

AN ESSAY

I.

ON THE

MODE AND SUBJECTS

OF

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

Intended to shew, according to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, Chap. XVIII. Sec. 3rd and 4th. "*Dipping of the person into water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.*" And, "*not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience to Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be Baptized.*"

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DEDICATION.

To the Ministers and Elders of the Hopewell Presbytery, Georgia, this Essay on the Mode and Subjects of Christian Baptism, prepared and published at their request, is respectfully DEDICATED, by their affectionate brother and fellow servant in the Lord.

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Theological Seminary, *Columbia, S. C. Nov. 12th, 1832.*

MODE AND SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

The design of this Essay is to establish the following propositions, viz:

I. Immersion is not the only right mode of administering the Sacrament of Baptism. And,

II. The infants of believing parents are to be baptized.

I. In proof of the *first proposition*, that "Immersion is not the only right mode of administering the Sacrament of Baptism," the following reasons are offered.

1st. The original Greek words (*Bapto* and *Baptizo*) which denote the general act that is called Baptism, do not exclusively signify immersion (see appendix, note *a*;) and do not necessarily imply the use of much water in performing the action described. Luke XI. 30th. "*and when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (Baptized) before dinner,*" that is, cleansed his hands with water. Luke XVI. 24. "*and he cried and said, Father Abraham have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus that he may dip (Baptize) the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue,*" that is, touch the extreme end of his finger to water, so as to have the finger barely wet with a single drop.

2d. Should it be admitted that *immersion* is the *primary* meaning of the original words which signify Baptism, it would yet remain to be ascertained by the rules of criticism what was the *real* and *intended* meaning of the author (*b.*) See Ernesti on Interpretation.

3d. The local circumstances and verbal descriptions of Baptism, as recorded in the sacred scriptures, do not confine us to the idea of immersion (*c.*)

4th. Many of these circumstances and descriptions are appa-

rently irreconcilable with the idea that, what is called Baptism in the original, was always administered by immersion. The following are selected for consideration.

In Hebrews IX. 10, we read of "*divers washings,*" that is, different kinds of Baptisms. Baptism, then, was not administered only in one way.

In Mark VII. 3 4, we are informed, that, "*the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not. And when they come from the market, except they wash (Baptize themselves) they eat not.*"

It is improbable that all the Jews were in the habit of *immersing* themselves *often* every day between meal times; or of washing or Baptizing any more than their hands after coming from the market. And there is no proof that they washed or Baptized their hands in any other way than we do, when we wash our hands or faces, by applying water to them.

In Mark VII. 4, we read, "*and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (Baptizing) of cups and pots, and brazen vessels and of tables*" (or couches.) And all these things were doubtless washed, or Baptized, then, as they are now; by applying water to them in such quantity and mode as was most convenient for the purposes of cleansing.

In 1st. Corinth. X. 1 2, which refers to Exodus XIV. 22, we read of many ten thousands of persons who were Baptized while *on dry ground* (*d.*) These, surely, were not immersed in any proper sense of that term; but were made mercifully to differ from other ten thousands that on the same occasion were immersed and drowned.

In Acts IX. 9, 11, 18, 19, we read of Saul of Tarsus who was Baptized in Damascus by Ananias, in the house of Judas, who was probably a Jew and an enemy of christianity. This baptism seems to have been performed unexpectedly, privately, suddenly, hastily, in a chamber, while Saul was faint and sick and standing up (*e*) by the bed side. All of these circumstances are extremely unlike immersion. And, as Saul received baptism, so, it is probable, he would administer it to others. And he baptized many of those persons who baptized very many others.

And in Acts XVI. 25, 33, we read of a whole family baptized by Paul at midnight in a jail (*f.*)

It appears also, to me at least, exceedingly improbable, that all the baptisms administered throughout the Roman Empire, previous to the conversion of Constantine, were by immersion; when the act must needs have been done so secretly as to elude the detection of thousands of exasperated heathens who would have caused that death to be inflicted on all parties engaged in the odious transaction, which was denounced against christians

by the Edicts of persecuting Emperors. See Lardner's Testimonies.

5th. The allusions made to baptism by the Apostles, in their Epistles, do not force upon us the idea of immersion (*g.*)

6th. Those who contend for immersion as the exclusive mode of administering baptism, are under obligations to prove that this mode was always practised in the Church, from the present time to the days of the Apostles.

But, so far as my information on this subject extends, baptism by immersion has been practised in an unbroken succession only in the Greek Church; which is, perhaps, the most corrupt of all the denominations that have worn the christian name; and even that Church is comparatively *modern* as a separate communion. In no other branch of the general Church, until the reformation in the *sixteenth century*, has immersion been practised uninterruptedly. And in no Church has it been proved to have been practised earlier than the *third century*.

7th. It is asserted on high authority, that, among the Jews, before and at the time of the Saviour's advent, those religious baptisms or ceremonial purifications by water which were performed by *immersion*, were always performed *privately*; whereas those religious baptisms or purifications which were required to be done *publicly*, in the Temple or at the doors of the Synagogues, were always performed by *pouring* or *sprinkling*. The Apostles and first christians were Jews. The *probability* is, they would follow the pious customs of their age and nation in a similar act, concerning which they had no other precedents and no specific instructions.

8th. It appears from Ecclesiastical history, that, when baptism was administered by immersion, in the *third century*, it was required by its advocates to be administered to all candidates, men, women and children, in a state of entire *nakedness*. See Cyprian, Vossius, Wall, Robinson.

9th. Baptism by immersion, and especially in a state of *nudity*, can scarcely be supposed to have long preceded the erection of *baptisteries*. But of these there is no record before the middle of the *third century*.

10th. In all cases of baptism recorded in the sacred scriptures, it seems that water was applied to the person; and not the person applied to water. Unlike the Jewish purifications by immersion, baptism was never required to be administered *privately*. When so administered, as in the case of Saul, it was in consequence of peculiar circumstances. There appears to have been no withdrawing of the candidates from the public assemblies, to receive baptism in another place, or in a private manner; or to make themselves ready for immersion, by changing their garments. There was no delay on the part of the Apos-

tles, to find a river, or to construct a bathing place, suitable for immersion. The ministers appear to have been always ready to administer baptism to converts at the times and places of their conversion; whether in a sick room, or on a journey; whether in a prison, or in a city, or by a river side; and to have esteemed this holy ordinance as a pious debt which was to be promptly paid on demand at all times and under all circumstances, so soon as water in any usual quantity could be obtained.

The baptisms of the thousands in the city of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and of the numerous converts in the city of Samaria, and of Saul and Cornelius and the Eunuch, and of the jailor and his household, and of Lydia and her household, and of the twelve disciples of John; appear to have been performed with an ease and expedition altogether unlike immersion. Ananias needed no help to baptize Saul; and Philip needed no help to baptize the Eunuch.

11th. No such proofs exist of immersion being the only right mode of administering baptism, as to prevent differences in opinions and practice among persons equally learned, conscientious and pious. And the far greater number of Churches during the far greater portion of time since the days of the Apostles, have held immersion to be neither the exclusively right nor the preferable mode of baptism.

12th. The administration of baptism by pouring or sprinkling has the following advantages. It is believed to be the most ancient mode. It is thought to be most significant of those spiritual blessings of which it is emblematical. It is most convenient, and best suited to all climates, seasons and states of health. It is most decent. It can be thus administered in a more orderly and solemn manner, in a Church; and in the midst of a worshipping congregation, as a sacrament ought to be administered. In this mode baptism may be administered with Apostolic readiness, ease and expedition. And, like the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, its validity will not depend on the quantity of the element used, nor on the precise mode of its administration.

With these views of Baptism, Christians of different denominations can commune with each other, without agreeing to undervalue this holy ordinance; and without waiting for that uniformity of opinion and practice, which the experience of centuries proves to be hopeless.

II. The infants of believing parents are to be Baptized.

In proof of this proposition, the following reasons are offered.

1st. There is evidently nothing in the signification of the term, Baptism, which excludes infants, or points out the proper subjects of this ordinance.

Whether Baptism be understood to mean immersion, or wash-

ing in any sense; it is plain that infants are as capable of being washed or immersed as adults: unless, indeed, they were required to wash or immerse themselves.

2d. There is nothing in the nature of a covenant, and least of all covenants, in such as God condescends to make with man; which necessarily excludes infants. See Witsius on the covenants.

3d. The covenant which God made with Adam before the fall, included his posterity; and its penalties have extended to all his race. This covenant was made with Adam not only, or even chiefly for himself, but for his posterity. And in consequence of our connection with him as our federal head, we are born with depraved hearts and dying bodies.

4th. The covenant made with our first parents after the fall, that, *the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*, equally included their posterity. Had our first parents literally died in the day they ate of the forbidden fruit, no infant of theirs would ever have been born.

5th. The covenant made with Noah after the flood, of which the rainbow is the visible sign, included infants. They, no less than their parents, are secured by this covenant from the desolations of a second deluge. For them as well as for their parents, seed time and harvest, summer and winter stately return. And to children as well as to adults was the flesh of animals given for food.

6th. The covenant which God made with Abraham, of which circumcision was the visible sign, included infants. This visible sign, or seal, was expressly commanded by God to be put upon the children of Abraham and his posterity as soon as they were eight days old.

7th. The covenant made with the children of Israel at Sinai, through the ministry of Moses, included infants.

8th. Proselyte baptism, administered to converts from heathenism to Judaism, and which was in use in the Jewish Church from the days of Moses to the destruction of the Jewish nation; was always administered to children as well as to adults.

9th. The learned Doctor Wall informs us on the authority of St. Ambrose and St. Austin, who received their information from Jews in the early ages, that John the Baptist baptised infants.

Infants, then, appear to have been included in every covenant made by God with man, previous to the establishment of the christian dispensation. This furnishes strong presumptive evidence in favor of their being included in the christian covenant.

10th. The christian covenant is substantially the same as the Abrahamic covenant. Those passages in the sacred scriptures which speak of making a new covenant with the house of Israel;

refer not to a change of the covenant made with Abraham, but to the covenant made at Sinai. Had the Jews, as a nation, received Christ, and been confirmed in their privileges as the people of God; and had the Gentile converts been added to that ancient Church, so soon as they submitted to Christ and were baptized; as they used to be, so soon as they submitted to the Law of Moses and were circumcised; perhaps there would never have arisen a doubt concerning this position. But this is no less true, because, "*through unbelief*" the Jewish nation has been "*broken off*;" like a withered branch, "*from their own olive tree*;" and the believing Gentiles "*have been grafted into this good olive tree.*"

11th. A few objections will now be considered.

1st. "If infants were intended by God to have been entered into the Christian covenant, as they were formerly entered into the Abrahamick covenant, why are we not expressly commanded in the new Testament to admit them?"

Because it was unnecessary to give such a command. It is unusual to recapitulate laws that are already known and habitually obeyed, unless to change them. Silence, therefore, leaves the laws and the subjects of them, where former enactments had placed them.

2nd. "Why is there not recorded in the New Testament one plain example of infant baptism; especially as it carefully recorded that Jews and Gentiles, males and females, were baptised: Why was it not added, *and infants also?*"

Because there was a change made by the christian dispensation in the relative condition of Jews and Gentiles, males and females; but no change was made in the relative condition of parents and children. These changes are carefully recorded, for the instruction of future ministers.

But if no change was intended to be made in the condition of children, mere silence leaves them where they were before; and yet, were we to substitute any other significant word for *baptized*, in many passages of the New Testament, children would seem to be necessarily included. Take the following passages: Acts XVI. 15. "And when she (Lydia) was *destroyed* and her household." Again, 33d. "And he (the jailor) took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes and was *circumcised*, he and all his straightway." And again, 1st. Corinth. I. 16th. "And I *circumcised* also the household of Stephanas."

3rd. "Our blessed Lord said, 'Whoso believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved;' and Peter said, 'Repent and be baptized;' and Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest' be baptized: do not these things prove that persons must

repent and believe before they are baptized; and that infants who cannot repent and believe, ought not to be baptized?"

We think not. Christ was baptized without repenting, or believing, in the common sense of the term. Children are not required to do what they cannot do; nor punished for not doing what they cannot do. And if these texts do properly apply to infants, they prove that all infants will forever perish. But they do not apply to infants. Our blessed master was not speaking of infants; nor was Peter preaching to infants; nor was Philip addressing an infant in the passages quoted by the objector.

4th. "But what good can baptism do infants?"

As much good, surely, as circumcision did Jewish children.— See Romans, III. 1. 2.

It places children and their parents in a different relation to each other, and to God: and the difference between a baptized and an unbaptized child, is all the difference between being in covenant with God, or out of covenant with God. In behalf of the baptized child, the christian parent is understood to covenant with God and his church to train it up in the fear, nurture and admonition of the Lord; to set before it a holy example; to pray with it, and for it; to cause it to be taught, in due time, to read the sacred scriptures; and to use all proper means to bring it early to the Saviour. The church is understood to covenant with its baptized children, to pray for them; to extend to them its salutary watch and care and discipline; to encourage them when they do well, and reprove them when they do ill; and should their natural guardians die, or be unable to protect and educate them, the church should endeavor to supply the place of such guardians to such children. And the great head of the church is understood to receive the baptized infants to his covenanted mercies, and to admit them to all the promises of the gospel, and the purchased blessings of the kingdom of grace.

5th. "Why not baptize all children, whether their parents are believers are not?"

Because we do not so understand the will of God.

We are taught that, "*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.*" Jewish children were not admitted into covenant with God because they were children; but because they were the children of parents who were in covenant with God. And children, now, may not claim to be admitted into covenant with God, because they are children, but only because they are the children of believing parents.

But, it may be said, "however desirable infant baptism may be esteemed, and however inconclusive the usual objections

against it may be thought, yet, what positive proofs or strong presumptive evidence in its favor, can be adduced?"

To shew that infants have been included in every covenant made by God with man, previous to the christian dispensation; and that the christian covenant is substantially the same with the Abrahamic covenant, into which infants were divinely commanded to be entered; and that infants have been admitted, by baptism, into covenant with God throughout all ages of the church, up to the days of those ministers of the gospel who were martyrs for the faith, and cotemporaries with the inspired Apostles, is, perhaps, all that can be reasonably expected on this subject. The last part of this proposition is what remains to be shewn.

8th. Infants have been admitted, by baptism, into covenant with God, throughout all ages of the church. And to render it more convenient for investigation, this long series of nearly two thousand years, will be divided into appropriate periods.

1st. Every Protestant church, except one, has practised infant baptism, from the present time back to the Reformation from Popery, in the early part of the 16th century—that is, for more than three hundred years past. See Harmony of Confessions.

2nd. The Latin and Greek communions, comprehending all the generally acknowledged christian churches on earth, previous to the Reformation, practised infant baptism up to the beginning of the 5th century. Those who deny the Apostolic origin of infant baptism, do commonly select the 5th century, as the time when the custom commenced. And some have asserted that the practice was occasioned, or at least confirmed, by a decree of Pope Innocent, the 39th bishop of Rome, who was elected A. D. 402, and died A. D. 417. How erroneous this statement is, will soon appear.

3rd. Augustine and Pelagius, cotemporaries with Pope Innocent, in the latter part of the 4th, and the beginning of the 5th century, who were learned men, extensively acquainted with the opinions and practice of the churches throughout the world, in their day, and in previous ages, and who were warmly engaged in controversy concerning the doctrine of total depravity, furnish the following testimony:

Augustine says, "The whole church practises infant baptism. It was not instituted by councils, but was always in use. I do not remember ever to have read of any person, whether catholic or heretic, who maintained that baptism ought to be denied to infants. This, infant baptism, the church has always maintained."

So far from controverting these assertions, which, indirectly, but powerfully, assailed his peculiar system of doctrines, and which it greatly concerned him to have disproved, if he were

able, Pelagius says, "I have never heard of even any impious heretic, who asserted that infants are not to be baptized. Who can be so impious as to hinder the baptism of infants?"

4th. In the 4th century, Gregory Nazienzen exhorts parents to offer their children to God in baptism. It is remarkable, concerning Gregory, that he was not baptized until he was about twenty years old, although his father was a bishop. Whether the father was not converted to christianity until the son was past the years of childhood, or for what reason baptism was delayed in this case, is unknown. But it may not be doubted, that Gregory believed it to be the duty of parents to have their children baptised, and he exhorts them to do so accordingly.

5th. We learn from Cyprian, who was a vehement advocate for immersion, and who wrote about the middle of the third century; that "sixty-six bishops, being convened in a council at Carthage, having the question referred to them, whether infants may be baptised *before they were eight days old*, decided unanimously that no infant is to be prohibited from the benefit of baptism, *Although but just born.*"

6th. Origen, who was born in the 2d century, about A. D. 184; and wrote in the early part of the 3d century; and who was a man of more information than any one of his time; says, "Infants are baptized for the remission of sins. The church hath received the tradition from the Apostles, that baptism ought to be administered to infants."

Tertullian, who wrote a few years before Origen, had advised to *delay the baptism of infants, virgins and young widows.* Tertullian gave this advice because he supposed baptism was regeneration; and that sins committed before baptism were washed away by the ordinance; while those sins which were committed after baptism were well nigh unpardonable. He therefore advises to delay the administration of this soul-purifying ordinance in all cases where there was a strong probability that sin would be committed after its reception. And many persons who embraced his opinions on this subject, delayed to receive baptism until the approach of death.

It was to combat these peculiar views of Tertullian that Origen wrote; and to this error concerning the nature of baptism, we are indebted for the above testimony in favor of the practice of infant baptism in the days of Origen; and that this learned man believed he possessed sufficient proof of infant baptism having been enjoined by the Apostles, and practised by the church from their day to his.

7th. Clemens Alexandrinus, born about the middle of the 2d century, A. D. 150; and who wrote about the time that Tertullian and Origen were born; says "If any man be a fisherman, let him think of an Apostle and the children taken out of the water."

Clemens was not writing on baptism; for there was no controversy about it in his day; but was giving advice concerning images to be engraven on seal rings. Some of these engravings were indecent; and some were idolatrous. Clemens exhorts christians to adopt such as were becoming. And he advises fishermen to choose the image of an Apostle baptizing infants.

8th. Ireneus, born near the close of the 1st century, about A. D. 97; who was the disciple of Polycarp who was the disciple of St. John; says, "Christ came to save all persons who by him are born again unto God, infants and little ones, and children and youth and elder persons." By being "born again unto God" Ireneus means being "baptized." And in this incidental way speaks of infants being baptized. Ireneus must have known what was the opinion and practice of Polycarp on this subject; and Polycarp must have known what was the doctrine of St. John concerning infant baptism. Nor is it probable that Polycarp would depart from the doctrine of St. John; nor Ireneus depart from the practice of Polycarp.

9th. Justin Martyr, born about A. D. 90; and probably before the death of St. John, and who sealed his faithfulness with his blood; speaking of those who were members of the church in his day; says, "A part of these are now sixty or seventy years old, who were made disciples to Christ from their infancy." They were, consequently, "made disciples to Christ" during the life time of one or more of the Apostles. And there never was any other mode of "making disciples to Christ in infancy" but by baptism.

10th. Clemens Romanus, who is reputed to have been the immediate successor of St. Peter, as pastor of the church in the city of Rome; who is mentioned by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians, IV. 3d.; and who was doubtless for many years cotemporary with not a few of the inspired Apostles; speaks in several passages of his writings so as fairly to imply the practice of infant baptism in his day.

11th. The earliest writer that is known to have advised the delay of baptism to infants, is Tertullian. It may appear unkind to bring to remembrance his eccentricities of character and conduct; and that he was early accounted a heretick. It is more important to remember that he equally advised the delay of baptism to all unmarried young persons, and young widows. He was evidently grossly in error concerning the nature and intention of baptism. But as he was unquestionably opposing the common practice of the churches in his day; his opposition conclusively proves the existence of infant baptism at that early age.

12th. The next opposition made to infant baptism, which is recorded in Ecclesiastical History, was made by one sect of the Waldenses, about A. D. 1120. They supposed that infants

which should die before they could repent and believe, could not be saved; and were therefore unfit to be baptized. This small sect was opposed by the larger part of the Waldenses; and by all other churches at that day, and soon expired.

13th. The Baptists, of the present day, who oppose infant baptism; commenced their existence as a religious denomination, in Germany, at the Reformation from Popery, about A. D. 1522.

Having given some reasons for believing that immersion is not the only right mode of administering baptism; and that the infants of believing parents are to be baptized; permission is respectfully solicited to expostulate with our Baptist brethren on the *unfairness with which* they commonly conduct this controversy.

1st. It is unfair to inform the ignorant without any explanation, that, Tertullion in the 3rd century opposed infant baptism.

2nd. It is unfair to assert that the father of Gregory in the 4th century, refused to baptize his children.

3rd. It is unfair to represent the Waldenses in the 12th century, as opposed to infant baptism.

4th. It is unfair to quote the Greek Church as favoring the modern mode of baptism by immersion.

5th. And most of all is it unfair to *garble (h)* the writings of Pedo-baptist authors; and thus make them appear to say what they never intended to say; and represent them as grossly inconsistent in their sentiments and practice; and hold them up to the public as habitually acting in the most solemn transactions of their lives in direct opposition to what they openly acknowledge to be truth and duty.

A few words of affectionate admonition to the members of the Presbyterian Churches will close this essay.

1st. Beloved brethren, you have been presented with some of the reasons for the faith and practice of our wide-spreading and venerable church. So far as we differ from others concerning the mode and subjects of baptism, we are assuredly walking "in the old paths and the good way" of the fathers and martyrs. But it does not follow, because we are right in these things that those who differ from us are wrong, in such a sense as to cease to be our brethren.

In the kindred sacrament of the Lord's supper, it would be right to use unleavened bread, and pure wine; in small quantities, in the table posture, in a house of worship, and during any hour of the day.

But should any christian denomination prefer to use leavened bread, and diluted wine, and to make a full meal of these elements, in a standing or kneeling posture, in an upper room, and at night; we may not conclude they are so wrong as to cease to be a true Church of Christ.

In like manner, the sacrament of baptism may be rightly administered in a house, or in a grove, in a Church, or under a booth, in a prison, or by a river side, with much water, or with little.

Substance is one thing; and *mode* is another.

Let us hold fast to the substance, without quarrelling about the mode. But if controversy be unavoidable, let us "contend earnestly for the faith" in the full exercise of that "charity which is the bond of perfectness."

2nd. Permit me to caution you concerning one view of this controversy, which has perplexed some pious minds.

Our Baptist brethren may say "your ministers acknowledge the validity of our baptism, but our ministers do not acknowledge the validity of your baptism, therefore it will be *safest* to be immersed, and to decline to have your children baptized."

Remember that an Episcopalian can also say, "your ministers acknowledge the validity of our Ordinations, but our ministers do not acknowledge the validity of your Ordinations."

And forget not that a Papist, also, can say, "your ministers acknowledge that our Church members may be saved, but our ministers do not acknowledge that your Church members can be saved."

What then: must we all become Baptists, and Episcopalians, and Papists, that we may be *on the safe side*?

Is bigotry, or illiberality, or uncharitableness the mark of the only true Church? "*I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.*"

Because it is right to baptize adults, and to teach adults to read, and to pray for adults, it is not therefore wrong to baptize children, and to teach children to read, and to pray for children.

Would it have been *safe* for Abraham to decline to have his son Isaac circumcised? See Genesis XVII. 14.

Was it *safe* for Moses to have neglected to circumcise his son? See Exodus IV. 24, 25, 26.

Would it have been *best* for the pious mothers not to have brought their infants to Christ? See Mathew XIX. 13, 14, 15.

3rd. Beloved brethren, we cannot bring our children too early to the Saviour. To contemn, or neglect, or unnecessarily delay the holy ordinance of baptism, has, doubtless, the nature of sin. As members of the Presbyterian Church, it is a sacred duty to have our children baptized. And should our Church perform all its duty to baptized children, it would be an unspeakable benefit to be baptized. It is probable that objections against infant baptism have originated and been greatly strengthened in many pious minds, by observing the improper administration of the holy ordinance to the children of ungodly parents; and by perceiving the criminal neglect of duty towards baptized

children, on the part of the church. Extremes tend to beget each other. Between administering baptism to all children, and administering it to none; the happy medium is to administer it only to the children of believing parents. Had this been always observed, and the Church always been faithful to instruct, and warn, and pray for, and discipline, and educate its baptized children, there would be now less opposition to infant baptism, and possibly there never would have been any opposition to it by a denomination of christians.

Permit me, dear brethren, with all affection and earnestness to exhort you, with pious Gregory of the 4th century, to offer your children to God in baptism. And may the blessing of that precious Saviour who said "*suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,*" rest upon you and your households!