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ARTICLE I.—*Weissagung und Erfüllung im Alten und im Neuen Testamente.* Ein theologischer versuch von Dr. J. CHR. K. HOFMANN, Prof. Theol. in Erlangen. 8vo. pp. 362 and 386.

THIS work, which was published rather more than thirteen years ago, has been several times referred to in our columns. But its influence upon the opinions of an important class of continental scholars has been such, that we shall render, we doubt not, an acceptable service to our readers by presenting them with a summary of its contents. It should be distinctly stated in advance, that with whatever faults these volumes may be chargeable, they are free from all complicity with the principles or results of a sceptical criticism, which is upon proper occasions scored in a very wholesome way. Hofmann's aspirations after novelty have taken quite a different turn from this. The literal truth of the sacred narrative is everywhere adhered to, as opposed to all mythical conceits and legendary exaggerations. The integrity and genuineness of all the inspired writings, and in all their parts, are strenuously asserted, and the date to which unvarying tradition assigns them is unhesitatingly received. When even such men as Kurtz and Delitzsch have yielded to the torrent, it is deserving of commendatory mention that Hofmann should stand firm. While

ART. VII.—*The Tecnobaptist*: A Discourse, wherein an honest Baptist, by a course of argument to which no honest Baptist can object, is convinced that Infant Christians are proper subjects of Christian Baptism. By R. B. MAYES. Boston: Printed by John Wilson & Son, 22 School street. 1857. pp. 172.

THIS is a piratical little book. It sails under false colours. It purports to be an argument in support of infant baptism. It is in fact an argument against it. The reader is not prepared for a trope on a title-page. He presumes that the word infant is used in its literal sense, and that "infant Christians" means children born within the pale of the Christian Church. He takes up the book, therefore, under the impression that he is about to read the process of argument by which a Baptist was converted into a Pedobaptist. Every thing favours this impression. The book is a colloquy. The interlocutors are Mr. A., an Episcopalian; Mr. C., a Presbyterian; and Mr. B., a Baptist. Mr. B. allows Messrs. A. and C. to have everything their own way. They begin the argument; lay down the premises; and draw the conclusions. Mr. B. seems to be entirely at their mercy. He lies still, as Napoleon did at Austerlitz, and permits his adversaries to gather their forces all round him, and to feel sure of victory. All at once the scene changes. Mr. B. takes things into his own hands. Admits the premises of his opponents, as he has allowed them to be stated, and then runs them into all manner of contradictions and confusion. Poor Mr. A. particularly is made to flounder ridiculously in very shallow water. Mr. B. acknowledges himself to be in favour of infant baptism, but by infant, he means a babe in Christ. He is the advocate of the baptism of those born of the Spirit, as soon as they give satisfactory evidence of regeneration. The maxim that all things are fair in war, our author has transferred to polemics, and he has certainly outmanœuvred his antagonists, and gained over them not only a complete, but an easy triumph. It is, however, hardly fair thus to mystify his Pedobaptist readers. They open their lips for a bonbon,

and he inserts a lump of aloes. The consequence is that the aloes is rejected with an emphasis which an honest pill would not have provoked. We do not think that our author has gained much by his ruse. It must be admitted, however, that the thing is well done. The book is very adroitly written, and is the best Baptist argument we are acquainted with. We do not propose to review it in detail. The principles involved in the discussion may all be presented, as we hope, more effectively, by avoiding the specialities of refutation. The whole of the author's argument is condensed in the following statement, to be found on page 93.

*"In the Old Testament Church.* 1. The carnal descendants of Abraham were the chosen people of God. 2. The carnal descendants were begotten with carnal and corruptible seed. 3. The carnal descendants were carnally generated, and entered the kingdom of God, or the Church, by a carnal birth. 4. The outward sign of membership was circumcision, a carnal ordinance, performed by cutting the flesh of the subject. 5. The carnal descendants were required to be circumcised not before nor at, but after, their carnal birth.

*"In the New Testament Church.* 1. The spiritual descendants of Abraham are the chosen people of God. 2. The spiritual descendants are begotten with spiritual and incorruptible seed. 3. The spiritual descendants are spiritually regenerated, and enter the kingdom of God, or the Church, by a spiritual birth. 4. The outward sign of membership is baptism, performed with water, which you believe to be an emblem of the Spirit. 5. The spiritual descendants should be baptized, not before nor at, but after, their spiritual birth."

In other words, under the old dispensation, the Church was an external society, and the condition of membership was natural descent from Abraham; whereas, under the new dispensation, the Church is a spiritual society, and the condition of membership is regeneration. In the Hebrew Church those born after the flesh were the proper subjects of circumcision. In the Christian Church, those born after the Spirit are the proper subjects of baptism. Every thing, it will be seen, in this argument depends on the idea of the Church, and on the conditions of church membership.

It is obvious that men can understand neither themselves nor others, on this subject, unless they agree in the meaning of the terms which they employ. The flaw in the preceding argument, the vitiating mistake in the whole theory of the Baptist is, that although right in his idea of the Church, he is wrong in his idea of Church membership. In other words, he confounds two entirely distinct questions, first, What is the Church? and, second, Whom are we bound to regard and treat as church members? We admit that the Church, considered as the body of Christ, consists of the regenerated. No man can be a member of Christ's body who is not a partaker of his life, and governed by his Spirit. But does it thence follow that we are bound not to recognize or treat any as members of the Church who are not born of the Spirit? Because it is true that no man is a Christian who does not believe Christ's doctrines and obey his commands, are we therefore to recognize and treat no man as a Christian who has not true faith, and is not obedient in heart and life? No man, says the apostle, is a Jew, who is not a true worshipper of God. But did it follow that none were to be recognized and treated as Jews but such as were Jews inwardly, and had experienced the circumcision of the heart? It is a sheer impossibility to carry out the principle of treating men according to their state in the sight of God. We must recognize many as Christians who are not real Christians; we must regard and treat as Church members many who are not the members of the body of Christ. In other words we must recognize the distinction between the Church visible and invisible, between the nominal and the real, between the true and the professed followers of the Lord. The whole argument of the Baptist is, that the Church under the new dispensation is a spiritual body, consisting of true believers, therefore none can be members of the Church but those who being regenerated by the Holy Ghost believe in Christ, and none can be properly regarded as members of the Church who do not give satisfactory evidence of regeneration. But as infants, whether capable of regeneration or not, cannot give evidence of being renewed by the Spirit, or profess faith in Christ, they cannot properly be regarded as members of the Church. And as baptism, being

the sign and seal of the covenant of grace, is the recognition of Church membership, children are not the proper subjects of baptism.

On the other hand, the great body of Christians, (in their confessions of faith,) and especially the great body of Protestants teach: 1. That the Church consists essentially of the true people of God, i. e. of all who have been, or who shall hereafter be, gathered into the fold of Christ, and made partakers of his salvation. 2. That since God has not given to men the power to read the heart, he has not imposed on his people the obligation to sit in judgment on the regeneration of their fellow-men. Consequently, we not only are not required, but we are not allowed, to demand evidence of regeneration satisfactory to ourselves, as the condition of church membership. In other words, Christ has not committed to men the impossible task of making a church which shall consist exclusively of the regenerate. He requires us to recognize as Christians all those who, having competent knowledge, profess their faith in him, and are free from scandal. No matter how well satisfied we may be in our own minds, that a man has not been really renewed by the Holy Ghost, we have no right either to refuse to receive him as a member of the Church, or to exclude him from it after such recognition, if he possesses the qualifications above-mentioned. This is not only a matter of divine command, but of inevitable necessity. Every Church on earth acts on this principle; that is, it receives to its communion, or retains in it, many who in its own judgment are not the true children of God. The task of separating the tares from the wheat, which the Master has reserved to himself, willing as many have been to undertake, all have been obliged practically to abandon. Such being both the law of Christ, and the necessity of the case, it of course follows, that while in the sight of God no men are true Christians but the regenerate, and no men are really members of the Church, which is Christ's body, but true believers, yet we are obliged to regard and treat as Christians, or as members of the Church, multitudes who are unrenewed in heart. Hence the unavoidable distinction between the Church visible and invisible, between those who are members of the Church in the sight of God, and those who are members in the sight of man.

It is therefore part of the faith or practice of all Christendom, that although regeneration is an essential condition of church membership in the sight of God, (i. e. no unrenewed person is an actual member of the Church in his sight,) yet it is not the condition of church membership in the sight of men. That is, we are bound to regard and treat as members of the Church, many who are not truly regenerate. 3. It is also part of the general faith of Christendom, that as we are required to regard many unrenewed adults as members of the Church, so we are bound to regard and treat the children of believing parents as members of the Church, although we do not know whether they are renewed or unrenewed.

When, therefore, it is asked, Who constitute the Church in the sight of God? we answer, The true people of God. When asked, Who constitute the Church in the sight of man? we answer, The professors of the true religion, together with their children. When asked, What is the condition of actual church membership in the sight of God? we answer, Regeneration, or the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. If asked, What is the condition of church membership in the sight of man? we answer, The credible profession of the true religion, or the filial relation to a parent who professes the true religion. The meaning of the last question is, Whom are we bound to regard and treat as members of the Church? For, to be a member of the Church in the sight of men, is to have the recognized right to be regarded and treated as such. A citizen of a country is one whose right to the privileges of citizen is duly recognized; and a member of the Church is one whose right to be so regarded and treated is duly recognized. When, therefore, we assert the church membership of the infants of believing parents, we do not assert their regeneration, or that they are true members of Christ's body; we only assert that they belong to the class of persons whom we are bound to regard and treat as members of Christ's Church. This is the only sense in which even adults are members of the Church, so far as men are concerned. When we say that any man is a member of the Episcopal, or Methodist, or Baptist Church, we mean that he has a right to be so regarded and treated, and is in fact so regarded and treated by his fellow-men. How he stands in the sight of God is a

different question. That is a point we are not capable of deciding.

It is easy to see, in the light of these elementary principles, the fallacy of the common argument of our Baptist friends against the church membership of infants. They say that because regeneration, or saving union with Christ, the condition of actual church membership in the sight of God, therefore children who cannot give evidence of such regeneration, are not to be regarded or treated as church members. But we are required to treat as members of the Church, many who are not regenerated. We constantly do it; we must do it, because we cannot avoid it. It is absurd to say, that because we cannot know that an infant is renewed, therefore he cannot be baptized. As it is undeniable that God never intended that the visible Church on earth should consist exclusively of the regenerated; as from the first he permitted and intended to permit tares to grow with the wheat until the harvest; as, in other words, he has always required his people to recognize as church members, many who were not really united to Christ, the only question is, Has he required us so to regard and treat the infants of believing parents? It will be seen that the question whether such infants are regenerate, has nothing to do with the controversy. Actual regeneration is not a *sine qua non* for membership in the visible Church. This is an undeniable proposition; for there is not a Baptist or a Brownist on earth who does not admit that there are unrenewed persons in the visible Church, who must be regarded and treated as members. The only question is, Are we bound by the command of God so to regard the infants of believing parents? All Christendom (Baptists excepted) answer this question in the affirmative, and answer it in such a way as to show that the answer comes from the heart. The reasons for this answer are substantially the following.

1. The intimate relation between children and parents. They are not only partakers of the same nature, but the child is of the very substance of the parents, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh. The life of the one is continued in the other. This natural bond is the ground of the instinctive natural affection, which on the part of the parent is one of the strongest

elements of our nature. There is moreover the bond of common interest. The destiny of the child is involved in that of the parent. The parent is responsible for the child, and the child is dependent on the parent. It is in virtue of this intimate relationship that, by the will of God, and the very nature of human society, the act of the parent is, in a multitude of cases, the act of the child. If the father becomes a citizen of a country, he makes his children citizens. If he turns Jew or Mohammedan, his infant children are included in the change. This is unavoidable. It arises out of the very nature of the parental relation. All the analogies of human society, therefore, are in favour of the doctrine, that when a parent becomes a Christian, his infant children are to be regarded as Christians. If this ought not to be done, it must be for some specific reason, making this an exception to all analogous cases. There is, however, no such reason. The fact that the child cannot understand what it is to be a Christian, cannot profess the Christian faith, nor give evidence of Christian character, is nothing peculiar. All this may be said in similar cases. When a foreigner becomes a citizen of this country, his children becomes citizens also, although they cannot understand our political system, nor make any profession of fidelity to our government. The parent is recognized as having the right in such cases to act for his child, and it is assumed, or presumed, or taken for granted, that the child will ratify the act of the parent. In like manner when a man becomes a Christian, when he lays hold of the covenant of grace for himself, his children are to be regarded as doing the same thing. He has a right to represent them and act for them. And it is to be assumed, or presumed, until the contrary appears, that the children are included in his act. At any rate they are to be so regarded and treated, until they become old enough to act for themselves. This was the law of God under the old dispensation. When any foreigner became a Jew, his children became Jews. Exodus xii. 48. They were included in the covenant embraced by the father. It was not a mere external political relation, but a spiritual or religious one, which was thus assumed for the child. He came under covenant obligations to adopt the Jewish religion, to acknowledge Jehovah to be the



only true God, and to obey the law, and trust the promises of Moses and the prophets. All this was included in becoming a Jew, and all this was done, by divine command, whenever a gentile having minor children embraced the religion of the Jews. The church membership of the infants of believing parents is, therefore, in accordance with the analogy of all human social institutions, and is sanctioned by the approbation and command of God. It is founded on the intimate relationship between the parent and child, which, from the will of God and the constitution of our nature, makes the parent the representative of the child, authorized to enter into covenant with God and man in its behalf. Our Baptist friends are wont to object to this argument, that a man may join a masonic lodge and not thereby make his infant children freemasons. This is true, and it shows that a child stands in a very different relation to freemasonry, from that which it sustains to the plan of salvation. The parent acts for the child, only where the act of the former of necessity determines the relations and obligations of the latter. Man is a social and religious being by the constitution of his nature. He must be the subject of civil and religious relations and obligations. During infancy he cannot determine these relations for himself. They must of necessity be determined for him by his parents. By becoming an English citizen, a man makes his infant children the subjects of the English crown, entitled to the protection and privileges, and burdened with the obligations of English citizenship. There is no analogy between this case and a parent joining the army or navy, or entering a masonic lodge, because there is nothing in the nature of a child which makes it necessary for him to belong to some army, or navy, or to be a member of some masonic fraternity. He must, however, be a citizen of some country, and he must have some religion. As the father chooses for the child his country, so he chooses for him his religion. This is a matter, so to speak, of necessity, both by the law of God, and the constitution of society. The Baptist doctrine, therefore, that a man in becoming a Christian, or entering the Christian Church, does not thereby make his children Christians, is opposed to all the analogies of political and religious life. No wonder that the Baptists stand alone in the vast field, not of

Christendom only, but of humanity. So wide is the application of the principle that children are included in their parents, and enter with them in the civil or religious relations which they assume, that an eloquent Irish Episcopal minister exclaimed, "There are but two places into the whole universe of God from which infants are excluded. The one is hell; the other is the Baptist Church." There must be something wrong in a doctrine which leads to such a violation of all analogies human and divine.

2. In all covenants which God has ever formed with men, their children have always been included. The covenant made with Adam was not only for himself, but for all his posterity descending from him by ordinary generation. Without their assent or consent, and even without the possibility of their knowledge and coöperation, he was constituted their federal head and representative, authorized to decide for them their character and destiny. His choice was regarded as their choice. It is a plain historical fact, that his apostasy was the apostasy of his race. When God entered into covenant with his Eternal Son, as the representative of his people, it was without their assent or consent, knowledge or coöperation. And yet they, in virtue of that covenant, are made partakers of all the benefits of redemption. And Christ will stand at last before the throne of God and say, "Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me." The covenant with Abraham included all his natural descendants in the line of Isaac and Jacob. When Abraham embraced the promise and received in his own person the seal of the covenant, all connected with him and represented by him were included in the compact. When God renewed at Mount Sinai the covenant with the chosen people, and made the law of Moses the law of the covenant between him and them, it was not with those of adult age only, but also with their little ones. Exodus xix. and xx.; Deut. v. and Deut. xxix. 9-13. "Keep therefore the words of this covenant and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. Ye stand here this day, all of you, before the Lord your God, your captains of tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water;

that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." The fundamental law of this covenant was the Decalogue. "The Lord our God," says Moses, "made a covenant with us in Horeb . . . saying, I am the Lord thy God which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," &c. The whole people, therefore, the adults for themselves, the parents for their children, and masters for their servants, entered into a solemn covenant with God, in which he promised to be their God, and they promised to be his people; to have no other God but Jehovah; to make no graven image to bow down to or worship; to keep holy the Sabbath; to honour their fathers and mothers; to do no murder; not to commit adultery; not to steal; not to bear false witness; and not to covet. In this solemn transaction parents acted for their children, as they again were to act for theirs, from generation to generation. The parent made for the child a profession of faith, and a promise of obedience. He introduced his child into the covenant which he himself embraced, and circumcision, the seal of that covenant, was therefore enjoined to be administered to children. The principle, therefore, which lies at the foundation of infant baptism, and which renders it obligatory upon all Christian parents, is here solemnly recognized; not for a time, nor for a special occasion; not for a peculiar form of religion, nor for any one dispensation of the Church, but as a general principle to govern all analogous cases, in all ages, and under all dispensations. That principle is, that the child is represented in the parent; and, therefore, when the parent enters into covenant with God, when he takes God to be his God, and consecrates himself to his service, he does for his child what he does for himself, and the child is not only bound by the parent's act, but is to be regarded and treated as though he had done in his own person what his parent did in his name. It is undeniable, that this principle is sanctioned in the Bible, and therefore that all objections to infant baptism,

(or infant church membership,) which assume this principle to be false, are unscriptural. The principal objection to infant baptism is founded on the incompetency of infants to understand the import of the rite, or to assume the obligations which it imposes. Christian baptism assumes the profession of the Christian faith, and consecration to the worship and service of the Lord Jesus. Children cannot make such a profession, nor can they consecrate themselves to God; therefore they cannot properly be recognized as Christians by baptism. But this assumes that the parent cannot properly make this profession of faith and this promise of obedience in the child's name; that he has no right to do it; and that the child would not be bound if the parent did assume to act in its name. According to the command of God, however, the parent was not only authorized, but he was required to make a profession of faith and promise of obedience in the name of the child; and the child by God's command was to be regarded as having done what his parent did in his behalf, and was accordingly held to the contract. He was denounced and punished as a covenant-breaker, if he proved unfaithful to the engagements thus legitimately assumed in his name.

It is objected, however, that the old dispensation was external, typical, and ceremonial, whereas the new is spiritual; and therefore we cannot argue from the one to the other. Under the old dispensation natural birth and outward profession were the condition of church membership; whereas under the new, spiritual birth and saving faith are the conditions. The premise in this argument is incorrect. When a man entered the Jewish community, or when a Hebrew parent presented his child for circumcision, he made a profession of the true religion, and the promise of spiritual obedience. Any Hebrew who did what he professed to do, was as surely saved, as any Christian who is sincere in his baptismal vows. The Hebrew took God to be his God; he promised obedience to all his laws, and faith in all his promises. What more does the Christian? All this the Hebrew parent did for his child; more than this no Christian parent can do for his child. What God, therefore, authorized and commanded Jewish parents to do for their children, is pre-

cisely what the opposers of infant baptism say Christian parents have no right to do for their children; and they found their objection on the very nature of the thing to be done. That is, they pronounce that to be wrong which God enjoined as right. The argument goes further than this. It is not merely that Christian parents may do what Jewish parents were allowed to do, but that they are bound to do it. They violate one of the most obvious and important of their parental obligations, if they fail to present their children for baptism. They are bound to profess in their name the Christian faith, to promise for them obedience to the laws of Christ, and to consecrate them to his worship and service. If the Hebrew parent was bound to do this, because he was a parent in covenant with God; so is the Christian parent for the same reasons. It is not a privilege merely, but a duty arising out of the nature of the relation between parent and child, and their common allegiance to God. It may be objected, that if the parent thus represents his children, and is bound to act for them in matters of religion, and if children are bound by the acts of their parents, it would follow that if a Christian should turn Pagan, he would be bound to devote his children to the service of idols, and that they would be under obligation to become idolaters. This is equivalent to arguing that because a parent, when he obtains food for himself, is bound to give a portion of it to his children; therefore when he poisons himself, he is bound to poison them. The only fair inference for the principle in question is, that in the present constitution of society the parent must be allowed to judge for himself what is suitable food for himself and his children. This he does at his peril. If he chooses well, it is well for him and for them. If he chooses ill, it is ill for himself and for them. So it is with his religion. He is bound to profess the true religion both for himself and for his children. But if he professes a false religion, he not only injures or ruins himself but those also committed to his charge. It is, therefore, an ordinance of God, having its foundation in the nature which he has given us, that whenever a parent professes the true religion, and covenants with God to believe his truth, and to obey his will, he is bound to make the same profession, and the same engagements, in the name and in behalf of his infant children, and they are

bound by the act. God requires us to regard them as doing for themselves what is done for them by their parents, and to treat them accordingly. That is, to attach to them the seal of the covenant, to mark them as of the number of God's professing people, to watch over, and cherish them as belonging to him, and as entitled to all the inestimable benefits of membership in his Church. God commanded this of old. He enforced his command by dreadful threatenings in case of disobedience, and by the most abundant promises in case the duty was faithfully performed.

3. We have seen that the Scriptures clearly teach, that when a man professes the true religion, and enters into covenant with God, his infant children are to be regarded and treated as making the same profession, and as included in the same covenant. This of itself is conclusive in favour of the church membership of the infants of Christian parents. The Bible, however, goes much further than this. It not only teaches a general principle which leads to the conclusion that such infants should be regarded and treated as members of the Church, but it teaches that from the beginning they have in fact, by God's command, been so regarded and treated. The Church is not of yesterday. It was founded on the promise of redemption given to our first parents, and has existed ever since. It has varied in its organization, in its external arrangements, in its amplitude, and in other nonessential circumstances; but it has remained always one and the same—the same in its nature, its faith, its promises, its conditions of membership, or terms of communion. The true Church has always consisted of true believers. The visible Church has always consisted of the professors of the true religion. This idea of the Church suits all dispensations, from Adam to the present time. Or if we take the more formal definition, which declares the Church to be the congregation of faithful men, called out from the world, and united in the profession of the same faith, for the purpose of divine worship, and the exercise of mutual watch and care, there has always been such a Church, and it has always been the same. If, therefore, by divine command the children of believing parents were included in the Church of old, they are included in it now.

Although the Church existed from the beginning, it was, before the calling of Abraham, for the most part in a state of dispersion. Too little is recorded of it, prior to that event, to give us definite knowledge of its nature and requirements. Our written constitution, so to speak, dates from the father of the faithful. God made a covenant with Abraham. By covenant is meant, a contract between two or more parties, in which there are mutual stipulations and promises. The transaction with Abraham was of this kind. God promised certain blessings to the patriarch, and he promised faith and obedience to God. Not only, therefore, in the Old Testament is this transaction called a covenant, but in the New Testament the same designation is applied to it. And, further than this, the New Testament writers, referring to the transaction with Abraham, not only call it a covenant, but they argue from its nature as such, to show that its original stipulations can be neither annulled nor altered. Rom. iv. 13, 14; Gal. iii. 15-18. "The covenant," says the apostle, "that was confirmed before (to Abraham) of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul." It is of importance, therefore, that this word should be retained, not only because it is scriptural, but because the idea which it expresses is essential to a proper understanding of the case. Many modern theological writers discard the word entirely, and stigmatize the system of the Reformers as the *federal* theology. In discarding the word, the truth which it was intended to convey is almost always discarded with it. If we would retain the truth, we must retain the forms in which God has seen fit to reveal it. God then formed a covenant with Abraham. The question is, What was that covenant, and who were the parties to it? We answer, in common with all Christendom, The covenant was the covenant of grace, and the parties were Abraham and those whom Abraham represented. Of course this does not mean that the covenant of grace originated in this transaction, or that none are included in it but Abraham and those whom Abraham represented. Nor does it mean that all represented by Abraham were savingly interested in its benefits. It only means that the covenant in question was a reënactment or renewed revelation of the covenant of grace in relation to

Abraham, and that those represented by him were to be regarded and treated as included in it.

By the covenant of grace is meant the plan of salvation, in which God promises to give to believers all the benefits of redemption, and they promise faith and obedience. If, therefore, in the covenant with Abraham, God promised to him the benefits of redemption on the condition of faith, that covenant was the covenant of grace. In other words, it was the gospel; for the gospel is nothing else than the proclamation of salvation through faith in Christ. That such was the nature of the covenant made with Abraham, is too clearly revealed to admit of doubt. When God promised that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, he promised to send Christ to be the Redeemer of men. It is the fulfilment of this promise and the exposition of it in the New Testament, which authoritatively determines its meaning. Our Lord himself said, "Abraham saw my day and was glad." This can only mean that Abraham foresaw the advent of Christ, and rejoiced in the accomplishment of the work which Christ came to perform. The apostle therefore says, "God preached before the gospel unto Abraham." The gospel, in the New Testament sense of the term, is the glad news of salvation through Jesus Christ. This therefore was, according to the apostle, what was preached to Abraham, when it was said, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." The apostle Peter also, after he had healed the lame man, told the astonished multitude that Christ, in whose name the miracle had been performed, had been promised to Abraham, and predicted by the prophets. "Ye," he added, "are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Acts iii. 25, 26. It is here clearly taught that the Abrahamic covenant, of which the Jews were the children, had reference to Christ; that the promise, "In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed," was fulfilled in the advent of the Son of God; and that the blessedness promised, was turning men from their iniquities. To the same effect Paul said in the synagogue at



Antioch, in Pisidia, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus." Acts xiii. 32, 33. When arraigned before Agrippa he said, "Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made unto our fathers: unto which promise the twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come: for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." Acts xxvi. 6, 7. The great promise made to Abraham and to the other fathers, according to this passage, was the promise of Christ, on whose behalf Paul was a prisoner; and this was the promise toward which the eyes of all who served God were constantly fixed. Paul said to the Romans, "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Rom. xv. 9. That is, Jesus Christ came and exercised his ministry among the Jews, to set forth the truth or veracity of God, in fulfilling the promises made to the fathers. In all these passages, "the promises made to the fathers," means the promise of Christ thrice made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxii. 18, repeated to Isaac and Jacob, Gen. xxvi. 4, xxviii. 14, and which thenceforth became the burden of prophecy, renewed to every generation, constantly unfolded in its inexhaustible contents until the fulfilment came. Nothing, therefore, can be plainer than that the covenant made with Abraham was the covenant of grace, i. e. the promise of redemption through faith in the Messiah. This, however, is not a doctrine which rests on such general allusions or declarations merely, it is taught in the most explicit terms by the apostles. The design of the epistle to the Galatians was to convince them of the folly of apostatizing to Judaism. To do this the apostle raises them above the Mosaic period, and sets them back into communion with the great Abrahamic covenant, to which the law of Moses was not only posterior but subordinate. The special purpose of the third chapter of that epistle is to prove that justification is by faith, and not by the law. His first argument is from the fact that the Holy Ghost, in his manifold miraculous and sanctifying influences, had been given in confirmation of the doctrine of justification by faith. His second argument is from the case of Abraham. He was

justified by faith, and therefore those who share his inheritance, i. e. who inherit the blessing of redemption promised him, are believers. Know therefore, he says, that believers are the sons (i. e. heirs) of Abraham. The third argument is from the impossibility of rendering the perfect obedience which the law demands. The fourth, from the explicit declaration of the Scriptures, that those who are just by faith shall live. The fifth, from the fact that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law in order that the blessing of Abraham, (i. e. the blessing promised to Abraham,) might come upon the gentiles. The only blessing, however, promised to Abraham, which comes upon the gentiles, is redemption. And finally, Paul argues from the nature of the covenant made with Abraham. He reminds his readers that even a human covenant cannot, when once ratified, be either annulled or altered, much less can a divine covenant be changed, either in its promises or conditions. In the covenant with Abraham in reference to Christ, the inheritance, (that inheritance in which the gentiles share,) was suspended upon faith in the promise. The law, therefore, which was long subsequent, could not alter this covenant, or make the inheritance to depend upon works. Here everything is taught, first, the Abrahamic covenant had reference to Christ; second, the thing promised was that inheritance of which Christ is the author, and all nations (not the Jews only) the heirs; third, the condition on which a participation in this inheritance is suspended, is faith and not works.

After thus clearly proving his point, the apostle goes on to answer the question, For what purpose was the law? He shows that it was not designed to interfere with the Abrahamic covenant, or to prescribe any new condition of salvation, but to convince men of sin, and to be as a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ. And as Christ was the person to whom the covenant with Abraham referred, and in whom all nations were to be blessed, it follows, he says, "If ye are Christ's, then are ye the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise." In having Christ and belonging to him, we are the heirs of Abraham, partakers of the inheritance promised to him. All these passages teach not only that the covenant with Abraham was the covenant of grace, but that it is still in force; that Gentiles

and Jews, Christians and Hebrews, the circumcised and the baptized, are included in that original contract, and are saved according to its conditions. The covenant with Abraham was not one thing, and the gospel of Jesus Christ another. They are one and the same. What we are required to do in order to be saved is precisely what was required of the patriarchs and prophets. We must embrace the covenant made with Abraham. We must become his sons, partakers of his faith, and heirs of his inheritance.

The fourth chapter of the epistle to the Romans contains nearly the same course of argument. Having in the latter paragraph of the third chapter set forth the gospel method of salvation, which, the apostle says, had been previously taught both by the law and the prophets, he proceeds in the fourth chapter to establish his doctrine from the case of Abraham. He shows that we are to be saved in the same way that he was. We are under the same covenant of mercy. Abraham was justified by faith, and so are we. To him righteousness was imputed without works, and so it must be to us. Salvation by grace was as clearly the doctrine of the Old Testament, he says, as it is of the New. Abraham's circumcision was neither the ground nor the condition of his justification, for he was justified before he was circumcised. Circumcision was only the seal of the promise to regard as righteous those who believe. The paternity of Abraham, therefore, extends far beyond the Jews. He is the father of all who believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, whether Jews or Gentiles. This, says the Apostle, was the tenor of the original covenant. The promise to Abraham, he says, was not of the law, but of faith; i. e. it was not suspended on the condition of legal obedience, but on the condition of faith, in order that it might be sure to all the seed; i. e. to all his spiritual children, whether Jews or Gentiles, for he is father of us all. This, he adds, was the very thing which God intended when he said, "I will make thee the father of many nations." All believers, of every nation, are included in the Abrahamic covenant. The promise to Abraham has come upon them. That is, what was promised him, is promised to them; what was demanded of him, is demanded of them, viz. faith. Whoever believes is an heir of Abraham.

Our limits would be soon exhausted were we to attempt to present a tithe of the evidence which the Scriptures contain, in support of the position that the covenant of grace, under which the Church now lives, and upon which it is founded, is the covenant made with Abraham. The whole of the Old Testament is nothing more than a record of the historical development of the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Of that Seed, (the promise, says the Apostle, is to be understood not "of many," but "of one," viz. Christ,) Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon, were types. His work as priest was prefigured in the Mosaic priesthood and sacrifices. His person, his parentage, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, his kingdom, and triumphs, form almost the whole drift of the prophecies. The extension of his dominion over the Gentiles, the introduction of the heathen into the covenant of God with Abraham in relation to his Seed, (viz. Christ,) was clearly predicted. The prophets rejoiced when they saw the nations flocking like clouds, or as doves, not to the narrow inclosure of Judaism, but to the broad field of the Abrahamic covenant—when they saw even Ethiopia and the isles of the sea stretching out their hands to the long promised Seed. And accordingly, as we have already seen, the apostles take up the same strain, and tell the people, Gentiles and Jews, that God had fulfilled the covenant made with Abraham in that he had raised up his Son Jesus and sent him to bless them. In the New Testament, therefore, the constant representation is, that the Gentiles are made fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God, they are introduced not into the covenant from Mount Sinai, but into the earlier, broader covenant made with the fathers. They were not planted as a new tree, but grafted into the old stock. They did not bear the root, but the root them. All this is too plain to be denied; and we presume few even of the opponents of infant church membership do deny that the Abrahamic covenant was the covenant of grace, and that it includes the whole Church from that day to this; that the only way in which we, under the Christian dispensation, can be saved, is by embracing the covenant made with Abraham, in which righteousness, salvation, the inheritance, was promised on the condition of faith.

The only question is, Were children included in this covenant? The meaning of this question is not, whether children were the subjects of grace, and made partakers of the redemption promised to Abraham. Nor whether they were, or still are, included in the covenant of grace in such a sense as secures to them all, and with absolute certainty, the benefits of that covenant. But the meaning is, whether they were included in that class of persons who, by divine command, are by the Church to be regarded as embraced in the covenant, and treated as such. It is admitted that we are to regard and treat as within the covenant those who make a credible profession of faith in Christ, and of obedience to him. The question is, Were the children of believing parents to be thus treated, and are they still to be thus regarded? This is not a question about the kind or degree of benefit which was secured to the children of believers, but simply whether by the command of God parents, in accepting the covenant of grace for themselves, were bound, as representing their children, to lay hold of the same covenant in their behalf. That is, were they to profess in their name the same faith, and promise the same obedience for them which they did for themselves? As children were by divine command to be circumcised, and as every male child which was uncircumcised was pronounced to have broken the covenant, there can be but one answer to the above question, if circumcision was the badge of the covenant of grace as made with Abraham. This, however, is denied. It is said that it was the seal of the national covenant made with Abraham; that it was intended to mark the nationality of his descendants, and to secure their interest in the national promises made to the patriarch. It matters very little whether we say that there were two covenants made with Abraham, the one spiritual, relating to Christ, the other national, relating to the possession of the land of Canaan, or whether we say there was but one covenant including both classes of promises. If it can be proved that circumcision was the seal of the one as well as of the other; or that whatever else it did, it marked those visibly included in the covenant of grace, the argument for the Church membership of infants is conclusive. By church membership, it will be borne in mind, is meant nothing more than member-

ship in that class of persons whom the Church is bound to regard and treat as included in the covenant of grace. Infants are in this sense members of the Church, because circumcision was the sign and seal of the covenant of grace. Infants by the command of God were circumcised, therefore, by the command of God, we are bound to recognize the infants of professing parents as members of the Church. The only point to be proved in this syllogism is, that circumcision was a sign and seal of the covenant of grace. It has already been proved that the covenant of God with Abraham in reference to Christ, was the covenant of grace, and that circumcision was the seal of that covenant. 1. Because no man could be a Jew without professing to embrace the covenant with Abraham which referred to Christ. The Bible does not distinguish two Abrahamic covenants. If we make the distinction it is only for the purposes of perspicuity and convenience. The two are in such a sense one, that no man could embrace the promise relating to the land of Canaan, without professing to embrace the promise that in the seed of Abraham all nations should be blessed. The fact is, that God made to Abraham three great promises. First: That he should be a blessing, or that all nations should be blessed in him or in his seed, and that he would be his God. Second: That his posterity should be exceedingly numerous. Thirdly: That his descendants should inherit the land of Canaan. Of the covenant containing these promises, circumcision is expressly declared to be "the token." "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his

foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii. 9—14.

That circumcision was the badge of this covenant in its spiritual, as well as in its temporal aspect, is obvious, because the two were united as the soul and body in man. The soul may exist without the body, but the body cannot exist without the soul. A man might embrace the promise of redemption made to Abraham, and have no interest in the promise of the land of Canaan. Ishmael, for example, was circumcised as soon as this covenant was made with his father Abraham, although he was expressly excluded from any portion of the inheritance. So also Esau was circumcised as well as Jacob, although he was not to inherit the land of Canaan. So far, therefore, from circumcision having exclusive reference to the national covenant, it had primary and special reference to the spiritual covenant, being administered to those who were excluded from all share in the national privileges of the children of Abraham. When the father of the faithful received the great promise of redemption, and bound himself to take Jehovah to be his God, he made this profession and engagement for Ishmael as well as for himself. Isaac made the same profession and covenant for Esau as he did for Jacob. Ishmael and Esau were as much bound to take Jehovah to be their God, and to look for salvation through the promised seed, as were Isaac and Jacob. Although the spiritual element might be professedly embraced by those who had no part in the temporal blessings of Abraham, the reverse was not true. No man could be circumcised with exclusive reference to the national covenant. He could not enroll himself among the children of Abraham, and claim as one of his descendants a part of the national inheritance, without at the same time entering into covenant with God. By the very act of circumcision, he took God to be his God, and promised to be one of his people, i. e. to believe what God had taught, trust in what he had promised, and do what he had commanded. A Jew who did not thus profess allegiance to God, who renounced all interest in the promise of the Messiah, was an impossibility. By being a Jew, he professed the whole Jewish faith, and promised fidelity to the whole religion of the Hebrews. The evasion therefore to which the opposers of

church membership of infants are obliged to resort, is absolutely untenable. No man ever was circumcised in obedience to the command given to Abraham, who did not thereby profess faith and allegiance to the Abrahamic covenant; and no child was presented by its parent for circumcision, in whose behalf a profession of faith in the true religion and fidelity to the true God were not thereby made.

That circumcision was "a token," or seal of the covenant of grace, is further evident from its spiritual import. It was a sign of regeneration. It signified the removal of the defilement of our nature; or, as the apostle expresses it, the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." Col. ii. 11. It was the symbol of the circumcision of the heart. On the ground of the covenant into which they had entered by circumcision, Moses exhorted the people, saying, "Because the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart." Deut. x. 15, 16. The prophets presented the rite in the same light. Jer. iv. 4; and so does the apostle, in Rom. ii. 28. The true circumcision, he says, that which the outward ceremony signified, was the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit. The "uncircumcised in heart" are the unrenewed and disobedient. Lev. xxx. 41; Jer. ix. 26; Acts vii. 51. As baptism with water is the symbol of the baptism of the Spirit, so circumcision of the flesh was the symbol of the circumcision of the heart. If infants cannot be baptized, because the symbol of regeneration can be applied to those only who give evidence of regeneration, neither could circumcision. The import of the one was the same as the import of the other. It is obvious, therefore, that if circumcision was the symbol of regeneration, the covenant of which it was the badge was the covenant in which regeneration was promised, i. e. the covenant of grace.

This is still further evident from the nature of the promises made to those who were circumcised, whether adults or infants. The great promise was, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," (Gen. xvii. 7;) a promise which is declared to be the substance of the gospel. Hosea ii. 23; Zech. viii. 8; Heb. viii. 11. This was the blessing promised to Abraham, and his seed after him; and this was the promise which every Hebrew



claimed for himself and for his children. Still more explicitly it is said, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut. xxx. 6. "The mercy of the Lord," says the Psalmist, "is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." Ps. ciii. 17, 18. And the prophet says, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." Isa. lix. 21. Such were the promises included in the covenant of which circumcision was the seal.

This is placed beyond dispute by the express declaration of the apostle in Rom. iv. 11. Circumcision is there declared to be a sign, a seal of the righteousness of faith. That is, the seal of the promise of God to regard as righteous all who believe. But this by common consent is the covenant of grace as distinguished from the covenant of works. God having originally promised life on the condition of perfect obedience; in the gospel he offers life on the condition of faith. This was the gospel preached to Abraham. This is the gospel preached to us. Of this covenant or promise circumcision was the seal. It cannot be pretended that the declaration of the apostle was true only of Abraham, that to him, but not to others, circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of faith. There is not only no ground for this assumption, but it is contrary to all elsewhere taught of the relation of circumcision to the covenant of grace, and inconsistent with the apostle's argument in the context. His special design was to correct the doctrine of the Jews that circumcision secured the favour of God. Paul tells them it was not intended to secure acceptance with him, but to assure those of his favour who truly believed.

Circumcision, therefore, being the token or seal of that covenant in which God promised salvation through Christ by faith on him, those to whom that seal was applied professed to accept

of that covenant. They were *fœderati*. And as children of professing Jews were circumcised, those children were, in the sight of man, included in the covenant. In other words, they were by divine command to be regarded as members of the Church.

The idea of the opponents of the common doctrine, that under the old dispensation the Church was an external society, membership in which depended on natural birth, whereas under the new dispensation it is a spiritual society, in which membership depends on spiritual birth, is altogether chimerical and unscriptural. The distinction between the Israel *κατὰ σάρκα* and the Israel *κατὰ πνεῦμα*, that is, between the Church visible and invisible, existed then as much as it does now. No one was a member of the true Church of old who was not a Jew inwardly, and no one is a member of the true Church now, who is not born of the Spirit. But then as now, those who professed the true religion were members of the visible Church; and then as now the children of professing parents were by divine command regarded as church members. Children are as much born within the Church as they were under the patriarchal or Mosaic dispensations. Church membership has always been the birth-right of the children of believing parents.

It being the recognized law of God that whenever a man embraced the true religion, he was bound to embrace it for his children as well as for himself, they being regarded as members of the religious community to which the parent associated himself. When our Lord commanded his apostles to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, he commanded them to baptize the children of all who professed to be disciples. It is impossible that the apostles could have put any other interpretation on the commission. Had they been commanded to make disciples by circumcising them, would not they have considered themselves bound to circumcise the children of their converts? Such was God's command. Parents represent their children by a perpetual ordinance of God. The apostles, therefore, could not fail in receiving parents to receive their children also into the pale of the Church, and to enroll their names in the list of disciples. We accordingly find that when God opened

the heart of Lydia, she was baptized and her household; when the jailor at Philippi believed, he was baptized and all his straightway, Acts xvi. 33; and in 1 Cor. i. 10, Paul says, he baptized the household of Stephanas. The connection in which these facts are stated, renders it plain that the baptism of these families was on the ground of the faith of the parent. It was because Lydia received the gospel that her household was baptized. Paul assumes it as a recognized principle that if the parents are holy so are the children. He does not prove it or assert it, but what is more to the point, he assumes it as a fact too plain to be either unknown or denied. 1 Cor. vii. 14. If the parent is within the covenant, so also are the children. He carries this principle to its extremest length in Rom. xi. 16, when he applies it even to the present condition of the Jews: "If the root be holy, so also are the branches." "They are still beloved for the father's sake, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

This great ordinance of God reveals itself, so to speak, so instinctively in the consciousness of men, that the world over children go with their parents. In all the Oriental Churches, in the Greek Church, in the Latin, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches, the children of Christians are regarded as Christians, as fully and really members of the visible Church as are their parents. Although the fact of the church membership of infants is thus universally acknowledged, (except by the Baptists,) there is far from being the same agreement as to the grounds of that membership. The scriptural ground, as we have endeavoured to show, is their birth. They are born, as our standards express it, within the pale of the visible Church. As the children of Adam are born under the covenant (i. e. under its curse) made with him; as the children of Abraham were born under the Abrahamic covenant; and the later Jews under the Mosaic covenant; so the children of those who embrace the new covenant are born within its pale. Circumcision did not make a man a Jew, it was a solemn recognition of his birthright, of which the neglect of circumcision was the rejection. Neither does baptism make children Christians. It is the divinely appointed mode of recognizing them as members of the Church, and of claiming for them a part in its promises and privileges.

The neglect of infant baptism is therefore the rejection of those promises and privileges. It is refusing to acknowledge them as belonging to our children. In popular language indeed it is often said that circumcision introduced a child into the Hebrew theocracy, and that baptism introduces children into the Church, just as a man is inducted into an office by the ceremony of inauguration. Coronation does not make a king; neither does baptism make a Christian.

The doctrine that parents represent their children, and that therefore children of professing parents are born within the Church, and on that ground are to be baptized, is the distinctive doctrine of the Reformed Churches. In opposition to this view, Romanists and Lutherans place the duty of infant baptism on the ground that all children are born outside of the Church, and by baptism are inwardly renewed by the Holy Ghost, and thus become members of Christ's body. They become members of the Church, therefore, by baptism. They are not merely recognized as included in the covenant and treated as *fœderati*, but are made partakers of the Holy Ghost and members of the invisible Church as the consequence of their union with the Church visible.

Did our limits, already unduly extended, permit, it would be easy to prove, first, that the Reformed Churches place the right and duty of infant baptism on the ground that the children of believers are born within the Church; secondly, that they repudiate not only the doctrine of innate grace, i. e. holiness derived by birth from their progenitors, but especially the Romish and Lutheran doctrine that children are made members of the Church by baptism, by being regenerated or inwardly renewed in that ordinance; and thirdly, that the doctrine of the Reformed Churches on this subject is the doctrine of the Bible. A few words on each of these points is all for which we can now find room.

First, the doctrine of the Reformed Churches as to the ground of infant baptism. On this subject, Hase, in his "Dogmatik," p. 438, after remarking that Calvin did not make baptism necessary to salvation, says, "Hiernach haben die reformirten Symbole die Pflicht der Kindertaufe auf ein Geburtsrecht der Christenkinder an das Gottesreich begründet." That is, *The*

*Reformed Symbols rest the duty of infant baptism on the birth-right of Christian children in the kingdom of God.* He quotes from Calvin's Inst. iv. 15, 22, the following explicit passage: *Unde sequitur, non ideo baptizari fidelium liberos, ut filii Dei tunc primi fiant, qui ante alieni fuerint ab ecclesia, sed solemniter potius signo ideo recipi in ecclesiam, quia promissionis beneficio jam ante ad Christi corpus pertinebant.\** Calvin's doctrine on

\* The January Number of the *Mercersburgh Review* contains a long article on "The Efficacy of Baptism," being a review of two articles which appeared in the *Princeton Review* for January, 1857. The respected writer endeavours to prove that the Reformed Churches, and the Westminster Confession in particular, teach "that grace and salvation are inseparably annexed to baptism," p. 20; "that, in the right use of the ordinance, the party baptized is engrafted into Christ, regenerated, receives the remission of sins by the working of the Holy Ghost," p. 31. He expresses astonishment that the Princeton writer should say that the standards of our Church deny "intrinsic efficacy to the sacrament." He professes "to be utterly at a loss to comprehend how a gentleman of candor and a Christian scholar can make such an assertion. If the efficacy of the sacrament of baptism is not intrinsic, he asks, "What then is it? Is not efficacy from the very nature of the case intrinsic? Does it not lie in the subject of which it is predicated? If not, if it lies in something else, it is an evident impropriety to speak of its efficacy. If the efficacy of baptism does not lie in baptism itself, where can it lie? In faith? but faith, as such, is not baptism. In the Holy Ghost? but the working of the Holy Ghost is not baptism," &c. p. 36. When a man lives long in a foreign country, he sometimes forgets his native language. This is the case with our Mercersburgh brethren. They have been so long conversant with Lutheranism and with the speculative theology of modern Germany, that they have forgotten the a, b, c's of their own theology. They denounce as heretical the simplest elementary principles of the Reformed Churches, and make the Reformed symbols teach the very doctrines they were constructed to deny. Dr. Gerhart's article is almost on a par with Mr. Newman's famous Tract, Number Ninety. The standing reproach of the Romanists and Lutherans against the Reformed from the beginning was, that the latter denied all intrinsic efficacy to the word and sacrament. It was the shibboleth of the Reformed Churches, that the efficacy of the sacraments is due "not to any virtue in them, nor in him that doth administer them, but *only* to the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit in them that do by faith receive them." They have indeed an intrinsic æsthetic, doctrinal, and moral efficacy, but what is denied is, intrinsic efficacy to produce grace. The clay had intrinsic efficacy as clay, but what efficacy had it to open the eyes of the blind? The word of God is quick and powerful—powerful to convince, to terrify, to confound—but what efficacy has it to produce grace, to quicken the spiritually dead, without the working of the Spirit? So the sacraments have intrinsic power, as significant signs, to enlighten the understanding, to rouse the imagination, and to stir the feelings, but what supernatural power have they apart from the influence of the Holy Ghost? The whole question is how

this subject ought not to be a matter of dispute. It is determined not only by the most explicit assertions, but by his system. It is uncandid to interpret his language, in particular passages, in a way inconsistent not only with his express decla-

they become "efficacious means of grace." The doctrine of the Reformed Churches on this subject is too plain to be fairly controverted. The reader, however, may judge what a learned, able, and doubtless, honest man, has courage to attempt, when his mind is thoroughly preoccupied by a theory, from the fact that Dr. Gerhart endeavours to show that the Westminster Confession and Catechisms teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and that children are made members of the invisible Church by baptism, p. 38.

In reference to the doctrine of the writer in the *Princeton Review*, that "membership in the visible Church is founded on presumptive membership in the invisible," he says, "Membership in the invisible Church is vital union to Christ, or regeneration by the Holy Ghost. The word *presume* means to admit a thing to be, or to receive a thing as true, before it can be known as such from its phenomena or manifestations. To presume an infant to be a member of the invisible Church, is therefore to believe it to be ingrafted into Christ and regenerated, before it gives any ordinary evidences of the fact. If, now, the author means that the presumptive membership of an infant in the invisible Church is constituted by baptism, his position harmonizes with the teachings of the Presbyterian symbols. . . . He holds that in the right use of baptism an infant is ingrafted into Christ, and is regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Interpreted philologically, and with logical propriety, it [his doctrine] can mean nothing less than this. His language teaches the doctrine of baptismal regeneration with all needful plainness." "If, on the other hand, he means that the presumptive membership of an infant in the invisible Church, or its vital union with Jesus Christ is effected by natural birth, his position is entirely different. 1. He contradicts the standards of the Presbyterian Church. . . . 2. He teaches a very novel doctrine." p. 38. Dr. Gerhart goes on to say that it follows from this view of the matter, "that children of believers are ingrafted into Christ, or regenerated by the Holy Ghost, in virtue of natural birth. A new doctrine for a *Presbyterian!*" Here is another example of a learned man forgetting the lessons taught him by his mother. Membership in the invisible Church is *not* "vital union with Christ, or regeneration by the Holy Ghost." Dr. Gerhart was taught in his infancy, (so long since that it has slipped his memory,) that the invisible Church "consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof." It includes, therefore, probably millions of the unborn and millions of the unconverted. Consequently presumptive membership in the invisible Church is no presumption of "vital union with Christ, or regeneration by the Holy Ghost." Consequently, again, making this presumptive membership in the invisible Church to depend on natural birth, is not to make "natural generation a channel of grace." The simple doctrine of the *Princeton Reviewer*, is the doctrine of all the Reformed Churches, of Dr. Gerhart's no less than of our own, viz., that since the promise is not only to parents but to their seed, children are, by the command of God, to be regarded and treated as of the number

rations, but with his whole doctrinal theory. Especially is it unfair to quote passages which speak of the efficacy of baptism in the case of believers, and make them apply to the case of infants. The sacraments are efficacious means of grace to those who receive them in faith. So is the word. But neither the one nor the other have any sanctifying power when received by unbelievers, or when unattended by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is only by overlooking this most essential distinction, viz. the distinction between what is true of believers and what is true of those destitute or incapable of faith, that any plausibility can be given to the attempt to prove that the Reformed Symbols, the Westminster Confession, and the Bible, attribute intrinsic, sanctifying power to the sacraments. Calvin, in the passage above quoted, explicitly denies that baptism makes children of believers the children of God, and expressly asserts that they are baptized because, being included in the promise, they are regarded as pertaining to the body of Christ. Why were Hebrew children circumcised? Because they were included in the promises made to their fathers. They were circumcised because they were presumptively within the covenant. That is, it was presumed that they would adhere to that covenant, and

of the elect, until they give undeniable evidence to the contrary, or refuse to be so considered. They are to be baptized, as the First Helvetic Confession says, *cum de eorum electione piè est præsumendum*. Chap. 21. It is not their vital union with Christ, nor their actual regeneration by the Holy Ghost, that is presumed, but their election. This is no more than is done when we baptize an adult, or when he is received to the Lord's table. We presume he is one of the elect. Whether he is so or not, we cannot tell; but he belongs to the class which, by the command of Christ, we are required so to regard and treat. The infants of believing parents belong to the same general class. This presumption of election is not founded on their baptism, but their baptism is founded on this presumption; just as the presumption that Jewish children would take Jehovah to be their God was not founded on their circumcision, but their circumcision was founded on that presumption. This is precisely what Calvin says in the passage quoted in the text. Infants are not made the children of God by baptism, but they are baptized because in virtue of the divine promise they are regarded as belonging to the body of Christ, i. e. to the elect. The passages which Dr. Gerhart quotes from Calvin as to the efficacy of baptism, have nothing to do with this subject. They relate to the baptism of believers. Who denies that the sacraments are efficacious means of grace to believers? Dr. Gerhart might as well quote passages descriptive of the power of the word of God in those who believe, to prove its effect on children.

share in its promises. Why are Christian children baptized? Because they are included in the promises made to their believing parents. They are baptized because they are presumptively within the covenant. That is, it is presumed (we are required by God to act on the assumption) that they will be faithful to the covenant, and share in its promises. That this was Calvin's doctrine is abundantly evident. In his *Inst.* iv. 16, 5, 6, he distinctly places the baptism of children on the ground of the covenant: "Quodsi fœdus firmum et fixum manet, Christianorum liberis non minus hodie competit, quam sub veteri Testamento ad Judæorum infantes spectabat." "Siquidem evidentissimum est, quod semel cum Abrahamo Dominus fœdus percussit, non minus hodie Christianis constare, quam olim Judaico populo, adeoque verbum istud non minus Christianos respicere, quam Judæos tum respiciebat." "Quamobrem et Judæorum liberi quod ejus fœderis hæredes facti ab impiorum liberis discernentur, semen sanctum vocabantur, eadem etiam ratione sancti censentur Christianorum liberi, vel altero duntaxat fidei parente geniti: et apostoli testimonio differunt ab immundo idololatrarum semine." "Fœdus commune est, communis ejus confirmandi causa. Modus confirmandi tantum diversus est, quod erat illis Circumcisio, in cujus vicem Baptismus nobis successit." It is hard to quote passages from an extended argument. It is plain, however, even from the above quotations, that Calvin placed Circumcision and Baptism on the same ground. The children of Christians are baptized for the same reason that the children of the Jews were circumcised. Baptism assumes our children to be holy in the same sense that circumcision assumed the Jewish children to be holy. All the Reformed Confessions take the same ground. In the First Helvetic Confession, Art. 22, it is said, "Quo quidem sancto lavacro infantes nostros idcirco tingimus, quoniam e nobis, qui populus Domini sumus, genitos populi Dei consortio rejicere nefas est, tantum non divina voce designatos, præsertim quum de eorum electione piè est præsumendum." The Gallican Confession, Art. 35: "Præterea quamvis Baptismus sit fidei et resipiscentiæ sacramentum, tamen quum unâ cum parentibus posteritatem etiam illorum in ecclesia Deus recenseat, affirmamus infantes sanctis parentibus natos, esse ex Christi auctori-



tate baptizandos." The Belgic Confession, Art. [infantes e fidelibus parentibus natos] eadem ratione dos et signo fœderis obsignandos esse credimus, qua olim in Isræele parvuli circumcidebantur, nimirum propter easdem promissiones infantibus nostris factas. . . . Præterea quod circumcisio præstabat populo Judaico, idem infantibus fidelium nunc præstat baptismus." The Second Helvetic Confession, ch. 20, says that the children of believers are to be baptized: "Nam juxta doctrinam evangelicam, horum est regnum Dei, et sunt in fœdere Dei, cur itaque non daretur eis signum fœderis Dei?" Such is the uniform representation. No other ground for the baptism of the children of believers is ever assigned, than the fact that they are included in the covenant made with their parents. As the promise which God made to Abraham he made to his descendants, they, as well as he, received circumcision, which was the seal of the promise. And, as under the Christian dispensation of the same covenant, the promise is to the children as well as to the parent, baptism is administered to the infant children of believers. This idea is expressed in the Reformed standards, either by saying that children are within the covenant; or, that they are born within the pale of the Church; or, that they are presumed to belong to Christ, i. e. to be of the number of the elect.

Second: In opposition to the Reformed doctrine, Romanists and Lutherans teach that the children of believers are not, in virtue of their birth, members of the Church (visible or invisible) until they are baptized. Their doctrine is, that children are made members of the Church by baptism, because it is the appointed means of inward spiritual regeneration. Romanists and Lutherans (as well as other advocates of baptismal regeneration) hold that baptism is essential to salvation, and that all the unbaptized, adult and infant, perish. Such is the express symbolical teaching of both those Churches. The Reformed deny all this. They deny that baptism is necessary to salvation, because they deny that it is the means of regeneration. To understand the state of the question as to this point, let it be remarked, 1. The question is not whether baptism is an effectual means of grace. The Reformed admit that both baptism and the Lord's supper, as well as the word, are

made effectual in conferring grace on believers. This efficacy, however, whether of the word or sacraments, is to be referred not to any intrinsic or objective power in them, but solely to the attending influences of the Spirit. 2. The question is not whether the baptism of an infant may not be attended by its regeneration by the Holy Ghost. The Reformed admit that children are susceptible of regeneration, and that it may take place at any time God sees fit to effect it: but they deny that there is any divine promise that the outward act shall be attended by the inward change, or that baptism, in the case either of adults or infants, is the appointed means of effecting that change. 3. The question, therefore, is, whether infants are regenerated by the Holy Ghost in baptism. In other words, whether infants are made members of the church by baptism, because they are thereby vitally united to Christ. This Romanists and Lutherans affirm, and the Reformed deny.\* As to Calvin's own convictions on this point, they are plain from his express assertions, from his arguments (as he labours to disprove the Lutheran and Romish doctrine) and from his whole theological system. Before proceeding further, we must remark, that the word *regeneration* is used by all parties to this discussion in substantially the same sense. It means that change in the state of the soul, wrought by the Holy Ghost, by which it is transferred from spiritual death to spiritual life; or, as Romanists express it, transferred from a state of sin, to a state of habitual (i. e. inherent) grace. Lutherans and Romanists alike hold that in baptism the merits of Christ are conveyed, and the recipient of the rite is vitally united to Christ. He is brought into a state in which his salvation is certain, unless he falls from it. In opposition to this view of the ground and effect of baptism, Calvin says, Inst. iv. 14, 14. "The whole sophistical school teach that the sacraments of the

\* There is an important difference between the Lutheran and Romish doctrine of the sacraments. Romanists deny that faith in the recipient is a necessary condition of the efficacy of the sacraments. The Lutherans maintain that it is. They, therefore, freely denounce the *opus operatum* theory of the Romanists. This, however, is a difference which does not here come into consideration; because both assert that infants are regenerated in baptism. Luther of course was forced, in order to save his principles, to maintain that infants have faith.

new covenant, i. e. the Christian sacraments, justify and confer grace, provided we do not interpose the obstacle of mortal sin." And as infants, according to the doctrine in question, do not and cannot oppose any obstacle to the efficacy of the baptism, on them it is assumed always to confer grace. "It is impossible," adds Calvin, "to say how fatal and pestilent is this doctrine. It is certainly diabolical, because as it promises righteousness without faith, it precipitates souls into perdition. . . . Nothing is conferred by the sacraments beyond what, being offered in the word of God, is perceived by faith." It was the constantly avowed doctrine of Calvin that the sacraments confer grace only upon believers. The Lutherans escape this denunciation by holding that infants have faith—that true, actual, saving faith is produced in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost, and therefore baptism communicates grace to them. But this doctrine of infants actually believing is well nigh obsolete, and is not held by the ordinary advocates of baptismal regeneration. On them, therefore, falls the denunciation of Calvin in all its weight. In section 17 of the same chapter, he says, "We are not to think that any latent virtue is intrinsic or inherent (*annexam affixamque*) in the sacraments, by which of themselves they confer the graces of the Spirit; since their only office is to testify and seal to us the benevolence of God; and they do us no good unless attended by the Holy Spirit, who opens our mind and heart, and renders us capable of receiving that testimony." In chapter 15, 17, he says, "Baptism profits us nothing so long as the promise therein offered lies neglected;" and in the following section, "The sacrament follows as a seal, not to give efficacy to the promise, as though it were of itself invalid, but only to confirm it." Then comes the passage, quoted on a preceding page, in which he says, "Hence it follows that the children of believers are baptized not to make them the sons of God, but because, in virtue of the promise, they already pertain to the body of Christ." The body of Christ, it will be remembered, consists of all the elect. In a previous section, the 15th, Calvin argues against the doctrine that baptism confers grace, from the case of Cornelius, the centurion, who received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, and was baptized, he adds, "not for a freer remission of sin,

but to increase his faith. If any one," he continues, "should object that if sins are not washed away by the virtue of baptism, why did Ananias say to Paul, (Acts xxii. 19,) that he should wash away his sins by baptism?" To this Calvin answers, "Ananias meant to say, Paul, that thou mayest be assured of the remission of thy sins, be baptized. In baptism, God promises remission; receive this rite, and be assured." It was and is a favourite doctrine of the Romanists, that while the New Testament sacraments confer grace, those of the Old Testament only signified it. This doctrine Calvin repudiates. "The scholastic dogma," he says, "which makes such a difference between the sacraments of the two dispensations, as though the one only prefigured grace, and the others confer it, is to be utterly exploded." Chapter xiv. 23. And further on, in the same section, he says, "nothing more is to be attributed to baptism, than Paul, in Rom. iv. 11, attributes to circumcision, verse 12, that it is the seal of the righteousness of faith." To suppose that Calvin believed that every circumcised Jewish child was vitally united to Christ, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost, would be to make him more Roman than Rome. No less foreign to his system is the doctrine that baptized infants as such are regenerated.

The "Consensus Tigurinus" drawn up and signed by Calvin and the ministers of Zurich, is the most formal and authoritative exhibition of the Reformed doctrine on the whole subject of the sacraments. In the 16th article it is said, "We sedulously teach that God does not operate in all promiscuously by the sacraments, but only in the elect." In article 17, "Hence the doctrine that the sacraments of the New Testament confer grace on all who do not oppose the obstacle of mortal sin, is overthrown. For nothing is in the sacraments but what is perceived by faith, and therefore we are not to suppose that grace is so bound to the sacrament, that all who receive the sign have the thing signified. For the signs are given equally to the elect and the non-elect, but the thing signified only to the elect." In article 19, it is said, "Inasmuch as unbelievers receive no more from the use of the sacraments than from the neglect of them. . . . so what believers receive in them, they receive without them. Paul's sins were washed away in

baptism, but they were washed away before. Baptism was to Cornelius the washing of regeneration, although he had already received the Holy Ghost." Article 20, "The utility of the sacraments is not tied to the time of their administration. . . . For those baptized in infancy are sometimes regenerated in old age."

In the Belgian Confession it is said, "What circumcision did for the Jewish people, the same baptism does for the children of believers." This of course precludes the idea of baptismal regeneration. The Heidelberg Catechism in the answer to the 74th question says, that inasmuch as children no less than adults pertain to the covenant and the Church, they are to be ingrafted into the Church by baptism, and separated from the children of unbelievers, as under the Old Testament was done by circumcision, in the place of which baptism is now substituted. The Second Helvetic Confession, chapter 19, says, "We do not approve of the doctrine of those who teach that grace, and the things signified, are so bound to the sacraments, or included in them, that all, without distinction, who externally receive the signs, internally receive the grace and the things signified." It is useless to multiply citations. If any fact in doctrinal history is plain, it is, that the Reformed Church rejected the doctrine of "sacramental grace," i. e. that the sacraments have inherent efficacy and confer grace on all who receive them, provided they do not resist.\*

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is not only repudiated by all the Reformed Confessions, but, what perhaps, will to many minds be more convincing, it is impossible to reconcile the doctrine with their theology. Every one knows that the Reformed Churches adopted the theological system of Augustin. They all taught that none are born of the Spirit but those who are finally saved. If a man is called (regenerated,) he is justified; and if justified, he is glorified. There is no

\* We have not quoted from our own standards for two reasons. First, they are in the hands of all our readers. Second, no one pretends that they teach any higher doctrine on the sacraments than is taught in the earlier confessions of the Reformed Churches. On the contrary, they are usually regarded as teaching a lower doctrine. Our standards are printed in Niemeyer's Collection as the *Libri Symbolici Puritanorum*; a term of reproach in our days.

such thing, according to their doctrine, as falling from grace. If the Reformed therefore believed that all who are baptized are vitally united to Christ, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost, then they held that all the baptized are saved. They assuredly did not hold the latter, and therefore it is no less certain that they did not hold the former. It is impossible for a man to be a Calvinist, and believe the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

The point on which we proposed briefly to dwell is, that the doctrine of the Reformed Church as to the ground and efficacy of infant baptism is the doctrine of the Bible. So far as the doctrine that the Abrahamic covenant, which is still in force, is the ground of infant baptism, or the warrant which the Church now has for regarding the children of believers as born within her pale, is concerned, the greater part of our article is devoted to that point. The other point, viz. that children are not constituted by baptism members of the invisible Church by a vital union to Christ, or regeneration of the Holy Ghost, needs no proof, so far as Augustinians or Calvinists are concerned. That doctrine, as just remarked, cannot be included in their system. If all the regenerated are saved, all the baptized are not regenerated.

2. A further invincible argument against baptismal regeneration is this. Baptism is not assumed to have greater efficacy in the case of infants than in the case of adults. But by the clear teaching of the Scriptures, regeneration in the case of adults is assumed to precede baptism. No man was ever baptized in the Apostolic Church until he professed faith and repentance. When the Eunuch asked, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." On this principle the Church has always acted. Men have always (except in the most corrupt days of the Romish Church) been required to profess faith in Christ and repentance toward God, before they were admitted to baptism. But faith and repentance are the fruits of regeneration. A man had, therefore, to profess to be regenerated before he could be baptized; therefore baptism could not be, according to Scripture, the means of regeneration.

3. This is involved in the very nature of the service, so far

as adults are concerned. In baptism the candidate lays hold of the covenant of grace. He takes God the Father to be his father, God the Son to be his Saviour, and God the Holy Ghost to be his sanctifier; and he consecrates himself to the worship and service of this Triune God. This he must do before he is baptized. But that is faith. What is saving faith but this reception of the gospel as presented in baptism? A man, therefore, must be a true Christian before, in the sight of God, he is a proper subject of baptism. Baptism was not designed to make him a Christian. It was the appointed mode in which he was to profess Christianity, and by which he was to be assured of his interest in its blessings.

4. A fourth argument is from the analogy of the word. If baptism is said to save us, to unite us to Christ, to make us the sons of God, &c., all this, and far more than this, is said of the word. We are begotten by the truth; we are sanctified by truth; the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. But who ever infers from these declarations that all who hear the word are thus regenerated, sanctified, and saved? Why then should it be inferred from similar declarations concerning baptism, that all the baptized are regenerated? Both classes of passages are to be understood in the same way. The gospel saves us if we believe. Baptism saves us on the same condition. Without faith the one is as ineffectual as the other.

5. This is Paul's doctrine on the whole subject. Circumcision, he says, profiteth if thou keep the law; but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision. Baptism profits if we are faithful to the covenant to which it is attached; if we have not such faith, our baptism is of no account. It will only aggravate our condemnation.

6. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration, so far at least as it has infested the Protestant Church, is easily traceable to a misunderstanding of certain passages of Scripture. Luther understood John iii. 5, and other passages, to teach the absolute necessity of baptism to salvation. But if thus necessary, he inferred that there must be some reason for it. If no man, not even an infant, can enter the kingdom of God without baptism, baptism must be the means of accomplishing what the Scriptures

declare to be necessary for the admission of a sinful creature into heaven. The Scriptures teach that the remission of sins and the renewal of the Holy Ghost are necessary for admission to heaven; therefore, this remission and regeneration must be conferred in baptism. But all this rests on a false foundation. It is very doubtful whether the passage in John has any reference to baptism. But conceding that point, and conceding, moreover, that baptism is there said to be necessary to salvation, it is evidently only the necessity of precept, and not the necessity of a means that is intended. Confession with the mouth is said to be necessary to salvation. That is, if men, when the opportunity offers and the occasion calls for it, do not confess Christ before men, he will not confess them before the angels. But this does not teach that confession is a necessary means of salvation; that no man, and even no infant, who does not publicly confess faith in Christ can be saved. Baptism is the appointed mode of confession, and is necessary in the same, and in no other sense. Ten times more is said in the Old Testament of the necessity of circumcision, than is said in the New, of the necessity of baptism; and yet Paul not only says that the circumcision of a disobedient Jew would avail him nothing, but that if the uncircumcised kept the law, their uncircumcision would be counted for circumcision. Many things are commanded of God, baptism among the number, which if neglected in a disobedient, unbelieving spirit, those who thus neglect them forfeit his favour, although the things in themselves have no connection with salvation, as a means to an end.

7. No doctrine can be more radically opposed to the spirit and teaching of the New Testament than this doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The grand idea of the gospel (so far as the essential nature of religion is concerned) is, that God looks on the heart; that rites and ceremonies are no more essential to religion than clothing to the being of a man; that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, and that true circumcision is not of the flesh, but of the heart; that the righteousness which God requires must be something different from that of the Scribes and Pharisees; that a man's state before Him does not depend on anything external, but on what is internal and spiritual; that neither grace nor salvation is to be attained by works,



least of all by ceremonies. It is the burden of the gospel, that whosoever believes shall be saved, whether Jew or Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, baptized or unbaptized. There is nothing on earth which Paul would have more execrated than the doctrine, (unless perhaps the man who taught it,) that a true believer and worshipper of Christ would perish for the want of external baptism. This would be to contradict a hundred assertions of the word of God, and utterly pervert, transmute, and degrade the religion of the Bible. Luther felt this as deeply as any man, and therefore, no man was more vehement in his denunciations of the Romish doctrine, that the sacraments confer grace on unbelievers. He held that unless infants believe, baptism avails them nothing. The modern doctrine of baptismal grace was as abhorrent to Luther as to Calvin; because abhorrent to the spirit of the gospel. All experience shows the evil tendency of the doctrine in question. Who are the advocates of baptismal regeneration? Of course there are exceptions, many and great; but speaking in general terms, they are not the spiritual and evangelical class among Christians. The most zealous advocates of the doctrine are the irreligious, the worldly, the fashionable, and even the vicious. It is most vehemently defended by those who make religion a form; who carry out the theory, and ascribe sanctifying power to a bishop's hands, to relics, to holy water, to consecrated oil, to amulets and talismans; who fast on Friday, and rob or murder on Saturday; who believe in priestly absolution, and think they can sin with impunity so long as they keep within the pale of the Church, and have access to her cleansing manipulations. It is part of a great system; an element in the great apostacy from apostolic teaching to christianized Judaism. This doctrine of baptism is only a revival of the doctrine of the Pharisees concerning circumcision. It pains us to write thus, when we recollect that dear, glorious Luther retained this with other elements of Romanism. But Luther was a wonder. He had the stomach of an ostrich, and could digest iron. There was nothing which his faith could not master. He believed that the words, "this is my body," teach the local presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist; therefore he believed that Christ's body fills all space. He believed that the Bible teaches that infants

cannot be saved without baptism; therefore he believed that baptism regenerates them. But he believed that the Bible teaches that baptism is useless without faith; therefore he believed that infants exercise faith. He would just as readily have believed that they read and write, had he thought the Bible called him to do so. His great fault was being too confident that he understood the Bible. We are not to be unfaithful to the truth, or to shut our eyes to the dreadful effects of false doctrine, because many, at whose feet we are not worthy to sit, through misinterpreting Scripture, believed it.

8. This, after all, is a question of fact. Are children regenerated in baptism? If a man should say that pouring water on tombstones would bring the dead to life, the shortest method of deciding the matter would be to try the experiment. If the operation were repeated thousands and even millions of times without success, it would be irrational to believe the theory. It would not do to say, that although there were no signs of restored life, still the life was there. Life cannot fail to manifest itself; or even if the signs of life were doubtful, the signs of death are certain. If all the indubitable evidences of death remain, notwithstanding these monumental ablutions, it would be absurd to believe that the dead were alive. No less decisive is the evidence of fact against the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The baptized are not regenerated. They are not vitally united to Christ. They not only give no evidence of this vital union, but they give decisive evidence, in the vast majority of cases, to the contrary. God never contradicts the testimony of his word, by the testimony of his providence or grace. If he had promised that washing with water in his name should regenerate the soul, we should find the fact in accordance with the promise. The fact however is notoriously otherwise; and to assert the existence of the fact without evidence, and against evidence, is to delude ourselves and others, and the delusion is apt to prove fatal. It has been a fatal delusion to many. What is regeneration worth, according to this theory? How is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost degraded and made a thing of naught, if we affirm such indwelling of the mass of the baptized? The whole nature of religion is of neces-

sity perverted; it is turned into Judaic formalism, by thus attributing to external rites effects which are due only to the power of the Spirit, whose presence in the soul is always manifested by the fruits of holiness.

When Paul had proved to the Jews that circumcision could not save them; that it was neither designed as the means of effecting the circumcision of the heart, nor so interested them in the promises made to their fathers, as to render their salvation certain, they ungratefully and unreasonably asked, What then is the profit of circumcision? We may as well neglect it as not, if it does not secure us an interest in the Messiah's kingdom. These are precisely the question and complaint addressed to those who deny that baptism is the means of regeneration, and who teach that it does not secure, as a matter of course, a portion in the salvation of the gospel. The answer in both cases is the same. There were great advantages connected with circumcision. The circumcised were separated from the world as the people of God; they were the depositaries of the true religion, and of the true worship; to them pertained the covenants, and the promises. All the religion to be found in the world (rare cases excepted) was to be found in their ranks; God had commanded them by circumcision to consecrate their children to him, and had threatened to cut them off from his people if they failed to do so. Was all this nothing? What circumcision did for the Jews, baptism does for us. Are we so ungrateful and rebellious as to say baptism is nothing, unless it is the means of regeneration; unless it vitally unites our children to Christ? Is it nothing to belong to the Church, to be of the number of those who in God's own way are separated from the world, and consecrated to his service? Is it nothing to be within that covenant in which God promises to be our God? Is it nothing to belong to that class in which almost without exception the blessings of redemption flow? Do we wish to exclude our children from all interest in the special promises made to the baptized, that is, to those who bear the seal of the covenant? We may rest assured that any parent who neglects or refuses to dedicate his child to God in baptism, who abstains from entering into covenant with God in its name

and behalf, in his appointed way, endangers its salvation as effectually as a Hebrew parent would endanger the salvation of his children by refusing to permit them to be circumcised.

The status, therefore, of baptized children is not a vague or uncertain one, according to the doctrine of the Reformed Churches. They are members of the Church; they are professing Christians; they belong presumptively to the number of the elect. These propositions are true of them in the same sense in which they are true of adult professing Christians. Both classes have professed the same faith; both have covenanted with God to be his people, to trust his grace, and to obey his will. Both are included in the general class of persons whom God requires his Church to regard and treat as within her pale, and under her watch and care. When these baptized children come to a suitable age, and have the requisite knowledge, they should be required to assume for themselves their baptismal vows, and should, as other church members, be disciplined for any neglect or violation of their covenanted obligations. Such is the doctrine of our standards. "CHILDREN born within the pale of the visible Church, and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and government of the Church; and are to be taught to read, and to repeat the catechism, the apostles' creed, and the Lord's prayer. They are to be taught to pray, to abhor sin, to fear God, and to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. And when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed that it is their duty, and their privilege, to come to the Lord's supper." *Directory*, chap. ix.