

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

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No. I.

ARTICLE I.—*A Familiar Treatise on Christian Baptism.*
Illustrated with Engravings. Designed for Young Christians
and Baptized Children. By JAMES WOOD, D. D. New
Albany: John B. Anderson.

Plain Words to a Young Communicant. By JAMES W. ALEX-
ANDER, D. D. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph. 1855.

THESE excellent little books, by two of our eminent and judicious divines, are among the pleasing proofs that our Church, while, with all true Protestants, it recoils from "condensing the sacraments into idols," also refuses to join the rationalists in evaporating them into airy nothing. That of Dr. Wood is well fitted to fortify our people against the plausible attacks which our principles, as to the mode and subjects of baptism, suffer from the Baptists, while it affords much valuable instruction to Christian parents and their baptized children, as to the significance and importance of infant baptism, and the privileges and duties which result from it. It maintains and develops the doctrine of our standards as to such children being members of the Church, and under its inspection and government.

Dr. Alexander's little manual is a model of its kind. While it does not undertake to supersede such larger works as Mat-

By Symon
Alexander

unbiased history of Greece assumes its highest importance. And this end, irrespectively of the feelings and intentions of Mr. Grote, which we do not pretend to know, his faithful presentation of facts and their relations cannot fail to subserve in every reflecting mind.

ART. IV.—*The Doctrine of Baptisms.* Scriptural Examination of the Questions respecting: I. The Translation of Baptizo. II. The Mode of Baptism. III. The subjects of Baptism. By GEORGE D. ARMSTRONG, D. D., Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Norfolk, Va. New York: Charles Scribner. 1857.

WITH great pleasure do we hail the appearance of "The Doctrine of Baptisms," from the pen of Dr. Armstrong, of Norfolk, Va. In our opinion, this subject of Baptism is one of the most important that can occupy the attention of our divines and scholars. And, indeed, if we understand the signs of the times, it will yet occupy more attention than it has done hitherto. This work of Dr. Armstrong seems to be well calculated to do good in and out of our Church; and with pleasure do we commend it to those who have a desire to examine this subject carefully and thoroughly, as well calculated to aid them in their researches. We are pleased with his mode of discussing the subject, and the general arrangement of the work; the mechanical execution of which is also such as to make it an attractive volume. We hope it will be widely circulated.

But our present object is not to review, or give an outline of, this work of Dr. Armstrong. We take the present as a favourable opportunity for expressing our surprise that, whilst so many writers have, with ability, discussed the mode and subjects of baptism, and the Baptist arguments, comparatively little attention is drawn to the neglect of household baptism, in our own Church, and to the mode of remedying that evil. We are constantly erecting barriers to prevent the inroads of enemies outside of our fortress, and at the same time we give

comparatively little attention to the work of destruction that is going on within.

An able practical treatise on the neglect of infant baptism, its causes and cure, would be timely, and would, we are persuaded, do great good in our Church. We will take this opportunity of presenting a few of our own thoughts on this subject, simply designed to awaken the attention of brethren to its importance.

Baptism is one of the only two sacraments of the New Testament dispensation. It is a holy ordinance, and was instituted by the King and Head of the Church himself. In his word, not only does he give us to understand the nature and object of this ordinance, but he has also designated the persons for whom baptism was designed. Since, then, he has instructed his Church as to those who are subjects of this ordinance, it most certainly is incumbent on the Church to execute his commands, and baptize all included in the commission. If this duty be neglected, then indeed will a very heavy responsibility rest on the Church itself.

The Presbyterian Church has always held not only to believers' baptism, but also to the baptism of their offspring. And hence, it has not been without interest, that we have read lamentations over neglect of infant baptism, and exhortations to the churches thereon, year after year, in the Narrative issued by our Assembly. It has been painful also to know the charge to be made by Baptist ministers and members, again and again, that infant baptism is rapidly losing ground; that Pedobaptist churches are much more anxious to have this doctrine in their Confessions of Faith, than practically conformed to by their members; and that the members are gradually, but most certainly, becoming Anti-pedobaptist, both in sentiment and practice. This charge has been made privately and publicly, both in the pulpit and through the press. And not only so—the attempt has more than once been made to prove what they have affirmed; and that too, sometimes, with an appearance at least of plausibility in their statements.

We have been pointed to associations of Congregationalists, within whose bounds the baptism of an infant has become unknown, or of rare occurrence. We have also been told, that

other Pedobaptist churches (as shown by their statistics) are fast moving in the same direction, fast deserting the doctrines of their fathers and forefathers. And, what most concerns us, we have often known it to be said, that in the Presbyterian Church there has been, for some time, a growing disregard for the baptism of children. Indeed, we have heard it boldly and publicly asserted, that this doctrine is fast becoming "a dead letter" in many parts of our Church.

If, then, this be true; if there be neglect, and neglect rapidly increasing in sister Churches, with regard to this holy ordinance, most assuredly, as we apprehend, it becomes the Presbyterian Church to be the more solicitous lest the same failure in the discharge of duty exist in her bounds. And should it prove true, as asserted by adversaries and feared by friends, that already a breach is made in our walls, already this doctrine is dying out; truly, then, ought the alarm to be sounded, that the friends of Bible truth, and the lovers of Christ's ordinances be awakened to the importance of immediate and earnest effort, before it be too late. Let us, then, arouse ourselves and contend, for in very deed Christ's crown and the covenants are endangered. And let us be thankful if even the rejoicings of our enemies have made us sensible of our own condition, if danger there be.

We have been much gratified by repeated efforts made to draw attention to an acknowledged neglect of infant baptism, on the part of many, very many parents. These efforts, whether in church judicatories or in our religious journals, have been timely, and, we doubt not, have answered a good purpose; for this subject should be second in importance to none to the sincere Presbyterian. We have feared that there has been neglect of this sacrament in the bounds of our Church. We have feared that the assertions of opposers were too true; that they were much more correct in their surmises than most of our brethren seemed to suppose; and hence we have attempted to gain all possible light on this subject. And we must confess, that the more we have considered the subject, and the more facts we have been able to obtain, we have been so much the more satisfied, not only that there is increasing disregard for the baptism of children, in sister churches, but also, that throughout

the whole of our own Church there is an increasing neglect of this blessed ordinance; neglect, such as demands, at once, much serious attention from members and ministers in our Church; much more, indeed, than it has yet received from them.

Far would we be from giving too much attention to the mere assertions of the enemies of our Church, or to the declarations of alarmists; but let us not err on the other extreme. Weak-minded and doubting ones have been drawn away from our ranks by statements such as are referred to above. Silence, or mere disclaimer, will not answer our purpose. We must have facts; and when we obtain them, if we discover weakness or error in our borders, before unknown; if our worst fears should be realized, we ought then to rejoice at a timely discovery, and be stimulated thereby to the more faithful discharge of those duties we owe to the seed of the Church. Let us know the whole truth on this point. Let us understand our position and practice on this subject, as a Church, and act wisely in the premises.

We will then briefly examine this subject, considering,

I. The position of the Standards of our Church, with reference to her infant seed. II. The extent to which there is neglect of infant baptism. III. The causes of this neglect. IV. How parents may best be induced to honour God, in attending upon his ordinances.

I. What, then, is the position of our standards regarding the children of professing Christians?

1. The Church regards children—one or both of whose parents are professing Christians—as members of the visible church.

(a) “The visible church . . . consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion with their children.”—Confession of Faith, ch. 25, sec. 2. Also, Larger Catechism, Quest. 62. (b) “The universal church consists of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession,” &c.—Form of Government, ch. 2, sec. 2. (c) “A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring.”—Form of Government, ch. 2, sec. 4. (d) “Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.”—1 Cor. vii. 14. “Of such is the kingdom of God.”—Luke xviii. 16.

2. She considers that children, being members of the Church, are within the covenant, and therefore ought to be baptized, in order that all the blessings of that covenant be sealed to them in that ordinance; and that infants are not made members of the visible church by baptism, but are to be baptized because of their relation to the Church.

(a) "Infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized."—(Larger Catechism, Quest. 166.) And also, "Baptism is . . . to be unto them a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace."—Confession of Faith, ch. 26, sec. 1; and same ch., sec. 4. (b) "They are federally holy, and therefore ought to be baptized."—Direct. for Worship, ch. 7, sec. 4. (c) "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."—Gen. xvii. 7. "The promise is to you and to your children."—Acts ii. 39.

3. She teaches that children, being in the Church, and having by divine appointment, both the privilege and right of enjoying this sealing ordinance, there is very great sin committed against God, and serious injustice done to their children, by those who neglect this ordinance.

(a) The Bible and Confession of Faith everywhere teach that "there be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord," (Confession of Faith, ch. 27, sec. 4,) that the ordinance of baptism is alone intended for children, and "that the seed of the faithful have no less a right to this ordinance, than the seed of Abraham to circumcision."—Direct. for Worship, ch. 7, sec. 4. (b) "And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people."—Gen. xvii. 14. Read also the case of Moses, Exod. iv. 24. (c) "Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance," &c.—Confession of Faith, ch. 28, sec. 5. "Baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed."—Direct. for Worship, ch. 7, sec. 1. (d) It must be evident to any one that baptism being an holy ordinance, appointed by Christ to seal the benefits of the covenant of grace to the infant seed of the Church;

it is not only rebellion against the authority of Christ, but it is very great injustice done to the children whose baptism is neglected. How would that church be regarded, whose members should neglect the ordinance of the Lord's Supper constantly? and is the sin less, where they neglect the only other sacrament? "Feed my lambs," said the risen Saviour; look well to my little ones. Let them not be deprived of the seal of the covenant. With the above agrees Calvin, who declares that, "While it is sufficiently clear that the force, and so to speak, the substance of baptism are common to children, to deny these the sign, which is inferior to the substance, were manifest injustice."—(Calvin's Tracts, vol. 2, p. 89.) And again, "How unjust shall we be, if we drive away from Christ those whom he invites to him; if we deprive them of the gifts with which he adorns them; if we exclude those whom he freely admits?"—Calvin's Institutes, b. 4, ch. 2, sec. 7. (e) Neglect of infant baptism is a breach of covenant, and a rejection of the grace presented in the ordinance: "He hath broken my covenant."—Gen. xvii. 14. And, indeed, not only is this taught in all parts of the Confession, but from the foregoing positions, it is self-evident, and, as Calvin expresses himself, therefore "we ought to be alarmed by the vengeance which God threatens to inflict, if any one disdains to mark his son with the symbol of the covenant; for the contempt of that symbol involves the rejection and abjuration of the grace which it presents."—Institutes, b. 4, ch. 16, sec. 9. So, also, Gen. xvii. 13: "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Also, Gen. xvii. 9–14.

4. Children are not to be baptized until the minister is previously satisfied that the parent or parents understand their duties and obligations to their children and the Church, and that they intend to discharge them.

(a) "Previously to the administration of baptism, the minister shall inquire into the parents' knowledge; . . . and being satisfied so as to admit them, shall in public point out," &c.—Digest, p. 80, § 19. (b) Ministers are exhorted "to take due care in the examination of all that offer to dedicate their children to God in the sacred ordinance of baptism," &c.—Digest, p. 80, § 19. (c) The Rev. Mr. Cumming was "com-

mended for insisting on persons praying in their families, who present their children to baptism.”—Digest, p. 81, § 20. (d) “After previous notice is given to the minister,” &c.—Direct. for Worship, ch. 7, sec. 3. The previous notice most certainly cannot be the parents’ bringing of the child to the front of the pulpit, which is very frequently the first intimation that the minister expects to have regarding those to be baptized. This section, especially in connection with the foregoing action of the General Assembly, explanatory of the Directory for Worship, evidently presumes a meeting, before the administration of the ordinance, between the pastor and those having children to be baptized.

5. Parents who neglect this ordinance are amenable to the discipline of the Church, at least as much so as if they neglected the Supper of the Lord.

(a) Known, acknowledged neglect of any of the ordinances has always been considered as involving such breach of Church covenant as to require Church discipline. And the General Assembly so decided in a case of appeal of one neglecting public worship, (See Digest, p. 83.) Of course, neglect of the Sacraments is a more aggravated offence. To avoid this conclusion shall we consider the Sacrament of baptism *inferior* to the Supper of the Lord? (b) The Book of Discipline says that an “Offence is anything in the principles or practice of a Church member, which is contrary to the word of God; or, which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification.”—Discipline, ch. 1, sec. 3. If neglect of infant baptism is not an offence, according to the above definition, we must own our want of perception, and that we cannot understand the Confession of Faith when it declares as above, that “it is a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance.” (c) “There be *only two Sacraments* ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.”—(Confession of Faith, ch. 27, sec. 4.) “Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, &c.”—(Confession of Faith, ch. 28, sec. 1.) Very clearly are we required to honour and observe the ordinance of baptism, in terms as strong as are applied to the Lord’s Supper; both in the Bible and Confession of Faith. (d) “The

exercise of discipline is highly important and necessary.”—(Discipline, ch. 1, sec. 2.) “Children born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and government of the Church,” &c.—(Direct. for Worship, ch. 9, sec. 1.) This presumes all born “within the pale of the visible church” to be baptized as a matter of course. It supposes no neglect. If, however, we allow neglect, are the children then still “under the government of the Church?” The exercise of discipline and government is declared to be “necessary,” and yet shall we allow many, very many to evade it, and “cut off” their children from the advantages of church oversight and care? In regard to children of Church members, whose baptism is neglected, we would like to be informed what is their true relation to the Church. Will we calmly hand them over to the “uncovenanted mercies” of God, so often spoken of in certain quarters?

6. The Church has no right to receive into full membership those who intend committing “the great sin of contemning or neglecting” this holy sacrament.

(a) Very manifestly it would be most inconsistent for a Church to receive those who expect, at once, to violate the laws of God and the constitution of the Church, especially in regard to one of the only two sacraments of the New Testament; and most certainly no session has a right to receive persons into full communion without “examining them as to their knowledge” of the sacraments. To receive such, and then discipline them would be wrong. (b) The above position is sustained by the course pursued by our church judicatories. The Session of the Church of Cambridge would not receive Bethuel Church, even to “occasional communion,” until they had first consulted the General Assembly. That body then declared that he might thus be received, *i. e.* to “occasional communion,” notwithstanding his scruples.—Digest, p. 75.

II. Is Infant Baptism on the decline in the Presbyterian Church?

The question thus stated is one of fact, not of opinion. To answer the query is no doubt difficult; but it is not impossible. For all practical purposes, the question can, we feel assured, be satisfactorily answered.

By comparison, and by comparison alone, can we at all obtain the information desired. Were we informed in regard to the exact number of the children of the Church, we would not be long in determining the query before us. But since that is impossible, we must make the best use of such data as are within our reach. If we cannot give an *exact* answer to the question, may we not make a close approximation thereto? Whilst considering this subject, some years since, it occurred to us, that the annual Statistical Reports made to our General Assembly do afford correct data for a very near approximate solution of this very interesting problem. The General Assembly has, from time immemorial, received a return, not only of the number of members, but also a report of the number of children baptized. It will then at once occur to the thoughtful observer, that there would in all probability be, taking the Church throughout, and from year to year, a fixed or nearly fixed ratio between the number of children baptized and the number of members in the Church. That is to say, take the Church throughout, and there would probably be, from year to year, to any given number of communicants, the same number of children introduced into the Church by birth, or else by the baptism of their parents. And could that ratio be ascertained, we would then be able to tell, with a very considerable degree of accuracy, the exact state of the case. We have therefore spent not a little time and labour, in seeking for the annual Statistical Reports regarding members and baptisms; and we have been gratified by unexpected success, having obtained them for the last fifty years, excepting only the Reports for 1813, 1822, 1823, and 1835. A large portion of these we extracted from the unpublished documents of the General Assembly, in charge of Dr. Leyburn, the Assembly's Permanent Clerk, by whose kindness we obtained access to them.

We herewith present the reader with two tables, containing the Statistical Reports referred to, so arranged as to enable him to form a very satisfactory estimate of the number of unbaptized children in our Church, according to almost any theory he adopts, regarding the absolute number of children in the Church. We add to them some other small tables regarding

other Churches, assured that the labour of an examination will be fully repaid.

TABLE NO. 1.*

The proportion existing between the number of members and the children baptized in the Presbyterian Church, for the last fifty years, excepting 1813, 1822, 1823, and 1835 :

Year.	Adult baptisms.	Members.	Members to each baptism.	Baptisms per 1000 members.	Infants baptized.
1807,	170	17,871	6.3	158	2,834
1808,	330	21,270	5.1	195	4,142
1809,	711	25,298	5.3	189	4,782
1810,	503	28,901	5.9	167	4,835
1811,	461	23,639	5.1	198	4,677
1812,	507	37,699	6.4	151	5,909
1814,	617	37,767	6.6	151	5,693
1815,	745	39,685	7.1	142	5,621
1816,	667	37,208	7.1	141	5,263
1817,	1,317	47,568	7.8	129	6,128
1818,	1,295	52,822	7.3	136	7,189
1819,	1,489	63,997	7.7	131	8,352
1820,	1,611	72,096	8.2	122	8,792
1821,	2,101	71,364	8.8	114	8,105
1824,	2,217	104,024	11.5	87	9,016
1825,	1,709	103,531	10.7	94	9,730
1826,	3,453	99,674	10.6	94	9,397
1827,	2,965	135,285	13.2	76	10,229
1828,	3,389	146,308	13.6	74	10,790
1829,	3,982	162,816	13.4	75	12,171
1830,	3,255	173,329	14.2	70	12,202
1831,	4,390	182,017	15.0	67	12,193
1832,	9,650	217,348	16.4	61	13,246
1833,	6,950	233,580	16.6	60	14,035
1834,	5,738	247,964	19.1	53	13,004
1836,	2,729	219,126	19.8	51	11,089
1837,	3,031	220,557	18.9	53	11,697
1838,	2,692	177,665	17.5	57	10,164
1839,	1,644	128,043	16.6	60	7,712
1840,	1,741	126,583	16.1	60	7,844
1841,	1,842	134,443	16.1	62	8,365
1842,	2,748	140,433	14.7	68	9,567
1843,	4,363	159,137	14.9	67	10,625
1844,	3,287	166,487	15.1	66	10,996

* This table contains, as will be observed, the infant baptisms; the number of members; a column showing the number of members each year, for each infant baptized; a column showing the number of children baptized for each one thousand communicants, for each year; and, as a mere matter of interest, the adult baptisms are also introduced.

Year.	Adult baptisms.	Members.	Members to each baptism.	Baptisms per 1000 members.	Infants baptized.
1845,	1,929	171,879	17.8	56	9,608
1846,	2,036	174,714	18.1	55	9,677
1847,	1,794	179,453	19.2	52	9,342
1848,	2,338	192,022	19.5	51	9,837
1849,	2,412	200,830	20.3	49	9,895
1850,	2,772	207,254	20.0	50	10,372
1851,	2,918	210,306	19.1	52	10,994
1852,	2,549	210,414	19.1	52	11,006
1853,	2,942	219,263	18.8	53	11,644
1854,	3,597	225,404	18.7	53	12,041
1855,	3,433	231,404	19.7	50	11,734
1856,	3,189	233,755	19.6	51	11,921
	116,211	6,312,233	Av. 14.8	Av. 68	424,470

TABLE NO. 2.

A Synopsis of Table No. 1, for periods of five years:

Years.	Adult baptisms.	Members.	Members for each baptism.	Baptisms per 1000 members.	Infant baptisms.
1807-1811,	2,178	116,979	5.5	182	21,270
1812-1816,	2,536	152,359	6.7	149	22,486
1817-1821,	7,813	307,847	7.9	125	38,566
1824-1826,	7,379	307,229	10.9	92	28,143
1827-1831,	17,981	799,755	13.9	72	57,590
1832-1836,	25,067	918,018	17.9	57	51,374
1837-1841,	10,950	787,291	17.2	58	45,782
1842-1846,	14,363	812,650	16.1	62	50,473
1847-1851,	12,234	989,865	19.6	51	50,440
1852-1856,	15,710	1,120,240	19.7	51	58,346
1807-1856,	116,211	6,312,233	14.8	68	424,470
1807-1831,	37,787	1,684,169	10.0	99	168,055
1832-1856,	78,324	4,628,064	17.9	56	256,415

TABLE NO. 3.

Number of members for each child baptized in four different Presbyteries, for six different decennial periods:

	1807.	1817.	1827.	1837.	1847.	1856.
New York,	5.6	10.2	14.2	15.4	15.1	10.3
New Brunswick,	7.4	6.6	11.8	25.2	30.4	31.1
Philadelphia,	4.8	11.8	13.7	15.6	16.9	19.1
Baltimore,	3.3	16.1	7.3	18.9	18.2	19.3
	5.0	11.2	11.7	18.8	20.1	19.9

In the Reformed Dutch Church, in the year 1855, there were reported 38,927 members and 2,448 children baptized—being one child for every 15.9 members, or 63 to the thousand. In 1856, there were 40,413 members and 2,754 children baptized—being one for every 14.7 members, or 68 to the thousand. For the two years, there was one infant baptism to every 15.1 members, or 66 to the thousand.

Let the reader, then, carefully examine these statistics, and his attention will at once be arrested by the fact, that in No. 1, the two columns of figures, showing the ratio of baptisms to church members are, the one an ascending, and the other a descending series. Fifty years ago, there were about 200 children baptized for every thousand communicants; now but 50—only one-fourth as many. Fifty years ago, there was one child baptized for every five members; now but one for 20!

In 1811 there were only 23,639 communicants, and yet there were 4,677 baptisms. And yet, in 1856, with *ten times* as many members, we have only *twice* as many baptisms of children; or, to be perfectly accurate, had the baptisms borne the same proportion to the communicants in our Church, last year, that they did in 1811, 46,249 would have been the number reported, instead of 11,921: showing (with the proportion of 1811) 34,328 children excluded from this holy ordinance within the past year, being almost three-fourths of the infant members of the Church! This, too, is on the supposition that the proportion for 1811 was exactly correct, that no child was then left unbaptized. At this rate, too, there should have been, for the 46 years of this table, 1,249,776 children baptized, whereas there were but 424,470, only one-third of that number, leaving 825,306 children thus—if this proportion be right—“cut off from their Church” by their parents’ act, in that brief period of time; a number nearly equal to three times the whole number of members at present in the Church!

But some one may object that this rate is too high; that there have not been that many children born in the Church. We do not assert that there has been that number of subjects of baptism; but we certainly have a right to require the objector to give substantial reasons for believing that there were more

children in the Church fifty years since, in proportion to the membership, than there are at the present time. Such reasons may be found, but they do not present themselves to us. We can think of no sufficient cause for such a change. We cannot understand why the proportion of infant baptisms to the number of members should now materially vary from what it was from 1807 to 1811. The accuracy and care used by churches, in the preparation of the statistics of baptisms and members, seem always to have been about the same; and, after a very careful examination of this point, we are satisfied that for all purposes of comparison, these statistics may safely be relied upon. We think, too, that the accuracy of all parts of these tables is about the same, and that there is no material error in any of them. And as to the proper ratio of baptisms to church members, we might remark, that our own experience and observation induce us to believe, that in 1811 it was not higher than we ought to expect it always to be, in a healthy state of the Church. There should be, from year to year, in the whole Church, about 200 children baptized for every thousand members of the Church in full communion.

It will be observed, too, that it was not in 1811 alone that there were reported nearly 200 to the thousand members. The average rate for the first five years of the last half century, (see table No. 2,) was 182 to the thousand, and for the first ten years 164, or one baptism for every 6.15 members; and even on this supposition there should have been, since 1806, 1,025,470 baptisms, instead of 424,470, the number reported, leaving 601,000 children neglected during that time, *i. e.* during 46 of the last 50 years.

If then there should be one baptism for every six members, there was no neglect until 1812, but since that time we have 629,338 neglected. If one for every seven members, since 1815, 482,651; none before. If one for eight, 375,763 since 1820; none before. If one for nine, 295,074 since 1824; none before. If one for ten, 231,352 since 1824; none before. And if one for twelve-and-a-half, 120,217 since 1827; and none before. Thus, according to the opinion we hold, whether we expect one child for every 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, or $12\frac{1}{2}$ members, (and

if to make the comparison better, we take the last 20 years alone,) we have respectively 618,339; 530,005; 463,753; 412,224; 371,000; or 296,801 as the number of children that should have been baptized; and as the number that was baptized in that period of time was only 205,041, there would be left 413,298; 324,964; 258,712; 207,183; 165,959; or 91,760 respectively, as unbaptized, and under twenty-one years of age. If then there are in the Church more children than one for every ten members, it follows, that *more than half* of the offspring of the Church are deprived of this ordinance.

A writer in the *New York Observer* has supposed that there ought to be 12.5 communicants for each child per year. To us this seems too many; and the Editor of the *Presbyterian Banner* very justly objects to it. And with our present light we cannot adopt it; nor can we substitute 10. For, it will be observed in the tables that the whole Church averaged that for 25 years. And the rate too was all the time decreasing; showing one of two things, either that Presbyterians have not as large families as formerly; or else, (and that is our opinion,) that adverse influences were more and more operating on the minds of parents, and gradually destroying their regard for this seal of the covenant; thus producing increasing neglect of the ordinance from year to year.

It is our opinion that the decrease of infant baptism has really been caused by increased neglect. And, after carefully considering the subject—after conversing with brethren in all parts of the Church, and observing the proportion of baptisms to members in many Churches; and after not only examining our own General Assembly's early and later statistics, but also the statistics of baptisms in Churches in old and new settlements, 30, 40, and 50 years ago; we are with pain inevitably driven to the conclusion, that there cannot be less than one infant subject of baptism for every six members in the whole Church. And consequently we must conclude that whilst there were but 205,041 children reported as baptized, during the last 20 years, the reports should have amounted to 618,339, leaving not less than 413,298 unbaptized. Thus have more than two-thirds of

the children of the Church been "cut off" from the people of God by their parents' sinful neglect, and by the Church's silent acquiescence therein! Is this indeed true? Is the one-half of it true? Then, indeed, is there not "*great sin*" resting on the Church?—Confession of Faith, ch. 28, sec. 5. And ought we not to fear lest great wrath is gone out against us, and lest the fire of God's anger soon consume us, unless we speedily humble ourselves, and roll away this reproach from us? Two-thirds of the children of our Church unbaptized! The very statement startles us. Indeed, we hesitate in making it, and would fain hope we are mistaken. But we fear it is sober, solemn truth. And we blush in view of the consequent shame and guilt that now rests on us as a Church.

To this conclusion, however, some may object. It may be said, that formerly more care was used in reporting baptisms than at present. But this we think is not the case. Reasoning *a priori*, we would expect to find greater care now used in making reports than formerly, since our Churches are now constantly and more earnestly urged to make correct returns than formerly, and Presbyteries generally show an increased and increasing interest in their Statistical Reports. And after referring to the Presbyterial reports, during this whole period, we can see no reason for believing that Churches were formerly more careful on these points than at the present time. About the same care in reporting on these two points seems always to have been used.

It may again be objected, that now there are more young people in the Church than formerly; and that consequently there is a smaller proportion of families with young children. But this objection, very manifestly, is not a valid one. It might be received as an explanation of a proportionate falling off for two, three, or five years. But the diminution has been gradual. For years, and tens of years, has there been a constantly decreasing ratio, and there has been no sudden change of the proportion; and that most manifestly would have been the case, if the objection were valid.

It may be objected that it cannot be true, that two-thirds, one-half, or even any large proportion of our children are unbaptized. So, no doubt, will very many reason, and therefore suppose that there may still be some explanation offered for the deductions we make from these figures. Thus, as it were, the question becomes one of experience and observation. And if you ask any pastor if the half of the children of his charge are unbaptized, he will, most probably, unhesitatingly answer, no; he will tell you that few, very few, are unbaptized. But our experience leads us to believe, that very many pastors and sessions know nothing about this matter, never having given it very special attention. We have been told, in more than one instance, that the children, in a given congregation, were generally baptized, and yet, when an examination was instituted, in every instance, more than half were found unbaptized.

As a matter of observation, we would also add, that we have frequently known ministers to neglect the baptism of their own children, without any apparent reason, for months and months, even until one or two years had elapsed; and we know of more than one, two, or three elders and deacons, in a State in which we have resided for years, who refuse altogether to have their children baptized; and yet Sessions and Presbyteries permit their continuance in office, in the very face of the Constitution, and the decision of the General Assembly: yea, and a minister who insists on the duty of attending to this *sacrament*, is in great danger of making himself odious. We have known a minister to be strongly urged to decline administering infant baptism at public worship on the Sabbath day; this, too, by his own members, who feared offence would be taken at its administration by some of the congregation connected with Baptist families; and when that pastor (his congregation being an old and large one) has been about to administer the sacrament, previous to the sermon, more than one have arisen and left the house, to show their contempt for the ordinance. And, in fine, we have heard, on the floor of one of our Synods, the very idea *scouted at* by one of our ministers, that it is "a great

sin to neglect" this ordinance, although the Confession of Faith declares that it is, in those very words. (See ch. 28, sec. 5.)

The opinions we have expressed above, as to the number of unbaptized youth in our Church, are further strengthened by the statistics of the Episcopal Church.

In 1855, having 107,560 communicants, they baptized 19,012 children, being 177 to every thousand members, or 5.6 members for every child baptized. In 1856, having 116,735 members, they baptized 20,048, being 172 to the thousand, or 5.8 members to every child baptized.

Thus, then, we learn that in the Episcopal Church, during the past two years, there has been one baptism for every 5.7 members. They have only half as many members as the Presbyterian Church, and yet report twice as many children baptized. To this, we know, it may be said, that they regard this ordinance in a different light from Presbyterians, thinking it to be a saving ordinance, and hence are over anxious to have their children baptized. Now, then, even admitting this to be true—and it would only show that Episcopals are more careful to have their own children baptized—it does not go to prove that they have larger families, more children than Presbyterians. It very much confirms us in the opinion above expressed, that at least one child should be baptized for every six communicants, if parents were faithful.

But there is another important fact that cannot escape observation. By table No. 1, we learn that there has been a constant, though varying decrease of the number of baptisms to each thousand communicants, descending from 198 to the thousand in 1811, until it reached as low as 51 in 1836, when the New-school and Congregational element in our Church was strongest. After the division, the number slightly increased, until in 1842 there were 68 to the thousand. And again there was a constant diminution until in 1849, there were but 49 to the thousand. And from that time there has been a very slight variation.

That our reference above to the New-school and Congregational element is worthy of consideration, will be seen by a

reference to the preceding tables, in connection with the statistics of those bodies, viz.

TABLE No. 4.

Members and infant baptisms in the New-school Presbyterian Church compared.

Year.	Members.	Infant baptisms.	Members for each infant baptized.	Per 1000 members.
1839,	100,850	4,426	44	23
1840,	102,060	4,378	43	23
1841,	120,645	2,843	43	24
1842,	120,645	2,843	43	24
1843,	120,645	2,843	43	24
1844,	145,416	3,226	45	22
1845,	145,416	3,226	45	22
1846,	145,416	3,226	45	22
1847,	139,047	2,621	53	19
1848,	139,047	2,621	53	19
1849,	139,047	2,621	53	19
1850,	139,797	4,096	34	29
1851,	140,076	4,126	34	29
1852,	140,652	3,931	36	28
1853,	140,452	4,032	35	29
1854,	141,477	3,873	37	27
1855,	143,029	3,924	36	27
1856,	138,760	3,394	41	24
	<u>2,402,477</u>	<u>62,250</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>26</u>

TABLE No. 5.

Members and infant baptisms in New England Congregational Churches for the last year, compared.

Names of Associations.	Members.	Infant Baptisms.	Members for each infant baptized.	Per 1000 members.
Maine,	16,937	268	63.2	16
New Hampshire,	20,022	285	70.3	14
Vermont,	27,705	193	143.6	7
Massachusetts,	67,195	1,254	53.6	19
Connecticut,	38,038	738	51.5	19
Rhode Island,	2,717	53	51.3	19
	<u>172,614</u>	<u>2,791</u>	<u>61.8</u>	<u>16</u>

By examining table No. 4, it will be seen that the New-school Church, immediately after their secession, show, by their reports, increasing neglect of infant baptism; whereas, our own body reported more baptisms for each thousand members than the united Church had done for some time. This increasing difference continued until in 1847 the New-school reported only 19 for each thousand members, the Old-school, at the same time, reporting 52, being nearly three times as many to the thousand amongst the Old-school as amongst the New. Since then the New-school have reported, from year to year, a very slightly increased proportion.

If, then, there ought to be one baptism a year for every six members, within the last 18 years there should have been amongst the New-school 400,413 baptisms, instead of 62,250, the number reported; that is, six children out of seven, or six-sevenths of their children, being 338,163, are unbaptized! All of them of 18 years old and under!

Turn now to table No. 5, and we readily see that in the Congregational Churches in New England, infant baptism is, beyond a doubt, dying out. In Vermont we have but 7 baptisms to every thousand communicants; in New Hampshire but 14; in Maine, 16; and in all the other Associations but 19; the average being only 16 to the thousand!

One remark more on this point. It would seem invidious to name Churches, but there are many, as can be seen by examining the Minutes of the General Assembly, who number 300, 400, and 500 communicants, and yet, from year to year, there are only 2, 3, 5 or 10 baptisms reported. Have such congregations no children, or almost none, or is this sacrament forgotten by them? Can it be their intention to place it amongst the five rejected sacraments of Rome? Let us hope better things. Let Churches honour God, and then alone will he truly honour them.

III. What causes have been at work to produce such extensive neglect of infant baptism?

1. We may mention the greatly increased and very extraordinary efforts of the various anti-Pedobaptist bodies, to disseminate their sentiments within the past thirty-five years.

The careful student of history cannot fail noticing a connec-

tion between the history of those efforts and the variations of the tables given above. The movement of Alexander Campbell has been felt in our Church, beyond a doubt. He has very plainly left his mark on the statistics above presented. Most insidiously, and yet boldly, was his heresy disseminated even within our borders, and that, too, with no little success. However, since Campbell himself had his debate with Dr. Rice, and since the world thus learned what Campbellism was, learned its dangerous tendency, it has ceased gaining further ground from us. So, also, the influence of the Congregational, Arminian, and Semi-Pelagian elements, have all told with power, have tended to laxity of practical religion. Look over the statistical tables given above, and examine the history of our Church during that time, and this will be noticed. Indeed, we are satisfied that independency in church government will, sooner or later, lead to errors both in doctrine and practice! And in so far as that element becomes mixed with the Presbyterian, Presbyterianism will lose its power.

2. Neglect of baptism results from neglect of pastors in giving proper and full instructions to their people in regard to this sacrament.

This, we think, would follow, as an inference from the mere fact of neglect of the duty. Almost invariably do failures, in regard to the practical duties of Christianity, arise from a previous neglect of doctrinal instruction; and, we think, this is eminently true in the present case. Seldom does a sacramental season roll around that we are not privileged to hear a discourse, yea, many discourses, intended to enforce the duty of all to regard and attend upon the Lord's Supper as an ordinance of God. The great sin of neglect is also dwelt upon with much earnestness; and great pains are taken to explain the nature, design, and use of that ordinance. And yet, although we have passed several years in the ministry, and have generally had a favourable opportunity of hearing preaching, we cannot recall one instance in which we were privileged to hear a sermon on the sacrament of baptism. Such sermons are, no doubt, often preached, but we are very greatly mistaken, if there is not a crying sin in this regard, on the part of very many pastors. Like priest, like people. If pastors disregard this ordinance in

their public teachings, the people may be expected to neglect the discharge of the duties incumbent on them. If the doctrine of the Trinity is not taught, Unitarianism invariably gains ground. If the duty of observing the sacraments is not insisted upon, their neglect will become more and more common, as a matter of course.

In regard to baptism, we are disposed to think that such instruction as is generally given in our pulpits and lecture-rooms, is very limited and partial. Our own limited experience and observation lead us to believe this is lamentably true. There are comparatively few of our youths, who understand the relation they bear to the Church. We have asked scores of them, and in a very few instances only have we received an intelligent reply. Our Shorter and Larger Catechisms, and such works as Willison and Fisher, are not in vogue, as they were thirty or forty years since. Pastors now seldom assemble the children of their congregations for instruction regarding the doctrines and sacraments, such meetings as were recommended years ago by our Assembly, (see above,) as are presumed in the Constitution, and as are still common in Scotland. "Examination" meetings have generally passed by. Many pastors too, are fearful of being accounted contentious if they preach on baptism, since some member has a husband, or wife, or some connection, of Baptist views; and it is very remarkable that, whilst this subject is constantly harped upon in Baptist periodicals and pulpits, and whilst tracts are constantly thrust in our people's hands, where this can at all be done—tracts intended to convince them that Presbyterianism is Popery, &c.—this may all be done, and give offence to very few of our members, but the moment their own pastor speaks with decision on the subject, and exposes the errors of these opposers, these same persons think it unnecessary, ill-timed, or ill-advised. Thus are they charitable and liberal in their own estimation, whereas, in reality, they are enemies of the truth.

Thankful are we for our hundreds of faithful, earnest, and godly pastors. And we feel assured that even where there is failure in the discharge of duty, the failure arises, in very few instances, from a want of love for the truth. Let us then urge them to insist more particularly, in their instructions, on the

truth, that baptism is a sacrament, one of only two; that it was ordained by Christ himself; and that, therefore, the same obligations rest upon Christians to present their children for baptism, as to attend upon the Lord's Supper; and that the same sin is committed when they neglect either duty.

Indeed, we think that the great failure in many works on baptism, and in much of the instruction given in the pulpit, consists in neglect, pointedly and earnestly, to press on the consciences of parents their great guilt and sin against God in neglecting this ordinance. Learned and very excellent discussions we have, and they have been called for; controversial works and sermons have been demanded, and read, and have tended to prevent the progress of error. But it is comparatively seldom that parents are pressed as to the sin of their neglect—the sin committed against the Church, against their children, against their own souls, against God; the sin of rejecting the blessings promised to their children in the covenant; the sin of despising their children's "birthright."

How very often is it the case that an ordinance, which should be regarded as a delightful privilege to the parent, is regarded rather as an ordinance of the Church! Perhaps it is considered a respectable way of naming the child, or of making a display of its habiliments to the congregation. Oh, how much reason is there to fear that its administration is not often preceded, on the part of the parents, by that meditation, self-examination and prayer, which should accompany an attendance upon such a holy and delightful sacrament!

3. Improper administration of this ordinance. This we imagine is one of the principal causes of the existing neglect of the ordinance itself.

1st. The minister very often does not even know who intend presenting their children, until the time for the service itself has arrived; contrary to the "Directory," ch. vii. § 3. Consequently, he has not, "previous to the administration of that ordinance, inquired into the parents' knowledge," &c., and cannot do, as required by the Gen. Assem. Digest, b. iii., p. 1, § 19.

2d. Thus proceeding without any previous acquaintance with the parents, or knowledge of their intentions, and very hastily

attending to its administration, the moral influence upon them, and others, is in a great measure destroyed.

3d. Although the minister expects to require of parents some solemn promises, those parents are often left in utter ignorance of their nature, or of the fact that they are expected to come under such solemn obligations, until the moment they are—in a hurried manner before the congregation—asked to give their assent to them. Unless previously familiar with the requisitions of our Constitution, (and our experience has taught us that comparatively few are,) the full import of those questions cannot be gathered, as they are proposed. And if the questions are not affirmatively answered, it is no difference; we never heard of one instance of baptism being, at that stage, arrested by either the minister, or parent. It is very wrong, thus to trifle with matters of such moment. The Constitution is violated, when this course is pursued; and common sense indignantly chides those who thus negligently and improperly deal with these sacred rites of our most holy religion.

“While in all the ordinances, holy fear and devout reverence should characterize religious worshippers, those which may be regarded as the highest and most sacred institutions of Christianity—the seals of the covenant—should be approached with peculiar solemnity, and with a frame of mind corresponding to the nature and importance of the service, to the spiritual benefits expected from its performance, and to the weighty obligations which it involves. It is generally admitted to be a gross profanation, to partake of the Lord’s Supper in a rash and hasty manner, without due preparation. ‘Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat,’ &c. And not only the practice of our Lord and his apostles, but the profession also, of almost all sections of the Church, declares an unprepared approach to this sacrament to be presumptuous sinning; not only unproductive of any real benefit to the participant, but fraught with fearful danger. Although there is reason to fear that, from low views of the nature and design of the other sacrament, and from the unfaithfulness of those who dispense it, numbers come to it destitute of due solemnity, ignorant of the necessary preparation, and unconcerned about making it; yet is such preparation

equally important and beneficial in partaking of baptism, as in coming to the Lord's Supper."—*Houston on Baptism.*

4th. Another cause of neglect is, the Church's failure to recognize baptized children as members after baptism. Feed my lambs, said our Saviour. Instruct my children, says the Church, in her Constitution; and yet, who can see any difference between the baptized children and other youths? We have often been seriously asked to point out the way in which the Church recognizes the difference. The recommendation of the General Assembly, and the spirit of the Constitution, require "the pastors and sessions of the different churches under their care, to assemble as often as they may deem necessary during the year, the baptized children with their parents, to recommend said children to God in prayer, and explain to them the nature and obligations of baptism, and the relation which they sustain to the Church."—(Minutes of the General Assembly for 1818, p. 691.) And again, "We do recommend unanimously, to all our Presbyteries, and particularly that each Presbytery do, at least once a year, examine into the manner of each minister's preaching, and whether he do, and how he doth discharge his duty, toward the young people and children of his congregation, in a way of catechizing and familiar instruction. And, in case any minister within our bounds shall be defective in any of the above mentioned cases, he shall be subject to the censure of the Presbytery."—(Minutes, 1734, p. 111.) And in 1785, arrangements were made to have the youth in vacant congregations catechized, "at least once a year, in the same manner as is required by the order of our Church, in congregations supplied with regular pastors." Were "the order of our Church" regarded by all pastors; were children so taught, that they would feel themselves to be really under the Church's inspection, they would see the advantages of baptism, and irreligious and ungodly parents would not need to inquire in what the difference does consist. We do not wonder at such persons concluding that there is no advantage to be derived by children, from their baptism, whilst in infancy; and hence they do not consider the guilt resting on themselves when they deprive their children of the seal of the covenant. The infant members of the Church are declared, in the Discipline, to be under the "inspection and gov-

ernment" of the officers of the Church. And hence, it belongs to them to see that parents discharge their duties; that they instruct their children in the Scriptures, and Catechisms, and train them in the fear of God. And when they have arrived at years of discretion, and possess sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, "they ought to be informed it is their duty and their privilege to come to the Lord's Supper." Let sessions and pastors universally discharge these duties thus made incumbent on them by God and the Church, and we doubt not the result will soon be seen in an increase of piety among parents. This would also, we doubt not, manifest itself in an increase of infant baptisms, and in an increase of the number of youths making profession of faith in Christ, from year to year. In the path of duty, children, parents, pastors, sessions, churches, all will be blessed.

5th. Neglect of family worship results in neglect of this sacrament. When the fire ceases to burn on the altar, it is not surprising if there be found no heat in the bosom. When the cry is made that family altars are torn down, that family worship is greatly neglected by professing Christians; we need not wonder if the sacraments and other ordinances are neglected, or carelessly attended upon, especially if baptism, the household sacrament, is laid aside. If children are not taught to love prayer and the reading of God's word at home, we need not be surprised that their parents neglect baptism, in which ordinance they would be reminded of the duties they thus owe to their offspring. After all, the great means, under God, for the perpetuation of piety in the family, is the family Bible and the family altar. Let *family* worship be laid aside, and soon will it show itself in want of regard for *public* worship. "A Christian family living without family religion is a contradiction."—Minutes of General Assembly, 1808.

6th. The time and circumstances attending the administration of baptism, are often such as wholly to destroy the moral effect of the ordinance itself. Week-day services or private prayer-meetings, when even few professing Christians are present, are, on that account not seldom selected, in preference to the Sabbath-day. Thus it would seem that this is regarded as

an *inferior* sacrament; at all events, that is the natural effect of such a course on the minds of lookers on. More especially is this the case where that ordinance is seldom administered, and consequently regular attenders on the house of God on Sabbath-day, seldom, perhaps never, have seen baptism administered on that day, and therefore are shocked at the impropriety of it! If these services were really held in private houses because of a desire to have children early dedicated to God, it would then be an exaltation of the ordinance—be a manifestation of high regard for it; since mothers cannot be expected, until their children are several weeks old, to be able to go up to the house of God. “It is proper that baptism be administered in the presence of the congregation,” (Direct. for Worship, ch. 7, sec. 5,) but in such cases it may “be expedient to administer this ordinance in private houses.” How many family records would show the great regard for this ordinance which was had by the parents of the late Dr. Chalmers, as evinced in the following extract from his father’s record: “*John Chalmers and Lucy Hall* were married on the 20th August, 1771. Children by said marriage—1. *James*, born June 11, 1772; baptized June 14th. 2. *Lucy*, born Nov. 9, 1773; baptized Nov. 14th. 3. *Barbara*, born June 21, 1775; baptized June 25th. 4. *George*, born April 1, 1777; baptized April 6th. 5. *William*, born Aug. 31, 1778; baptized Sept. 6th. 6. *Thomas*, born March 17, 1780; baptized March 19th. 7. *Isabel*, born Dec. 13, 1781; baptized Dec. 16th. 8. *David*, born May 31, 1783; baptized June 1st. 9. *John*, born May 19, 1785; baptized May 22d. 10. *Helen*, born August, 1786; baptized Sept. 3d. 11. *Jean*, born June 29, 1788; baptized same day. 12. *Patrick*, born June 16, 1790; baptized June 20th. 13. *Charles*, born January 16, 1792; baptized January 22d. 14. *Alexander*, born April 9, 1794; baptized April 13th.” Not one of all the fourteen children of this record was over seven days old at the time of its baptism. Would there not be more such men as Thomas Chalmers, if we had more such parents as he had?

Specific times seem to be set apart for the administration of infant baptism, generally about the communion season. Thus naturally, but unintentionally, the idea is instilled into the minds

of very many parents, that there is a fixed opportunity for their children's baptism, and that it cannot be attended to at other times. We know this impression is common in the Church, and very general in some districts. And thus parents not being able to present their children at the specified time, suppose it cannot be done till the next communion season; and should anything be in the way at that time it is again postponed. Thus carelessness and neglect of the ordinance is engendered, and years roll around, when one, two, three, or six little ones added to the family, are without the seal of God's favour.

7th. We also think that another fact, not yet mentioned, is deserving our notice. About the year 1830, there were, annually, some 3,000 adults and 12,000 infants baptized, and about 9,000 members were received on profession of faith. It was usually the case, about that time, that the whole number of persons received on examination was nearly equal to the number of infants baptized. But in the year 1832, the number of members received on examination was trebled, as was also the number of adults baptized; but the increase in the number of infants baptized, was only one-twelfth—*i. e.*, instead of having reported some 36,000 infants baptized, to 34,160 persons received on profession of faith, there were only 13,246 children thus admitted to this sealing ordinance. And so we find this state of things continued during the excitements in our churches from 1831 to 1836, which were of New England and Congregational origin. "New measures" were popular, and the old doctrine of infant baptism shamefully neglected. So that in three years, under the "new system," there must have been received at least 40,000 or 50,000 members, besides the usual proportion of 40,000 more, who, from the beginning, entirely disregarded and ignored household baptism. This would indicate both indifference to this sacrament by church officers in receiving members, and a disregard of it on the part of the members received. We regard these facts as well deserving consideration, much more than we have time or space at present to devote thereto. The remarks already made in reference to the Congregational and New-school statistics thus receive additional confirmation.

IV. What may be done to awaken the Church to a proper regard for the sacrament of baptism, the seal of God's favour towards his little ones?

On this point we will not now speak largely. Let brethren ponder well this whole subject. Let our Church judicatories, our pastors and our ruling elders consider well the solemn responsibilities now respectively resting on them. We will now, however, very briefly suggest some things which, it seems to us, may and ought to be done. 1. Let pastors and sessions give more attention to the requirements of the Constitution as presented, particularly in the former part of this article. If this were done, much, if not all, of the neglect would thus be removed. 2. Let pastors more frequently preach in regard to the sacrament of baptism, and particularly point out the guilt of those who contemn or neglect it, since it is an ordinance of Christ himself. And let them also give proper attention to catechetical exercises amongst the youth. 3. Let Presbyteries and Synods inquire into the faithfulness with which pastors and sessions discharge their duties in this respect. Let an interest, a real interest, be manifested in regard to those admitted to the benefits of this sacrament, as well as those received to the Lord's Supper; and let this interest also manifest itself in the giving and receiving their annual reports. 4. Let Sessions, Presbyteries, and Synods insist more on family religion among their members, and they will learn highly to prize this seal of promise to the children of believers. 5. It may be well for the General Assembly to consider the propriety of overturing Presbyteries with reference to adding to the Constitution some of its own enjoinderments, above quoted; and of adding one or two sections, regarding the time when baptism is to be administered, the time and manner of the pastor's interview with parents previous to the baptism of their children, the qualifications of parents, &c. And we would suggest that sessions be required to keep a register of all the children in their congregation, adding from time to time those born to their members, and the children of members received on certificate, and report the same annually; and that Presbyteries report the same to the Assembly. 6. Let the Assembly insist that the Presbyteries under her care do *require* all members within

their respective jurisdictions to conform to the requisitions of our Confession of Faith and the teachings of the word of God. And, in particular, that they see to it that all their ministers, elders, and deacons, neither contemn nor neglect this holy ordinance. 7. Let the Assembly direct that baptized members be dismissed, and received as such on certificate, and that thus their being under the Church's care and inspection be regarded as a matter of fact; every church having a list of baptized members, and annually reporting the same to the higher judicatories.

ART. V.—*Free Agency.*

IN all discussions concerning sin and grace, the question concerning the nature and necessary conditions of free agency is of necessity involved. This is one of the points in which theology and psychology come into immediate contact. There is a theory of free agency with which the doctrines of original sin and of efficacious grace are utterly irreconcilable, and there is another theory with which those doctrines are perfectly consistent. In all ages of the Church, therefore, those who have adopted the former of these theories, reject those doctrines; and, on the other hand, those who are constrained to believe those doctrines, are no less constrained to adopt the other and congenial theory of free agency. Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, and Remonstrants are not more notoriously at variance with Augustinians, Lutherans, and Calvinists, on the doctrines of sin and grace, than they are on the metaphysical and moral question of human liberty. In every system of theology, therefore, there is a chapter *De libero arbitrio*. This is a question which every theologian finds in his path, and which he must dispose of; and on the manner in which it is determined depends his theology, and of course his religion, so far as his theology is to him a truth and reality.

It may seem preposterous to attempt, in the compass of a few pages, the discussion of a question on which so many volumes have been written. There is, however, this important difference