr. Hibbard, published in the "Auburn Banner," to whom we feel much indebted: "The verb βαπτίζω (baptizo) is translated, so far as I now remember, but twice in the common English Testament, (vide Mark vii. 4, Luke xi. 38,) where it has been rendered by the verb *wash*. This circumstance sufficiently shows that the learned translators regarded it as extremely equivocal in pointing out any specific mode of baptism, and we may add, their modesty in this instance is not an unworthy pattern for some more modern critics.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Among all the hundreds of languages known in the world, there is, we venture to say, not one which has a verb that perfectly corresponds in import with the New Testament signification of βαπτίζω,

The word βαπτίζω (baptizo) is evidently a *generic* and *not* a specific term, comprehending under it a variety of particular modes of applying water to the person. Hence, it corresponds in sense, in some measure, to the English verb *wash*, though not perfectly. For instance, in Heb. ix. 10, where the noun βαπτισμος (baptismos) occurs; to render that noun by *immersion*, would be to give a totally false version—a version that would inevitably misguide the English reader, and contradict other parts of Scripture. It would be to say, that the Levitical institutes ‘ stood only in meats and drinks, and *different immersions*, whereas it is notorious that the Jews used sprinkling and pouring, as well as immersion.

\* \* \* Our Baptist brethren contend that to *immerse* (*submerge*), is the primary, and only true and literal sense of *to baptize*. Let us suppose, therefore, (though we by no means admit,) that this is correct. What have they gained by this argument?—an argument upon which they have leaned with unbounded self-complacency in the hour of controversy. Do they expect to convince the world, because *immerse* may be the *primitive* sense of baptize, that therefore, the latter word will always bear that sense in *composition*? To illustrate this point, we will propound a parallel case. The word δεῖπνον (*deipnon*) signifies in the New Testament a supper, which, with the Hebrews, was the principal meal of the day. It also signifies *feast, banquet*, (Luke xiv. 12, et al.) Now it is well known that Paul uses this word to

or a noun which fully expresses the meaning of βαπτισμα. The proper course then for those who translate the New Testament, is to take the Greek words just mentioned, and give them merely such a change as will conform them to the idiom of the language into which they are translated, and this is the rule no doubt which has been almost universally adopted.

signify the institution of bread and wine, called the Lord's supper. (ἀφ' ἧς τῆς ἐπιτιμίας, 1 Cor. xi. 20.) Hence, if we adhere rigidly to the primitive meaning of the word, we shall arrive at this conclusion, viz. that the Lord's supper is a sumptuous repast, a full meal, a feast, a banquet, which is exactly contrary to the true application of the term in that connection. But there is no reason, so far as the mere philology of the question is concerned, why we should invariably use ἐπιτιμία (baptize) in its primitive sense of to immerse, and not also as invariably use δεῖπνον (deipnon) in its primitive sense of a feast, &c. And, if we can obey the command to 'eat the Lord's supper' by eating a crumb of bread and taking a sip of wine, analogy would teach us that we might obey the command to be 'baptized' by having a small quantity of water applied to us. It would be easy to extend observations in proof of the utter fallacy of this mode of arguing from the primitive sense of words: but we have no time, nor is it necessary. We shall close this branch of the subject with an extract from the Rev. R. Watson.—'The word itself,' says he, 'proves nothing.—The verb (ἐπιτιμία) with its derivatives, signifies to dip the hand into a dish: to stain a vesture with blood: to wet the body with dew: to paint or smear the face with colors: to stain the hand by pressing a substance: to be overwhelmed in the waters as a sunken ship: to be drowned by falling into water: to sink, in the neuter sense: to immerse totally: to plunge up to the neck: to be immersed up to the middle: to be drunk with wine: to be dyed, tinged, or imbued: to wash by effusion of water: to pour water upon the hands, or any other part of the body: to sprinkle. A word then of such application, affords as good a proof of sprinkling, or partial dipping, or washing with water, as for immersion in

it. The controversy on this accommodating word has been carried on to weariness : and if ever the advocates of immersion could prove, what they have not been able to do, that plunging is the *primary* meaning of the term, they would gain nothing, since, in Scripture, it is notoriously used to express other applications of water.”

—Theological Institutes, vol. ii.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE GREEK PREPOSITIONS.

HAVING seen that there is nothing in the word βαπτίζω to support the opinion that baptism was administered by submersion among the early Christians, let us next examine the several prepositions connected with this word when applied to the ordinance in question, and see whether they afford any proof.

The prepositions, four in number, viz. ἐν, ἐκ, ἀπο and ἐκ, or ἐξ, are indeed used in connection with water baptism, but as they are employed in different senses, and even promiscuously, and are governed in their meaning by their context, just as similar particles are, in the English and other languages, it is abundantly manifest, that their testimony to the cause of our opponents must necessarily be, even under favorable circumstances, exceedingly equivocal. It is surprising that recourse was ever had to this kind of evidence, and is only another proof of the weakness of the assumptions we are combating. When men have clear and substantial arguments to sustain them, there is no necessity to resort to such as are vague and futile. That this is most unquestionably the character of all those derived from the use of the prepositions in question, will sufficiently appear before we have done with them.

It is well known to the mere tyro in the Greek language, that prepositions signifying *motion from a place*,



as  $\alpha\tau\tau$  and  $\epsilon\kappa$ , and those signifying *motion to a place*, as  $\epsilon\upsilon$ , are frequently interchanged with those which mark *rest in a place*, as  $\epsilon\upsilon$ , and vice versa. This fact of itself at once shows the impossibility of settling the question by an appeal to these particles. But to proceed more systematically.

#### THE PREPOSITION EN.

1. The primary meaning of  $\epsilon\upsilon$  is *in*, and it denotes *rest in a place*, but in composition it is correctly rendered *at*. Thus, “the tower *at* ( $\epsilon\upsilon$ ) Siloam;”—“at ( $\epsilon\upsilon$ ) the right hand of God:” see Luke xiii. 4, Rom. viii. 34. Now it is said, Matt. iii. 6, that the people “were baptized of him (John) *in* Jordan,”  $\epsilon\upsilon$   $\tau\omega$   $\text{I}\epsilon\rho\delta\alpha\nu\eta$ —*at* Jordan would have been an equally correct translation, and indeed, according to our view, more correct. But let us take the favorite translation of our Baptist brethren, and see whether it proves any thing in support of submersion. According to this it is maintained, John *stood in the river Jordan* when he baptized; but does it follow that he submersed?—by no means; as well might it be contended that *in Bethlehem* implies *under Bethlehem*, or *in Baltimore under the streets of Baltimore*. John may have stood in the water, or at its edge, but in neither case are we justifiable in inferring that he immersed. All that the preposition  $\epsilon\upsilon$  settles, is his position in the vicinity of the water; his proximity to it; but with the *mode* of baptism, it has no more to do than our sitting *at* the table to write, decides whether we write a large and bold or a small and cramped hand.

In further support of this fact, let us inquire how this same preposition  $\epsilon\upsilon$  is translated in parallel places. Mark (i. 4) says John baptized “*in* the wilderness;” Luke (iii. 3) says, “he came into all the country ( $\tau\epsilon\gamma\iota$   $\chi\alpha\rho\epsilon\upsilon$ ) ABOUT

Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance," (i. e. calling the people to repentance and baptizing them,) and John declares that he baptized *in* (*ev*) Bethabara, BEYOND Jordan," John i. 28, and also *in* (*ev*) Enon near to Salim, John iii. 23. Now what connection has this preposition in all these passages with the *mode* of baptism?—evidently not the remotest. If "baptized *in* Jordan" implies *submersed* in Jordan, what is the meaning of "baptizing beyond Jordan;"—"baptizing *in* Bethabara;"—"baptizing *in* the wilderness?" If with these illustrations staring them in the face, our Baptist brethren can still see such potent force in the particle *ev* in deciding the mode in which the ceremony was performed, we confess their powers of reason are vastly more acute than ours. But if we translate the preposition by the English particle *at* as it actually is translated in other places, and should be in the cases before us, then the text would read: John baptized *at* Jordan, or *in the vicinity* of Jordan, *at* Bethabara, *at* Enon, &c., and thus the true meaning would be distinctly seen.

2. But the preposition *ev* has another sense when used in connection with baptism; it is also properly expressed by the word *with*, indicative of the *instrumental cause* or *means* by which a thing is performed. Matt. iii. 11, Luke iii. 16, "I indeed baptize you *ev* *with* water;" here it is rendered not *in*, but *with*. It is translated by the same word in other connections; thus Matt. xxiii. 36,—Thou shalt love the Lord \* \* \* *ev* *with* (not *in*) all thy heart, and *ev* *with* all thy soul, and *ev* *with* all, &c. Luke xiv. 34. "If the salt have lost his savor *ev* *with* (not *in*) what shall it be seasoned?" Matt. vi. 29, "Solomon *ev* *with*, i. e. *by means of* all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." From these examples it is obvious that

the preposition *en*, in Matt. iii. 11, and parallel cases, designates the means or instrument whereby a thing is performed;—to baptize with water accordingly implies water as the means with which the ordinance is administered, but has not the most distant allusion to the quantity of water used, or to the mode of using it.

3. We come now to the third and last sense of the preposition *en*, when used in connection with baptism, which is conveyed by the word *by*, signifying the *efficient cause* or *the agency* by which a thing is effected. “But ye,” says Christ, “shall be baptized *en*, *by* the Holy Ghost,” Acts i. 5 and xi. 16. As this promise refers to the communication of the Holy Spirit on the following Pentecost, when he *sat upon each as a cloven tongue of fire*, it is very obvious that the particle *en* affords no evidence of plunging, but rather against it, inasmuch as the mode of the Spirit’s descent certainly has more affinity to affusion than to plunging. A similar rendering of this preposition is found Luke iv. 1, “Jesus \* \* \* \* was led *en* by the Spirit into the wilderness.”—Matt. (iv. 1) uses the particle *υπο* *by*, as synonymous. Other illustrations might be quoted, but these are sufficient to show that *en*, among other uses, is employed to express the *efficient cause* of a thing, and in such cases is correctly translated by the monosyllable, *by*. But our Baptist brethren notwithstanding, give us the following notable version of Acts i. 15. “For John truly *immersed in water*; but ye shall be *immersed* in the Holy Ghost,” &c. No doubt this rendering accords best with their views of baptism, but it is certainly at variance with the principles of sound theology; because the doctrine of the passage Acts i. 5 is plainly this: John indeed baptized *en* *with* water, as the *instrument*, but ye shall be baptized *en* *by*

the Holy Ghost as the *agent* of that spiritual and more important baptism to which they were referred by the symbolic washing. In one case, the preposition denotes the *instrumental* cause or *means*, and in the other, the *efficient* cause or *agency*; but in neither is there the most distant hint at the *mode* of baptism. The Baptist version represents the Holy Ghost as a passive, inert element in which the apostles were plunged, just as a man is in water; which is in itself as absurd as any thing we can conceive of, and is also utterly fatal to the true sense of the passage. But this rendering of our Baptist brethren, is as inconsistent with the plain facts of history, as it is at war with sound theology. To be convinced of this, it is only necessary to call to mind the mode of the Spirit's descent upon the apostles, from which we learn, that they were *in fact not immersed in the Holy Ghost*, but that the Holy Ghost SAT UPON *them*.—Can any argument be more conclusive?

We have now amply shown, that the particle  $\epsilon\gamma$  when employed in the New Testament, in connection with baptism, has no bearing whatever upon the *mode* of administering that ordinance; or if it have, it favors affusion more than submersion, as is evident from the manner of the Spirit's descent upon the apostles.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PREPOSITIONS EIS, EK OR EX AND APO.

THE other prepositions used in connection with baptism are: *eis*, *ek* or *ἐξ* and *apo*,—their primary significations are *into*, *out of*, and *from*; but it is well known that *in composition*, they are frequently used in senses different from those just stated, so that it would unquestionably lead to error, to force upon them uniformly the same meaning irrespective of their connection.

The most specious case in favor of sumersion,—we mean in a philological point of view,—is probably that recorded in Mark i. 9, “Jesus was baptized by John *eis* *in* Jordan.” Here we have *eis* with the accusative case, after the verb βαπτίζω, and it is the only instance of the kind on record in the New Testament: a more common construction is the dative without *en*, *in*, alluding to the *means*, and never to the *manner* of baptism; vide Matt. iii. 6, Mark i. 5, et al. If then, we can make it appear that even here submersion is by no means necessarily implied, our opponents will be deprived of one of their strongest philological holds.

1. Let it then be borne in mind, that the Greek particles are frequently interchanged, *i. e.* one is often used for the other; every Greek scholar is aware of this fact; and this is manifestly one of those instances. That *eis*, *into*, is substituted for *en*, *in*, in the passage in question, is abundantly manifest from the following verse, for we

are there told that "Jesus straightway ascending—not *out of*, but *απο* *from* the water." The very same form of expression is used Matt. iii. 16. True, our English translation reads, "*out of* the water;" but every person in the least conversant with the Greek, knows that this is wrong, and that in both passages it ought to read "*from* (*απο*) the water." If then, our Lord ascended not *out of*, but *from* the water, up the bank of the river, we conclude that *us* *into* must have been put for *en* *to* or *at*, and that he accordingly had not been in the water, and could not have been submersed. We appeal to every unbiassed scholar for the legitimacy,—the strict propriety of this interpretation.

3. Again, it is obvious that the verb in this case defines the sense of the preposition, and not the preposition that of the verb. If *baptize* has *but one meaning*, and that is to plunge, then "to be baptized (*us*) *into* the Jordan," must imply plunging; but if it have other significations, which has been a thousand times incontrovertibly proved; if, for instance it may convey the idea of pouring, sprinkling, &c., then it results with equal certainty, that to be "baptized in the Jordan," implies no more than sprinkling, because we are told in the sequel that the individual baptized went up the bank, not *out of*, but *from*, the water; hence we repeat, that *us* is put for *en*, as the corresponding *απο* proves. Who does not then perceive, that this passage can only be made to favor submersion upon the supposition that the Greek word βαπτίζω signifies submersion and nothing else; of course this throws the controversy back upon the import of the verb *baptize*, and is an entire abandonment of the argument derived from the preposition *us*. It is accordingly manifest, that the baptism of our Lord by no means presents a clear case of total plunging, and we are surprised that it has ever been admitted by any Greek scholar.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE next strongest philological instance that our Baptist friends can produce, is that contained in Acts viii. 38, "And they went down both *εἰς* *into* the water, both Philip and the eunuch," &c. The fact of their going *into* the water, is regarded as conclusive evidence of submersion; but if this simple fact afford such evidence, then Philip must have been submersed also, for "they went down *both* into the water, both *Philip and the eunuch*;" this argument of course proves too much, and therefore by common consent, fails to prove any thing. Moreover, their going down "*into* the water" did not constitute the act of baptism, for that act is said to have taken place subsequently, and is described by another word, which implies no more than the use of water without determining the mode in which it was used.

But we have a still stronger argument to array against the case before us. The original text does not necessarily prove that Philip and the eunuch went *beyond the margin of the water*. The phrase *εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ* translated "into the water" may with equal correctness be rendered, "to the water." A few examples selected from a great number will be sufficient to establish this point. Acts xxvi. 14, "And when we" (Saul and his company) "were all fallen *εἰς* to the earth" not *into* the earth. John xi. 38, "Jesus therefore cometh *εἰς* to (not *into*) the tomb of Lazarus." John xx. 3—8, "Peter therefore went forth,

and that other disciple and came *us to* the sepulchre. So they both ran together; and that other disciple did out-run Peter and came first *us to* the sepulchre, \* \* yet went he not *us in*." Now if *us* necessarily means *into*, we must read, "the other disciple came *into* the sepulchre, yet *went he not into*," which is too gross an absurdity to be tolerated for a moment. These examples are to the point; others might be given, but it is not important. Any person who is at all conversant with his Greek Testament may readily satisfy himself as to the use of prepositions by the New Testament writers. If therefore *us το μνημειον* means *to the sepulchre* and *us την γην* means *to the earth*: the preposition merely denoting the *point to which the motion is made*, so also may *us το υδωρ* signify *to the water*, and in the connexion of Acts viii. 38, may mean no more than, that Philip and the eunuch both went *to the margin of the water*.<sup>1</sup>

We are aware that it will be said, "They both come up *us out of* the water," thus implying that they had been previously *into* the water. But it is probable that *us out of*, in this passage stands for *απο* from. The particle *us* often stands in contrast with *απο* instead of *us*, in passages like the following: "*απο* from city *us to* city,"—*απο* from Jerusalem *us to* Jericho." "The way that goeth down *απο* from Jerusalem *us to* Gaza," &c. We have already observed that both Matthew and Mark use *απο* from, instead of *us out of*, when they describe the act of our Saviour in leaving the water after baptism. They simply say, he came *from* the water. The passage

<sup>1</sup>The appropriate word in the Greek language for coming up out of the water, is *ανεδυσαι*, but in the passage before us, the words *κατεβησαν* and *ανεβησαν* are used, which express the action not of entering water, &c., but of descending or mounting trees, horses, hills, &c.



therefore in question, is a solitary case in the history of baptism where *ex* is put in contrast with *in*. This circumstance, to say the least, renders their testimony to the doctrine of immersion extremely unsatisfactory. But furthermore, it is well known that *ex* is often used to denote simply the *point from which* a motion is made. Thus: "Howbeit, there came other boats *ex* *from* 'Tiberias." "Get thee *ex* *from* thy kindred." "Who shall deliver me *ex* *from* the body of this death," &c. (John vi. 23, Acts vii. 3, Rom<sup>7</sup> vii. 24.) It would, therefore, be every way consistent with the general use of the prepositions in question to read—"and they went down both *to* the water \* \* \* and when they were come up *from* the water," &c.

Besides, it should be remembered, that the act of coming out of the water, as well as going into the water, is affirmed of both Philip and the eunuch, and has no more to do with the act of baptism than with their riding in the chariot. The Greek prepositions employed in this narration, have the same latitude of meaning of our English *into* and *from* or *out of*. And in popular language, a person goes *into* the water when he enters to the depth of six inches; and when he recedes from that point, he comes *out of* the water. Prof. Ripley here proposes a question that is, indeed, singular enough. It is, whether the preposition *in* indicates that they went far enough into the water for immersion. How such a question is to be determined satisfactorily, I am unable to judge. Certain it is that philology can never settle it. But while the subject of the eunuch's baptism is before the reader, we will adduce a few considerations which may tend to corroborate the foregoing statements, and show that an immersion was not probably practised on this occasion.—And,

1. The *place* where the eunuch was baptized was “*desert*,” vide verse 26. The word *desert* in Scripture, sometimes means a barren waste and sometimes merely a country place in contradistinction of a city. The former is probably the true sense in this connection. For when the angel said to Philip : “ Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza *which is desert*,” if he intended merely a country place, the description would have been trifling. It was already understood as a matter of course by Philip, that the place was rural, but that it was a desert proper, might not have been so obvious. But to find a body of water in a desert proper, sufficient for immersion, would be strange indeed.

2. The body of water itself in which the eunuch was baptized. The account says, “ they came *επι τι υδατος* to some water.” No more or less can be made of Luke’s statement. But what is *some* water? How much? The pronoun *τι* (*some, any,*) has sometimes a diminutive sense, and so here, “ they came to a little water,” &c. Our English reads, “ a certain water.” As if our translators had in view a particular watering place for travellers or caravans. And so the eunuch, when he saw it, exclaimed, with evident emotion, *ιδου υδατος* behold water. He does not say how much water, but seemed a little surprised and pleased to find any water in such a place. Indeed, it was in this vicinity—in the valley of Gerar—the valley in which, according to our most accurate maps, the city of Gaza stands—that Abraham and Isaac were obliged to dig wells to procure water for their flocks. It was here that “ the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac’s herdmen, saying, The water is ours.” It could not have been far from this place where Philip baptized

the eunuch. We sometimes, in Scripture, read of "springs in the desert," boiling out of the ground, (Gen. xxvi. 19,) and it was probably such a body of water in which the eunuch was baptized. Whence then, has arisen all this fancied abundance of water sufficient for an immersion, where herdmen would contend for a "*well*" to water their flocks?—The reasonable presumption is against it. We want more proof.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See "GREEK PARTICLES" by the Rev. F. G. Hibbard.

## CHAPTER VIII.

HAVING as we believe, irrefragibly established the fact, that so far as the literal words, employed to designate baptism, are concerned, the New Testament affords not the slightest proof of its dispensation among the early Christians by submersion; we proceed to examine whether such proof can be derived from *the circumstances attendant on its administration*. In prosecuting this examination we must necessarily inquire into the mode practised by the first heralds of Christianity.

### I. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MODE.

We have already sufficiently explained our views on the *character* of John's baptism;<sup>1</sup> at present its *mode* is the subject of investigation. It is not indeed a matter of very great importance, what was John's mode, any further than it may tend to reflect light on the practical application of the word βαπτισμα; for it has already been amply established that his baptism was by no means the Christian sacrament known by that name, and can therefore have no direct influence in fixing the gospel method of the baptism instituted by Christ. But while we can readily account for the fact that our Baptist brethren, should have so eagerly imbibed the idea that John performed his baptism by submersion, we must confess that we are astonished that any one of those who hold to the mode by aspersion, should have ever yielded to this assumption, since the supposed evidence on which it

<sup>1</sup>See p. 132, sqq.

is based, is in all its points so extremely vague and deficient.

Before stating the arguments in support of our view, we shall notice the most plausible of those, brought forward in defence of the hypothesis that John submersed. They are the following:

*First*,—"John baptized in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there;"<sup>1</sup>—therefore he baptized by submersion.

*Secondly*,—John baptized "*in Jordan*;"<sup>2</sup>—therefore he baptized by submersion.

*Thirdly*,—When John had baptized Jesus, it is said that "he (Jesus) went up straightway *out* of the water;"<sup>3</sup>—therefore John must have submersed him.

This kind of logic may indeed prove satisfactory to some, but we frankly confess we cannot participate in a faith which has no better evidence for its foundation. We might reply to it in the same superficial strain,—thus:

First,—John baptized in the wilderness where there was much sand;—therefore he plunged them under the sand.

Secondly,—The apostle baptized the jailor in prison where there was little water;—therefore he sprinkled him.

Thirdly,—When Christ was about to be baptized, it is said he "*went to Jordan*;"<sup>4</sup>—therefore he could not have plunged.

We readily concede that this mode of refutation is inconclusive, but not more so than the pretended argument to which it is a reply; and we only state the case thus, to expose more fully the sophistry of such reasoning, and the dexterous facility with which our opponents leap at

<sup>1</sup>John iii. 2—3.   <sup>2</sup>John iii. 6.   <sup>3</sup>Matt. iii. 16.   <sup>4</sup>Matt. iii. 13

conclusions in support of their cause. But the subject demands a more serious examination.

Why, it is triumphantly asked, did John choose a place for administering baptism, where there was "much water" if he merely *sprinkled* the people?—just as if there could have been no possible necessity for a copious supply of water, at a place in a warm climate where vast concourses of people assembled, *except for the purpose of submersion!* In return, we might ask: Why do our Methodist brethren make it a point, when convenient, to hold their camp-meetings in the vicinity of a running stream, or a large spring, or of some other abundant supply of water? is it because they are in the habit, or that they may have an opportunity, of plunging under the water, all the infants and adult converts who may be baptized on such occasions? Or why are similar locations preferred for the celebration of American independence on the fourth of July?—The same answer will furnish a satisfactory solution to each of the queries. But the fact is, we are not bound to point out the real cause of John's choosing such a region. If any man assert that it was *for the purpose of submersion only*, why let him prove it,—the *onus probandi* rests with him. We have not, like our opposing brethren, taken upon us any such responsibility.

Let us however, notwithstanding, inquire whether a sufficient reason cannot be assigned, apart from the idea of submersion. That it was with a view to submersion, is altogether a gratuitous assumption; the Bible itself nowhere states this or even hints at it, but leaves us to conjecture the motive by the light of circumstances. Observe then,—

1. That in that country the mercury ranges, in winter, from 40° to 50° and, in summer, from 80° to 100°, and in

the plains of Jordan where John had been baptizing, much higher. Water therefore, was in constant demand, not merely for baptism but more especially for the use of the people and their beasts. And this necessity John must foresee and provide for, whenever he would fix his position for baptizing, unless he would be reckless of the comfort and even endanger the lives of the people.

2. That ENON, by its name, imports a single spring: "the fountain of ON;" but it flowed in several or many streams. The original phrase, πολλὰ ὑδάτα is in the plural, and every Greek scholar knows that it ought to be translated not "much water," but *many waters or streams*;<sup>1</sup> and this rendering would also express more correctly the various rivulets in that region, all emanating from the same fountain. The same word ὑδάτα occurs in an oration of Demosthenes against Callicles, at the commencement, p. 1272 ult. of Reiske's ed. and p. 275, vol. viii. Dobson's "Oratores Attica," where the context and whole object of the oration render it certain that it designates "rains." If then ὑδάτα—waters—can imply drops of water falling as rain, why must we at once enlarge these ὑδάτα, where John abode, into deep waters or rivers? We would describe any river, lake or sea as consisting not of "many waters," (a rather singular expression in such a case,) but of deep waters. If then we here find "many waters" ("much water" in our English Bible), and if "waters" may be rain as well as seas, then we can lawfully understand them to be only springs or fountains. Had the idea of dipping existed in the mind of the sacred writer, he would surely have spoken rather of *deep* than of *many* waters. Indeed it is evident that

<sup>1</sup>Thus the very same phrase is translated in other places, for instance, Rev. i. 15,

these springs of water were not used for dipping, since three thousand were baptized in Jerusalem, where no deep waters were found.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Baptizer made choice of a place where there was a good supply of water interspersing the neighborhood with a number of running brooks, of which the people as well as their camels and asses might drink. This idea is supported by travellers who have visited that region.

3. That John had previously been baptizing at the Jordan near Bethabara. But the water of that stream is always turbid and black and unfit to drink until it has stood several hours in vessels and settled. Hence the Jordan was sometimes called, by the Greeks, *μαλας*, which signifies *black*. The multitudes, therefore, that thronged to John's baptism at Bethabara were probably inadequately supplied with wholesome water, which determined his course northward, to Enon, where this inconvenience might be obviated.

4. That John had left Bethabara where there was *more water*, for Enon, where there was *much water*. Why should it be said that, because there was much water at Enon, he chose that place for baptism, when he had all along baptized at Bethabara, where the Jordan is much broader, and there was a much larger quantity of water? If the mere *quantity* of water is to be understood, we can assign no reason why John preferred Enon to Bethabara, and the passage in question is perfectly enigmatical. But, if Enon was supplied with fresh running streamlets suited to the necessities of so vast a multitude as followed John, then we perceive a reason why he should select such a location and also a propriety in the translation we have adopted.



Now then, let us recapitulate; the climate was warm and oppressive, and pure fresh water was scarce and of great value; the multitude of people was immense, amounting probably to hundreds of thousands; for "there went out unto him, *all* the land of Judca and they of Jerusalem, and were *all* baptized,"<sup>1</sup> and no doubt many travelled thither with camels and asses, and remained on the spot at least one night, and hence much water was absolutely necessary for other purposes than that of submersion; John had just before been baptizing in the vicinity of Jordan, where there was more water than at Enon, but it was unfit for immediate use; hence he went from *a large body of water*, to a situation where *the supply was comparatively small*, but notwithstanding, preferable on account of its *quality*. And does not this sufficiently account for the fact under consideration, without the slightest necessity of resorting to submersion? If total plunging had been the practice and the "much water" had been required for that object, would it not have been wiser in John to remain at Bethabara, and does not his departure from a location of *more water* to one of *much water* rather disprove the doctrine of such plunging? This passage then, so often quoted by Baptists as favoring their views, is found to have no possible connection with the point at issue, or if it have, it furnishes an argument against submersion. But to say the least, it leaves the question as to John's mode of baptizing, just where we found it.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. iii. 5—6, Mark i. 5,—It is calculated upon correct data, that in the days of David the population of Palestine could not have been less than six millions seven hundred thousand, and in the time of John it amounted to something like six millions, and of these at least one half (three millions) must have been baptized by John. See Mode of Baptism by Rev. Mr. Hibbard, Aub. Jour.

“But” continue our opponents, “does not Matthew tell us, chap. iii. 6, that on other occasions “they were baptized of him *in* Jordan? We answer no. It is not the old English language but the original Greek which must decide. We appeal to the text to which we have just now referred. How could they be baptized “of” him? In modern English we would say “by” him. If an English preposition may, or rather did express in the time of King James, the two different ideas of “by” and “of,” why is it difficult to conceive that a Greek preposition may have different shades of meaning? It is well known how much the meanings of Greek prepositions vary. \* \* \* This can perhaps be made intelligible even to one unacquainted with the Greek language. The word in question is in Greek rendered here, “in.” But the same word stands in a similar connection in Luke xiii. 4, where our Saviour speaks of the tower “in Siloam.” Siloam was a well known pool of water, in which our Saviour directed a man born blind to wash, (John ix. 7,) that is, his eyes, for the word translated “wash” is appropriated to the washing of the hands, feet, face, &c., and seems to exclude the idea of bathing, for which there are other appropriate words. The instances in Bretschneider’s Lexicon, given under the word *νιπτω*, substantiate this remark. In the other five chapters of the New Testament where it occurs, (according to the Greek Concordance of E. Schmidius,) it is uniformly and expressly applied to the washing of the face, feet, or hands. The pool was too shallow to have allowed a bathing of the whole body, and hence this word *νιπτω*, is used. This same pool is mentioned in Nehemiah iii. 15, where the Hebrew termination, as in numberless instances, differs from the Greek. The pool lay to the east of Jerusalem, and the

tower stood *near* it, which is meant by the word *en*. Thus too we read, Heb. x. 12, Christ “sat down on the right hand of God.” Here the same word occurs. Now if we must translate “in” Jordan, we must translate, he sat down “in” the right hand of God, for the word is the same in both cases. But as we, of course, translate it “at” or “by” the right hand, &c., so too we must translate “at” or “by” the Jordan. Still, it may be said, that John must have immersed our Saviour, for we read, Matt. iii. 16, “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway *out of* the water.” Here we remark that Matthew does not say that Christ went into the Jordan, but, v. 13, only “to” it. The question is, how did he then come *out of* the river? The English words “went up,” are expressed by one compound Greek word, *ανεβη*, and the words “out of” by the simple word *απο*. We will endeavor to explain the proper rendering of these words to the English reader. Luke tells us, xix. 4, that Zaccheus, in order to have a better view of our Saviour, “climbed up” a tree. The Greek for “climbed up” is *ανεβη*, the identical word, in the same person, number, tense, mood and voice, which occurs in Matt. iii. 16. The reader will observe that the idea of *ascending*, climbing, &c., is connected with *ανεβη*. That is, Jesus ascended, climbed up, the extensive acclivity which stretches forth to a considerable distance from the bed of the river.<sup>1</sup> The Jordan had high banks; and hence in the prophet Jeremiah, xlix. 19, the lion is said “to *come up* from the swelling” of Jordan, not as if he were an amphibious animal, coming *out* of the water, but *up* from its vicinity. Again, *απο* is in Matt. iii. 16, translated “out of.” But it should be translated simply

<sup>1</sup>See Horne’s Introd. vol. iii. p. 35.

“*from.*”—Let us endeavor to prove this assertion. The word *απο* occurs, for example, Acts xii. 10. When the angel who delivered Peter out of the prison, had conducted him through the iron gate and one street, he “forthwith departed *from* him.” But now, if we must translate “out of” Jordan, then, to be consistent, we must necessarily translate the same word *απο* thus: The angel departed “*out of*” Peter, which of course does not apply—the angel at his side, simply went away. To save room we omit other examples.

The baptism of Jesus, by John, after these explanations, may be thus viewed: He went to John, who was in the vicinity of the river, in order to procure water with ease in a vessel, whenever he was requested to baptize,—Christ kneeled down perhaps, and then, to signify the act of anointing, he took water (for neither oil nor water had any peculiar spiritual efficacy, and were hence of equal value) and poured it on the head of our Saviour, signifying perhaps likewise the out-pouring of the Spirit, which at the time did descend. After his baptism, Jesus *ascended* or climbed up the acclivity, and went simply away “*from*” the region of Jordan.

We have read of no dipping, of nothing that could favor such an idea. Why should John have dipped our Saviour? Certainly not in allusion to the burial of the latter, for he was not yet dead, and hence, had he dipped him, it would have seemed as much out of place, as if he had administered to him the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, before it was instituted.

There is one expression in Matt. iii. 16, which needs a passing remark. The translation, “he shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost,” has been occasionally impugned; but it is a most successful version. When we

read in Matt. xxvi. 52, (we take an instance designedly from the same writer,) "they that take the sword shall perish *with* the sword," we see at once that *with* or *by* can be the only word appropriately prefixed to "sword." The *same* word is in the former passage prefixed to "Holy Ghost," and hence it is correctly rendered "with" or "by the Holy Ghost."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See ~~Essays~~ on Baptism by Rev. Prof. Schaeffer.

## CHAPTER IX.

A STRONG argument that John could not, in the nature of things, have baptized by submersion, may be deduced from the shortness of the time employed by him, in administering the rite to such immense multitudes.

It has already been remarked that from detailed calculations, made from the best data, he baptized at least half the nation, for he was received by the Jews as a nation; there was no such division of public sentiment in regard to him as prevailed in reference to Jesus Christ. Pharisees and Sadducees, JERUSALEM AND ALL JUDEA, AND ALL THE REGION ROUND ABOUT JORDAN, submitted to his baptism, ambitious of the distinction thus conferred, and all parties coalesced in the popular sentiment that John was a divine prophet. "He was a burning and a shining light, and the Jews were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."<sup>1</sup>

On a careful examination it appears that John's ministry did not last longer than nine months; but we will extend it to ten months, as the utmost limit to which it can be prolonged with any shadow of evidence.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Josephus the great Jewish historian informs us that there were so many that followed John, that Herod the Tetrarch, fearing an insurrection among the people, apprehended John and caused him to be executed.

<sup>2</sup>The duration of John's ministry has been variously estimated; some have extended it to *eighteen* months, while others have limited it to less than half that period. We have fixed it at *ten* months,

Now make allowance for the time employed in introducing himself to the people,—preaching to them, &c., also for the time lost during the winter season, embracing

not because a medium between extremes is more likely to be correct, but chiefly because an investigation of the subject has satisfied us that this estimate approximates nearest to the truth. The Rev. Mr. Hibbard has bestowed considerable research on this question, and his opinion is therefore entitled to our respect. “According,” says he, “to Luke iii. 1, John opened his public ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, (reckoning the three years of his reign conjointly with Augustus,) which, according to our most approved chronology, answers to the thirtieth of John’s life. It is generally agreed by chronologers that our Saviour was born December 25th, A. M. 4,000. John the Baptist was six months older than Christ, (vide Luke i. 30—36 compared with verse 13,) and consequently, was born the 24th of June previously. Allowing then, John to have opened his ministry at the age of thirty, in the latter part of June, year of the Vulgar era, 26; and supposing, as Luke says, (chap. iii. 21—23,) Jesus was baptized when he was thirty years of age, i. e. about December 25th of the same year,<sup>1</sup> it would then follow that John had been engaged six months in his public ministry at the time of Christ’s baptism. How long John continued baptizing subsequently to this period, we are not definitely informed. But from a careful collation of facts, we can safely limit the period of his after labors to four months.

“The last account we have of John, previously to his imprisonment, states that he was ‘baptizing at Enon near to Salim.’ John iii. 23. This was immediately after our Lord had attended his first passover, which was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, which, as the Jews reckoned their years by lunar months, answers to the moon of our March. As a necessary consequence of their reckoning time by the phases of the moon, the celebration of their passover sometimes fell on the latter half of the month of March, and sometimes on the fore part of April. We cannot there-

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<sup>1</sup>I suppose it will be understood that the birth of Christ is reckoned to have actually taken place FOUR years (strictly three years and six days) before the commencement of the Vulgar era, or Anno Domini.

storms, rains, &c.; also for the time occupied in moving from place to place; also for forty-three sabbaths on which according to Jewish notions, it was not lawful to

fore be exact to a day; but by closely following the circumstances in the evangelist's history, we shall arrive at a reasonable certainty that John did not continue his ministry beyond the period above assigned him. The whole chain of facts runs thus: After Jesus was baptized he went into Galilee, where, on the third day after his arrival, he attended the marriage at Cana. John ii. 1. After this he went to Capernaum, where he staid 'not many days, verse 12. Leaving Capernaum, he returned into Judea to attend the passover at Jerusalem, verse 13. Here he purged the temple (verse 14) and held conversation with Nicodemus, chap. iii. 1—21. Leaving the city of Jerusalem, he went out into the province of Judea, and baptized, verse 22. At this time 'John also was baptizing at Enon near to Salim,' (verse 23,) about twenty miles distant. Their mutual proximity and the increasing popularity of Jesus led to disputes among the Jews, (verses 25, 26,) and excited the jealousy and malice of the Pharisees, chap. iv. 1—3. 'When therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,—he left Judea and departed into Galilee.' Here then, it is stated that Jesus 'departed into Galilee,' while John was in the vicinity of Enon, baptizing, immediately after the first passover which our Lord attended, i. e. the latter part of March, A. D. 27, nine months after John had commenced his public ministry. But, by comparing Matt. iv. 12, we find that Jesus did not depart into Galilee at this time, until after 'he had heard that John was cast into prison.' The conclusion therefore is, that John was arrested during his stay at Enon; and Jesus, in view of the commotion excited in Judea by that event, and also of the controversies going on there, concerning himself and John, prudently withdrew, for a season, into the remoter parts of Galilee

"Various circumstances corroborate this conclusion. It is evident, both from Josephus and the New Testament, that John was arrested by Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee and Perea. But Enon lay at the southern extremity of Herod's dominions on the west of the Jordan; therefore, if John had been south of Enon, he would have been beyond the jurisdiction of Herod. And, as we



baptize, and we have left about two hundred and twenty-seven days in which we may suppose he exercised the function of his mission.

If he submersed his disciples according to the modern mode, he could not have thus labored more than six hours per day, standing all the time in three feet depth of water; and according to this estimate, the whole number of hours employed in the act of baptizing amounted to one thousand three hundred and sixty-two; which would average two thousand two hundred and two per hour, thirty-six per minute, or a little over *one* in every two seconds!—and he must have pursued these labors in the same rapid ratio during six hours every day, for the space of two hundred and twenty-seven days!

But we are bound to concede to the administration of John's baptism, some degree of solemnity, and he could not have averaged during six hours per day for two hundred and twenty-seven days, more than *one* person in never read of John's going north of that place, we conclude he was arrested at Enon.

“Again, our Lord did not fully open his mission until after John was cast into prison. Matt. iv. 12—17. The popularity of John presented an impediment to the ministry of the Saviour. Indeed it is natural to suppose that two such great characters, laboring in the vicinity of each other, would inevitably produce a great division of public sentiment. Jesus therefore prudently withdrew himself until John had ‘fulfilled his course.’ But from the nature of the case, he cannot be supposed to have then withheld long,—the object of his mission being of such paramount importance to that of John's.

“Thus have we followed John, in his public ministry, during the space of nine months. He had introduced Christ to the Jews, and having thus fulfilled the object of his mission, (John i. 31,) he retired by a singular providence, from the field of his labor some time in the month of April, A. D. 27. That he continued his ministry longer than about nine months cannot be proved from the Bible.”

every *two* minutes ; and this would make forty thousand six hundred and sixty persons in ten months,—not *one thirteenth* part as many inhabitants, as, according to Josephus, perished at the siege of Jerusalem about forty years afterwards ; and at this rate it would have occupied something like fifty years to baptize all who applied to him !—Or let us suppose he could submerge with becoming solemnity, *one* every minute, and it would have employed him not much short of twenty-five years !

We will not increase the difficulty by alluding to a change of raiment,—dressing and undressing of males and females, or their moving to and fro dripping in their garments, either of which would have been indecent ; since the whole transaction is already impossible enough without this allusion.—But let us suppose that John sprinkled them with a “ hyssop branch,” dipped in the water, as they passed before him in ranks, and all difficulty at once vanishes. This mode of dedicating the people of God was, moreover, actually known among the Jews and had been practised on one of the most grand and impressive occasions ever known to that people, viz. that of the ratification of the covenant between God and them. (Exo. xxiv. 8.) Thus Paul, (Heb. ix. 19) “ For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats with water and scarlet wool and *hyssop* and sprinkled both the book and **ALL THE PEOPLE.**” It is worthy of remark that when Moses sprinkled “ all the people,” they numbered six hundred thousand fighting men, which, by reckoning five persons that did not bear arms, to every warrior would leave an aggregate population of three million. These Moses sprinkled, probably as the priest was required to do on another oc-

casion, "with a stick of cedar wood upon which a bunch of hyssop was tied with a scarlet thread." John made no innovation in the Mosaic rites—he instituted no new forms of religion among the Jews, but applied only those which he found already established.

From the preceding remarks it is evident that the practice of John affords nothing like satisfactory proof that he baptized by submersion; if however he even had, his example in this particular would possess no binding force on us, as will hereafter be made sufficiently clear. But this not being the case, our view of the subject is doubly fortified. Let us next inquire what was the mode practised by the apostles.

## CHAPTER X.

### II. THE APOSTLES' MODE.

THE apostolic practice in respect to the mode of baptism must be learned from their ACTS, as recorded by the "beloved physician," Luke. The more closely and impartially we examine the several cases related in the Acts of the apostles, the more fully shall we be convinced that they do not furnish any satisfactory evidence in support of submersion. Let us commence with—

1. The baptism of *the three thousand converts on the day of pentecost*; Acts ii. 41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about *three thousand souls*." The mode in which these three thousand were baptized is not specified, and we are left to find it out by the accompanying circumstances. While we may boldly challenge our opponents to point out one single incident in the whole history of the case, propitious to the idea of submersion, we can adduce *strong presumptive evidence* against it. Submersion in the case under consideration is highly improbable, because *they had no opportunity for the submersion of such a multitude*. Let it be remembered that the apostles and their hearers were collected together at one place in Jerusalem, probably in the temple as seems to be intimated in v. 46, and as this was the *third hour of the day*, v. 15, (9 o'clock A. M.) which was the Jewish hour of *morning prayer*, it is most prob-

able that the temple was the place in which they were assembled. Now there was neither at the temple, nor in any other part of Jerusalem, a suitable place for submersion.<sup>1</sup>

It is true, the pool of Bethesda lay but a little to the northeast of the temple, but it was used for cleansing the temple, the sacrifices, &c., and all the blood and offals and filth from the sacrifices and temple were washed into it; which some suppose imparted to the water its healing virtue; but whether or not, it was unfit for baptizing. Besides, it contained too little water for the submersion of so many in so short a time as was occupied (five hours,) especially at that season of the year, viz. the month of May or later, (the time when pentecost occurred,) at which time, John informs us, no rain whatever fell;<sup>2</sup> and its porches moreover, were occupied by the sick, waiting to receive the benefit of its healing water. But if even Bethesda had been a suitable place for submersion, the use of it could not have been obtained, because it was in the possession of the priests, the avowed and mortal enemies of our Lord and his apostles. And can it be supposed that the dignitaries of the Jewish church, after their recent, hard-earned and diabolical triumph over Christ and his followers;—their concerted and undisguised hostility to the Christian name;—their settled and incurable malice, now rankling of anew on account of the alarming success of the apostles;—can it, we say, be supposed that under these circumstances they would peaceably surrender their claims to the use of Bethesda, in order to accommodate the apostles of Christ with a

<sup>1</sup>The Jews commenced their day at 6 o'clock in the morning, consequently their *third hour* was our *ninth*.

<sup>2</sup>Archæology, p. 22.

place for Christian baptism ; particularly as the time for the evening sacrifice came on between three and four o'clock P. M. (the very time occupied in baptizing) when the use of the pool would have been indispensable ?

The brook Kidron or Cedron, is still less likely to have afforded the necessary convenience. It flowed along the east side of the city, was at best but a turbid and unimportant stream, and always dry in the summer. Jahn informs us ; "its channel is dry except in winter,"<sup>1</sup> and it is well known that the winter is over in that country towards the close of February ; whereas the three thousand were baptized in May or the beginning of June. Hence there could have been no submersion there.

The only remaining water that might be supposed to have answered the purpose, was the pool of Siloam, or Shiloah, which flowed at the bottom of Mount Moriah to the southeast, at least three-fourths of a mile from where the people were assembled. Jerome, an ancient commentator states that "Siloam does not flow regularly, but *only on certain days and hours*, when it bursts through the crevices of the earth and from rocky caves."<sup>2</sup> But we have no account of the apostles marching off three thousand persons, that distance, with all the multitude of spectators that would naturally follow. In addition to all this, (if any additional remarks be necessary) there is reason to doubt whether Siloam as well as Bethesda, was of adequate dimensions to admit twelve men, (much less the additional seventy disciples) for the purpose of submersing three thousand converts.

It would be ridiculous to contend that the apostles might have used the washing lavers in the temple, for the malignant opposition of priests and the deadly hatred

<sup>1</sup>Jahn, § 19, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Jahn, § 19, p. 20.

of the Jews in general must have prevented this. Nor can it be supposed that they had access to the bathing places in private houses; for these were confined to the rich and honorable; few of whom, as yet, were in any wise disposed to befriend the cause of Christ. *Where* then, we ask, did the apostles *submerge* those three thousand converts? They might conveniently have been baptized by aspersion, but *where* could they all have been submersed by twelve apostles, in so brief a space of time? Are there no difficulties attending this hypothesis?

But submersion was not only highly improbable but impossible, because—

*They had not time for it.*

Peter, as already intimated, commenced his sermon about “the third hour of the day,” that is 9 o’clock A. M. (v. 15.) Judging from the nature of the occasion and the drift of his sermon, (of which we have but a mere epitome reserved on record,) he could not have preached less than an hour. His hearers were excited and alarmed, and anxiously inquired, “what they should do,” &c.; then the apostles entered into personal conversation with awakened thousands, and gave them the proper directions;<sup>1</sup> after all this he continued for some time instructing and exhorting them, for it is expressly said: “And with many other words did he testify and exhort,” (v. 40.) All this over, the converts must be selected from the multitude, and examined as to their faith and experience. If they were submersed, they must be provided with a change of raiment, because when they left home, they had not the most distant idea of being converted and baptized, and were therefore, so far as a change was con-

<sup>1</sup>Did this personal conversation with awakened sinners, partake of the nature of what, in the present day, is termed an “*anxious meeting*?”

cerned, utterly unprepared for the ordinance; and as we dare not suppose that they remained on the ground, or returned to their lodgings in their wet clothes, soaked and dripping from head to foot, considerable delay must have been occasioned in procuring the requisite habiliments. Next, apartments for the men and women must be obtained adjacent to the place of baptism. Before all these preliminaries could be disposed of with decency, four hours at least, if not longer, must have elapsed; which would have delayed the ceremony until 1 o'clock. The Jewish day closed at 6 P. M.; and Luke says they were baptized and added to the church that "same day." Consequently they had but five hours left in which to perform the work of baptizing! In other words, twelve apostles baptized three thousand converts in three hundred minutes, or one hundred every ten minutes! or dividing them into companies, each apostle baptized two hundred and fifty in three hundred minutes, which would allow one minute and twelve seconds to every apostle for each baptism, provided they all continued hard at work for five hours, without a moment's intermission! We need scarcely stop to say that this was absolutely impossible. It usually requires at least five or six minutes in the present day to plunge an individual, and how the same thing could be done in about one minute in the days of the apostles, and that too for five continuous hours by the same individual, is more than we can tell. Let us suppose that every one of the two hundred and fifty baptisms assigned to each apostle, required *six*, or let us say only *four* minutes, this would amount to one thousand minutes, or sixteen hours and four minutes. Now they began at 1 o'clock P. M. or probably later; standing constantly in the water through the remainder of the day and *the subsequent night*, by the time that sixteen hours and



four minutes had elapsed, it would be four minutes after 5 o'clock in *the morning of the next day*, and yet we are told that all this took place "the same day!" Unless another Joshua was there to command the sun and moon to stand still, they must, surrounded by the offended and unbelieving part of the community, have been plunging in the water, in all the darkness and confusion of the whole night.

In this calculation we have made many concessions; we have supposed that there was a convenient stream of adequate depth and expanse to admit of all the apostles being engaged at the same time; that they actually all were engaged; that all the converts went down *into* the water, and came *up out of it*, though we read nothing of that; that there were no exhortations immediately prior to the act of baptism, with a view to collect the thoughts and compose the minds of the candidates, after all the hurry and confusion of preparation; that no agitation and difference of opinion took place among such a multitude; that there was not a moment's suspension of labor during the whole time; that all the apostles held out until the last, and that the strength of each sufficed to plunge his full quota under the water during the few hours allotted him.<sup>1</sup> All this and much more, has been gratuitously

"A gentleman of veracity told the writer that he was once present when *forty-seven* were dipped in one day, in the usual way. The first operator began, and went through the ceremony, until he had dipped *twenty-five persons*; when he was so fatigued that he was compelled to give it up to the other, who with great apparent difficulty dipped the other *twenty-two*. Both appeared completely exhausted, and went off the ground, into a house hard by, to change their clothes and refresh themselves." *Scripture Directory for Baptism by a Layman*, 14.

We have just seen an article in the "*Philadelphia North American*," containing an account of the recent revival in Cincinnati, in

admitted, and yet, after all these admissions, the whole matter still remains utterly incredible.

We know it has been said that the seventy disciples aided on this occasion; but what foundation have we for this assertion? none at all; the proof is all against it. Where is even the evidence that they had authority at that time to baptize? It is not found in Luke x. where we are furnished with an account of their call and commission. The privilege to baptize was one of those important functions, originally invested in the apostles only. It was at first distinctively an apostolic prerogative, subsequently they transmitted this power to others whom they judged men of established reputation for integrity, piety, understanding, who felt moved by the Holy Ghost to take the office of the ministry. "Lay hands hastily on no man," was an apostolic maxim in reference to priestly ordination. 1 Tim. v. 22. But we have no account of the apostles having ordained any person to the work of the ministry during the ten days that intervened between their commission and the day of pentecost. We do know, however, that our Saviour himself commanded them to suspend the exercise of all their apostolic functions until the descent of the Holy Ghost, which took place on pentecost. Luke xxiv. 49. Acts. i. 7, 8.

Who, after the foregoing investigation, can maintain that the case before us furnishes any authority for submersion? It appears to us that such a thought could never enter the mind of a reader, not already committed on the side of plunging: and it surely is high time to abandon which we find the following remarks: "A gentleman informs us he saw eighty-five adults receive at one time the ordinance of baptism, when the officiating clergyman was obliged to desist through exhaustion, although a large number of other candidates were in attendance."

an interpretation, at once so unreasonable and untenable. Let us suppose that the apostles, agreeably to a well known custom among the Jews, took bunches of hyssop and sprinkled the multitude, and all the difficulty will at once vanish. "This," says a judicious writer, "could have been done in a very short time, if they passed through the multitude, and the rest of the day have been spent in instruction, in preaching and in prayer, much better than in needlessly plunging men and women in water, to the detriment of their health, the offence of the modest, and the dishonor of the Christian church. Is it not strange, if the apostles did here immerse, that we do not read of *any* circumstance which would even in the faintest manner favor the supposition? Did the apostles conceal the proper mode, and was it left for the sectarian at this late day, to enlighten the church?"

## CHAPTER XI.

2. THE next case of apostolic baptism that demands attention, is that respecting the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 38; "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him, and when they were come up out of the water," &c. As this case has already been examined at large, (see p. 201, sqq.) we shall now finally dispose of it in a few words. It has been conclusively proved, and every one acquainted with the Greek language knows, that the passage may with equal, and as we think, greater correctness, be rendered: "they descended *to the* water, and ascended *from* it;" and such a translation would at once strip the case of every circumstance countenancing the idea of submersion. But independently of this, and on the supposition that the common version be correct, the mere fact of going into the water is no proof of submersion; if it were, we should have to believe that Philip was plunged at the same time, as he also went *into it*. The argument then, apparently in favor of submersion, derived from the case of the eunuch, as well as from the baptism of Christ, is founded altogether on the mere sound of the words, and vanishes on the slightest investigation.

But as there is nothing in this case to favor submersion, let us inquire whether it presents any evidence for aspersion. Philip met the eunuch, v. 26, in a road that led through the *desert*, as the text itself tells us, implying

that no streams could be found there. if we consult the geography of the country, we will find that no river, not even a creek, runs through that region. Philip explained the 52d and 53d chapters of Isaiah, which are here expressly mentioned. He found these words in the prophecy: "So shall he sprinkle many nations," liii. 15 Philip, of course, must have told the eunuch that the blood of Christ was shed to wash us clean from sin, for this is the leading idea of the prophecy on which the eunuch was meditating. He must likewise have spoken of professing his faith in Christ, of becoming a member of his church and announcing and sealing the fact by baptism, for it was always expected of the Jewish and gentile converts that they should make a profession of faith preparatory to submitting to this ordinance, and hence we can understand how the eunuch could mention baptism. Philip may have told him that as water cleanses the body, so the blood of Christ effects a spiritual cleansing;—that hence, baptism was full of meaning,—that it was a sprinkling,—noting too the word "sprinkle" in the prophecy. The eunuch was convinced, and coming "unto a certain water, (perhaps a small spring gushed forth, as is sometimes the case in a desert,<sup>1</sup>) he was baptized, and

<sup>1</sup>The place where this eunuch was baptized, Beza, by a very wide mistake, makes to be the river Eleutherus, which ran near the foot of Mount Lebanon, in the most northern borders of Palestine, quite at the other end of the country; Brochard places it near Nehel Escol, or the *Torrent of the Grape*, the place whence the spies fetched the bunch of grapes; on the left side of which valley, about half a league, runs a brook, not far from Sicelech, in which this eunuch was baptized. But Eusebius and St. Hierom (followed herein by Ado, the martyrologist) more probably place it near Bethi-soran, (where we are told it is still to be seen at this day,) a village twenty miles distant from Jerusalem in the way between it and Hebron,

in all probability, by sprinkling. Most unquestionably this is a more natural representation than the forced interpretation which involves submersion.

near to which there was a spring bubbling up at the foot of a hill, St. Hierom adds, that it was again swallowed up in the same ground that produced it, and that here it was that Philip baptized the Ethiopian. See Dr. Cave's "Apostolici," life of St. Philip, vol. ii. p. 113.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE case of Lydia and her household, Acts xvi. 13—15, furnishes no proof whatever in favor of submersion. She may possibly have been baptized by “a river-side,” but nothing can be inferred from this in favor of plunging, since we are told that she was at that place, not for the purpose of being baptized, but because “prayer was wont to be made there.” It is even not certain that she was baptized at the prayer-meeting; and the exclusion of strangers, &c. rather countenances the supposition that she returned to her residence, and there in a retired and silent apartment, she and her children were baptized in the usual way.

The fourth instance that we notice, is the baptism of Cornelius and his friends, Acts x. 41—8. The Holy Ghost having been poured out upon them, Peter determines to administer baptism. But observe, he makes no proposition to leave the spot—no preparations are made for submersion; but he modestly inquires, “can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” Acts x. 47; i. e., in plain English etiquette,—“Will some one present be kind enough to fetch some water, that these may be baptized?” The language of Peter deserves a little farther notice. The verb *καλωω*, *forbid*, implies, in this connection, as in other places, the power (sometimes

including the right) of imposing a prohibition on the thing or act specified. Thus, Num. xi. 28, "Joshua said, my lord, Moses, *forbid* them," (i. e. Eldad and Medad from prophesying).

Mark ix. 39. But Jesus said *forbid* him not.

Mark x. 14. Suffer little children and *forbid* them not to come unto me.

Luke vi. 29. He that taketh thy cloak *forbid* not to take thy coat also.

Nothing is more obvious than that the prohibitive phrase in these passages, fully recognizes the power of granting or withholding at option; and this power is also clearly recognized in the persons to whom Peter's address was made. Had they possessed no such power as the one in question, the appeal of Peter on this occasion, would have been trifling and senseless. For instance, if it had been the intention of Peter to repair to a public pool, a pond, or a river, in order to submerge the candidates, it is manifest that the persons present would have had no power of interference to prohibit such an act. And in such a case it would have been senseless to inquire: "Can any man present prohibit the use of a public water that these should not be baptized?" &c. But if the apostle intended to baptize the gentile converts on the spot, and by aspersion, and consequently needed only a vessel of water to be brought in—a service which it was certainly in the power of any one present to *grant* or *withhold*—it was with the greatest propriety of language—which at the same moment evinced true delicacy of sentiment, combined with the most disciplined courtesy—that he couched his request for a vessel of water in that interrogatory appeal—"Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which



have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" It seems water was immediately brought into the house at Peter's request; that no interruption occurred, and that they were baptized *on the spot*. This case then, especially if considered in connection with a right understanding of Peter's question, presents a singular difficulty in the theory of exclusive submersion, and appears to us to be irreconcilable with it.

Dr. Wood's comment on this case corresponds with the above; "Peter said: 'Can any man *forbid water* that these should not be baptized?' It is most natural to understand this to mean, *can any man forbid water to be brought?* It is far less natural to understand it to mean, *can any man forbid us to go out to a river or fountain of water?* It seems impossible that this account should be thought by any one to favor the mode of baptizing by immersion."

The fifth example that we shall notice, is that of Saul of Tarsus. Acts ix. 18 and xxii. 16. In this and in the succeeding cases we shall adopt the comments of a judicious writer on this subject. "Here we must remember that Paul had not eaten any thing for three days, verse 9. Nothing is said of his having left the house, in the weak state occasioned by a long and rigid fast, and of being plunged in water. But we find the contrary. 'He *arose* and was baptized.' We look at the Greek word, and find it to be composed of two others, *ανιστας*, which mean 'standing or rising up,' so that we read, literally, 'he, standing up, was baptized.' Nothing is here said of his being buried in a *watery grave*—simply that he stood up, in the house, had water poured on his head, and was thus baptized;—these are obvious circumstances. If it be more becoming to take the Bible as it

stands, rather than attempt to improve the narrative of the sacred writer, then why must we insert so many circumstances, as that Paul went out of the house, sought a stream, &c., when the simple account before us leads to a supposition the very reverse ?

“ We have now arrived at the sixth case of baptism, mentioned in the Acts, which is that of the Philippian jailor and his household, Acts xvi. 32—33. All the circumstances detailed in the preceding verses plainly show that immersion, under the existing circumstances, was totally out of question. Paul and Silas had been thrust, verse 24, into the ‘ inner prison.’ Suddenly came the earthquake, *at midnight*. The jailor hastened out in alarm, was convinced that God was the protector of Paul and Silas, was awakened, conversed briefly with Paul, and was ‘ straightway’ baptized, that is, ‘ in the same hour of the night, verse 33. Now as the jailor at the same time brought in water and ‘ washed their stripes’ or wounds, is it not clear, that a part of this water, in a vessel, may have answered for the baptism ? We read nothing of the circumstance that at midnight, the whole family with Paul went out of the jail in search of a river, &c.,—nothing that would imply such a circumstance. We ask, would it have been in character with the noble, upright Paul, to steal out of the jail at midnight in a clandestine manner, in order to dip the jailor, and then the next morning to refuse to leave his prison walls, till the magistrates who had confined him, would personally dismiss him in an honorable manner ? verse 37. Would such insincerity have been calculated to give the jailor a favorable opinion of the integrity and honesty of Paul ? Suppose such a scene had occurred to an immersionist preacher—suppose that he had thought it advisable to

risk the danger of leaving the jail at midnight, when guards surrounded the building, had gone some distance, and dipped the convert; would *he* or his friends describe the scene in a way that would lead us to think he had only sprinkled or poured water on the head of the convert? Is there a single circumstance in the whole narrative that is favorable to the idea of immersion? Among the wretched accommodations of a Roman jail, can we find large ponds, or convenient bathing vessels? The whole account leads us to conclude at once, that the jailor was baptized in the only mode which we have hitherto been able to discover, that is, by pouring or sprinkling.

But as if to remove all difficulties, and silence all controversy, resort is had to the old and convenient hypothesis—an hypothesis which has peculiarly befriended our opponents on other occasions of need, viz. that there was, in all probability, a private *bath* in the jail which served them on this occasion for a place to immerse. It is unfortunate, however, for this hypothesis that Phillippi lay under latitude 41° north—in a climate where baths are little used—and that the person supposed to have furnished the bath on this occasion, was a *jailor* and *not* in possession of the luxuries of wealth.

7. The next instance is that of Paul baptizing at Corinth. Acts xviii. 7—8. None of the circumstances mentioned, imply the mode of baptism, unless that from the circumstances that Justus lived near the synagogue, v. 7, that Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue believed, and that many Corinthians were baptized, we are to infer, that they assembled at the house of Justus, and were *there* baptized in the usual way.

8. We have now reached the last case. It is that of Paul baptizing at Ephesus. Acts xix. 1—5. Here too, nothing special is mentioned to indicate the mode; Paul explained the nature of Christian baptism to the individuals mentioned, and as he was satisfied with their spiritual state, they were baptized at once. Where were they at the time? Near a pond or creek? If so, how singular it is, that converts in this and other cases, could not be found, unless, by a remarkable coincidence, a large body of water was near. If we are to believe a class of men in the west, it must be that there is some special virtue in water, which we have never discovered—for they tell us that dipping in water is essentially connected with regeneration. If all the ponds and creeks which exist in the imaginations of immersionists who interpret the Acts, had really watered Judea, then it may be proved by a calculation that there would have been enough water to have turned the whole land into a sea.<sup>1</sup>

We have now noticed all the examples of apostolic baptism recorded in the New Testament, from which it is possible to learn any thing respecting the *mode*; and after a careful examination, we are confirmed in our original opinion, that the circumstances attending those examples, are by no means favorable to the practice of submersion, but the very reverse.

<sup>1</sup>Essays, Lutheran Observer, vol. iii. No. 19, 20.

## CHAPTER XIII.

LET it be remembered that our main object thus far has not been to establish the doctrine of affusion, but simply to show that submersion was not in vogue among the primitive Christians. If this fact be established, there is no necessity to adduce arguments in support of our mode, for that will then follow as a necessary consequence.

We have plainly seen that there is nothing to be found, either in the *literal terms* used in reference to baptism, viz. βαπτίζω and its derivatives, and the prepositions *υπο, εν, εκ, &c.*, nor in the circumstances accompanying its early administration, which sustains the idea of plunging; but that, on the other hand, those terms and circumstances greatly favor the mode by affusion, so much so indeed, as to amount to demonstrative proof. There remains however one other source of argument on this topic, and that is *the metaphoric or figurative language applied in the New Testament to baptism*, which we shall now proceed to examine.

### THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN REFERENCE TO BAPTISM.

1. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted," &c.

Our Baptist brethren take for granted that there is in this passage an obvious allusion to the *mode* of baptism ; that it refers to a resemblance between the interment of a dead body and the immersion of a baptized person entirely under the water ; and also to the resemblance between the subsequent resurrection of that dead body from beneath the surface of the earth and the raising of the baptized person up again from beneath the surface of the fluid. In other words, they assert that baptism represents the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and as none can be said to be buried unless put under ground, so no one is baptized unless plunged under water. This we believe is their usual interpretation, and we have expressed it in as strong and lucid language as we could command.

That some Pedobaptists also have partly adopted this exposition, is well known to us, but we are notwithstanding clearly of opinion that it is entirely erroneous.

There can be no allusion here to the *mode* of baptism, because—

(a) The passage manifestly presents a plain *antithesis* ; the first part of which is, “ we are buried with him,” (like him, or in like manner with him), the second part is, “ even so we also should walk in newness of life.” This resurrection to newness of life is evidently *spiritual*, for it is one which Christians in the present life, have confessedly *already actually experienced*, consequently the being “ buried with Christ” must also be *spiritual*. To understand it then, as of a *literal burial under water*, is to understand it in a manner which the laws of exegesis absolutely forbid. But what resemblance is there between being *spiritually* buried into death, that is, buried and dead unto sin, the world, &c., and a gross literal plunging under water ?

(b) There is not another passage in the whole Bible in which baptism, or being bathed or washed in *water* is employed as the symbol of *death* or *burial in the grave*. In the Jewish ceremonies, it is always an emblem of *purification*, never of *death* or *interment*. Nor can we think that the apostle, in the passage before us, can be justly charged with so glaring a departure from propriety, as to adopt a comparison in which it is impossible to trace one single point of coincidence.

(c) Instead of any resemblance between baptism and death or burial, there is, in their very nature, a diametrical opposition. Baptism, as just remarked, is an emblem of moral purity; it signifies our being cleansed from sin and renovated by the influences of the Holy Spirit. But how does this comport with the place of dead men's bones and all uncleanness,—with physical decomposition, natural corruption, putrefaction, loathsomeness and destruction?

(d) If there even were a similarity between submersion and the ordinary literal burying of a dead body; or, in other words, if suddenly plunging a body under water resembled the lowering of a corpse into a hole dug in the earth and covering it gradually with ground; still that resemblance would not hold good in relation to Christ's interment, to which the passage obviously alludes. The body of Christ was not buried after the manner of the present day. It was placed in a tomb hewn out of a rock; not a tomb sunk in the earth, but hollowed out of a rock, above ground, and containing separate cells or niches for the reception of bodies, "Even supposing then, that it were yielded to our Baptist brethren that the design of the apostle is to teach the *mode* of baptism, by comparing it to the burial of Christ, it would by no

means serve their purpose. There was not in fact any such subterranean immersion, if the expression may be allowed, as they imagine. The body of the Saviour was evidently laid in a stone cell, above ground, in which no earth came in contact with it, and in which, when the stone which closed up the door was taken away, the body was distinctly visible. In short, the burial of Christ no more resembled the modern interment of a dead body among us, than the depositing such a body, for a time, in an apartment in the basement story of a dwelling house, the floor of which was either not sunk below the surface of the earth at all, or if any, not more than a few inches; admitting of free ingress and egress as a common inhabited room. The figure in question, then, does not serve the turn of our Baptist brethren.

(c) To maintain that in the passage under consideration, the mode of baptism is exhibited by a literal burying of a dead body, proves too much, and therefore entirely fails. In the very next verse, (v. 5.) the apostle says: "We have been *planted* together," (by baptism) "in the likeness of his death;" now what resemblance is there between, not the planting of a *literal* seed in the ground, for there is no such allusion here, but our being "planted with Christ," and submersion? our planting with Christ, is a spiritual one, as the grafting of a branch upon a tree, but is this like plunging under the water? Further, in the succeeding verse (v. 6.) the apostle speaks of our being "*crucified* with Christ," and that also by baptism; are not our Baptist brethren then bound to show us, how plunging under the water resembles the nailing of a body to a cross? Evidently they make this passage prove too much for their purpose, and therefore wrest it to the prejudice of their own cause.



(*f*) If the text had any reference to the *mode* of baptism, it would rather favor pouring or sprinkling. The modern manner of interring the dead, is, not to thrust the coffin into the earth, but to lower it slowly and solemnly into the grave, and then to sprinkle the earth over it; and this sprinkling or gradual filling up of the grave, is more like *pouring* in than *plunging* in. But such an interpretation like that of the Baptist's is perfectly frivolous, inasmuch as there is no allusion whatever to the mode of baptism.

(*g*) Christ lay in the tomb until the third day; why then should not the person baptized remain under the water until the third day? Paul speaks in the present tense, "we *are*," not, *we have been*, or *shall be*, but "we *are* buried with him," as if they had not yet emerged from "the watery grave." Of course then, if the mode of baptism is here exhibited, our Baptist friends are bound to keep their converts three days under the water.

(*h*) If we understand the phrase, "buried with Christ in baptism," *literally*, we are bound to give a like interpretation to parallel passages, and this would lead to the grossest absurdities. For instance, Gal. iii. 27. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have *put on* Christ." Here the metaphor is taken from the putting on of clothes. Accordingly, a literal interpretation would require that at our baptism, we must put off and on our apparel; and this construction was actually given to the passage by the ancient Baptists. They read of "being buried by baptism," and understanding it *literally*, they commenced plunging; they also read of "putting on Christ" in baptism, and other similar passages, and by the same rule of interpretation, were compelled

to baptize naked! Is this a mere fiction?—a slander? God forbid that we should bring a false accusation against our brethren, even for the sake of overthrowing an unscriptural practice!—if we are in error, let it be proved. But the disgusting fact is too well authenticated to admit of a doubt. Now, can a principle of exegesis which conduces to such absurd results, be correct?—“judge ye.”

We might lengthen this list of objections to the Baptist exposition of this text, but we forbear; the difficulties are already sufficiently accumulated. We accordingly feel compelled to dissent from it, and to believe that the apostle had only a spiritual or moral burying in view. What else but a *spiritual burying* can be meant, when he says, “we are buried with him *by baptism into his death?*” Is this *physical* baptism, or moral? Is it not plain, that reference is here made to *baptism*, only because, when the ordinance was administered, the Christian promised to renounce sin and to mortify all his evil desires, and thus “to die unto sin, that he might live unto God?” We must believe, therefore, that there is no more reference to the *mode* of baptism here, than to the *mode* of the resurrection. The one may just as well be supposed as the other.

In this view we are strengthened by the opinions of many enlightened writers of various denominations, among whom are even some of the Baptist church. Mr. Robinson, the Baptist historian, and Mr. Judson, the Baptist missionary, who both strenuously maintained the necessity of submersion, “admit that this passage is *misapplied*, when used as evidence of *the mode of baptism.*”<sup>1</sup> Here we have two eminent men, decided advocates of plunging, coinciding in the declaration that

<sup>1</sup>Hamilton in his work on the subject, p. 95.

this passage affords no proof in favor of their mode of baptism.

What then is the true import of this text?—"The apostle in the preceding part of the Epistle to the Romans, had shown that Christians are justified by faith in the righteousness of Christ. He proceeds in the sixth chapter to obviate the objection, that this doctrine tends to licentiousness. "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" He rejects with abhorrence the odious thought. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" He then adverts to the significance of baptism, which being the ordinance which seals our introduction into the family of Christ may be considered as exhibiting both the first principles of gospel truth and the first elements of Christian character. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" He then infers, that since baptism has so immediate a reference to the death of Christ, it must, by consequence, be connected also with his resurrection; and that, as in the former view, it teaches the regenerated the abandoning of the old life of sin; so, in the latter, it equally teaches them the pursuit and progress of the new life of righteousness. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The obvious design of the apostle is to illustrate the character and obligations of believers, from the circumstance, that they are, in a certain respect, conformed to Christ's *death*; that as he died *for* sin, so they are dead, or are under obligations to be dead, *to* sin; that is they are holy, or are, by their profession, obliged to be holy.

“So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death.” And this is explained by what follows. “In that Christ died, he died unto sin (or on account of sin) once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, (or in respect to sin,) but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.” This is what was signified by baptism. And so believers were baptized *into Christ’s death*: not that baptism was a symbol of *death*, or the state of the dead; for water, or washing in water, never was a symbol of this. But water, used in ceremonial, whether by washing or sprinkling, and afterwards in Christian baptism, always signified the *fact*, or the acknowledged *necessity* of *purification*. Now being *dead* or in a state of *death to sin*, is the same thing as to be *spiritually purified*, or made *holy*. And this is the very thing that *baptism*, coming in the place of ablutions under the former economy, is exactly adapted to signify. Or, to say all in a word, water used in baptism is a sign of that moral purification of believers, which the apostle means to express by their being *crucified, dead*, and conformed to Christ’s death. Their being *dead* in conformity with Christ, is the expression which contains the metaphor. And baptism, as an appointed token or *symbol*, denotes what is signified by the metaphor, not the metaphor itself.”<sup>1</sup>

It appears then that nothing more was intended by the figure in the text, than to set forth that by being baptized into the death of Christ, we profess to be *dead and buried in respect to sin*, without any reference whatever to the *mode* in which either the burial or the baptism might be performed. And continuing the metaphor, even as Christ

<sup>1</sup>See Dr. Miller on baptism.

lived a *new* life after his death and resurrection, so we, having professed Christ at our baptism, are now, as members of his body, bound to lead a new life, that is, a holy life; so that every Christian can say, with *Paul*—“I am crucified with Christ; I have been made conformable to his death; being dead indeed to sin, and alive to God by Jesus Christ.”

In Dr. Wardlaw's Dissertation, we find the following confirmatory remark:—“Now it is quite obvious, that the *argument* of the apostle has not the remotest connection with the *mode of baptism*. There is not the most distant occasion for the supposition of any such allusion, in order to render the passage intelligible; nor does the allusion, when supposed, impart to it any addition of force or propriety. The meaning does not, in the least degree, depend on the manner of performing the ceremony: it turns entirely on its being baptism *into Christ's death*. Provided it was this, it makes not the smallest difference to the apostle's statement, or argument, or conclusion, whether we suppose it to have been by immersion, by pouring, or by sprinkling.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

2. COL. ii. 12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."—As this text is so very similar to the one just examined, the preceding remarks apply to it, and hence we shall dismiss it with a few words. The whole context so plainly proves that the phrase "buried in baptism" is figurative, that we shall lose no time in an attempt to establish it. It means that as a man literally dead and buried, "is cut off from all temporal connections and indulgences; so the baptized man is really, or at least by profession, dead to sin, and in this way made conformable to the death of Christ in its great design and efficiency, which are to purify to himself a peculiar people, dead to the world, dead to carnal ambition, and secluded from every unhallowed practice."—Besides other objections to explaining this text in reference to the *mode* of baptism, there is one on the very face of it, which is insuperable. The individual who is plunged rises from the water by the muscular strength of the man who plunges him, or at least by physical power, whereas Paul here says, "risen *through the faith* of the operation of God." Of course then, he cannot allude to submersion.

3. 1 Cor. xv. 29. "Else what shall they do who are baptized for (*υπερ*) or *over* the dead, if the dead rise not at all?"—The signification of this passage is somewhat obscure; Tertullian, Theophilact and Epiphanius inform

us, that it was the custom of the Marcionites and Corinthians, if a catechumen died before his baptism, to baptize some other in his stead, as the apostle here seems to intimate. And as the early Christians regarded with much veneration the graves of martyrs, and occasionally held assemblies on the spot, it is supposed that in these vicarious baptisms, the rite was performed *over* his grave. This would be the obvious meaning of the apostle, if his language (*υπερ*) in this passage signifies *over*, as it certainly often does in Greek writers. But could the baptisms *over* the graves of martyrs be performed by immersion? Were their graves dug at the bottom of rivers?<sup>1</sup>

4. 1 Cor. x. 1—2, “Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized into *Moses* in the cloud and in the sea.” The fact here referred to is recorded Exod. xiv; from which we learn that the Red Sea, through which the Israelites passed, was divided before them; that the waters stood up on each side like a wall; and that they travelled through ON DRY GROUND. We also learn that the *cloud* by which their course was supernaturally directed, did not discharge itself upon them in the form of an overwhelming shower, much less submerge them; that it sometimes preceded and sometimes followed them. In all this, there was nothing that even resembled submersion; but they were doubtless *sprinkled* by drops from the miraculous cloud, when it passed over their heads, or at least by the spray of the sea, particularly as we are told that a high wind prevailed at the time, and in this sprinkling their children shared as much as they. The only submersion that took place on that occasion was that experienced by the Egyptians, who were indeed

<sup>1</sup>Popular Theology, pp. 222—3.

“buried in a watery grave,” from which they never emerged; but this the apostle does not term a baptism.

5. 1 Peter iii. 20—21, “The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”—The only beings saved from the deluge, were Noah and those with him in the ark; but these were not submersed, while all the rest of the world was, and perished! Submersion on this occasion proved as fatal as in the case of the Egyptians who were “buried” in the Red sea. Submersion was the very evil from which the ark was the instrument of deliverance. Baptism is here represented as a means of salvation “by (or through) the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” This however, all will admit, it can only be to those who receive the thing signified by baptism, which is the renewing and cleansing influences of the Holy Ghost. All such are saved in this life from their sins, and *through the resurrection of Christ from the dead*, have the well-grounded hope of eternal glory. We further learn, that *as a means of salvation* it was *pre-figured*;—but by what?—by the waters of the flood?—certainly not, for they were the means of destruction? it must then have been by the *ark*. It may also be remarked that the ark was not submersed, for had it been so, all must have perished? but it was borne aloft on the surface of the water, (not down under it) and was *sprinkled* with the rain that fell from heaven.

This text then says nothing in behalf of submersion, but is rather from the circumstance just mentioned, in favor of sprinkling. But in any event, it is “*not the*



*putting away of the filth of the flesh,"* washing, or cleansing, or even sprinkling of the body, that can avail, "*but the answer of a good conscience towards God,"* namely, the covenant with God, made in baptism, to preserve a conscience void of offence by leading a holy life,—such a life as will exhibit the purification of our nature by the laver of regeneration. We are accordingly most impressively cautioned against undue attachment to the *outward rite*, since that will not save us, and admonished to look to the *substance*.

We have now examined all the important passages of the New Testament, which are usually introduced into this controversy, and which are in the remotest manner calculated to reflect any light on the point at issue. In none of these passages have we discovered the slightest evidence in favor of submersion;—not even a word, or incidental remark, much less a fact that would even *seem* to require submersion. On the contrary the whole of the argument is of an adverse character, and preponderates overwhelmingly on the side of baptism by affusion.

Thus far then, our investigations have resulted in the most triumphant confirmation of the proposition with which we at first set out, viz. "that the writings of the New Testament afford no proof, either *in the literal terms* used in reference to baptism; or *in the circumstances* attending its administration; or *in the metaphorical language* applied to it, that it was performed by submersion."

## CHAPTER XV.

THE next proposition that calls for attention is :

*Is the mode of baptism of such essential importance that the example would be binding on us ; could it be conclusively shown that either mode constituted the primitive practice ?*

The attentive reader has doubtless already inferred from what has been said, that we regard the question respecting the mode of applying water in baptism as *non-essential*, and were we not acquainted with the lamentable proneness of poor, erring man to lose sight of the *substance* and attach undue weight to *mere forms*, we should be at a loss to account for the vast amount of controversy,—conducted, alas ! too often in a spirit utterly unworthy of the Christian character, to which this question has given rise. Long before the introduction of Christian baptism, this propensity marred the beauty and harmony of God's house, and called forth the severest rebukes from him and his faithful servants. “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? Saith the Lord : I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts ; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.” \* \* \* Bring no more vain oblations : incense is an abomination unto me : the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with : it is iniquity even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth : they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them.”

Isaiah i. 11—14. “For I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” Hosea vi. 6.<sup>1</sup> Our blessed Lord and his apostles also found it necessary to caution the Jews again and again against this tendency of their nature, and availed themselves of every occasion to instruct them in the plain but too much neglected truth, that external observances, even though of divine appointment, were of but little consideration, in comparison with the spirit of those observances. “Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise and cummen and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.” Matt. xxiii. 23. “Ye observe,” says the apostle, “days and months and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.” Gal. iv. 10—11. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon or the sabbath days.” Col. ii. 16.

Those who have carefully looked at the state of the church in the present day, and noticed the devotedness with which men are wedded to the externals of religion, and the warmth and even acrimony with which they too often contend for their own peculiar forms, must admit that the foregoing warnings are as necessary at present as they were in former times. We still have need to remind men, that true religion does not consist in meats and drinks *and divers washings*,<sup>2</sup> &c., i. e. outward things which can have no direct moral influence upon the soul; or in other words, that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, (not external ceremonies) but righteousness

<sup>1</sup>See also 1 Sam. xv. 22. Jer. vi. 20, and vii. 21—23. Amos v. 21—25. Micah vi. 6—8, and many others.

<sup>2</sup>Heb. ix. 10.

and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”<sup>1</sup> When mere forms become the subjects of controversy, the danger of giving them an importance and prominence which they do not deserve, and of overlooking their essence and their end is doubly great. Hence we may in most of such cases, without much hazard of being justly charged with impertinence, address the zealous disputants in the spirit of the apostle’s language: “Ye observe days and months and times and years, I am afraid of you;” “for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision,” *neither Judaism nor heathenism; neither forms nor modes; neither submersion nor sprinkling, &c.*, but faith which worketh by love.<sup>2</sup> These considerations appear to us to apply with peculiar force to the *mode* of baptism, inasmuch as this, as intimated in our proposition, can by no means be essential to the validity of the ordinance; and hence whatever may have been the practice of the primitive Christians in this respect, it has no binding application to us. Our reasons, among others, are the following:

1. *No particular mode has been pointed out in the Bible to the exclusion of every other mode.* This we think has been conclusively established. The most patient and impartial examination of every legitimate source of argument, has certainly left us without one particle of proof in favor of submersion. Though the inspired writers speak of baptism, directly or indirectly in almost every page of the New Testament and under a great variety of aspects, yet they have not employed a single term, or stated a single fact, or used a single figure of speech, which evinces that they either preferred or practised submersion in any case. They have indeed

<sup>1</sup>Rom xiv. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Gal. v. 6.

related some occurrences which cannot possibly, in our view, be reconciled with plunging, but in no instance have they made a representation which is not entirely reconcilable with the practice of perfusion or sprinkling. On the supposition that the doctrine of our Baptist brethren is true, this is a most unaccountable fact. What! not one evangelist or apostle—though taught by the Spirit of God what to say—kind enough or wise enough to put this matter beyond a doubt? The unavoidable inference is, that the inspired writers did not deem the mode of applying water in baptism, an essential matter; and did not therefore think it necessary to state it precisely.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time we readily admit that however numerous and cogent the arguments in favor of affusion, amounting, in our estimation, to proof demonstrative, yet our investigations have not resulted in the decided conviction, that this mode is prescribed, to the rejection of every other. Obviously then, if we contend for any one mode exclusively of every other, we transcend our authority; “we attempt to do, what Christ and the apostles left undone; what they left undone, for the very purpose of showing, that they did not regard the particular form of the rite as of any material consequence, and so would have Christians at liberty to vary the form, as circumstances might require.”

It will avail our Baptist brethren nothing, to contend, that the mode of applying the water *is distinctly defined*; for, independently of all the previous irrefragable reasoning to the contrary, this position would stand forth in the very face of the most glaring and stubborn facts. The diversity of sentiment prevailing among many learned and pious men; the numerous public and private controver-

<sup>1</sup>See Dr. Miller on Baptism.

sies; the scores upon scores of pamphlets and books published on both sides of the question;—all go to establish most conclusively the point, that *the mode of using the water is not specified in the Scriptures*, neither by precept, example nor incidental circumstances. This then, in itself, proves incontestibly that it cannot be a matter of essential moment, and therefore, that whatever may have been the practice of the early Christians, their example in this respect is not binding on us.

## CHAPTER XVI.

2. *Again, that the mode of baptism is not essential and the primitive example not obligatory, may be proved from ANALOGY.* If it can be made appear that in analogous cases the mode of administering a divine and positive institution, has been admitted by inspired as well as uninspired men, to be of no essential importance, it will follow that baptism belongs to the same category. We shall endeavor to establish this position in reference to—

(a.) *The passover.* This ordinance was instituted of God in memory of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage; explicit directions were given as to the *time, manner, &c.*, of the celebration. But these directions were not always strictly observed, for the obvious reason that they were not considered essential. God had ordained that it should be celebrated in the *first* month of the year, but in the days of Hezekiah it was kept in the *second* month;<sup>1</sup> the law also prohibited persons who were ceremonially unclean from participating in the solemnity, but on the occasion just mentioned, many who had not purified themselves, “kept the feast.” For a “multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, &c., had not cleansed themselves; yet did they *eat the passover, otherwise than it was written.*”<sup>2</sup> It may further be added, that the Levites “*killed the passover,*” whereas this duty belonged properly to the people;<sup>3</sup> and they also

<sup>1</sup>2 Chron. xxx. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. v. 18.

<sup>3</sup>1 Chron. xxx. 17.

assisted more than the law allowed, in offering the sacrifices, particularly those that were for the purifying of the unclean. Now, let it be remembered that all these external departures from the plainly prescribed rules, were practised under the very eye and superintendence of that holy and inspired man of God, *Hezekiah*, and with the consent and co-operation of the Priests and Levites; moreover, notwithstanding the deviations, the Lord was well pleased and sanctioned the whole transaction with the tokens of his approbation and love; for it is said: "Their voice was heard and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven."<sup>1</sup>

Should it be urged that Hezekiah did not, himself, deem those variations proper and therefore prayed God to pardon them, we answer, that this does not reach the *essence* of the case. We manifestly have here a want of outward conformity in several respects to the legal regulations, specifying the mode of celebrating the passover; a divinely inspired man did not consider the efficacy of the ordinance at all invalidated on that account, and God himself impressed upon it the broad seal of his approbation. *Grotius* very properly observes here, that "ritual institutions must give way not only to a public necessity, but to a public benefit and advantage;" and the pious *M. Henry* says, "let the circumstance give way to the substance, and let not the thing itself be lost upon a nicety about the time." This case is indeed in some points analogous to baptism, but in others it is a much stronger exemplification of departure from original usage, than sprinkling would be from submersion, upon the supposition that submersion was the primitive mode; for in relation to keeping the passover, *the mode was expressly*

<sup>1</sup> Chron. xxx. 27.



*pointed out*, but not so in baptism; and yet, the non-compliance with that plainly prescribed mode, did not affect the validity of the passover. How much less can the mode of baptism, which is not specified, be thought essential?

Again, those who read the bible attentively, know that the passover was required to be commemorated with shoes on the feet and staves in the hand, and this practice was emblematic of a historical fact; yet neither our Lord nor his apostles adhered to it; nor had it been observed for many years previously. And why?—because it was a collateral circumstance not necessarily connected with the spirit of the ordinance. And will any one venture to assert that this deviation from the original mode, rendered the institution of non-effect, or in any degree impaired its validity? Then let the controversy be waged with Jesus Christ and his holy apostles, for it was they who thus varied from the original instructions, and that too without pretending to make any alteration or improvement in the ordinance.

Our position is equally true in relation to

(b.) *The Lord's supper*.—The external mode of celebrating this institution is not expressly prescribed, but we know precisely what was the example of our Lord and his apostles. They met in the *night*; not on the Lord's day, but on *Thursday*; not in a house of public worship, but *in an upper chamber of a private dwelling*; they used *unleavened bread and the pure juice of the grape*, and received the supper not standing, sitting nor kneeling, but *in a recumbent posture, half sitting and half lying*. Now will any intelligent Christian maintain, that a strict adherence to all these particulars is necessary to the validity of the holy supper? We think not, for,

in this event, our Baptist brethren, as well as all other religious denominations would be in a sad predicament; and it might be truly affirmed, that as there is not a branch of Christ's church on earth in which these particulars are observed, so therefore there is not one in which this sacrament is celebrated! By common consent then, it is universally conceded, that the external mode of commemorating the love of our dying Lord, is not essential, and that the practice of the early Christians does not bind us. Now if the prophet Hezekiah, and the priests of God, in his day, and our Lord and his apostles in their day, evidently regarded the external mode of observing a divine and positive ordinance, as of little consequence; and if all Christian denominations at present, conspire to proclaim by their usage in reference to the eucharist, the very same doctrine, why should our Baptist brethren form an exception in respect to baptism alone? Do they not thereby subject themselves to the charge of glaring inconsistency? Are they not bound, either to abandon the ground they occupy as to baptism, or else to take the same position in reference to the eucharist?

They may however answer, "we do conform to the example of Christ and his apostles, so far as we conveniently can; but it would be inexpedient to have the supper in an upper chamber and after it is dark;—to recline at the table on a couch, would not be agreeable to the usage of the present day, nor be thought *suitable* or *decent*; and as to the unleavened bread and pure grape-juice, these are unimportant and do not enter into the essential constituency of the ordinance; besides, the latter is difficult to procure." Thus our Baptist brethren may and probably do argue, and we grant that the argument is satisfactory; but why not adopt the same process of rea-

soning in regard to baptism? why not admit the plea of *convenience, suitableness, decency, and unimportance of mere externals*, in one case as well as the other? This plea would certainly be better founded in reference to baptism, than to the eucharist, because our Saviour's directions respecting the latter are more explicit, for he says: "*This do ye in remembrance of me;*" that is, *eat this bread* (unleavened) and *drink this wine* (the pure juice of the grape) in remembrance of me. He has not done any thing like as much to enjoin *exact conformity* in relation to baptism.

We have now brought before the reader no less than three distinct cases, in which conformity to the outward mode of observing divine ordinances, has been shown to be non-essential; in the first two cases even inspired men (including our Lord himself) varied, not only from the ancient but from the *expressly prescribed* usage, and in the other, the whole Christian church in the present day habitually varies. This argument has been introduced upon the supposition that submersion was the original mode of baptism, which, however, is in no wise admitted, and cannot by any possibility be proved; but even upon this gratuitous supposition, it appears we are under no obligation to conform. We repeat then, that if it could be established that the primitive Christians practised submersion, we should by no means be bound to adhere to that practice, and would regard affusion (for reasons which will be stated in the sequel) to be decidedly the best and most suitable mode. For, unless it can be shown that total plunging was actually prescribed and was intended to symbolize something which cannot be otherwise equally well set forth, then the example of Hezekiah and of our Master himself, authorizes us to consider such

plunging as a mere circumstance,—an accident not essentially belonging to the ordinance. All that we are bound to look to, so far as water is concerned, is the preservation of its symbolical expression; that being retained, the sacrament is complete, so far as the outward element can make it so.

Suppose the idea designed to be expressed by the water, is moral cleansing; is it not plain that aspersion or affusion represents that idea as effectually as plunging? Were not the most of the typical purifications under the ceremonial law, exhibited by sprinkling and that too by God's own appointment? And are we not thereby taught, that in the divine judgment, sprinkling is even a more appropriate emblem of moral purification than submersion?

## CHAPTER XVII.

3. ANOTHER proof that the mode of baptism is not essential, and the example of the early Christians not binding, may be found in the fact that *God* EQUALLY *approves of sincere Christians, whether baptized by submersion or sprinkling.* What we mean is, that the question as to the divine judgment respecting Christians, depends not on the form of their baptism, but altogether upon their real, actual character; if they are *holy*, they are equally objects of God's approbation,,—if unholy—of his disapprobation, irrespective of the manner in which they have been baptized. Their not observing an external ordinance in the same manner, can be of no account with God. For this view of the subject we are indebted to Dr. Woods and we shall adopt his statement of it.

“That God does in fact regard Christians, who are baptized in different ways, with equal approbation, might be made evident from the representations of his word, and from his actual administration. But formal proof cannot be necessary. Those who are familiar with the scriptures have learned, that God judges of men, in the manner I have described. And we cannot fail to receive the same impression from what is manifest in his administration. I am happy to acknowledge those, who prefer immersion as the mode of baptism, to be sincere friends of Christ; and I would not cease to rejoice in all the

tokens of the divine favor which they receive. But do not those Christians, who use sprinkling or affusion, receive as many tokens of divine favor? Does not God give them as high a degree of the influence of the Holy Spirit? And in consequence of this do they not exhibit as high a degree of sanctification? Have they not as ardent love to the Saviour, and as much zeal for the promotion of his cause? Do they not labor as diligently and pray as fervently for the salvation of the world? Are not their labors as successful? And do not their prayers meet with as much acceptance, and obtain as many gracious answers? Do they not as sensibly enjoy the presence of God in the special ordinances of the gospel, in seasons of affliction, and in the hour of death? Will not as welcome and joyful an entrance be ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom of their Saviour? And will they not enjoy as high a degree of blessedness in heaven? Now, if it is indeed so, that God grants to those who believe sprinkling or affusion to be a proper mode of baptism, as many tokens of his approbation and love, as to those who prefer immersion: is not the conclusion perfectly obvious, that God does not consider the particular form of baptism to be of any essential consequence as to the great interests of religion? It clearly follows then, that we ought to love the followers of Christ who baptize in one way, as much as those who baptize in another way; and that if we consider the form of this rite as of any essential consequence, or suffer it to have any great influence upon our feelings, we commit a lamentable mistake, and in regard to this point, place ourselves in opposition to the mind of God. And how deeply is it to be deplored, that any Christians should, through weak-

ness or imperfection, cherish views and feelings, which are at variance with the divine will and the divine administration !”

4. A fourth reason why we regard the practice of the early Christians in reference to the mode of baptism, as possessing no binding force on us, is derived from the consideration, that *even they were liable to err and to be influenced by their peculiar education and habits.*—We readily concede, that those who enjoyed the personal instructions of our Saviour and his apostles, possessed advantages from which we are necessarily excluded;—advantages which would seem to invest their example with a degree of authority over the faith of all succeeding generations of the church. Hence, that popular opinion which is so prone to pay a blind veneration to the example of the early Christians; hence the fancied pre-eminence for virtue and orthodoxy, of those who think they can find a precedent for their conduct or a sanction for their belief in the opinions and forms of the primitive church. But we must confess, that while we entertain the profoundest regard for the example of our Lord and the apostles, and of all others who taught and acted under the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit, we cannot accord to others who were fallible men like ourselves, the same degree of respect, just because they lived *in*, or immediately *after*, the apostolic age. The advantages enjoyed on their part, find a potent offset in the superior state of moral and intellectual improvement of the present day, as the facts in our relative histories amply demonstrate. The early churches were formed from Jewish or gentile converts, who had alike been brought up in the vilest superstitions. The influence of their early education and original habits was felt long after their es-

pousals to Christianity. Even under the pruning hand and the vigilant eye of Paul, there sprang up, in the very bosom of the primitive church, the rank weeds of false doctrine and of a barbarous religion. Endless disputes on points of no importance were warmly prosecuted;—disputes which could have been generated only in superstitious and ignorant minds. Even the solemn ordinance of the holy supper, in reference to which Christ's instructions and example were so very plain, was ignorantly and wickedly turned into a bacchanalian revel! So prone were they to abuse the institutions of Christianity, that Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (ch. i. 14—15) gives utterance to this strange declaration: "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; *lest any should say that I baptized in mine own name.*" But if we pass over to the second and third centuries, we shall find a state of things still more deplorable. Here the true genius of the oriental philosophy, mingling with a variety of vulgar superstitions, began to display itself.—Who can forget the ridiculous ceremonies at baptism, of exorcism, unction, giving salt and milk to the candidate,—attiring him in a snow-white robe and crowning him with an evergreen? And who, in view of all this, can persuade himself that those early Christians,—so prolific of superstitious refinings and innovations upon the rite of baptism, as well as in other respects, did yet in regard to *the mode* of this rite, remain *infallible*?—and who, with these facts staring him in the face, can seriously maintain, that their example in a matter, not in itself essential, constitutes an authoritative model for us?

But, says the opponent, our appeal goes beyond the second and third centuries; we carry it up to the apostolic practice. Be it so; the weight of the argument



from church history, must doubtless mainly hinge here. But it has already been proven, that the whole force of apostolic example is decidedly on our side of the question. Let us not however be misunderstood; we do not admit that even the example of the apostles can, from the nature of the case, determine this controversy. In addition to the considerations already advanced in support of this position, we would merely remark here, that as the verb βαπτίζω is manifestly a *generic* term, like our own verb *wash*, and consequently comprehends a variety of modes of ablution, and the command to baptize is therefore not *specific* as to the *mode*, it matters not what may have been the precise practice of the apostles, that peculiar practice cannot of course be essential, and therefore constitutes no obligatory rule of faith or of imitation for us. The climate of Palestine, and also of many of the other countries where the gospel was preached by the apostles, is warm. This rendered bathings frequent, and this circumstance of itself, might naturally be supposed to have begotten in them a predilection for immersion, even though it were not required, but only allowed by the original command. But in a more rigorous climate where bathings are unfrequent, and attended with greater inconvenience and exposure, a diverse propensity would naturally exist. The practice of the church therefore, in any age, setting aside denominational prejudices, would be likely to shape itself in general, according to the climate and the corresponding habits of the people.—There is undoubtedly more weight in this remark than a prejudiced mind would be willing, readily to concede. The aquatic habits of a Greenlander and an Otaheitan—we mean their habits in relation to bathing, swimming, diving, &c., although respectively engendered by climate, are

totally different. And when we say that a Greenlander, if left to the direction of his own choice in relation to the mode of baptism, would feel a natural bias to the practice of aspersion instead of dipping ; and that an inhabitant of the Society Isles would be naturally inclined to a choice opposite to that of his shivering brother, we pay no more than a reasonable tribute of respect to the prejudices of climate. And when we consider that these prejudices are not only innocent and unavoidable, but highly salutary to the health and comfort of the body, we cannot but admire the wisdom and characteristic goodness of the Author of our religion, in so graduating his command, touching the mode of baptism, as to make it harmonize with the various conditions of his great family. If therefore, it should be found upon examination, that the apostolic churches did practise immersion, still that circumstance can be sufficiently accounted for on other ground than that of a specific command of Christ.

It would be an easy matter to extend our remarks on this subject to an indefinite length ; we might advert to the several benefits of baptism, as set forth in Part II. of this work, and show by the strongest evidence of which the subject is susceptible, that all those benefits are enjoyed, to say the least, in as ample and rich a measure by Christians baptized by affusion, as by those who have received the ordinance in any other way ; and justly infer from this fact, that the mode cannot be essential. We might take another view of the holy supper, and prove, that as the eating and drinking of a given quantity of bread and wine by each communicant, is not indispensable to a valid reception of this sacrament, so it is preposterous to set up such a pretension in reference to baptism ; that bread and wine occupy the same place in the

one that water does in the other; all are outward signs and so far as quantity is concerned, *mere circumstances*. It is the command and promise of our Lord annexed to the signs or emblems, and our faith in the same, that constitute them sacraments, and apart from that command and promise, these emblems, whether used in greater or smaller quantity, cannot possibly partake of a sacramental character. Hence the great Saxon Reformer justly remarks on baptism: "It is not the water that produces the benefits, but the word of God which is connected with the water, and our faith confiding in the word of God in this baptismal water. *For without the word of God the water is mere water, but with the word of God, it is a baptism.*"<sup>1</sup>

We might yet further refer to the ceremony of "feet washing" as practised by several sects, in *literal* conformity to the command and example of Christ, and show that as the Baptists dispense with a *literal* observance of it, and are content with obeying it virtually; (that is, with performing acts of condescension and brotherly kindness;) and to justify themselves, plead the difference of present usages from ancient ones, and the sufficiency of complying with the *spirit* instead of the *letter* of it; therefore they themselves confirm us by their own procedure in the belief, that outward forms and modes are of little weight in religious ordinances. We would not be understood to maintain, that the construction put upon the command of Christ *to wash one another's feet*, and their justification of that construction on the ground of the changes which have taken place in the usages and circumstances of society, and their conforming therefore to the *spirit* instead of the

<sup>1</sup>See Luther's Catechism, fourth part, fifth question.

mere letter of that command, are improper. Far from it ; the principles on which they proceed, in all this, we believe to be decidedly correct. But on the very same principles we are fully sustained in the view, that the outward mode of baptism is not essential, and even if it could be certainly determined that this sacrament was at first administered by submersion, we should not be bound to conform to that practice. But we forbear ; we think the proposition with which we commenced this branch of the subject, has been fully sustained and hence we shall hasten to the last proposition.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE third and last proposition respecting baptism that we intend to consider, is the following :

III. *Is the mode by affusion decidedly more scriptural, appropriate and edifying than that by submersion?*

Without stopping to analyse this proposition, we shall proceed at once to state the grounds upon which in a general view, we answer it in the affirmative.

We maintain that the mode by affusion is decidedly more scriptural, appropriate and edifying than that by submersion :—

1. *Because it falls in more harmoniously with the circumstances attending the several examples of baptism recorded in the New Testament.* We have already seen that there is not one word, not one incident, not even a hint to be found in the various cases of baptism narrated in the New Testament, which proves that submersion was practised ; even the ordinance as administered to the disciples of John, to our Saviour and to the Ethiopian eunuch does not bring to light a single circumstance which may not be most happily reconciled with the idea of affusion. But can the same be said on the other side of the question ? Think of the baptism of Saul of Tarsus, of the three thousand converts on the day of Pentecost, of Cornelius and his household, of the jailor, of Lydia, of the disciples in Samaria, Acts viii. 16, &c., and let any unprejudiced mind decide, whether the circumstances detailed in connection with these cases are not

absolutely in conflict with the doctrine of plunging, unless violence is done to the text, or some far-fetched and fanciful interpretation is forced upon it. We do not aver that it is plainly asserted *in totidem verbis* that the above individuals were baptized by pouring or sprinkling, but we do say that all the circumstances combined, present such an overwhelming array of argument as not to leave a solitary loop on which to hang a reasonable doubt. Admit that they received the ordination by affusion, and all is plain and intelligible; every circumstance mentioned accords with and corroborates the idea, there is nothing to perplex the plain reader, nothing but what is easily accounted for. But assume the theory of submersion, and that moment you are met at every step with difficulties and involved in an inextricable labyrinth of incongruities. We have already pointed out those embarrassing circumstances, and shall not travel over the same ground again; it is sufficient for our present purpose simply to refer to them. But we would not intimate, that because the circumstances alluded to, are, according to the established laws of exegesis, irreconcilable with submersion and fall in so harmoniously with affusion, therefore affusion is the only valid mode. We have already proved that the mode is not essential; that apostolic example itself, unattended by a command, is not binding, and when even enforced by an injunction cannot justly be made to extend to *accidents* or mere matters in themselves indifferent; but what we mean is, that though affusion be not the only scriptural mode, yet being more consonant with the example of the apostles as transmitted to us in the scriptures, it is therefore *more scriptural* than submersion. There are different degrees of assimilation to complete conformity to primitive example even in the

externals of religion, and in proportion as our mode approximates nearer to that kind of conformity, it may be said to be more perfectly in accordance with Scripture.

2. *Again, affusion is more scriptural and appropriate because it is the fittest emblem of the blessings intended to be represented by baptism.* It will be admitted that these blessings are mainly the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Christ, and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. These were the benefits represented by circumcision; the apostle tells us it signified "the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,"<sup>1</sup> and "the circumcision of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter."<sup>2</sup> Clarke's comment on the latter quotation reads thus: "Circumcision was a rite which represented a *spiritual* thing, viz. the change and purification of the heart, as may be seen Jer. iv. 4 and ix. 26; Ezek. xlv. 7—9. Thus also baptism symbolically sets forth the remission of sin by the blood of atonement, and the purification of our nature by the operations of God's Spirit.

Now in order to prove that affusion is a more scriptural and appropriate emblem of these gifts, it is only necessary to inquire how the shedding of Christ's blood, which is the meritorious ground of pardon, and the pouring out of the Spirit, which is the efficient cause of sanctification, are represented in the word of God. In recurring to the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, we find that the pardoning efficacy of Christ's sacrifice on the cross was prefigured, not by *plunging*, but by *sprinkling*, Exod. xxix. 21, Lev. vii. 14 and xiv. 7, Numb. viii. 7 and xix. 18—19, Isa. lii. 15, Heb. ix. 13—14 and xii. 24, 1 Peter i. 2. In all these passages and many others that might be referred to, the act of *sprinkling* is uni-

<sup>1</sup>Col. ii. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Rom. ii. 29.

formly employed as an emblem of the shedding of Christ's blood for the forgiveness of sin; plunging is not once dreamed of; so also, when the inspired writers speak of imparting the influences of the Holy Spirit for the sanctification of our nature, the idea is almost universally expressed by *sprinkling* and *pouring*. Isa. xxxii. 15 and lxiv. 3, Ezek. xxxvi. 25—26 and xxxix. 29, Joel ii. 28—29, Zech. xii. 10, Acts ii. 17—18 and x. 45, We might increase this list of references, but it is already sufficiently long. Now if the reader will turn to them, he will find that *pouring* and *sprinkling* are throughout, the terms used to designate the communication of the influences of the Holy Spirit, as the efficient means of the renovation and purification of our nature; indeed, the phrases: "I will *pour* my Spirit upon thy seed;" "I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you," &c., seem to be the favorite language of inspiration whenever the subject is introduced. Moreover, the psalmist and the prophet Hosea represent those same divine influences under the similitude of rain, in which the earth, it is well known, is not *plunged*, but which descends in *drops* and *sprinkles* the earth. Ps. lxxii. 6, Hos. vi. 3.

Who then does not plainly see that *affusion* is a decidedly more scriptural and appropriate representation of the blessings symbolized by baptism, than *submersion*? and hence we willingly leave the reader to make his own deduction as to the most scriptural and appropriate form of baptism.

But we have not yet disposed of this view of the subject. The "baptism of the Spirit" was promised by our Lord to his disciples, it had been predicted by the prophets of old, especially by Joel, ch. ii. v. 28—29. "I will *pour* out my Spirit upon all flesh," &c.; and on the



day of Pentecost especially, and also on subsequent occasions, this promise was fulfilled. But *how*, in what *manner* did the fulfilment take place? was it by submersion? were the apostles *plunged* into the Holy Ghost? By no means; the very thought is preposterous. Turn to the first four verses of the second chapter of Acts, and you will find an account of the descent of the Spirit; but not a word about plunging, nor even a circumstance that could possibly call up such an idea; but as a gentle rain descends upon the verdant fields, so, we read, the Spirit was poured out in the form of cloven tongues, “*and it sat upon each of them.*” On another occasion we are taught more distinctly what was the mode of this baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. When Peter preached in the house of Cornelius, the Spirit descended on all who heard him, and in relating the occurrence he says, “the Holy Ghost fell on them *as on us at the beginning*, (that is, at the beginning of the new economy on the day of Pentecost.) Then remembered I the words of the Lord, how he said John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.”<sup>1</sup> Now we demand a candid answer to the question; did this baptism consist in *plunging* the disciples into the Holy Ghost? or did it consist in *pouring out* the Holy Ghost upon them? in a word, was it a baptism by submersion, or by affusion?

We feel warranted then, in declaring once more, that affusion being decidedly more significant of the benefits intended to be represented, is far more scriptural and appropriate, and for this reason alone, vastly preferable to submersion. We cannot close this argument better than in the language of a learned cotemporary; “Surely it is

<sup>1</sup>Acts. xi. 15—16.

not without design or meaning, that we find language of this kind so generally, I almost say, so uniformly used. Can a single instance be produced from the word of God in which the cleansing influences of the Holy Spirit are symbolized by dipping or plunging into water, or into oil or blood? Or can a single example be found in which believers are represented as being dipped or plunged into the Holy Ghost? No such example is recollected. Whenever the inspired writers speak of the Holy Spirit being imparted to the children of men, either in his sanctifying power, or his miraculous gifts, they never represent the benefit under the figure of immersion; but always, unless my memory deceives me, by the figures of 'sprinkling,' 'pouring out,' 'falling,' or 'resting upon' from on high. Now if baptism, so far as it has a symbolical meaning, is intended to represent the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, as all agree; it is evident that no mode of applying the baptismal water can be more strikingly adapted to convey its symbolical meaning, or more strongly expressive of the great benefit which the ordinance is intended to hold forth and seal, than sprinkling or pouring. Nay, is it not manifest that this mode of administering the ordinance, is *far more* in accordance with Bible language, and Bible allusion, than any other? Surely, then, baptism by sprinkling or affusion, would have been treated with less scorn by our Baptist brethren, if they had recollected that these are invariably, the favorite figures of the inspired writers when they speak of the richest covenant blessings which the Spirit of God imparts to his beloved people. Surely all attempts to turn this mode of applying the sacramental water in baptism into ridicule, is really nothing less than shameless ridicule of the statements and the language of God's own word?"

## CHAPTER XIX.

3. *The practice of baptizing by affusion is decidedly more scriptural and appropriate than that by submersion, because it alone is adapted to the designed universality of the Christian religion.*—Those who are acquainted with the prophecies of the Old and New Testament, know that the church of God is destined ultimately to comprehend the whole world. We are assured that “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose;”<sup>1</sup> the Father has engaged to give to the Son “the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;”<sup>2</sup> Christ himself has declared that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations.”<sup>3</sup> The very nature of the Christian religion, as well as the universal benevolence of its divine Author, the provision made for its complete diffusion, and the command to prosecute the preaching of the gospel until “the end of the world;” are so many pledges that the period must finally arrive when the standard of the cross shall be victoriously planted on all the isles of the sea, and its banner float in triumph in every climate. Then the remotest inhabitants of the polar regions as well as those of the torrid zone; the wandering tribes of the arid desert and

<sup>1</sup>Isa. xxxv. 1.      <sup>2</sup>Ps. ii. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. xxiv. 14. See also Ps. lxxii. 8—11. Isa. ii. 2. Dan. ii. 34—35. Mal. i. 11. Rev. xi. 15 and xx. 2—3, &c.

those who dwell in the frigid vicinity of ice-bound streams and snow-capt mountains;—all shall be brought into willing subjection to the King of saints;—all, all shall be numbered amongst his baptized hosts and joyfully praise and worship him as their common Lord and Saviour. Blessed Redeemer, prosecute thou the work of triumph, and hasten the time when all the nations and kindred of the globe shall acknowledge thy authority and bow to thy sceptre.

But is there no difficulty—no invincible obstacle in the way of Christ's universal reign, on the supposition that *submersion* is the only acceptable mode of baptism? How are the people to be plunged in those large and numerous districts, which are so parched and dried up that neither stream nor pool is to be found for many miles together? Would not the trouble and expense attending submersion, whether fountains were sought for or baptisteries were formed, render it impracticable to a considerable portion of the community, especially if, in a season of gracious visitation, thousands upon thousands should be converted in a day, as we have reason to expect will be the case prior to the dawning of the millennial glory? And is the difficulty not even greater in the extreme northern regions, where darkness and unmitigated winter reign for six months in succession?—there every stream is locked up in icy fetters most of the year; the cold is intense; the solid covering of the frozen deep impregnable. What labor and cost in such countries to obtain an opportunity for submersion!—And then also, there are seasons even in temperate latitudes, when by reason of a drought, there is hardly a sufficient quantity of water to be found to sustain animal life; *the heavens become brass and the earth iron, and the Lord makes the rain of the*

*land powder and dust.*<sup>1</sup> Now how is submersion to be practised at such times? Must it be delayed until the rains of heaven pour down a supply of the liquid element? But in the mean time thousands may die, and if submersion is essential, what becomes of them? Dr. Austin speaks to the same effect on this subject: "In besieged cities," says he, "where there are thousands, and hundreds of thousands of people; in sandy deserts like those of Africa, Arabia, and Palestine; in the northern regions, where the streams, if there be any, are shut up with impenetrable ice; and in severe and extensive droughts, like that which took place in the time of Ahab; sufficiency of water for animal subsistence is scarcely to be procured. Now, suppose God should, according to his predictions, pour out plentiful effusions of his Spirit, so that all the inhabitants of one of these regions or cities, should be born in a day. Upon the Baptist hypothesis, there is an absolute impossibility that they should be baptized, while there is this scarcity of water; and this may last as long as they live." In addition to all this, how can we safely plunge infirm, diseased and dying persons, especially in those extreme northern climates? Let us suppose a person to be converted on a bed of sickness; he is extremely feeble; not able to lift his head from his pillow; his recovery depends, under God, on quiet and composure, and especially on being carefully protected from all exposure to cold and humidity. 'This is by no means an improbable or even a rare case. He is persuaded that every mode of baptism except by submersion, is a nullity; of course he is taken from his bed and "buried in a watery grave," and without a miracle, this is the precursor of

<sup>1</sup>Deut. xxviii. 23—24.

his actual interment in the earth, particularly if the ceremony is performed in a high northern latitude or in the dead of winter. Here then we have a case of self-immolation at the shrine of mistaken zeal, and to the mere outward form of a religious rite! And if the minister who performs the rite, is old and infirm, he may also fall a victim to the desperate operation. Certainly, Baptist ministers whose health is impaired and who have grown feeble, can in no case baptize with safety; and if called on to submerge large and corpulent men, they cannot comply without endangering their life.

Now, is a religion that dictates a course so merciless as this;—a religion which imposes impossibilities,—requiring submersion in districts of country and in seasons in which it is utterly impracticable;—a religion that demands compliance with an external form, which even in the temperate zone, in some cases, insures the martyrdom of its votary;—is such a religion adapted to universal diffusion? is it calculated to prevail without a rival to the utmost limits and in all the ends of the earth? “It is a general principle, on which the defenders of Christianity often and justly insist, that it differs materially, not only from every false religion but even from the temporary and local Mosaic institutions, in this circumstance, that while none of the latter were adapted in their ceremonies and requisitions to all individuals in every nation, the Christian religion, on the contrary, is suited to every individual of every nation, in every age. It was designed to embrace all nations, and continue to the end of the world. Its ordinances or outward rites, if they were to correspond with this design, must necessarily be few in number, and so framed, that they could at all times be administered to all persons.” But who will maintain

that baptism by submersion is a rite which may be administered "at all times and to all persons?"

It accordingly appears to us, that our Baptist brethren must either change their views on baptism or abandon the hope of beholding the universal reign of Christ on earth. Should they adopt the principle that impracticability absolves from duty, then the question presents itself in another and equally suspicious aspect, viz. is it credible that a religion designed for the whole world, would be encumbered by its divine Author with an external observance necessarily involving in numerous cases, absolute impossibility? We leave our opponents to take which horn of the dilemma they choose.

"Now, contrast all these difficulties, which surely, form a mass of no small magnitude with the entire absence of every difficulty of baptizing by sprinkling or affusion. According to our plan, which, we have no doubt, is by far the most scriptural and edifying, baptism may be performed with equal ease and convenience in all countries; at all seasons of the year; in all situations of health or sickness; with equal safety by all ministers, whether young or old, athletic or feeble; and in all circumstances that can well be conceived. How admirably does this accord with the gospel economy, which is not intended to be confined to any one people, or to any particular climate; but is equally adapted, in all its principles, and in all its rites to every "kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue!"

"Accordingly, it is a notorious fact, that, in consideration of the difficulties which have been mentioned as attending immersion, a large body of Baptists, in Holland, I mean the Mennonites, who were once warm and uncompromising contenders for this mode of administering

baptism, at length gave it up, and, while they still baptize none but adults, have been, for more than a hundred years, in the practice of pouring water on the head of the candidate, through the hand of the administrator. They found that when candidates for baptism were lying on sick beds; or confined in prison; or in a state of peculiarly delicate health; or in various other unusual situations, which may be easily imagined; there was so much difficulty, not to say, in some cases, a total impossibility in baptizing by plunging, that they deliberately, as a denomination, after the death of their first leader, agreed to lay aside, as I said, the practice of immersion and substituted the plan of affusion.”<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, we appeal to every candid reader, whether the doctrine of submersion does not interpose very serious if not insurmountable barriers to the designed universal spread of the Christian religion? But is this the case with effusion? Does it thus clog the onward progress of the gospel chariot? Is it not entirely compatible with the perfect establishment of the church of God in every climate, in every region, in every season, on every occasion, and among every people, kindred and tongue, and is it not therefore decidedly *more scriptural, appropriate and edifying?*

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Miller on Baptism.



## CHAPTER XX.

4. *Baptism by pouring is more consistent with the simplicity and spirituality of the gospel than plunging.* Simplicity and spirituality are distinctive features of the Christian scheme. It claims to be free from inconvenient and oppressive rites, and to impose no yoke that is not easy, and no burden which is not light. When our Lord told the Jews, that *the truth should make them free,*<sup>1</sup> he no doubt alluded to deliverance from the numerous and burdensome requisitions of the Mosaic ritual, as well as from the bondage of sin, which the gospel was intended to confer upon them, and when he promised *rest to them who labored and were heavy laden,*<sup>2</sup> he referred among others, to those also who were heavy laden with the cumbrous rites of the Mosaic institution, rendered still more oppressive by the additions made by the scribes and Pharisees;<sup>3</sup> such were promised rest from these heavy burdens. And in view of the fact that the gospel was intended to afford them this rest, our Lord could emphatically say: “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” In reference to the same fact the apostle informs us that Christ “bath blotted out the hand-writing of *ordinances* that was against us \* \* \* nailing it to his cross.”<sup>4</sup> But if in lieu of these irksome ordinances the gospel imposes the *yoke of submersion*,—the frequently *painful and dangerous*, and not seldom *impracticable burden* of total

<sup>1</sup>John viii. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Matt. xi. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Ib. xxiii. 4.

<sup>4</sup>2 Col. ii. 14.

plunging, where is the ecclesiastical *freedom*?--where the rest from ritual pressure, guaranteed by the Master?

If we call to mind all the difficulties detailed in the preceding argument, it will be found that the whole congeries of Mosaic ceremonies cannot afford a rite so inconvenient and burdensome, so painful and destructive to health, as is submersion under some circumstances and in some climates and seasons, and hence, hundreds submit to it only because they think God peremptorily requires it.

It may accordingly with very just grounds be questioned, whether all this coincides with the admitted simplicity and spirituality of the gospel; and comports with Christ's promise of freedom and rest from ritual burdens, and the declaration that his yoke is easy and his burden light. No part of this objection lies against affusion, and hence we hold it to be more scriptural and appropriate and edifying.

## CHAPTER XXI.

5. *Our mode of baptism is more scriptural, edifying and appropriate, because it is not calculated, like the doctrine of submersion, to give rise to any thing that is indecorous or indecent.*—We engage in this part of the discussion with no small degree of reluctance, because we are conscious of the difficulty of enlarging on it, without ourselves transcending the limits of strict propriety, and giving offence to those whose views we oppose. We desire however to avoid both, and shall go no further than fidelity to our subject seems to demand.

Whether the baptism of females, in the presence of an assembled and mixed multitude, comprehending all descriptions of character and condition, can be conducted in such a manner as not to infringe upon the laws of delicacy and propriety, we willingly submit to the decision of others. Certainly, there are thousands who think that the practice is not in strict keeping with those religious feelings which should characterize a Christian ordinance, nor with that rigid sense of decorum which it is especially desirable that the more delicate sex should ever cherish. Witness the hurried, convulsive respiration of the fair candidate; her stifled sigh; the violent palpitation; the alarm depicted upon the pale visage; her spasmodic grasp on the arm of the minister. Do these symptoms afford evidence that the mind is occupied with the devotional solemnities of religion? See her emerging from the “watery grave,” her countenance betokening more

of sorrow and alarm than of joy and confidence ; her apparel thoroughly drenched and dripping, and cleaving to her body, and she, as if prompted by an instinctive feeling of indelicate exposure, anxious to escape as soon as possible the scrutinizing gaze of the multitude. Turn next to the throngs of spectators, among whom are many vain and ungodly men, collected for the express purpose of beholding and amusing themselves with the very scene which has just transpired. What profane ribaldry among that gloating rabble ; what flippant remarks ; impure innuendoes and frivolous sentiments ! Scenes of this sort have too often occurred ; and more than once, while a few pious souls have prayerfully waited at the water's brink, curses from the wicked have floated all around, and tainted the very atmosphere ! We make these statements, not in ridicule, but in unaffected sorrow ; God forbid that we should speak lightly of a sacred ordinance ! Nor do we offer this consideration as an argument against submersion in the abstract, but simply as an evidence of its tendency to indecorum,—we will not add, indecency. Such repulsive scenes are never known to be associated with our mode of administering the ordinance ; and this is another reason why we greatly prefer it. Can any other case be conceived in which right and wrong are productive of such paradoxical results ?

Again, it is well known that in the third century, and subsequently, when Cyprian, Cyril, Athanasius and Chrysostom lived, the candidate for baptism was divested of every thread of apparel ; we speak advisedly and on good authority, and wish to be understood ; both males and females, all ages and conditions were submersed in a state of perfect nudity. This fact has already been adverted to, and amply proved ; even enlightened Baptists

do not dispute it.<sup>1</sup> This outrage on all decency resulted from the practice of submersion, and seems, in some degree, necessarily to stand connected with that practice. The learned Wall says: "they" (the submersionists) "thought it better represented the putting off the old man, and also the nakedness of Christ on the cross. Moreover, as baptism is a washing, they judged it should be the washing of the body, not of the clothes."<sup>2</sup>—How natural is the transition from the doctrine of submersion, to this revolting and abominable abuse. "For if the thing signified be the cleansing and purifying of the individual by an ablution which must of necessity extend to the whole person; it would really seem that performing this ceremony, divested of all clothing, is essential to its emblematic meaning. Who ever thought of covering the hands with gloves when they were about to be washed; or expected really to cleanse them through such a covering? No wonder, then, when the principle began to find a place in the church, that the submersion of every part of the body in water, that the literal bathing of the whole person was essential both to the expressiveness and the validity of the emblematical transaction; no wonder, I say, that the obvious consequence should soon be admitted, that the whole body ought to be uncovered, as never fails to be the case, with any member of the body which may wish to be successfully cleansed by bathing. And we have no hesitation in saying, that, if we fully adopted the general principle of our Baptist brethren in relation to this matter, we should no more think, of subjecting the body to that process which must, in order to its validity, be strictly emblematical of a complete spirit-

<sup>1</sup>See p. 160—162.

<sup>2</sup>Wall, ch. xv. Part ii.

ual bathing, while covered with clothes, than we should think, in common life, of washing the hands or the feet, while carefully covered with the articles of dress with which they are commonly clothed. Whereas, if the principle of Pedobaptists on this subject be adopted, then the solemn application of water to the part of the body which is an epitome of the whole person, and which is always, as a matter of course, uncovered, is amply sufficient to answer every purpose both of emblem and of benefit.

Besides, let me appeal to our Baptist brethren, by asking, if they verily believe that the primitive and apostolic mode of administering baptism was by immersion, and that this immersion was performed in a state of entire nakedness; how can they dare, upon their principles, to depart, as to one iota from that mode? Let them not say, that they carefully retain the substance, the essential characters of the plan of immersion. Very true. This is our plea; and it accords very well with what we consider as the correct system; but in the mouth of a Baptist it is altogether inadmissible. The institute in question is a "positive" one; and, according to him, we must not depart one jot or tittle from the original plan."<sup>1</sup>

So far then as the example of the third, fourth and fifth centuries is concerned, and so far as our opponents' view of the symbolic signification of baptism is correct, they are bound to continue the two practices; immoral, and outrageous as one of them undoubtedly is, they are inseparably connected, and must stand or fall together;—we mean of course, agreeably to the testimony of history subsequently to the apostolic age, and the light in which submersion is represented.

<sup>1</sup>See Dr. Miller.

Now can a practice which, in connection with such views, tends to such indecorum and indecency, be preferable to that which has never been known thus to degenerate, and cannot in the nature of things eventuate in such results? Is not baptism by aspersion decidedly more scriptural, appropriate and edifying?

6. *Affusion is the most scriptural and appropriate mode, because it accords better with Peter's definition of baptism.* The apostle tells us that this ordinance is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God."<sup>1</sup> From this it appears, that its efficacy does not depend upon the quantity of water employed, or on the physical influence of water in cleansing the body, but upon the faithful answer (stipulation or engagement) of a determined and good conscience to believe in Christ, and be entirely devoted to his service. It is in this sense only that baptism can be regarded as partaking of a saving character; namely, as being the sign and seal of a covenant; which covenant, if faithfully kept, will certainly issue in our salvation through the merits of Christ. Baptism then, has no power in itself, any more than other external ordinances; its efficacy proceeds from its connection with God's word, from its being the formal recognition and ratification of a saving covenant through Christ, and from the influence of the Holy Ghost making it effectual. The benefits of the ordinance have accordingly, no connection with the operation of water on the animal frame, but are the result of a gracious covenant solemnly sealed in a divine ordinance, which ordinance is made effectual by God's blessing upon it. And as the Scriptures have nowhere expressly informed us of the precise mode in

<sup>1</sup> Peter iii. 21.

which the water employed shall be applied, we have the best grounds to infer, that our mode of applying it (which is not intended to put away the filth of the body) is more significant and appropriate, and to say the very least, quite as likely to be accompanied by the divine blessing. Undoubtedly aspersion accords perfectly with the apostle's definition, and in our opinion the doctrine of submersion does not, but seems rather decidedly to conflict with it, and hence we judge the former is more scriptural and edifying.

7. *Affusion is preferable because there is no tendency in it to superstition and abuse, as there is in the doctrine of submersion.* The tendency here alleged has been developed in different ages and in divers ways. It is well known and has already been adverted to, that a magic power was ascribed to submersion, by those who practised it at an early period. Submersion was put in the place of Christ's atonement and supposed to effect the remission of sins, and the doctrine was taught that sins committed afterwards were peculiarly dangerous,<sup>1</sup> if not altogether unpardonable, unless the individual died a martyr. Bretschneider states that in ordinary cases, it was believed that if a man sinned after he had been submersed, he would certainly perish.<sup>2</sup> Hence, it was deemed advisable to delay baptism, and it was delayed in reference to infants and others; and some of the most conspicuous converts postponed it until death, in the hope of thus making their salvation certain.<sup>3</sup> But this is not the only superstition connected with the doctrine of submersion. Passing by various other points that have a

<sup>1</sup>See History of Baptism, p. 105, &c.

<sup>2</sup>Bretschneider's Dogmatic, vol. ii. p. 697, sqq.

<sup>3</sup>Rees' Cyclopaedia. Art. Baptism.



similar bearing, we will come down at once to the age in which we live. Do not many Baptists at present lay an unwarranted stress on the practice of submersion? Do they not dwell with peculiar and the most manifest fondness and complacency on the idea of being “buried under the water,” just as if it had an innate and saving efficacy, a sort of necromantic power to change and renovate the sinner, and as if those who submitted to it, were necessarily regenerated Christians? We do not say that this is the belief of the pious and enlightened members of that denomination; but look to the great mass, and even to *some of their ministers*, and see whether they do not positively seem to imagine that “being buried under the water” is the great turning point, the mighty lever in religion, whereby men are transformed into living Christians, and all is made secure for time and eternity! Thus, submersion is put for regeneration, and the effect of the water takes the place of the efficacy of Christ’s blood. Here we have another abuse arising from the doctrine of submersion. And no wonder that such consequences result. Just witness the amazing zeal of those brethren in recommending submersion; how they dwell on it, magnify it, hold it up unceasingly to public view, and represent it as the great distinguishing mark of discipleship. *The water, THE WATER, THE WATER*, seems to be “the one thing needful.” Is not such a course calculated to lead men astray and to betray them into a false hope? We all know how prone men are to self-righteousness, how anxious to build on their own doings, and rely on works of outward obedience for pardon and divine favor. “Whenever therefore, any external rite becomes the grand distinction of a sect, and the object of something approaching to sectarian idolatry, we may be sure there

exists not only danger, but the actual commencement, to some extent, of that superstitious reliance, which he who has not learned to fear, 'knows nothing of the human heart yet as he ought to know.'

"That this suggestion has something more than mere fancy on which to rest, is evident from facts of recent and most mournful occurrence. A large and daily increasing sect has arisen, within a few years, in the bosom of the Baptist denomination which maintains the delusive and destructive doctrine, that baptism is regeneration; that no man can be regenerated who is not immersed; and that all, without exception, who have a historical faith, and are immersed, are of course, in a state of salvation. This pernicious heresy, so contrary to the plainest principles and facts of the word of God, and so manifestly adapted to destroy the souls of all who believe it, has been propagated to a melancholy extent, by a plausible, reckless, and impious demagogue, and is supposed to embrace one half of the Baptist body in the western country, besides many in the east. In short, the Baptist churches, in large districts of country, are so rent in pieces, and deluded by the miserable impostor referred to, that their prospects, for many years to come, are not only gloomy, but, without a special interposition of the King of Zion in their favor, altogether desperate.

"Now we maintain that this wretched delusion is by no means an unnatural result of the doctrine and practice of our Baptist brethren, in regard to the baptismal rite. Multitudes of them, we know, reject and abhor the heresy in question as much as any of us. But have they duly considered, that it seems naturally to have grown out of their own theory and practice in regard to baptism; their attaching such a disproportioned importance to the mode

of administering that ordinance ; often, very often, directing the attention of the people more to the river than the cross ; excluding all from Christian communion, however pious, who have not been immersed ; and making representations which, whether so intended or not, naturally lead the weak and the uninformed to consider immersion as a kind of talisman, always connected with a saving blessing ? This, we sincerely believe, is the native tendency of the doctrine of our Baptist brethren, although *they*, we are equally confident, neither perceive nor admit this to be the case. If pious Christians who have not been immersed cannot be admitted to communion in the church below, there would seem to be still more reason for excluding them from the purer church above. And so far as this principle is received and cherished, though far from being alike mischievous in all cases, it can scarcely fail of predisposing many minds in favor of that awful delusion, by which we have reason to believe that not a few, under its higher workings, have been blinded, betrayed, and lost.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Miller.

## CHAPTER XXII.

8. *Affusion should be preferred because it does not, like the doctrine of submersion, interfere with and destroy devotional feeling.* We have already detailed some of the revolting and agitating occurrences that are wont to attend the act of plunging:<sup>1</sup> but this particular aspect of the subject is too painful to be further enlarged upon. We must however be permitted to present it in another point of view. How often has the doctrine of submersion been obtruded upon the people in seasons of revival, and like a spiritual upas, spread blight and death around it?

By believing and earnest prayer the portals of heaven were opened, and by faithful preaching the Holy Spirit melted the obdurate hearts of sinners into deep contrition and prepared them for the reception of God's richest blessings. There was a high degree of holy excitement among saints and sinners; the former were strengthened in the inner man and rejoiced in the marvellous doings of God's grace; and the latter, overwhelmed with a painful sense of their moral corruptions, were anxiously inquiring the way to Zion. From day to day sinners found pardon and salvation in the blood of the Lamb and were added to God's ransomed people; while others, and yet others were apprehended by the same grace, and more than supplied their place in the class of the anxious. Thus the work of mercy progressed in great power and

<sup>1</sup>See p. 145, sqq.

love ; the incense of prayer and praise daily ascended, perfumed with “the blood of sprinkling ;” God’s people sang aloud the praises of the Redeemer in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace ; awakened sinners were pointed, without a dissenting voice, to the Lovely One of Calvary ; there was nothing to divert attention from the great leading interests that alike engrossed the minds of all ; one feeling, one desire, one prayer, one spirit animated every bosom ; it seemed as if heaven had been brought down upon earth, or as if the millennial glory had suddenly burst upon the church ; even angels looked down with sympathetic delight, and joined in the harmonious chorus of “glory to God in the highest.”

In the midst of these hallowed exercises a note of discord is unexpectedly heard ; a gruff and grating sound interrupts and mars the euphony of the whole scene. The attention of all is arrested ; they look to see whence this untimely disturbance proceeds, and behold a warm-hearted Baptist brother has made his appearance and the air trembles beneath the sound of his voice, as he exclaims, full of zeal for his favorite doctrine, “The river, the river ! you must all be ‘buried under the water’ if you wish to enter the kingdom of heaven !” Thus, instead of co-operating with his brethren with all his heart, to bring sinners to Christ and promote the holiness of believers, he labors *to convince them that baptism should not be administered by sprinkling, but by plunging.* The consciences of the weak are perplexed ; the attention of the anxious is withdrawn from the one thing needful and directed to an outward ordinance ; believers are diverted from the great work before them and involved in unprofitable and baneful discussions ; the Holy Spirit is grieved ; God is provoked to put a stop to the current of his bless-

ings, and the whole scene is changed into one of disharmony, jealousy and unkind debate. Thus, by the ill-fated obtrusion of the doctrine of submersion,—oh how many a good work has been thwarted in its incipency or arrested in its progress. Such ministers or Christians would do well seriously to inquire, whether they are pursuing the great object for which the Son of God died on the cross, and whether they are not in danger of substituting an excessive zeal for an external rite, or rather the *mere form* of such a rite, in the place of pure love to Christ and to immortal souls? “I have personally known,” says a writer, “such proceedings to occur with a frequency as wonderful as it was revolting; and with an obtrusive zeal worthy of a better cause. Young and timid consciences have been distressed, if not with the direct assertion, at least by the artful insinuation, that their particular mode of baptism was all in all; that there could be no safe Christianity without it. *The river, the river*, really seemed, by some, to be placed in the room of the *Saviour!*”

“There is something in all this so deeply offensive to every enlightened and judicious Christian, which involves so much meanness, and which manifests so much more concern for the enlargement of a sect, than the salvation of souls, that it is difficult to speak of it in terms of as strong reprobation as it deserves, without infringing on the limits of Christian decorum and respectfulness. It is conduct of which no candid and generous mind, actuated by the spirit of Christ, will ever be guilty. And, I am happy to add, it is conduct in which many belonging to the denomination to which I allude, have souls too enlarged and elevated to allow themselves to indulge.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Miller.

Now we ask, whether the doctrine of aspersion is wont in this wise, to interfere with devotion and with revivals? Every one knows that such is not the case, and cannot in the nature of things be so ; to attempt to prove this would be a work of supererogation, because it is self-evident. If at any time Pedobaptists have been forward to break in upon the devotion of Baptists, or to interfere with and arrest revivals among them, by broaching baptism or even by decrying the Baptist mode of it, their course was not the legitimate result of their system, but rather of their ignorance or sectarianism. But the procedure of Baptists in such cases, is in accordance with their theory ; it is interwoven with their proscriptive view of the subject and naturally flows from that view. Therefore we greatly prefer aspersion and deem it to be more scriptural, appropriate and edifying.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

9. *Affusion does not, like the doctrine of submersion, logically lead to such glaring absurdities.* If the doctrine of our Baptist brethren be correct, conclusions the most preposterous, at which they themselves probably recoil, may be justly deduced. To present this view of the subject in all its various phases, would be a tedious task, we shall therefore be content with a single argument.

According to the Baptist theory no one is baptized or has a right to administer baptism, who has not been submersed; but if the testimony of authentic ecclesiastical history may be relied on, there was a period in the church (commencing in the fifth and concluding in the twelfth century) when no society of Christians was known to confine the ordinance to adults, or even pretended to teach that it was unlawful to baptize infants. Besides, Roger Williams and his followers, with whom the Baptist church in the United States originated, were not baptized in adult age.<sup>1</sup> Consequently—

(a) From the fifth to the twelfth centuries, viz. from the year of our Lord 400 to 1150 (seven hundred and fifty years) the line of true or gospel baptism was interrupted, and it was impossible to know who was and who was not scripturally baptized during all that period, or whether the Baptists, who arose subsequently, received the ordinance from persons authorized to administer it or not.

<sup>1</sup>Authentic Hist. viz. Benedict, Backus' Church History, et al.



(b) The Baptists in the United States have not the ordinance among them, because their founder and his disciples from whom they received it, had no right to perform the ceremony.

But this is not all; if true baptism does not exist, even in the Baptist churches, neither does the Lord's supper, for no one has a right to administer or partake of this ordinance, who is not duly baptized. Nor do we stop here; if we have neither baptism nor eucharist, neither have we a visible Christian church in the world. Consequently this theory unchurches our brethren as completely as it does us.—Now then, our Baptist brethren are found in the same dilemma, in which the Catholics have long since been placed, in regard to the “divine succession,” the legitimacy of popery and the genuineness of their episcopal ordination. If they can extricate themselves from this difficulty, it strikes us they will, at least be entitled to much credit for ingenuity, though it may perhaps be at the cost of sound logic.

This argument may be thrown into the form of a *theorem*, which will present it to a logical mind in a stronger light and give it all the force of a mathematical demonstration.

In stating this theorem let it be observed, that we adopt, for the sake of illustration, and to expose its fallacy, the Baptist doctrine of submersion. According to this doctrine, the subjoined axioms and corollaries, appear to us to stand indissolubly connected.

## T H E O R E M .

### AXIOMS.

1. Baptism is the submersion in water of an adult believer, in the name of the Trinity by a person duly authorized to administer the ordinance.

2. Baptism, in this form alone, is the only means of admission into the visible Christian church.

3. No person is qualified to administer the ordinance, unless he, himself, has been baptized according to this mode.

4. The Lord's supper can only be celebrated by a visible Christian church, and none but members of such a church, that is, persons baptized by submersion, have a right to partake of it.

From these axioms unavoidably flow the following corollaries :

#### COROLLARIES.

1. All those who have not been baptized (by submersion of course) in adult age in the name of the Trinity, are not members of the visible Christian church. (According to axioms 1 and 2.)

2. All those societies calling themselves churches, whose members have not been plunged under the water in adult age, are not visible Christian churches. (Ax. 1, 2.)

3. All those men professing to be ministers who have not been submersed in adult age, are not ministers of the visible Christian church. (Ax. 1 and 2.)

4. Their administration of baptism, no matter in what mode, is null and void. (Ax. 3 and 4.)

5. The nominal celebration of the holy supper, by such pretended churches and administered by such pretended ministers, is positively no sacrament, the whole transaction, including the ceremony,—the participants and the administrator, is clearly and absolutely spurious. (Ax. 2 and 4.)

6. No one believing the doctrine of submersion dare commune with a congregation, whose members do not hold to that doctrine, because such communion would be thought a tacit, yet a reprehensible acknowledgment of

said congregation as a visible Christian church;—of its teachers as valid ministers of the visible Christian church, and of its communion as a Christian sacrament. (Ax. 1, 2, 4 and 5.)

7. It is not competent for an individual who has not been submersed in adult age, to partake of the holy supper in a visible Christian church, because he is not a member of any visible Christian church and therefore has no right whatever to that ordinance. (Ax. 4.)

8. It is inconsistent and highly censurable for a minister of a visible Christian church to exchange pulpits, or services of any kind that are peculiarly ministerial, with a teacher who has not been submersed in adult age; for this is a public acknowledgment of him not only as a *member*, but as a *minister* of the visible Christian church; whereas in point of fact he is neither the one nor the other.

#### POSTULATES.

1. From the year of our Lord 400 to the year 1150, no part of the church, so far as authentic church history informs us, limited baptism to adults only.

2. The founders or originators of the Baptist church in the United States, viz. Roger Williams and his disciples were not one of them baptized in adult age.<sup>1</sup> Then—

<sup>1</sup>Rev. Roger Williams established the first Baptist church in America at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1639. Mr. Williams had been pastor of the church in Salem, Massachusetts; Mr. Ezekiel Holyman was a deacon of the same church. When the church in Providence was organized Ezekiel Holyman re-baptized Mr. Williams. Then Mr. Williams re-baptized Ezekiel Holyman and ten others. According to the system of our Baptist brethren, neither of them was baptized, nor had any right to baptize others. This is the origin of the Baptist church in America, and of course of its baptisms. See Morton's Memorial of New England, Winthrop's Journal, and Backus' Church History.

## COROLLARIES.

9. There is no certain knowledge of any visible Christian church in the world from the fifth to the twelfth centuries; seven hundred and fifty years. (Ax. 1 and 2, and Pos. 1.)

10. The Baptist churches in the United States are not visible Christian churches. (Axiom 3 and Postulate 2.)

11. There is now no visible Christian church in the world, unless it be the Baptist. (Ax. 1, and 2.)

And it is most clear that—

12. The Baptist is not a visible Christian church.— (Post. 1 and 2, and Cor. 9 and 10.)

Thus, our Baptist brethren commence with denying the validity of our mode of baptism, and end with tearing up by the root their own; they start with rejecting sprinkling, and wind up with depriving the whole Christian community, themselves included, of the Lord's supper; they begin with setting aside our right of church-membership, and close with completely annihilating their own ecclesiastical existence; they set out with claiming to be the only visible Christian church, and terminate with blotting from existence every vestige of a visible Christian church on the face of the earth!

We would by no means charge them with pressing their principles to this extreme, for we know not precisely how far their practice corresponds with their theory; what we mean is, that the doctrine of submersion as held by them, must lead to these results, if honestly and consistently carried out to their full extent.

Now, we will simply put the question, whether a theory like this, can plead scriptural warrant, and whether the doctrine of affusion is chargeable with such extravagant logical results? Is it too much then to say, that this doctrine is more scriptural, appropriate and edifying?

Before we close, we must be allowed to reply to a few objections to baptism by affusion, which have not been fully met in the preceding pages. These objections though trivial in their character, are not without their influence over many sincere though generally uninformed minds, and must not therefore be passed by in silence.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### OBJECTIONS TO BAPTISM BY AFFUSION.

#### FIRST OBJECTION.

1. IT is objected that *affusion or sprinkling is an insufficient mode of baptism*. “How,” says the adversary, “can a filthy garment be cleansed by merely pouring or sprinkling a little water on it?” And hence, as if the argument were complete, it is inferred that baptism also, if performed by aspersion, would be a mock cleansing. We marvel that such an objection should ever have found its way into this world of error; for it is calculated to impose only on the ignorant, and even in regard to them, the delusion must vanish so soon as they learn to form a correct view of the subject. It is however brought forward only for want of something more solid and rational. In reply we remark—

1. That the objection proceeds from a false assumption in relation to the design of baptism. It will not be contended by the intelligent that baptism is intended to remove that common filth, which from personal neglect, accumulates upon the surface of the body. And yet strange as it may appear, this is the identical construction which all those force upon the ordinance, who press too closely the analogy between common and ceremonial washings. If ceremonial ablutions had been designed originally to effect a kindred purpose with that of household washings, we readily concede that the quantity of

water and the mode of applying it, would materially affect the efficiency of their administration. But the case is far otherwise. Domestic washings are used only to effect a *physical* cleansing, while ceremonial washings borrow all their importance from their *mystical* signification,—not from their *visible* effects;—and hence the mere *quantum* of water is not a circumstance of primary moment.

But cannot our Baptist brethren perceive that their weapon, like the elephants of King Pyrrhus, turns back upon their own ranks? By their own showing, their own mode of baptism is insufficient; they are defeated on their own principles, no less than we. If the analogy, above alluded to, is to be thus hardly pressed; if sprinkling is to be denounced on the score of inefficacy, then certainly the difficulty is not removed by a resort to immersion. If sprinkling a garment will not cleanse it, who can be so silly as to imagine that simple immersion will?—Thus the objection is as fatal to immersion as it is to sprinkling:—let our Baptist brethren themselves be the judges.

2. Again, the common sense of mankind may be appealed to, as proof of the absurdity of this objection. It was a common custom among the Hebrews, Greeks and Latins, to wash their hands in token of their innocence, and to show that they were pure from any imputed guilt. So also, according to the Mussulman's creed, ablution consists in washing the hands, feet, face, and part of the head. The devotee is then pronounced *wholly clean*. Thus, by different nations, in different ages of the world, has the principle been clearly recognized, that *perfect* or *entire purity*, may be significantly represented by applying water to a *part* of the body only. But what renders

this circumstance of weight in the present controversy, is, that the Bible itself has given sanction to the principle. Anciently, among the Hebrews, when the body of a murdered man was found, and the guilty perpetrator had eluded discovery, the elders of the city, nearest the spot where the body was found, were required to wash their hands over a slain heifer, as a public protestation of their innocence of the undiscovered murderer. Deut. xxi. 1—9. But why were they not required to immerse themselves, if the principle of our opponents be correct, and if consequently, a *partial* washing may not represent *entire* purity? David says, “I will wash my hands in innocency.” Ps. xxvi. 6. Here undeniably, the washing of the *hands* betokened the entire purity, or innocence, of the *whole* man. So also, Pilate “took water and washed his hands, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person.” Matt. xxvii. 24. But why did he not immerse himself in token of his alleged innocency?

3. But the subject admits of other proof. Ps. li. 7, David prays: SPRINKLE (*שִׁטְטֵם*) me with hyssop, and I *shall be clean*. Ezek. xxxvi. 25: “Then will I SPRINKLE clean water upon you, and you *shall be clean*.”

Heb. x. 22: “Having your hearts SPRINKLED from an evil conscience.”

Heb. ix. 13: “The blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer, SPRINKLING the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh.”

We by no means adduce these passages as direct proof that Christian baptism should be performed by sprinkling, but simply to show that Jehovah has long since settled the principle in his church, that a partial washing, or sprinkling the body with water, may suffice to represent an entire cleansing of the moral man. And we wish our



opponents to bear it distinctly in mind, that when they ridicule the practice of baptism by sprinkling, on the score of its inefficacy, they ridicule a *principle* that God himself has, from the remotest antiquity of the church, settled by his own authority.

But we have something more to do with the principle under consideration. The subject assumes too serious an aspect to be scouted away by the frivolity of superficial thinkers. When the Bible speaks of the application of the blood of Christ to the heart in order to effect (not a ceremonial but) a *real* cleansing, it employs the following allusion: "Elect \* \* \* through sanctification of the Spirit \* \* \* and SPRINKLING of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 2. The same reference is also made, Heb. ix. 13—14, and x. 22. So also, Heb. xii. 24: "Ye are come \* \* \* to Jesus and to the *blood of* SPRINKLING."

But why is not the allusion made to immersion instead of sprinkling? Will our opponents ridicule the idea of cleansing the heart from moral defilement by having the blood of Christ *sprinkled* upon it? Why then should they speak lightly of having water sprinkled upon the body, when the object is merely to represent this moral cleansing? "There are three," says John, "that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood." 1 John v. 8. We are acquainted with the operations of the Spirit and the application of the blood of atonement, only by their affusion upon the heart. This is the mode in which they uniformly yield their testimony to the divinity and Messiahship of Christ. Analogy therefore, would teach us that the water of baptism, in order the more forcibly to "agree in one" testimony with the "Spirit and the blood," should agree with them also in the *mode* of its application—i. e. should be sprinkled or poured upon the body. There is a remarkable instance

recorded in Isa. vi. 7, of the entire purgation of the prophet, by simply applying a coal of fire to his lips. "Lo," says the seraph, "this hath touched thy lips and thy iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged." So far as the principle under consideration is involved, we might ask, is there any thing more absurd, in supposing that an application of water to *one part* of the body may represent the entire purgation of the whole man from moral defilement, than in supposing such a purgation to be actually effected by applying a coal of fire to the lips only?

#### SECOND OBJECTION.

2. It is further objected to the practice of sprinkling, that "*there is no cross in it;*" while the *cross* of being immersed is a circumstance urged in proof of the superior and exclusive merits of that mode, the mode by affusion is condemned as not requiring any sacrifice of feeling or comfort. Simple as this objection may appear, it is not without its influence over many sincere Christians. All Christians it is urged, must bear the cross of Christ, that is, a cross to which we feel a strong repugnance. And hence it is loosely inferred, that to overcome our repugnance to a particular act, is to bear the cross of Christ. Those who reason thus, seem to measure the cross of Christ in any particular duty, according to their reluctance to perform it. This we are well assured, is the popular view taken of this subject. And if people would examine the matter with candor and impartiality, they would find that what generally passes under the specious appellation of the cross of Christ in immersion, is nothing else than the irrepressible risings of a constitutional repugnance of such treatment of the body. To persons living in frigid climates, there is a strong resistance to being plunged into the water. This resistance arises, not from the force of

theological opinions, but from the natural effects of climate on the physiological constitution. On the other hand, in the torrid regions, to be dipped into the water is a luxury ardently craved by every impulse of the languishing system. Yet the cross of Christ no more strongly marks the immersion of an Icelander than that of a Cingalese. The Author of our being has implanted in our nature for our own welfare, an instinctive propensity to resist any sudden or unexpected hazard of our safety. The operations of this instinct are involuntary and without the co-operation either of the will or the rational faculty. It is our settled conviction founded upon somewhat extensive observation, that many, very many, who deeply imbibe the doctrine of exclusive immersion beforehand, still, at the moment of baptism, experience so much agitation and alarm as utterly to preclude that sense of religious obligation and devotional awe that should wholly pervade and possess the mind. Still we are taunted with the opprobrium of avoiding the "*cross*," of inclining to a merely fleshly, selfish ease, to the subversion of a pure administration of Christian baptism, and this, because we deny the theory of exclusive immersion! Is it reasonable to expect Pedobaptists to submit to a usage inconsistent with their views of duty, merely to show their willingness to "take up the cross?" May they not, and do they not evince that disposition, in numberless other instances in which it is their duty to do so? Have they not advanced to the front ranks in the great strife, and exhibited themselves valiant for God and the truth? Have they sunk into concealment in the hour of persecution and the times which have tried men's souls? Have they ever betrayed the common cause, or given any just ground for a latent suspicion, (much less a public proclamation,) on the part of their Baptist brethren, that

like the apostate Galatians, they wished to “avoid the cross of Christ?” Where then, is the justice—where the truth of these insidious whisperings of defection? We repudiate the ungenerous reflection thus cast forth upon the fair reputation of the great body of the church; while we assure the reader that if, in his estimation, we have descended to an odious personality in our *argumentum ad hominem*, it has not resulted from our choice, but from the necessity of the case and the delicacy of our position in this unfortunate controversy.<sup>1</sup>

### THIRD OBJECTION.

3. A third objection urged by our Baptist brethren, particularly in their discussions with members of the Lutheran church, is, “*that Luther himself, the great reformer, condemned the practice of sprinkling, and even disapproved of infant baptism.*” That any one not utterly regardless of his reputation, should hazard an assertion so entirely unfounded, is a matter of as much regret as it is of surprise; for Luther’s writings throughout, abound with the most conclusive evidence in support of pedobaptism as well as of his conviction of the propriety and validity of its performance by affusion; even his hostility to the abuses of papacy, is not susceptible of clearer or stronger proof. We have gone to the trouble to collect a few passages from those writings, which we shall here translate for the benefit of our readers, and which we have no doubt will prove fully satisfactory to every candid reader;—we would direct attention particularly to those portions of the extracts which are printed in *italics*:—

“That the dipping of a *child* in water or *sprinkling it with water* according to the command of Christ, should

<sup>1</sup>See Rev. F. G. Hibbard on the Mode of Baptism.

cleanse it from sin and transfer it from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God, is reviled by reason," &c. See *Singularia Lutheri* by Philip Saltzman, *Jena edition 1564, Tit. 220. Art. Baptism p. 657.*

"Inasmuch as there is neither ornament nor honor at baptism and God does outwardly no more than *apply a HANDFUL of water,*" &c. *Ibid chap. viii. p. 669.*

"I consider that by far the safest baptism is *the baptism of children*; for as Judas came to Christ to be baptized, so an adult may practice deception; but an infant cannot deceive, and comes to Christ in baptism like John and like the children that were brought to him," &c. *Ibid chap. x. p. 602.*

"We conclude that children believe at baptism and have a faith of their own, that God produces it in them in answer to the faithful prayers and obedience of the sponsors," &c. *Ibid chap. xi. p. 663.*

"Devils must flee from baptism; why?—they do not regard the water and the letter, but it is because God has commanded that we must use our hand and tongue in administering it *by sprinkling water* upon the subject in connection with the words prescribed by God," &c. *Ibid. chap. xi. p. 663.*

"We must endeavor by all means to honor baptism by word and work, for therefore we have the *baptismal font*, the altar, and pulpit, that they may receive us and bear testimony that we are baptized and belong to Christ," &c. *Ibid. chap. 15, p. 667.*

Luther's letter inviting a lady to become sponsor to his own child, will both gratify the curious and add to the amount of evidence on this point; it is as follows:

"Grace and peace in Christ; honorable and virtuous lady; dear friend; God has bestowed upon me a young

heathen, taken from my and my dear wife's body; I invite you for the Lord's sake that you will do me the favor to aid in introducing her to Christianity and become her spiritual mother, in order that through your instrumentality and assistance (I mean by your prayers) she may pass from the old birth of Adam to the new birth of Christ by holy baptism. I will strive to make myself deserving of the kindness, I commend you to God, Amen." *Table Talk, appendix chap. xxxiii. F. 55.*

*Martinus Luther.*

It is scarcely necessary to comment on any particular portion of the foregoing extracts, for they constitute an almost solid phalanx of proof, the most clear and conclusive, not only that Luther insisted on infant baptism, but also that he entirely approved of the mode by affusion or sprinkling. It is however highly probable that at an early period in the reformation, he inclined to the opinion that *infants* should be "*pretty well dipt,*" but at no time did he consider such dipping *essential*; but on most occasions when he adverted to the subject, he gave us to understand unequivocally, that he regarded the mode by sprinkling, pouring, the application of "a mere handful of water," &c., as fully adequate and valid. His apparent original preference (it was a mere preference) of dipping, was soon abandoned, and as he grew older, he settled down into the same opinion that is now entertained by the great body of Lutheran divines in the United States. Such is the conviction to which we have been led by a careful and extensive examination of his writings, and the foregoing extracts sufficiently prove its correctness.

A few more citations from Luther may not be unacceptable to our readers:

In the year 1541, Luther preached two sermons on baptism, occasioned by the administration of the ordinance to the child of the prince of Anhalt. In the second of these sermons (*Siebenter Theil, Fol. 439—441,*) he says: “Baptism consists of three parts, 1. water, 2. God’s word, 3. God’s command and ordinance;” he then proceeds in these words: “Here no more is done than that the subject, according to God’s command, is dipped, (*in’s Wasser getaucht,*) or the water is poured upon him, (*ueber ihn gegossen,*) and the words pronounced: I baptize you in the name of the Father, &c. If this is done, doubt not that it is a lawful and perfect baptism; nor need you inquire whether he who administers the ordinance is a pious and believing man. Though he should not be so, (for as to what he personally is, that does not concern the efficacy of the ordinance) if he only uses the words of the institution and does not take wine, or beer, or lye, or any thing else but water in connection with God’s word, it is a holy and acceptable baptism. For *all that is essential to baptism is the use of natural water in connection with the words of the institution.*”

In 1542 John Bugenhagen published a little tract on infant baptism, of which Luther approved, and to which he made some additions. It contains an elaborate argument in favor of pedobaptism, and the following is an extract from it: “Again, if any one can obtain baptism, and yet cavils in this manner: *how can a mere handful of water be of any benefit?*—he cannot be saved. For he despises God’s word and the ordinance of Christ; he treats Christ as though he had acted foolishly in ordaining and commanding things useless. *Luther’s Works, Achter Theil, Fol. 58.*

Luther's hostility to the Anabaptists is notorious; of this we have a curious specimen in a letter addressed to his wife.

*Copia* of a letter of Dr. M. L. to his beloved wife, written in Halle.

“ 1546, NUM. 61.

“ Grace and peace in the Lord !

“ Dear Katy ; we arrived at Halle to-day at 8 o'clock, but we could not go to Eisleben. We were met by a large Anabaptist woman with waves of water and great cakes of ice that covered the ground ; she threatened to baptize us over again,<sup>1</sup> and as we could not retreat in consequence of the Mulda (a stream of water) in our rear, we were obliged to remain in Halle, between the waters ; not however as though we thirsted for so much water, &c.

“ Martinus Luther, D.

“ 'To my kind and beloved “ Katy Luther  
in Wittenberg.”

This letter was written, as before stated, in 1546, that is, in the year of Luther's death ; and every one will perceive that he could at that period have had no predilection for the views of the Baptists, inasmuch as it treats those views with not a little irreverence, and even with ridicule—at least by implication.

We leave our readers to judge for themselves, from the foregoing extracts, what amount of credit is due to the objection made by some of our Baptist brethren, that Luther believed in the necessity of submersion to the exclusion of affusion, or that he was not decidedly in favor of children's being baptized. To our more enlightened readers we may owe an apology, for making our extracts

<sup>1</sup>Luther had been baptized in his infancy by *affusion*, and considering that valid, he was never re-baptized.



so copious and dwelling so long on this subject ; but the less informed, who have been assailed again and again by this groundless objection, without ability to refute it, will know better how to appreciate our effort. We need scarcely remark that Luther evidently laid more stress on baptism than many are inclined to in the present day, and that whatever may have been his opinion as to the efficacy and indispensable necessity of the ordinance, we do not feel bound to follow him any further than as he followed Christ.

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We have now brought our discussion to a close ; with what success, we are perfectly willing that an unbiassed public shall decide. As we wrote mainly, though not exclusively, for the benefit of the unlearned, it frequently seemed necessary to enter into detail and expand our remarks beyond what would otherwise have been deemed necessary ; thus the limits which we originally prescribed to ourselves, have been greatly transcended, not however so much, we hope, as to render the work particularly tedious.

It has been our uniform endeavor to treat those, whose views we have in the providence of God been called to oppose, with due deference ; nor are we conscious of having in the whole course of the discussion, indulged one single unkind feeling towards our Baptist brethren. If a harsh word or a disrespectful remark has escaped us, God is our witness that it was not designed, and we sincerely pray the Father of mercies to pardon us, and not to suffer the cause of Christ and the rights of "little children" to receive any prejudice on account of a want of temperateness on our part. Our object has been to contend for the truth as it is in Christ, and not for victory ;—

and to contend for and promote that truth, in the love of it, and with the meek and fraternal spirit which it never fails to inspire, when permitted to exercise its divine influence upon the heart.

In conclusion, let Christian parents once more be reminded of their duty, and urged to present their offspring to God in baptism. Think not, dear friends, that if you neglect this duty, the omission is a matter of minor importance. "You are evidently casting contempt on a divine institution, established by God and observed by his people for generations; and one which received the approbation and sanction of Christ and his apostles. Do you, can you suppose then that he will smile upon you, and bless you and your household, whilst you live in a neglect of this duty? Consistently you cannot: for 'whosoever shall break the least commandment, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.' How often did Jesus perform wonders, and heal the sick, on account of the believing entreaties of their friends! How cheerfully did he bestow his benediction upon children, on account of the faith and earnest desire of their parents! If you love your little ones therefore and feel concerned for their present and eternal welfare, bring them in the arms of faith to Jesus, and consecrate them to his service. 'He will in no wise cast them out; he will carry them in his bosom, and lead them into paths of righteousness for his name's sake.'

"Have you already dedicated your offspring to God, forget not your solemn vows and obligations. Call to mind the eventful hour, when in the presence of the heart-searching God, you promised and bound yourselves by ties never to be dissolved, to train them up in his fear and for his glory. Remember that you are intrusted with the care of immortal souls, who are soon to enter

upon an existence that will never terminate ; and whose everlasting happiness or misery, stands intimately connected with your exertions and prayers. ‘ These lights, lighted for eternity, it is yours to feed with holy oil from the sanctuary of God, that they may burn, with pure and lovely radiance, before the throne above. ‘ These never-dying plants, it is yours to rear and to cherish, bringing down upon them, by your supplications, the dews and rains of heaven, that so they may flourish and bear fruit forever, in the paradise of God.’ Let us entreat you then, Christian parents, ‘ to take that child and nurse it for God.’ ‘ Take it to a throne of grace. ‘ Teach it early the importance of religion and the science of salvation, ‘ when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.’ Be more concerned to make it an heir of the kingdom of God, than to raise it to the possession of great worldly opulence and distinction. Impress upon it constantly, the necessity of preferring the interests of the soul to the body, and the things of eternity to those of time. ‘ Thus may you expect, that you will be mutually blessed in the present life, and become to each other crowns of rejoicing on the day of the Lord.

“ To those children who have been devoted to God in their infancy, permit us to say :—You have abundant cause of gratitude, when you think how highly you have been distinguished above many around you. If your parents, in the act of your consecration, had right views and exercises, they must have felt a deep and prayerful solicitude for your future and eternal welfare. ‘ They not only vowed, but determined in humble reliance on the grace and promises of God, to watch over you, to instruct and admonish you and to bring you up as disciples

of the Saviour. What profit, my young friends, have you derived from their pious teachings and counsels, from their entreaties and prayers? Have you fulfilled the expectations and desires of their hearts, by walking in the paths of virtue and religion? 'A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.' O beware then of embittering the life of your parents, either by your indifference about religion or by profligate conduct: beware of disturbing the serenity of their dying moments, and of preventing them from closing their eyes in peace and triumph. Beware lest your signal blessings should at last prove a curse, and the privileges with which you are exalted unto heaven, should tend only to sink you deeper into the burning abyss.

“Let us all endeavor to have our religion seated principally in the heart, and never depend on any outward form as the ground of our eternal hopes. Let us live upon the great fundamentals of Christianity, and make it our daily and highest concern to exemplify their power in all our conversation and actions. For want of attention to these weightier matters of the law, it was that the Jews came short of heaven, though they were all the children of Abraham, and subjects of the covenant and promise. If therefore you suppose, that you must necessarily be Christians, because you have been born of Christian parents, and received the seal of the covenant, you are under the same awful delusion and will meet with the same disappointment and doom. The carnal descendants of Abraham perished without remedy, and so must all, notwithstanding their baptism, perish without remedy and without hope, who have not been born again by the Holy Spirit of God. ‘He is not a Chris-

tian who is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly, and baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.' ”<sup>1</sup>

It is a subject of deep and serious regret, that in a land of gospel privileges, where there are so many opportunities to become wise unto salvation, and Christ's ministers so frequently urge upon the rising generation, the necessity of making a public profession of religion, and of renewing the seal of God's covenant with his people by confirmation, there should still be so many who, either ignorant or regardless of their duty, are members of no particular denomination. This lamentable defection is attributable in part, to the mistaken views entertained by thousands respecting the relation in which their baptism, or rather the covenant of grace, of which baptism is the seal, has placed them. “We cannot now,” they say, “join the church or submit to confirmation, because we are not prepared; or we dread the assumption of such solemn responsibilities,” &c. But it should be remembered, beloved readers, that we do not ask you to join the church, or take upon yourselves the duties of church-membership. This has already been done. You were in fact *born into the church* without your consent, just as, without any agency of your own, you were born free citizens of the state; you were embraced in God's covenant even long before you entered upon your existence; the duties of church-membership are therefore already upon you, and you cannot escape without actually renouncing them. At your baptism your birth-right was impressively certified, and your participation in God's

<sup>1</sup>Christian Baptism by a Minister of the Ger. Reformed church.

covenant was ratified and openly announced ; and hence you are already members of the church of God, and require not to be transferred to this relation by a public profession or by the rite of confirmation.

A profession is indeed indispensably necessary, but upon grounds very different from that implied in your objection. Christ expressly commands you to *confess him before the world*, and declares that if you refuse or neglect to do so, he will deny you before his Father and his holy angels. Besides, the profession made in your name at your baptism, whereby your membership was solemnly attested, was made by your parents and sponsors, and now, having arrived at a proper age to act for yourselves, it is of the highest importance that you should publicly and voluntarily acquiesce in it; nor can any well-regulated Christian denomination admit you to the full enjoyment of church privileges, unless you do thus acquiesce.

Accordingly, in addressing those who have not yet entered into communion with any Christian denomination, we propose not the question: will you join the church of God; will you become subjects of his covenant; will you consent to become members of his visible kingdom and assume the responsibility connected with that relation? Far from it; all this, as already observed, has been done. You are already committed on the side of Christ; the vows of God are already irrevocably upon you, and the covenant has been solemnly recognized. All the powers of earth and all the ingenuity of infidelity, cannot absolve you from the obligations belonging to the position you occupy in reference to Messiah's kingdom. No, the question wears this aspect, and none other: Will you renounce your membership; are you

prepared to become recreant to the church to which your souls have been espoused; are you willing to be ranked among backsliders and apostates; have you made up your mind to annul the "everlasting covenant," and can you deliberately consent to be "cut off from God's people;" which is the penalty denounced, and necessarily incurred by a neglect personally to renew and confirm the covenant in question?—You may refuse *formally* to come out from the world, and to renew the profession made at baptism; but this will not diminish the amount of your duties or the weight of your responsibility; on the contrary, it will stamp upon your souls,—*deeply and perhaps indelibly*, the foul blot of *apostacy*! it will mark you as recreants to the cause to which you have been solemnly consecrated, and as traitors to the gracious covenant by virtue of which alone you can ever expect to be saved! A man who attempts to apologize for his omission to make a profession of religion and personally to confirm his baptismal engagements, does in effect say to Jehovah: I am indeed, by grace, a member of thy church; all the duties of discipleship are incumbent upon me; in virtue of my birth I belong to thy gracious covenant, and I stand pledged to believe in thy well-beloved Son for salvation, to renounce Satan, the world and sin, and walk in all the ways of thy commandments. But I now deliberately renounce the church and all its privileges and blessings; I abjure the covenant of God with his people, and the promises of mercy and eternal life comprehended in it; I annul and wilfully cast from me the entire spiritual and religious relation into which I have been brought by grace, and set up for myself independently of God, and in opposition to his plan of salvation; I sever myself from God's people: I cut loose from the great sheet-

anchor of hope; I abandon — but we forbear, we can pursue the awful subject no further; our heart within us grows faint and sick, while we contemplate the daring presumption and enormous guilt of those, who esteem their privileges so lightly, and thus stretch out their hand against God and strengthen themselves against the Almighty.

Would to God, that all those who are standing aloof from their duty in this respect, would take this view of the subject! would, that they could realize the true relation they sustain to Jehovah, and the actual ground they assume in refusing to profess Christ before the world, and to incur personally the obligations of church-membership; we are persuaded they would then act differently. The old plea: “I am not prepared to join the church; I cannot enter upon so solemn and responsible a relation,” &c., would no longer be relied upon; its fallacy would be seen and felt, and, ashamed of the base ingratitude and folly involved in it, they would perhaps awake to their duty or be compelled to seek refuge under shelter of a more specious apology.

Young men and women! remember, we beseech you that *you are not your own; you are bought with a price and therefore bound to glorify God with your bodies and spirits, which are his*; bear in mind that you are Jehovah’s own rightful property, not only by creation and redemption, but also and emphatically by a *covenant-transfer*; the God of Israel stipulated for your services with faithful old Abraham, when he condescended to enter into solemn league with that pious and distinguished patriarch; the promise attached to that agreement, had respect not only to him and his immediate posterity, but also “to all who were afar off, even as many



as the Lord our God should call ;”<sup>1</sup> he *has called* you by the gospel, and hence the blessings of the covenant appertain to you. When you first opened your eyes upon the world, you did so as subjects of that covenant ; you did so as members of the church of God ; accordingly, in due season the covenant was sealed and certified in baptism ; your membership in the church was thus made known and acceded to. Away then, with every idle subterfuge, and with all the miserable excuses with which you have heretofore sought to justify or extenuate your neglect of duty, and attempt no longer to undo what God has already done ; spurn not your blood-bought, inestimable birthright ; renounce not the church of God in which you were born ; be not apostates from the covenant so rich in love and mercy, in virtue of which alone remission of sins and eternal life can be obtained !—O remember your Creator now in the days of your youth ;—seek the Lord in brokenness of heart and contrition of spirit ; seek him in true faith on the Saviour of a lost and perishing world ;—seek him thus, while he may be found ; seek him now, even this very moment, lest it be eternally too late ; and profess him cheerfully, gratefully, and consistently in the face of a gainsaying and ungodly world, laying claim to all the blessings, and honors, and superabounding riches of grace, appertaining to your covenant relation. And thus, though your life may be accounted madness, and your end to be without honor, yet shall you be numbered among the children of God, and have your lot forever among his saints.

<sup>1</sup>Gen. xvii. 7, compared with Acts ii. 39.



# APPENDIX.

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## ESSAYS ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH BAPTISM.

### No. I.

#### WHY A NAME IS GIVEN AT BAPTISM.

A NAME is an appellation attached to a person or thing; or it is that by which an object is designated, to distinguish it from another. To give a name is a token of authority; thus a father gives names to his children, and a master to his servants. So also Adam gave names to all the animals, thereby indicating that they were in some sense placed under his dominion.

When God gave a name to an individual or changed it, he thereby signified that, that individual belonged to him in an especial manner, was taken under his peculiar care and appointed to some particular purpose. Thus he gave names, even before their birth, to Jedidiah or Solomon, the Messiah, John the Baptizer, &c. When he selected *Abram* with a view to claim him as his peculiar servant, to enter into a covenant of grace with him, and through him to accomplish a great purpose, he changed his name to *Abraham*. Hebrew and Greek names, have a meaning, and when given or changed on divine authority, their import always corresponded with some prominent feature in the character of the individual, or with some important purpose for which he was set apart. The name *Abraham* implies *the father of a great multitude*; accordingly

when God covenanted with him, he said:—"Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised, as God had said unto him."—Genesis xvii. 4, 5, 10, and 26.

*Jesus* means Saviour, and hence this very appropriate name was given to our Lord. *Saul* was changed to *Paul*; the former signifies *sepulchre, destroyer*,—an appellation quite expressive of the work of destruction in which that determined persecutor was engaged prior to his conversion; the latter implies a *worker*, answering admirably to the subsequent character of that same man, who could truly say: "but I labored more abundantly than they all."

It is well known that circumcision was the sign and seal of a covenant with God; in that rite God's authority over the individual circumcised, his favor and mercy towards him and his appointment of him to a particular purpose, were marked and formally recognized. Hence it was customary among the Jews to give names at circumcision, thereby betokening more fully the very thing represented by the rite. Thus, when Abraham covenanted with Jehovah and acknowledged his entire subjection to him by submitting to circumcision, his name was changed. The following examples reflect additional light on this subject.

"And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him Zacharias—Luke i. 59—63.

"And when the eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus.—Luke ii. 21.

"And when Jesus beheld him he said, thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, Peter.—John i. 42. Luke vi. 14.

"Saul who is also called Paul. Acts xiii. 9.

"Joses, by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas.—Acts iv. 36.

These remarks being premised, the practice of giving a name at baptism is easily accounted for. Baptism has come in the place of circumcision; it is in like manner an ordinance in which God's covenant of grace is sealed, and whereby we acknowledge his authority over us and his claim to our service and obedience; and he on his part assures us of his favor, owns us as his children and appoints us to purposes of love

and mercy. Hence there is a propriety in giving a name at baptism; the very idea which it indicates falls in with one of the designs of this ordinance; it may also, in a sense, be said to be in accordance with divine example in reference to Abraham, Christ, John and others, and is evidently a usage that has been transmitted to us from remote antiquity.

Another consideration which shows the propriety of this practice is the fact, that the individual baptized is recognized as a member of the church. Of course he is entitled to church-privileges, according to his capacity to enjoy them; if he is an adult, all the privileges of full communion belong to him; if a child, only such as progressively appertain to infant-membership. It is therefore obvious that the individual thus recognized should be announced to the church under some name, so that he may be distinguished from others, and under his own name and in his own proper person, receive the privileges and treatment due him from the church. It would be unreasonable as well as inconvenient to acknowledge a *nameless* person as a member of any society.

Further, the rules of the church demand, that a record should be kept in the regular church-book of the baptism of every member. This record presupposes a name; what kind of a registry of members would that be, in which they could not be distinguished by appropriate designations? In some countries the civil authority requires such a record, and it is in various respects important that it should be attended to, and hence we have an additional reason for giving a name at an early period in life.

We should however guard against gliding into an error on this subject. As the announcing of a name was in no sense a necessary part of circumcision, so it is not of baptism; if administered without a name, it is in every respect as valid as when one is given, hence the name appropriated to a person at baptism may be subsequently altered if circumstances render it necessary. But this should not be done hastily nor without substantial grounds. No good end could result from frequent alterations, and much confusion and even serious mischief would unavoidably ensue. The name adopted at baptism and entered into the church-protocol, should therefore be invariably retained except in special cases of sufficient importance to justify a change. If the record of the name be a matter of legal requirement, we have no right to alter it, unless authorized by a special act of the legislature. Being enrolled in the appropriate civil registry, the name has become the property of the State, and cannot be abandoned or exchanged for another except by permission of the State.

## No. II.

## SPONSORS AT BAPTISM.

SPONSORS are persons who by appointment are present at baptism, to witness the ceremony and answer for the individual baptized, and thus become sureties for his future religious education. This we presume is a correct definition of the term, according to its common acceptation; but it does not comprehend one of the principal designs contemplated by sponsors in the Lutheran church. By an examination of a number of ancient Lutheran liturgies, we find that god-parents were required to be present at baptism as *representatives of the church*, to acknowledge in its name, the baptized child, as a member of the church, and, as intermediate persons, to form the cord of union and Christian fellowship between the parties. It was on this ground that parents were not deemed suitable persons to act as sponsors;—it being their office to dedicate the child, it was thought inconsistent for the same persons to act in the double capacity of offering their child to the church and also of receiving the offering.

Some very respectable writers maintain, that the practice of having sponsors was introduced at a very early age. It is well known that the primitive Christians were violently persecuted and in numerous instances barbarously put to death; it therefore seemed necessary that others besides the parents, should be witnesses at baptism, who in case of the death of the parents, might attest the fact, and if necessary, provide for the religious education of the baptized. This design of sponsors accords well with the opinion of those who think they can trace the practice as far back as the second century.

Others are of opinion that there is no historical evidence whatever, that children were presented for baptism within the first five or six centuries, by any other persons than their parents, unless the parents were dead or had not embraced the Christian religion. A very learned Episcopal divine, who carefully examined the subject, and was exceedingly anxious to fix the introduction of sponsors at the earliest possible period, acknowledged that in the first centuries, none but parents were the presentors and sureties for their own children, except in extraordinary cases, as for example, when the parents were not living, or were not professing Christians; when they cruelly forsook and exposed their offspring; and when masters had young slaves committed to their charge.<sup>1</sup> Augustine who flourished toward the close of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, maintained that parents ought to act as sponsors

See Bingham's Ecclesiastical Antiquities.

for their own children, except in extraordinary cases, viz. such as have just been mentioned; and added, that in those cases any professing Christians who should be willing to undertake the benevolent charge, might with propriety, take such children, offer them in baptism, and become responsible for their Christian education. The writings of several of the fathers are sometimes quoted as affording evidence in favor of the use of sponsors in early times; but those who have gone to the trouble of examining them most carefully, assure us that they have not written a sentence which sustains the idea that any others acted as sponsors but parents, provided they were in life and were of a proper character to perform the office. The testimony of Dionysius, which is more favorable than that of others to the early use of sponsors other than parents, relates only to cases in which the children of pagans or unbelieving parents were to be trained up to the Christian religion. It must also be borne in mind that the writings of Dionysius are entitled to no credit, as they are regarded by the most learned as "a gross and impudent forgery."

Sponsors in cases of *adult* baptism, appear to have been introduced in the fifth century; but they were employed only under peculiar circumstances; for example, when the adult was *dumb*, or in a state of *delirium* and could not answer for himself. On such occasions the sponsors testified to the good character of the candidate and the fact that he was really anxious to receive baptism. Subsequently the practice became universal, still the adults always entered into the engagements themselves, provided they were not incapacitated by physical or mental imbecility. The sponsors at adult baptism were usually the officers of the church, and were looked upon as the guardians of the religious life of the persons baptized.

In the ninth century, the church of Rome prohibited parents to act as sponsors for their own children, and required this duty to be yielded up to others;—certainly a most arbitrary and unrighteous requisition.

Among the Waldenses and Albigenses the parents usually stood as sponsors for their own offspring, though other pious persons were not prohibited from performing this office, at least when the parents were dead or absent or for some other reason could not attend to it themselves.

The church of England and also the Protestant Episcopal church in this country, require god-parents in all cases of baptism, adults as well as infants. In the former the parents are not permitted to stand as sponsors, nor even urged to be present at the baptism of their child.

The Lutheran church in the United States, as on several other points of doctrine and practice, so also on this subject, occupy middle ground. Indeed, a comparative view of her

principles and usages place her in this relative position in a variety of respects, as though her ruling maxim had been, *Ibis tutissimus in medio*. We require the parents to be present at the baptism of their children if practicable, and always advise them to act as sponsors; at the same time, if desired, we admit other sponsors in connection with them, but avail ourselves of every suitable occasion to discourage it. As the church-records attest the fact of baptism, and it is the acknowledged and solemn duty of the church to make provision for the Christian education of her young members, especially if they be orphans or destitute, we consider that these objects of sponsors, other than parents, are sufficiently provided for. As to representatives of the church to acknowledge in its name the membership of the baptized child; we think, that while the parents dedicate it to the Lord, the church is amply represented by the officiating minister. But there are other considerations that have operated upon our churches in determining them to resist this practice. The pledges made at baptism in behalf of the child, are such as none but parents are for the most part qualified to redeem, and hence it most becomes them to enter into those pledges. Moreover, the use of sponsors, however necessary at first, however laudable the original design, and however faithfully their duties may have been observed, has in too many instances deteriorated into an unmeaning and thoughtless and even sinful habit. Solemn engagements are made which are rarely if ever fulfilled, nay scarcely afterwards thought of, and which indeed those who make them have neither intention nor opportunity to discharge. Thus the practice has sadly degenerated, and cannot in such cases be regarded by the Searcher of hearts otherwise than as odious and culpable. For these reasons several of our synods have publicly expressed their disapprobation of it, in ordinary cases, and we rejoice to say that it is rapidly disappearing. We must however here remark, that as our churches are in a sense *independent*, and claim the right of observing such usages as they deem most subservient to general edification, especially in matters not essential, our statements may not strictly apply to every individual church and minister belonging to our community; but in general we think they will not be found to be materially erroneous.

The views and usages of the German Reformed church on this subject, bear so strong a resemblance to those of the Lutherans, that these observations are perhaps equally applicable to it.

The conclusions which we draw from the preceding remarks, are the following:

1. The use of sponsors other than parents, is not a scriptural regulation.



2. It did not exist on ordinary occasions, in the earliest and purest age of the church.

3. It is productive of very little if any good, as practised in the present day, and is calculated to occasion much evil.

4. The design of sponsors is amply provided for by the present regulations of the church in Christian countries.

5. Parents are decidedly the most suitable persons to stand as sponsors for their own children, but they ought certainly to be pious.

6. If the parents are dead or absent, or insane, or are pagans, or live in vice and immorality, or on some other account are disqualified to act in that capacity, then others should supply their place, but their substitutes should be professing Christians.

7. When adults are baptized, they should always answer for themselves; but if they are *dumb*, or of very feeble capacity and therefore in need of spiritual guardians, then it is proper for some Christian friend or friends to become their sponsors.

If in view of the foregoing conclusions it should be asked, whether the children of all Christians or baptized parents ought to be baptized? We answer in the *affirmative*. The practice of circumcision among the Jews was universal; and though it was the duty of every Jew to be a *sincere* worshipper of the true God, yet many were not, "they were not all Israel who were of Israel;" still we have no evidence that any children were excluded from circumcision, unless their parents were excommunicated. So also the children of all Christian parents should receive baptism; being born in the church, just as they are born citizens of the state, they are undoubtedly entitled to the formal recognition of their membership. If both their parents are infidels or pagans, and have thus either renounced or never embraced the Christian system, the case is different. But even in this event, if a Christian friend should kindly adopt them into his family, or consent to stand as sponsor and become surety for their religious education, they also, by virtue of this connection would have an equal claim, through the merits of Christ, to the seal of the covenant. But while we contend for the universality of infant baptism under the specified limitations, we cannot admit that all baptized parents are qualified to stand as sponsors. Such as habitually violate their own baptismal vows and set at defiance the authority of God and the church, and of course have forfeited their membership, are certainly not fit and suitable persons to enter into those solemn engagements in behalf of their children, which baptism involves. How can parents of this description *sincerely* dedicate their children to the pure and sacred service of God?—how, *consistently* obligate themselves to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Is there no incongruity,—nothing like gross hypocrisy in such a pro-

cedure! Does not every formula of baptism that has ever been published in the Lutheran church, whether in Europe or America, require those who present the child for baptism, to renounce in its name, the devil and all his works and ways, to profess faith in the divine authority of the Christian religion, and to engage to use all necessary care and diligence by instruction, admonition, example and discipline to train him up in the fear of the Lord? Now, is it not expected that this *renunciation, profession, and engagement*, should be *sincere*? If not, the whole transaction is a *solemn mockery*; but if it is, then we submit it to the decision of any enlightened and unprejudiced mind, whether ungodly parents, are qualified to perform the office of sponsors?

What then, under such circumstances, is the proper course of procedure? We answer, if either of the parents afford evidence of a sincere profession of Christianity, let that parent only, answer for the child; but if both are still "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," it does not appear to us that the ordinance can be consistently administered, or its engagements be faithfully entered into, unless some Christian friend will kindly consent to act as sponsor. Some ministers, feeling the force of this view of the subject, have endeavored to escape the charge of inconsistency, and of tempting ungodly parents hypocritically to bind themselves by vows which they neither intend nor are capable to perform, by omitting to propose the usual questions prescribed in the formulary of the rite; they think they pursue the safest course by administering baptism without requiring the customary renunciation, profession and engagements. But does it not follow, that in such cases, it is not upon a profession of Christianity that the child is baptized, for there is no profession made; and does not this conflict with the very nature of the ordinance, and with all the examples of its administration recorded in the New Testament? If they however have the approbation of their own conscience, we shall not condemn them; but we would respectfully suggest, whether it would not be highly proper to avail themselves of such occasions to administer a solemn reproof and a pungent exhortation to those who wickedly undertake to covenant with God for their own children, while they themselves are living in rebellion against him? and if so, they will find an appropriate text in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the fiftieth Psalm: "But unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do \* \* \* that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee."

## No. III.

## CONFIRMATION.

## THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF CONFIRMATION.

CONFIRMATION is a solemn and religious rite, observed by the great body of the Christian church, but is not regarded in the same light by the several denominations among whom it is practised.

The churches that reject this rite, constitute, comparatively speaking, but a *small minority*. Besides the Lutherans, it is held in high estimation in the German Reformed, Protestant Episcopal, Bohemian, Moravian, Roman Catholic, Greek, and some other churches. Even those who have hitherto looked upon it with an evil eye, are beginning to discern its advantages, and to speak of it in commendatory terms.<sup>1</sup>

The Roman Catholics rank confirmation among the sacraments, but there is no scriptural warrant to justify this view of it, especially as it was not instituted by Christ, which is deemed an essential constituent of a sacrament.

Our brethren of the Protestant Episcopal church consider it, not indeed as a sacrament, but as a divine ordinance, which according to their opinion, was instituted and practised by the apostles. They think it probable that our Lord, during the forty days that he conversed with his apostles after his resurrection, instructed them to institute it.

Our Presbyterian brethren reject it entirely as a human invention, and place it in a category with *exorcism*, *chrismation* or anointing with oil in the form of a cross, and the administration of *milk and honey* to the candidate; all which they maintain, were human additions to baptism, introduced about the close of the second or the beginning of the third century.

Not wishing to give this article a controversial character, we shall not stop to investigate the process of reasoning by which these conflicting theories are attempted to be sustained; but shall proceed to present the sentiments generally entertained in the Evangelical Lutheran church.

The Lutherans, constituting by far the largest Protestant denomination in the world, occupy middle ground between the Episcopal and the Presbyterian churches. They do not as a

<sup>1</sup>See Christian Spectator of December, 1831, p. 552, sqq. in a review of Harvey's Inquiry; also Prof. Robinson's remarks on confirmation, Bib. Repos. of July, 1831, p. 423, 599; an extract from which, as well as some remarks by Prof. Hodge on the same object, will be found at the end of this article.

body, believe that confirmation was instituted either by Christ or the apostles, nor do they generally profess to find conclusive evidence in the word of God, to justify the belief that it was even practised by the apostles. The portions of Scripture recorded Acts viii. 14, 15, and Acts xix. 1, 6, which are usually quoted as apostolic authority for the observance of this rite, are understood by them as referring, not to the *ordinary* solemnity of confirmation, as practised in the church at the present day, but to the *miraculous* gifts of the Holy Ghost, conferred by *extraordinary officers* for an extraordinary purpose. There have indeed been some very respectable divines in the Lutheran church, and for aught we know there may be yet, who have inferred from Heb. vi. 1, 2. that "the imposition of hands" other light than that in which we have represented it. The may possibly have been continued in the church as an impressive mode of invoking the divine blessing on those who were to be received into full communion with the church. The passage from which this deduction is made, reads thus:—"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptism and *the laying on of hands*, and of resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment." The inspired penman here enumerates *the laying on of hands*, among the rudiments or elementary principles of Christianity, and it is supposed by some, that although the laying on of hands was first designed to accompany the communication of the extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit, it was nevertheless retained by the early Christians, after those powers had ceased, as a standing solemnity to mark the transition from infant-membership in the church to adult-membership. It will be perceived that this is merely a *supposition*,—a supposition however, which receives some strength from the consideration, that no other rite whatever has descended from the apostolic church, to which the above mentioned imposition of hands could allude, if it be not confirmation. But even granting that the apostles and their immediate successors practised confirmation, which the premises in the case are not sufficiently clear to warrant, still as that presumed primitive practice was not enforced by a "thus saith the Lord," we are not obligated to conform to it any further than as its superior adaptation to accomplish good, may commend itself to us. We cannot admit that the example of the first Christians, including that of the apostles unenforced by a command is binding on us, especially in reference to a rite merely external. Such a concession would involve us in inextricable difficulties, not to say absurdities.

Confirmation, as practised among Lutherans, may be said to present two aspects.

1. It is a personal and most solemn assumption and ratification of the covenant of grace, which was recognized and sealed at our baptism. The members of the church are baptized in infancy, and though they are then, in a formal manner, acknowledged as parties to the covenant and consequently as members of the church, yet being infants and incapable of voluntary action in a moral point of view, it is not only right, but a positive duty that they should themselves, when they arrive at a proper age, come forward and personally renew and confirm the vows made in their name, by their sponsors or representatives, when at baptism they were recognized as subjects of God's gracious covenant. God requires the heart. His people must be a willing people; and neither our services nor our persons can be an acceptable offering to him, if not accompanied with the full and free consent of the will and the cheerful flowing forth of the affections of the soul. Hence it is eminently proper and necessary, that there should be some appropriate rite, in which adults may personally take upon themselves and ratify the solemn promises entered into in their behalf in their infancy. To afford an opportunity for the discharge of this sacred duty, appears to be one of the principal designs of confirmation.

Accordingly, when persons present themselves as candidates for this ordinance, (they should always *present themselves*, and not come merely to gratify the wishes of friends, or in compliance with the usage of the church,) they do most solemnly renew the vows made for them at their baptism. They engage, in the presence of men and angels, to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life; to believe in Jesus, and to serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives. In a word they deliberately "join themselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten."

2. The second aspect in which this rite may be viewed, exhibits it to us as a solemn mode of admitting individuals to adult church-membership, or to full communion in the church. The enjoyment of the privileges of membership in Christ's church is progressive. It commences with baptism and the special prayers of God's people; next, as the infant member grows older and the powers of the mind are developed, it includes religious instruction from the preaching of God's word, and the private labors of the pastor and members; to this is gradually added the society of the faithful followers of Christ, whose example and exhortations will afford the young member important aid in his journey toward the land of bliss; then ensue the advantages resulting from church-discipline, which

consist in the watchfulness exercised by the church over the purity of individual members, in exhorting, admonishing, reproving, censuring, &c., the member who wanders from the footsteps of the Saviour. And although the latter stages of this discipline may be painful, the erring youth will be greatly benefited by it, and feel thankful to the church that even this severe remedy is employed to lead him to the Saviour of his soul. Finally, having reached mature age and been properly instructed, the last and crowning act, is admission to full and complete membership in the church of Christ, whereby he publicly devotes himself to the service of his Saviour, voluntarily presenting his soul and body as a living sacrifice upon the Christian altar. He thus, in a public and solemn manner comes out from the world and declares himself to be a member of God's kingdom, a subject of his covenant, and a disciple of his Son. This is equivalent to what is termed in some churches, a *public profession of religion*. In the Lutheran church, this profession is made at confirmation.

Every church has some mode of receiving members into full communion, and as Christ did not prescribe any particular form, that which is the most appropriate and impressive, and has the least tendency to nourish superstition, may be regarded as the best. We have no objection to the Presbyterian, or Methodist mode; nay, we are willing to admit that their modes may be more appropriate than ours for their respective churches; but at the same time we maintain that ours is decidedly the best for us. Of this, extensive experience has long since convinced us. Confirmation, with its antecedent and attendant religious exercises, is in itself adapted to make deep and salutary impressions, as well upon the assembled congregation who witness the solemn scenes, as upon those who are the personal participants of them. Moreover, the Master has again and again sanctioned this rite with his smiles, and blessed it on countless occasions, as the means of awakening sinners and reviving and strengthening believers. So long therefore, as any degree of fidelity and spirituality mark the character of our ministers and people, the rite of confirmation with the previous religious instruction connected with it, will be held in very high esteem and be practised in the Evangelical Lutheran churches with great confidence in the promised blessing of God.

Having admitted that the evidence in support of apostolic example for this rite, is not conclusive, and that if it even were, not being enforced by an injunction, it would form no obligatory rule for us, the question may be proposed: "why, under such circumstances, do you still adhere to it?"—Because the Great Head of the church, having in this case, as well as many other similar ones, given no specific directions, but left

us to adopt such form as in consistence with the general principles of the gospel, might most strongly commend itself, we are of opinion that this rite is peculiarly adapted to the very purpose for which it is employed. It is therefore on grounds of Christian expedience or utility, that we hold to confirmation; we prefer it decidedly to every other outward mode of renewing the covenant of baptism and making a public profession of religion. We know assuredly, that it is acceptable to that God who has so frequently sanctioned and blessed it.

To this consideration may be added the fact, that confirmation lays claim to great antiquity. The laying on of hands was a common usage under the Old Testament dispensation. Thus when Moses constituted Joshua his successor, God appointed him to lay his hands upon him.<sup>1</sup> Jacob laid his hands upon Ephraim and Manasseh when he gave them his last blessing.<sup>2</sup> The high-priest stretched out his hands to the people as often as he pronounced the divine blessing upon them.<sup>3</sup> This practice was also frequent in sacrifices; the person bringing the victim, *laid his hands on the head, &c.*<sup>4</sup>

All this was indeed not confirmation, but still it marks the practice of the imposition of hands as ancient and solemn, and always connected with religious or devotional exercises.

In the New Testament we find, besides that already referred to, (Heb. vi. 1—2,) at least four kinds or occasions of the imposition of hands recounted. The first by Christ himself, to express an authoritative benediction;<sup>5</sup> the second, in the healing of diseases;<sup>6</sup> the third, in conferring the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit,<sup>7</sup> and the fourth in setting apart persons to sacred office.<sup>8</sup>

Though none of these instances affords a clear example of confirmation, nor even alludes to one unless it be that recorded in the Epistle to the Hebrews, yet, if the apostles received into full communion members who had been baptized in their infancy, it appears to us to be not improbable that they did so by the imposition of hands and prayer, in other words, by confirmation, because this mode of doing it would have fallen in most harmoniously with the well known and long established usages of the Jews, and have precisely coincided with the spirit and custom of the apostolic age. This probability is heightened by the historical fact, that the Jews were in the habit of presenting their children at the age of thirteen years, to the congregation, that they might be publicly examined, renew the covenant which had been made for them in their infancy, and take upon themselves their obligations of obedience

<sup>1</sup>Numb. xxvii. 18. <sup>2</sup>Gen. xlvi. 14. <sup>3</sup>Levit. ix. 22. <sup>4</sup>Ibid i. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Matt. xix. and Mark x. 16. <sup>6</sup>Mark xvi. 18, Acts xxviii. 8.

<sup>7</sup>Acts viii. 17, and xix. 6. <sup>8</sup>Acts vi. 6, xiii. 3, 1 Tim. iv. 14.

to the divine law.<sup>1</sup> On these occasions the elders of the Synagogue laid their hands upon them and pronounced them *the sons of the congregation of Israel*. The objection that the laying on of hands by the apostles (Acts viii. 17, and xix. 6,) was accompanied by the *extraordinary influences* of the Holy Ghost, does not appear to be a solid one, because the ceremony was attended by the same miraculous effects in cases of *ordination to the gospel ministry*, (1 Tim. iv. 14, and 2 Tim. i. 6,) and yet the practice of ordaining in the same mode is still retained in churches that reject confirmation, though they make no pretensions to confer the Holy Ghost on such occasions. To condemn confirmation then, simply because we cannot thereby impart those supernatural gifts, would be no less fatal to ministerial ordination.

As our Lord, when he instituted the new seal of his covenant, did not introduce a novel rite, but selected baptism which had long been used among the Jews in the reception of proselytes, and appointed it to a new purpose, is it not very reasonable to suppose that the imposition of hands accompanied by prayer,—a practice so well understood among the Jews, should be adopted as the mode of admitting members to full communion in his church? But whether or not, it is certain that confirmation can be traced to a very early period in the church. Dr. Campbell<sup>2</sup> thinks it arose in the second century from the rite which the bishop claimed to confirm the baptisms that were administered by the presbyters and deacons of his church. Towards the close of the second century, it was undoubtedly in vogue, for Tertullian mentions a number of superstitious practices that were associated with it about that period. The ceremony was performed immediately after baptism, provided the bishop was present, and in his absence, was deferred until the candidates could present themselves, or if children, until they could be presented by others to him. In that age the imposition of hands was regarded as essential to the completion of baptism, and was usually performed by the bishops, who professed to be the successors of the apostles, and as such, empowered to communicate the Holy Ghost through the act of confirmation. “For their convenience the two festivals of Easter and Whitsuntide were chosen as the proper seasons for adults and children, when the candidates were required to assemble from all places in the bishop’s church, and the part which the bishops then performed was that of the imposition of hands, while the act of baptism, might be done by presbyters and deacons. Such as had been baptized in the interval, and converts from heresy who had received baptism in their

<sup>1</sup>See Buxtorf Syn. Jud. cap. 3.

<sup>2</sup>See Lectures on Ecclesiastical History.



own sects, now received only the imposition of hands with its accompanying ceremonies."

But whatever superstitious frippery may have disfigured the rite in question in the second and third centuries, and in later ages among the Roman Catholics; in the Lutheran Church it is regarded, so far as our knowledge extends, in no other light than that in which we have represented it. The apology of the Augsburg Confession contains the following declaration on this subject: *Confirmation is a rite which was transmitted to us from the fathers, but which the church never regarded as essential to salvation; for it is not supported by a divine command.*<sup>1</sup> We make no pretension to impart the Holy Ghost by confirmation, we ascribe no magic virtue to the laying on of hands, nor to the form of words accompanying that act; we claim for them no other than their appropriate moral influence, and are convinced that they had not anciently, and have not at present, any other in the hands of bishops. The testimony of the illustrious Calvin on this subject, well deserves a place in this article. He speaks of it in the highest terms, (Institutes, book iv. chap. 19, §. 4.) It deserves, he thinks, "to be regarded as sacred and solemn." He adds, that he "highly approves of it, and wishes it were restored to its primitive use, uncorrupted by superstition." In Book iv. chap. 19, §. 13, he again says: "I sincerely wish that we retained the custom (of confirming) which I have stated was practised among the ancients"—and his principal argument in his subsequent remarks is founded on the catechetical instruction which was connected with it, and by which such salutary effects are produced, as we have already had occasion to remark.

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No. III.

CONFIRMATION.

CONTINUED.

THE BENEFITS OF CONFIRMATION, AND THE QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO A PROFITABLE RECEPTION OF IT.

Having examined the nature and design of confirmation, we shall proceed to set forth its benefits, and the qualifications necessary to a profitable reception of it.

The great value of this rite consists, not in the simple act of laying on of hands, nor even in the form of words uttered

<sup>1</sup>Formula Concordiæ, p. 201.

by the minister; for, apart from the knowledge of divine truth, and the impression which it is designed to make upon the heart, the whole ceremony, so far as the recipient of it is concerned, is little else than a solemn mockery. Confirmation then, must be considered in connection with the course of instruction which precedes it, and as the closing act of a series of religious efforts intended, and with the divine blessing adapted to prepare the candidates for "the communion of saints;" that is, for their communion with Christ as their Head, and with God's people as members, of which communion the Lord's supper is the visible sign.

Some time before a Lutheran minister intends to administer confirmation, he invites all who desire to take up the cross and follow the Redeemer, to meet him in the church or lecture-room. Among those invited, are particularly such as are religiously disposed, or awakened to a sense of their sins, and others, whether baptized or not, who are old enough to make a personal profession of religion. In order to enforce his invitation, he seeks a private interview with all whose duty it is to attend his public ministrations, but have not yet been admitted to full membership, and urges upon them the necessity of this duty. All are exhorted to attend the contemplated course of religious instruction, with the understanding however that no one will be required or even permitted by the discipline of the church, to be confirmed, unless the religious instruction is blessed as the means of awakening his heart and producing a sincere desire to consecrate himself to God.

The "catechetical lectures" now commence; each catechumen is provided with Luther's Smaller Catechism, which, so far as may be deemed advisable, is committed to memory together with accompanying proof-texts. The minister explains the object of the instruction, the nature and design of baptism, of confirmation and the Lord's supper; he aims at making them acquainted with themselves and with God, with their own character as fallen and hell-deserving creatures, and the character of Christ as the only Saviour of a perishing world; the Holy Spirit is represented as the only efficient agent, and the inspired word of God as the instrumental means of renewing and sanctifying their nature. The whole plan of salvation, every important doctrine and precept of the gospel, especially the nature and indispensable necessity of repentance and faith, of thorough conversion to God and of newness and holiness of life, are elucidated and inculcated in as simple and earnest a manner as possible, so that the youngest and weakest may fully understand. No scriptural efforts are unemploy- ed, to prevail on them to turn to the Lord with their whole heart; to yield without delay to the claims of God and to be-

come and forever remain his humble and obedient children. The meetings are opened with singing and prayer, and closed in the same manner; the catechumens themselves, amply instructed on the subject of prayer, if qualified publicly to lead in this duty, are sometimes called on to offer up the closing prayer. The Sacred Scriptures are made the only basis of all these lectures; they are the polar-star of the Lutheran minister in imparting religious instruction; with them he lays the foundation, rears the superstructure and adds the cap-stone; the catechism he also uses faithfully, not however to determine the sense of God's word, but as a summary of it, to direct him in his general course and facilitate and simplify his lectures. For every meeting with his beloved pupils, he is careful to prepare himself previously in his closet, and by prayerfully reading the Bible and other devotional works calculated to interest and instruct his own heart and solemnize his own feelings. Before he finishes his deeply interesting and important work, he takes occasion to converse with every catechumen on the great subject of his personal salvation. At these interviews he ascertains from each, the state of his heart, the measure of his doctrinal knowledge, his religious experience, his peculiar trials and difficulties, &c., and is enabled to form a tolerable estimate of the qualifications of every one for the approaching solemnities. This course of instruction is continued at first, once, and subsequently, twice or thrice a week, for two or three months, and often longer.

“Such is the course of instruction substantially pursued by the great mass of our divines, with the variations which the habits and predilections of each may dictate, and the exercise of which, the principles of Christian liberty, so highly prized, and so fully enjoyed in the Lutheran church, secure to all; yet has it not unfrequently been the theme of invidious clamor to the illiterate enthusiast, and of animadversion from others better informed. But we have never heard, nor do we expect ever to hear, of a single truly pious pastor, who faithfully attended to this instruction, and did not regard it as a highly blessed means of bringing souls to Christ. By unconverted ministers, this duty, like all others, will be performed as a mere formality, and confer little benefit on those who attend on it. But in the hands of the great mass of our pastors, it is nothing else than a series of meetings for prayer, singing, exhortation and individual personal interview, between them and those who profess a concern for salvation; in which, without adopting the novel nomenclature of the day, they can enjoy all the facilities and afford to their hearers all the benefits aimed at, and doubtless often attained by others, in what are termed anxious meetings, inquiry meetings, class meetings, private conferences, &c. &c. Indeed, the friends of this good

old custom are delighted to see the several denominations, under different appellations, adopting the substance of the same thing; nor do we care by what name the thing is known, so that God is glorified, and sinners are saved."<sup>1</sup>

The instruction ended, an examination of the catechumens takes place, at which the pastor presides and the church-officers are witnesses.<sup>2</sup> After the examination, the minister recommends to the officers, as many of the applicants for full communion in the church, as he thinks are qualified; and their cases decided, all who have been deemed worthy, are confirmed, that is, they are permitted publicly to renew and ratify their baptismal promises and by a public profession, to dedicate themselves to the service of Him who loved them and gave himself for them. Those of the candidates who had not been baptized, enter into the same engagements preparatory to their baptism, which are made by such as are confirmed. In these cases, some of our ministers do not deem confirmation necessary while others do. As the Christian cannot renew his vows to God too often, even though it should be every day, there is certainly no impropriety in administering confirmation to those adults who have just been baptized, and it may have a beneficial effect.

The ceremony of confirmation is thus performed.—First, several appropriate questions are proposed; these being answered in the affirmative, (which with the prayer of the officiating minister, is considered the essential part of the act itself,) the catechumens kneel at the altar, and the pastor laying his hands on each one as he passes around, solemnly invokes the blessing of God upon him in a short prayer. He then extends to each the hand of brotherly fellowship, and in the name of the whole congregation, acknowledges him as a member of the church and entitled to all its privileges, so long as his deportment shall correspond with the solemn promises which he has just made.

It is accordingly the public and solemn renewal of the baptismal covenant, as the concluding act of a previous and full course of religious instruction, which is regarded as confirmation, and not the imposition of hands; indeed the latter, though an appropriate religious practice, always connected with it, is not even considered essential.

<sup>1</sup>Pop. Theol.

<sup>2</sup>In some neighborhoods this examination is held in the church in the presence of the whole congregation, but experience as well as the nature of the exercise has shown, that the object can be much better accomplished, if conducted more privately and by a *personal inquiry with each individual respecting the evidence of his own personal piety*, instead of a general examination on the doctrines and duties of Christianity.

The foregoing view of confirmation, including the preparatory course of instruction and the attending circumstances, will enable the intelligent and unbiased mind to form some idea of its advantages. We will only yet remark, that in addition to the special prayer of the officiating pastor for the subject of this rite, the fervent supplications of the assembled congregation of God's people, are also enlisted in his behalf. His religious obligations, though not increased, are more deeply impressed upon his mind, and this will have a tendency to keep him faithful and diligent in the duties of Christian life, to make him watchful and prayerful, and we may justly hope, to prepare him the better for the reception of those influences of the Holy Spirit, which are necessary to aid and guide him in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord, blameless. As he confirms the obligations arising from his covenant-relation to Jehovah, and willingly renews his vows of self-consecration to him; so God, by his ministering servant, confirms all his promises of grace and mercy, so that when this rite is duly administered, and duly received, it can hardly fail to prove the occasion of the richest blessings. It would be a most dishonoring reflection on the divine faithfulness and goodness, to suppose that a surrender of all we are and have, to the great Head of the church, in a manner so solemn and serious, and withal, so intelligent and voluntary, should not be highly acceptable to him. He has declared that he will honor those who honor him; that he will confess before his Father and his holy angels, all who sincerely confess him before men, and though heaven and earth should pass away, not one jot or tittle of his promises shall fail. Often has his sanctifying and comforting grace descended like the dew of heaven, on occasions of confirmation; and thanks to his unmerited grace, many humble believers can testify, from happy experience, that when they sealed their covenant with God, by renewed vows of fidelity, they found themselves "sealed with the Holy Spirit" unto the day of eternal redemption.

"The orthodox and pious Knapp speaks advisedly, when he remarks that confirmation, in the cases of many, is followed, as experience teaches, by the most blessed effects, through their whole life. 'And if,' he continues, 'its advantages do not always *immediately* appear, they often manifest themselves in after years; for the seed which was sown in the heart frequently lies concealed a long time ere it comes up.' Both he, and Morus, (in the Epitome, &c. p. 238 of Schneider's German translation.) exhort the pastor to be careful and conscientious in the performance of the duties which are connected with this 'laudable custom.' Many, says Dr. Lochman, in his History, &c. of the Evan. Luth. church, p.

158, date the beginning of their real conversion to God from their confirmation."<sup>1</sup>

The qualifications requisite to a profitable reception of this rite, remain to be stated. Believing that our excellent Formula of Discipline, corresponds on this point with the principles of the gospel, we shall be guided by that in our remarks.

"It shall be the duty of the Council to admit to membership adults, who make application, and whom *on mature examination*, they shall judge to be possessed of the qualifications hereafter specified. They shall be obedient subjects of divine grace, that is, they must either be genuine Christians, or satisfy the Church Council that they are sincerely endeavoring to become such. Also to admit to communion of the church, all those who are admitted to church-membership in their infancy, and whom *on like examination*, they shall judge possessed of the above mentioned qualification. No one shall be considered a fit subject for confirmation, who has not previously attended a course of religious lectures, delivered by the pastor on the most important doctrines and principles of religion; unless the pastor should be satisfied that the applicant's attainments are adequate without this attendance."<sup>2</sup>

It accordingly appears, that the candidates for confirmation, must be "obedient subjects of divine grace, that is, they must either be genuine Christians, or satisfy the Church Council that they are sincerely endeavoring to become such."

All mankind are the subjects of divine grace, for all are more or less the recipients of his unmerited favor. Those who have been born in a Christian land and have an opportunity to enjoy Christian privileges, are the *special* subjects of God's grace, being favored with the special grace of his gospel. But candidates for confirmation must be "*obedient* subjects of divine grace, that is, they must either be genuine Christians, or satisfy the Church Council that they are sincerely endeavoring to become such." Now, individuals who are awakened to a sense of their religious duties and anxious to be reconciled to God, have, to a certain extent, been obedient to divine grace, or they would not be in this *awakened* and *anxious* condition. It will not be maintained that persons of this description are converted, that they have "saving faith," or are genuine Christians. The most that can be said of them is, that they are penitent, inquiring, seeking sinners; they are, as it were, in a state of transition from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan to the glorious liberty of the children of God. Such persons then, though not radically converted, are nevertheless, according to our Discipline, suitable candidates

<sup>1</sup>Essays on Confirmation in Lutheran Observer, June 15th, 1832.

<sup>2</sup>Formula of Discip. chap. iv. § 5.

for confirmation, and therefore bound to present themselves for admission to adult-membership in Christ's church, and his ministers have no right to repel them. If the Lord himself were personally on earth, and they should humbly approach him confessing and mourning over their guilt, and promising a faithful use of the measure of grace, however small, already bestowed upon them; the general benevolence of his character and the superabounding riches of his mercy, are a pledge that *He* would not reject them. No verily, *He* who in the days of his flesh so often fulfilled the prediction: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench,"<sup>1</sup> and who, in the plenitude of his unsearchable grace deigned to eat with publicans and sinners in the hope of recovering them from the error of their ways; would welcome them to his communion, and diligently employ the occasion to strengthen their good desires and establish them in their upright efforts to become his obedient followers.

This view of the question before us, so obviously in accordance with the practice and theory of the Lutheran church, falls in no less with the system of our Methodist brethren, which prescribes an anxious "desire to flee from the wrath to come" as the pre-requisite for admission to the table of the Lord. But what is best of all, it harmonizes with the spirit of the gospel and with examples of admission to church-membership recorded on its inspired pages. To refer to and examine those examples, would extend this article, already too long, beyond our prescribed limits.

However desirable it therefore is, that all who are received into full communion in the church, should have bright evidences of their conversion, and undoubted assurance of faith and of their acceptance with God, yet we think these high attainments are not *essential* to a profitable reception of confirmation, or of any religious ordinance. Christ invited all who "labor and are heavy laden to come unto him," and never rejected the trembling penitent, though that penitent was merely "framing his doings to turn unto the Lord," and had advanced no further than to place his foot, as it were, upon the threshold of the sanctuary. Moreover, the gospel of Christ with all its promises, his church with all her institutions, are designed for the encouragement and salvation of the humble and contrite. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."<sup>2</sup> "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word."<sup>3</sup> Do you therefore mourn in bitterness of soul for your sins, and feel that God would be just, if he were to punish you with everlasting destruction from his presence and the glory of his power?

<sup>1</sup>Isa. xlii. 3.<sup>2</sup>Ps. li. 17.<sup>3</sup>Isa. lxvi. 2.

Christ bids you come to him just as you are,—with all your misery and all your guilt,—to take his yoke upon you,—to profess him before men, and to follow him in the way of his appointment. He urges you to come to his ordinances, and with joy to draw water from these wells of salvation. And all his invitations are accompanied with the gracious promise, that “him that cometh, he will in no wise cast out.”<sup>1</sup> Fear not, trembling sinner, to approach the altar, and renew your baptismal vows in the rite of confirmation; you may there find the Lord Jesus Christ, whose good pleasure it is to administer unto those who mourn in Zion, and to appoint unto them “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

But we must return to the point from which we have somewhat wandered; and here a very important question presents itself for consideration, viz. How are we to know whether a man is a *genuine christian*, or whether he is *sincerely and actually endeavoring* to become one? Can we short-sighted mortals read the hidden thoughts or explore the secret motives of our neighbor? If any minister or set of church-officers lay claim to such profound wisdom, let them produce their credentials from the Most High, under his broad seal of miracles; but if they cannot do this, their pretensions are entitled to no more credit than those of the astrologer who casts nativities from the aspect of the planets. God has wisely reserved to himself the prerogative of *discerning spirits*. “I, Jehovah, search the heart. I try the reins.”<sup>1</sup> It appears then, that the REALITY of conversion, or even of *sincere anxiety* to be converted, cannot be laid down as the ground of admission to adult-membership, because we have not the means of positively ascertaining the existence of that reality. We often cannot detect a perjury in the custom-house, or dishonesty in the common affairs of life; how then can we decide whether he who recounts his religious experience, or asserts his anxiety to become a christian, is not a hypocrite? If it be answered: “*By their fruits ye shall know them;*” we reply,—even so, BY THEIR FRUITS, that is, by their external life,—their walk ‘and conversation,’—but not by their inward experience, their secret exercises, or that which passes in their own breasts and is known only to God and themselves. The church of God, so far as its outward ordinances are concerned, is altogether *visible*; and it would be absurd to make an *invisible* quality the criterion of *visible* communion. If then we are incompetent to determine with certainty who is and who is not a genuine Christian, and cannot therefore in the nature of things, make the *reality* of conversion the test of admission, what is to be done?—Answer: The gospel informs us that “faith

<sup>1</sup>Jer. xvii. 10.



worketh by love," or in other words, that regeneration of heart exhibits itself by corresponding acts of obedience; when therefore, according to our best knowledge, we perceive that love to God and man, which is the legitimate fruit of living faith in Jesus Christ, or those acts of obedience which are the known and regular effects of regeneration, we are bound to account their possessor a brother and to embrace him accordingly. So also when we have reason to believe that we behold those endeavors which necessarily result from sincere anxiety to become a Christian, it is our duty to regard him who puts forth such endeavors, as sincere in his professions, as an "obedient subject of divine grace," and to extend to him all the facilities at our disposal and encourage him in his sincere intentions.

From all these remarks we accordingly conclude, that *a credible profession of Christianity*, in relation to the one class of individuals, and *a credible profession of sincere anxiety to become a Christian*, in reference to the other, is all that we have a right to require from candidates for confirmation. We may be deceived; our utmost caution may be, and often has been, ineffectual to prevent hypocrites and other unworthy individuals from entering into the church;—we are not omniscient. But we have no right to suspect sincerity, to refuse privileges, or to inflict censure, where we can put our finger upon nothing repugnant to the love of God and the fruits of faith, or to the diligent efforts of upright desire.

We have great pleasure in assuring our readers that the conclusion at which we have now arrived, accords very nearly with the result of a discussion on the "Visible Church," by one of the ablest theological writers of our country; we allude to the late distinguished DR. MASON, of New York. He sums up his ideas on this point, in the following language:—"A profession, then, of faith in Christ, and of obedience to him, not discredited by other traits of character, entitles an adult to the privileges of his church."<sup>1</sup>

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### No. III.

## CONFIRMATION.

CONTINUED.

### OBJECTIONS TO CONFIRMATION ANSWERED, AND TESTIMONY IN ITS FAVOR.

MANY objections have been urged against confirmation, but for the most part they proceed from a want of acquaintance

<sup>1</sup>See Christ. Mag. v. i. p. 22.

with its nature and advantages, from its occasional abuse and from sectarian prejudices. They mostly need little more than a simple statement, to expose their fallacy. We shall therefore dispose of them in a very summary manner.

It is objected—

1. *That confirmation consists principally in committing the catechism to memory, and in being pronounced worthy to partake of the Lord's supper.* From what has been said, it is abundantly evident that this is altogether an unfounded assertion, without even the shadow of truth to extenuate the enormity of its turpitude.

2. *That it is an assumption of new and burdensome duties.* This objection evinces a total misapprehension of the rite, and involves gross ignorance of the general relation which we sustain to God. Whether we are confirmed or not, we are all solemnly bound to repent and be converted and live wholly unto God, and confirmation contemplates no more than this, and therefore imposes no obligations that were not previously upon us.

3. *That it is the means of introducing people into the church at too early an age.*—This objection lies not against the rite itself, but against its application. Under the Old Testament dispensation the custom was, to receive candidates into church-membership at the age of twelve and thirteen; in latter days our Presbyterian and Methodist brethren have frequently admitted them at an earlier period. The great majority of those who receive confirmation in the Lutheran church in this country, are from fifteen to twenty years of age; too many of them alas, defer it to a later period. Are those who are old enough deliberately and voluntarily to engage in the service of sin and Satan, and to prepare themselves to lie down in “everlasting burnings,” too young to covenant with God, and dedicate themselves to his service? We never confirm them at an age earlier than this.

4. *That it is a mere external ceremony submitted to by compulsion, or as a matter of course.* This is an argument against its abuse, and may be employed with equal force against baptism, against a public profession of religion as it is sometimes practised in sister churches, against every religious ordinance and indeed against religion in general. But the abuse of a religious rite does not abolish its proper use.

5. *That it is a scheme for making proselytes.* If the “scheme” succeeds well in making proselytes to Christ the objection is one of the highest commendations, and we would on this ground alone warmly recommend it to others. But our “proselytes” are generally the lambs of our own flocks, but if we can also gather in those who are “wandering on the

dark mountains of sin." every true Christian will bid us "God speed." But for one church to charge another with endeavoring to make proselytes, in this age of unparalleled sectarianism, is venturing on delicate ground. It rather behooves all to lay their hands upon their mouths, and their mouths into the dust, and plead *guilty!*

6. *That it is a remnant of popery.* This is an unfortunate objection; for if confirmation was not practised by the apostles, it certainly was in use in the second century. Every one acquainted with church history, knows this. But popery was not introduced until the beginning of the seventh century. Is it a relic of popery because in the fifteenth century, Pope Eugenius erected it into a sacrament! then matrimony and ministerial ordination are also remnants of popery; for both are regarded as sacraments in that corrupt church. Then Calvin also countenanced popery, for he was a warm advocate of the rite of confirmation.

7. *That persons confirmed, frequently violate their promises in after life.* So do those who make a profession of religion in any other mode; shall all religious profession therefore forever cease! Many who enter into the matrimonial covenant, violate their engagements in subsequent life, must that holy and divinely instituted state therefore be abolished. But the objection is too frivolous to deserve notice.

8. *That it was not appointed by Christ nor practised by the apostles.* Neither were sabbath schools, tract societies, Bible and temperance societies, &c.; nor do we read that they recommended special days of thanksgiving, and of humiliation and prayer. Neither the "Westminster Confession," so much revered by one branch of Christ's church; nor the "Book of Common Prayer," so warmly commended by another; nor the "Book of Discipline," so highly esteemed by a third, was appointed by Christ or observed in all their detailed minutiae by the apostles. There are many practices in the church of God at present, which are in themselves excellent, and worthy of all praise, but yet cannot claim the authority of specific divine appointment or of apostolic example. The objection accordingly proves too much, and therefore entirely fails. Whether confirmation was practised by the apostles or not, is a mooted point; many good and wise men of different denominations, especially in the church of England, think it was.<sup>1</sup> But in the Lutheran church the custom rests upon a different basis; we value it highly and adhere to it with decided preference, on the ground of *utility*. If candidates are suitably prepared

<sup>1</sup>We would here take occasion to observe that the views and practice of the German Reformed church on this subject, very much or entirely resemble those of the Lutherans.

personally to renew the covenant of grace and enter into full communion. we can think of nothing more appropriate as a mode of receiving them, than the rite of confirmation. It is so simple and at the same time so solemn, so significant and affecting, that it cannot fail to impress both the new members and the whole congregation with a deep sense of God's infinite mercy and their own obligations to love and serve him.

9. *That it is indirectly elevated above the rank of a sacrament; bishops perform confirmation, while baptism and the eucharist are administered by the inferior clergy.* This indeed strikes us as an inconsistency, but the objection applies not to the Lutheran church. We have no "inferior clergy" in point of grade or privilege. *We are all bishops in our own churches*, belonging to the same order and enjoying the same rights; the principal differences existing among us, are those which arise from inherent personal advantages, such as superior talents, learning, piety, usefulness, &c. This difficulty then does not attach to us, and must be settled with "diocesan episcopacy."

10. *That it is superfluous, inasmuch as the Lord's supper answers every purpose contemplated by confirmation, and is liable to no exception.* Among all the objections urged and dwelt upon with so much emphasis by Dr. MILLER, of Princeton, this is the only one that can apply to the Lutheran church. In reply, we ask, if we have in the Lord's supper just such a solemnity as we need for the end in question, why have our brethren of the Presbyterian church introduced a ceremony of their own, whereby a profession of religion is made? Do they not require candidates for adult-membership to appear before their "church-session," and enter into certain engagements, preparatory to receiving the holy supper?—do they not also in some churches, call forth candidates in the presence of the whole congregation, and exact certain promises from them, as pre-requisite to their admission to full communion? now what is this else but a specific "transaction or solemnity by which young people who have been baptized in infancy, may be called to recognize their religious obligations, and, as it were, take upon themselves the profession and the vows made on their behalf in baptism?"—in a word, what is it but another mode of confirmation, with the exception that it is not accompanied by the laying on of hands and all those solemn and affecting circumstances, nor preceded by that protracted and highly beneficial course of religious instruction, which characterize and give so much interest and value to the usage observed among Lutherans? If accordingly, the Lord's supper renders confirmation needless and useless in the Lutheran church, why does it not supersede certain forms or usages, preliminary to the celebration of the supper among Presbyterians? It would seem therefore that a special solemnity as a

<sup>1</sup>Infant Baptism, p. 117.

mode of admission to the Lord's supper, is necessary; the want of it is sensibly felt and provided for in most churches, and the solemnity which commends itself most strongly to the understanding and hearts of Lutherans, is the very rite that we now advocate.

Moreover, with all deference for the learning of our venerable and justly venerated opponent, we would ask, whether there is not a difference between *admission* to church-privileges and the *enjoyment* of them? The person who is to be confirmed is in a course of reception into full communion, but he who partakes of the Lord's supper is already in the possession of that blessing. Confirmation designates transition from infant to adult membership, as also does the making of a profession of religion among our Presbyterian brethren; but sacramental communion publishes the completion of that transition, and is to be regarded rather as one of the privileges of the new relation for which application is made, than as the mode of conferring that relation. If we are mistaken, why do not our dissenting brethren at once admit applicants to the Lord's supper, without any intermediate form whatever?—While they then *in theory* deny the propriety of this rite, does not their own procedure seem to indicate that *in practice* they feel its necessity, and have therefore adopted a substitute?

But there is another reason why we are compelled to oppose the doctor's view. The hold which this ancient custom has upon our members, enables us to bring within our reach and under the influence of our instructions, a class of youth whose attention we could not otherwise so fully procure. We thus have opportunities to adapt our religious teaching to the capacities and wants of the young and inexperienced which we could not do in the pulpit. We can create and keep alive attention by the questions we propound, and bring our pupils into immediate contact with saving knowledge, and oblige them to feel that *they alone are now the persons who are concerned*. These opportunities are such as every faithful minister of Christ will rejoice to find, and will conscientiously improve; and wo that minister of the church who, possessing them, does not make the most of them? If we relinquish the custom of confirmation, it will in all probability be an abolition of the annual catechizing of youth, and we should thus deprive ourselves of one of the most effective and successful instrumentalities which God Almighty has placed in our hands, and that too in reference to a class of individuals who have attained to an age, which is peculiarly interesting, and renders special attention particularly necessary.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See a very able and lucid article on confirmation, by the Rev. Dr. MAYER, of the Ger. Ref. church, which appeared in the paper of that church (if we mistake not) in the year 1832.

The testimony of the Rev. Professors **ROBINSON** and **HODGE** on this subject, shall conclude this article :

“It is moreover not to be denied, that this system of instruction, in the hands of a faithful pastor affords one of the most powerful means that can be devised of operating upon the youthful mind, and forming it, under God, to habits, and feelings, and principles of virtue and religion. The usual time for confirmation is about the age of puberty, or from the thirteenth to the sixteenth year;<sup>1</sup> and custom has ordained that every one shall take upon himself the solemn obligations imposed by this rite. The youthful mind is at this period in its most susceptible state, and most open to conviction, and to the influence of the thrilling motives and tender remonstrances, which a good shepherd knows how to urge in behalf of Him who was ‘meek and lowly of heart.’ He meets his youthful flock frequently, and has the opportunity, if he does his duty, of becoming thoroughly acquainted with their different characters and dispositions; so that it is his fault alone, if he be not able to apply to each the instructions and exhortations which the nature of the case requires. In its present shape, this system owes its birth to the pious Spener; and through this institution that godly man still exerts an amount of influence that is incalculable: Have not the churches of our own land reason to blush, when they look upon what is thus done in other lands for the religious education of the young?”—*Prof. Robinson.*

“In the Lutheran church, you probably know, it is customary that boys at the age of fourteen, and girls at fifteen, should be confirmed; that is, be called upon to assume their baptismal vows, and solemnly recognize themselves as members of the church. That there are serious evils attending this usage, is very obvious, but that much good is effected by the pastoral attention to the young, which it occasions, cannot be denied. The candidates for confirmation, each year, are formed into a class or classes, to which it is the pastor’s duty to devote several hours in every week, instructing them in the principles of the gospel and of their own particular church. This course of instruction continues through the year; and as every child must be confirmed, the whole mass of the people, rich and poor, from the king’s son to the children of the peasant, are regularly indoctrinated in the Christian system. The degree of fidelity with which this duty is performed, depends on the character of the pastor; but it may be remarked that even the rationalists, in general, retain the use of Luther’s catechism and other evangelical formulas in the instruction of the young. I have witnessed few scenes more impressive than the induction of one of these little flocks of the lambs of

<sup>1</sup>In the United States the usual time is from the fourteenth to the twentieth year.

Christ, into his sacred fold. On the day appointed for this service they came to the church, with their pastor at their head. Their entrance was greeted with a burst of cheerful music, in which all hearts and voices joined. Arranged before the pulpit, the pastor proceeded to explain to them the situation in which they stood. Consecrated to God in baptism, they had been given to the church by their parents; but now having attained an age at which they were capable of acting for themselves, having been instructed in the doctrines and requirements of the Christian religion, and in the faith and discipline of their own church; they were to decide whether they would remain in that church, receive its doctrines, and submit to its watchful care. For the satisfaction of those present, their pastor examined them on the history and doctrines of the Bible, received their profession of faith, and solemn assent to be regarded as under the guardianship of the church. They knelt before him, the name and the blessing of God was invoked upon them, and they arose in a new relation to the household of faith.”—*Prof. Hodge.*

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 No. I.
BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.<sup>1</sup>

“I. The doctrine referred to, as held by some Protestants, in its most objectionable form, appears to be this:—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; that on the one hand, every person, infant or adult, who has been baptized by an authorized minister, is a regenerated person; and that, on the other, every person who has not been baptized, however deep or mature his penitence and faith, is still unregenerate. In short, the position is, that the inward grace of regeneration *always* accompanies the outward sign of baptism; that they are inseparable; that the one cannot exist without the other; that he who has been thus regenerated, if he die without falling from grace, is certainly saved; that baptism is essential to salvation; and that to call by the name of regeneration any moral change, from the love of sin to the love of holiness, which takes place either *before* or *after baptism*, is unscriptural and absurd. This, as I understand them, is the doctrine maintained by Bishop Tomline, Bishop Marsh, Bishop Mant, and a number of other writers, of equal conspicuity, in the church of England, and by not a few divines of the Protestant Episcopal church in our own country.

<sup>1</sup>This essay, as well as the succeeding one, is abbreviated and somewhat altered from “Additional Notes” by Dr. Miller. See his *Infant Baptism*, p. 102, sqq.

“This doctrine, we apprehend, is contrary to Scripture; contrary to experience; contrary to the declared opinion of the most wise, pious, and venerated divines; and adapted to generate the most dangerous errors with regard to Christian character, and the gospel plan of salvation.

“1. It is contrary to *Scripture*. Without regeneration, the Scriptures declare, it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of heaven. But the penitent malefactor on the cross undoubtedly entered into the kingdom of heaven, if we are to credit our Lord’s express declaration. Yet this penitent, believing malefactor was never baptized, therefore he was regenerated without baptism; and of course, regeneration and baptism are not inseparably connected. Again, Simon Magus received the outward and visible ordinance of baptism, with unquestionable regularity, by an authorized administrator; yet who will venture to say, that he received the ‘inward and invisible grace’ signified and represented in that ordinance? He was evidently from the beginning a hypocrite, and remained, after baptism, as before, ‘in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.’ Therefore the outward and sensible sign, and the inward and invisible grace are not in *all cases, or necessarily*, connected. Again: it is evident that the Apostle Paul, Lydia, the Ethiopian eunuch, the Philippian jailor, &c. ‘believed with the heart,’ and were, consequently, brought into a state of acceptance with God *before* they were baptized. But we are told (John i. 12, 13) that as many as believe have been ‘born of God,’ and made the ‘sons of God.’ Of course regeneration *may* take place in the case of *adults, ought* to take place, and in these cases, *did* take place, *before* baptism; and, consequently, is not *the same thing* with baptism, or inseparably connected with that rite. Once more; we are assured in Scripture, that ‘he who is born of God, or regenerated, doth not commit sin (that is deliberately or habitually), for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God;’ and farther, that every one that loveth is ‘born of God’ and ‘knoweth God;’ and that ‘whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.’ But can it be said that this character belongs to all who are baptized? Or, that none who are unbaptized manifest that they possess it. Surely no one in his senses will venture to make the assertion. Therefore a man may be ‘born of God’ before he is baptized, and, consequently, the administration of the outward ordinance, and that work of the Holy Spirit, called in the word of God regeneration, are not always connected.

“2. The doctrine before us is as contrary to *experience* as it is to Scripture. ‘It is asserted,’ says an eminent divine of the church of England, now living—‘It is asserted, that the spiritual change of heart called regeneration invariably takes place



in the precise article of baptism. If this assertion be well founded, the spiritual change in question will invariably take place in every adult at the identical moment when he is baptized; that is to say, at the very instant when the hand of the priest brings his body in contact with the baptismal water; at that precise instant his understanding begins to be illuminated, his will to be reformed, and his affections to be purified. Hitherto he has walked in darkness; but now, to use the scriptural phrase, he has passed from darkness to light. Hitherto he has been wrapped in a death-like sleep of trespasses and sins; but now he awakes, and rises from the dead, Christ himself giving him life. Hitherto he has been a chaos of vice, and ignorance, and spiritual confusion; the natural man receiving not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: but *now* he is created after God in righteousness and true holiness; being in Christ he is a 'new creature;' having become spiritual, the things of the Spirit of God are no longer foolishness to him; he knows them because they are spiritually discerned. Such are the emphatic terms in which regeneration is described by the inspired writers. What we have to do, therefore, we apprehend, is forthwith to inquire, whether every baptized adult, without a single exception, is invariably found to declare, that in the precise article of baptism, his soul experienced a change analogous to that which is so unequivocally set forth in the above mentioned texts of Scripture."<sup>1</sup> We need not dwell long on the inquiry. The fact is notoriously not so. Does experience evince, that every subject of baptism, who has reached an age capable of manifesting the Christian character, does, *at the moment of receiving the baptismal water*, show that he is the subject of that regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, by which 'old things are passed away, and all things become new in the Lord?' No one who has a particle of intelligence or candor can imagine that any such fact exists; but if it do not, then the doctrine under consideration falls of course.

"3. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is contrary to the declared opinion of the most pious, judicious, and venerable Protestant *divines*, including those of the very highest authority in the church of England. In support of this assertion, the most explicit quotations might be presented from the writings of those distinguished martyrs and prelates, Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and Hooper; and after them from the writings of the eminent bishops, Jewell, Davenant, Hall, Usher, Reynolds, Leighton, Hopkins, Tillotson, Beveridge, Burnet, Secker, and a host of other divines of the English church, of whose elevated character it would be little less than an insult to any intelligent reader to attempt to offer testi-

<sup>1</sup>Faber's Sermons, Vol. i. p. 145, 146.

mony. All these men declare in the most solemn manner, against the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, in the sense which we are now considering. Indeed, we cannot call to mind a single writer of that church, from the time of Archbishop Cranmer to the present hour, who had the least claim to the character of an *evangelical* man, who did not repudiate the doctrine which we are now opposing; and not a few of them denounce it as *popish*, and adapted to subvert the whole system of vital and spiritual religion.

“4. The last argument which we shall urge against the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, is, that it is adapted to generate the most *fatal errors* with regard to the gospel plan of salvation.

“So far as this doctrine is believed, its native tendency is, to beget a superstitious and unwarranted reliance on an external ordinance; to lower our estimate of that inward spiritual sanctification which constitutes the essence of the Christian character; in fact, to supersede the necessity of that spiritual change of heart, of which the Scriptures speak so much, and for which the most holy and eminent servants of Christ have, in all ages, contended. The truth is, the doctrine now under consideration is the very same in substance, with the doctrine of the *opus operatum* of the *Papists*, which all evangelical Protestants have been opposing for more than three hundred years, as a mischievous delusion. Accordingly, the popish character and fatal tendency of this error have been unreservedly acknowledged by many bishops, and other pious divines of the church of England, as well as by many of the same denomination in this country.

“Further; if regeneration, which is the commencement of holiness in the soul, is always communicated in baptism, then it follows, as indeed, those who entertain this doctrine distinctly avow,—that baptism invariably places its subject in a state of salvation; so that every baptized person who dies immediately after the administration of this sacrament, is infallibly sure of entering the kingdom of heaven. If this doctrine were fully believed, would not every thinking, anxious parent refrain from having his child baptized in infancy, and reserve the ordinance for an hour of extremity, such as the approach of death, that it might serve as an unfailing passport to glory? Would it not be wise in every adult who may be brought to a knowledge of the Saviour, from paganism, or from the world, to put off his baptism to the last hour of his life, that he might be sure of departing in safety? This is well known to have been one of the actual corruptions of the fourth century, growing out of the very error which we are now opposing. ‘It was the custom of many,’ says Dr. Mosheim, ‘in that century, to put off their baptism till the last hour; that thus immediately after receiving by this rite the remission of their sins,

they might ascend pure and spotless to the mansions of life and immortality.' This is no far-fetched or strange conceit. It is the native fruit of the doctrine before us. Nay, if we suppose this pernicious theory to take full possession of the mind, would it not be natural that a tender parent should anxiously desire his child to *die* immediately after baptism; or even, in a desperate case, to *compass its death*, as infallibly for its eternal benefit? And, on the same principle, might we not pray for the death of every adult, immediately after he had received baptism, believing that *then* 'to die would certainly be gain?' In fine, we see not, if the doctrine be true, that a regenerating and saving efficacy attends every regular baptism—we see not how we can avoid the conclusion, that every pagan, whether child or adult, that can be seized by force, and however thoughtless, reluctant or profane, made to submit to the rite of baptism, is thereby infallibly made 'a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven?'

"These consequences, which appear to me demonstrably to flow from the theory in question, afford sufficient evidence that it is an unscriptural and pernicious error, even if no other means of refutation could be found.

"It is not forgotten that language which seems, at first view, to countenance the doctrine which we are opposing, is found in some of the *early fathers*. Some of them employ terms which would imply, if interpreted literally, that baptism and regeneration were the same thing. But the reason of this is obvious. The Jews were accustomed to call the converts to their religion from the gentiles *little children*, and their introduction into the Jewish church, *a new birth*, because they were brought, as it were, into a *new moral world*. Accordingly, circumcision is repeatedly called in Scripture '*the covenant*,' because it was the *sign* of the covenant. Afterwards, when baptism, as a Christian ordinance, became identified with the reception of the gospel, the early writers and preachers began to call this ordinance *regeneration*, and sometimes *illumination*, because every *adult* who was baptized, professed to be born of God, illuminated by the Holy Spirit. By a common figure of speech, they called the *sign* by the name of the *thing signified*. In the truly primitive times this language was harmless, and well understood; but as superstition increased, it gradually led to mischievous error, and became the parent of complicated and deplorable delusions.

"II. But there is another view of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, which is sometimes taken, and which, though less pernicious than that which has been examined, is still, I apprehend, fitted to mislead, and of course, to do essential mischief; It is this: That baptism is that rite which marks and ratifies the introduction of its subject into the visible king-

dom 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 new state or relation is designated in the Scripture by the term *regeneration*, being intended to express an *ecclesiastical birth*, that is, being "born" into the visible kingdom of the Redeemer. Those who entertain this opinion do not deny, that there is a great moral change, wrought by the Spirit of God, which must pass upon every one, before he can be in a state of salvation. This they call *conversion*, *renovation*, &c.; but they tell us that the term "*regeneration*" ought not to be applied to this spiritual change; that it ought to be confined to that change of *state* and of *relation* to the *visible kingdom of Christ* which is constituted by baptism; so that a person, according to them, may be regenerated, that is, regularly introduced into the visible church, without being really born of the Spirit. This theory, though by no means so fatal in its tendency as the preceding, still appears to me liable to the following serious objections.

"1. It makes an unauthorized use of an important theological term. It is vain to say, that, after giving fair notice of the *sense* in which we use a term, no misapprehension or harm can result from the constant use of it in that sense. The plea is insufficient. If the sense in question be an unusual and especially an unscriptural one, no one can estimate the mischief which may result from the use of it in that sense. *Names* are so closely connected with *things*, that it is of the utmost importance to preserve the nomenclature of theology from perversion and abuse. If the sense of the word "*regeneration*" which is embraced in this theory, were now by common consent admitted, it would give an entirely new aspect to all those passages of Scripture in which either regeneration or baptism is mentioned, making some of them unmeaning, and others ridiculous; and render unintelligible, and in a great measure useless, if not delusive, nine-tenths of the best works on the subject of practical religion that have ever been written.

"2. But there is a more serious objection. If men be told that every one who is baptized, is thereby regenerated—"born of God"—"born of the Spirit,"—made a "new creature in Christ,"—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?

"But it may be asked, is there any beneficial influence, physical or moral, *necessarily* and in *all cases*, connected with the

due administration of this sacrament? I answer, *none at all*. The washing with water in this ordinance is an *emblem* and a *sign* of precious benefits; it holds forth certain great truths, which are the glory of the Christian covenant, and the joy of the Christian's heart; it is a seal affixed by God to his covenant with his people, whereby he certifies his purposes of grace, and pledges his blessing to all who receive it with a living faith; nay, it is the seal of valuable *outward privileges*, even to those who are not then, or at any other time, 'born of the Spirit;' as a solemn rite appointed by Christ, it is adapted to make a solemn impression on the serious mind; but when it is administered to the persons, or the offspring of those who are entirely destitute of faith, there is no pledge or certainty that it will be accompanied with *any blessing*. They receive the *water*, but not the *Spirit*. They are engrafted into the visible church, but not into the spiritual body of Christ, and are *after* baptism, just as they were *before*, like Simon the sorcerer, 'in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.'

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No. V.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY RESPECTING BAPTISM.

"IN opposing baptism as practised among us, our Baptist brethren frequently refer to the Westminster Assembly of divines, asserting that when the question was put in that Assembly, whether baptism should be performed by *sprinkling* or *immersion*, it was carried in favor of *sprinkling*, by a majority of *one only*. This is wholly incorrect. When the committee who had been charged with preparing a 'Directory for the worship of God,' brought in their report, they had spoken of the mode of baptism thus: '*It is lawful and sufficient to sprinkle the child.*' To this Dr. Lightfoot, among others, objected; not because he doubted of the entire sufficiency of sprinkling; for he decidedly *preferred* sprinkling to immersion; but because he thought there was an impropriety in pronouncing that mode *lawful* only, when no one present had any doubts of its being so, and when almost all preferred it. Others seemed to think, that by saying nothing about *dipping*, that mode was meant to be *excluded*, as *not a lawful* mode. This they did not wish to pronounce. When, therefore, the clause, as originally reported, was put to vote, there were twenty-five votes in favor of it, and twenty-four against it. After this vote, a motion was made and carried, that it be *recommitted*.

The next day, when the committee reported, and when some of the members still seemed unwilling to exclude all mention of *dipping*, Dr. Lightfoot remarked, that to say that *pouring* or *sprinkling* was *lawful*, would be 'all one as saying, that it was *lawful* to use *bread and wine* in the Lord's supper.' He, therefore, moved that the clause in the 'Directory' respecting the mode of baptism, be expressed thus :

" 'Then the minister is to demand the name of the child, which being told him, he is to say [calling the child by his name]—

" 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"

" 'As he pronounceth these words, he is to baptize the child with water, which, for the manner of doing it, is not only *lawful*, but *sufficient*, and *most expedient* to be, by *pouring* or *sprinkling* of the water on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony.' This was carried. See *Lightfoot's Life*, prefixed to the first volume of his *Works*, (folio edition), p. 4; compared with *Neale's History of the Puritans*, vol. ii. p. 106, 107, compared with the Appendix, No. II. (quarto edition), where the 'Directory,' as finally passed, is given at full length.

" We do not learn, precisely, either from Lightfoot's biographer (who was no other than the indefatigable Strype), or from Neale, by what vote the clause, as moved by Lightfoot, was finally adopted; but Neale expressly tells us, that 'the Directory passed the Assembly with *great unanimity*.'

" From this statement, it is evident, that the question which was carried in the Assembly, by a majority of one, was not whether affusion or sprinkling was a *lawful* mode of baptism; but whether all mention of *dipping*, as *one* of the *lawful* modes should be *omitted*. This, in an early stage of the discussion, was carried, by a majority of one in the affirmative. But it would seem that the clause, as finally adopted, which certainly was far more decisive in favor of sprinkling or affusion, was passed "with *great unanimity*." At any rate, nothing can be more evident, than that the clause as it originally stood, being carried by one vote only, and afterwards, when recommitted, and so altered as to be *much stronger* in favor of sprinkling, and then adopted without difficulty, the common statement of this matter by our Baptist brethren is an entire misrepresentation."

THE END.

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