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I.—LITERARY.

CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.*

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PREACHING, which is the prime function of the ministry, has been aptly and tersely defined as "Truth through Personality."

The other departments of instruction in this institution have to do mainly with the truth—a fixed and unvarying element. This department, however, more especially in one of its branches, has to do with the ever-varying element of *personality*—the medium through which the truth is conveyed.

The burning question here is not, "What is truth?" but rather, "How can the truth be brought into saving contact with a perishing world?"

Whilst there are many and divergent views as to what constitutes that truth which is committed to the ministry, there are no less divergent views as to the nature and functions of the ministry; views, perhaps not so obtrusively heterodox, but none the less pernicious in their influence.

In view of the practical importance of the subject, and without apology for introducing to your attention so trite a theme, let us consider briefly and simply some, at least, of the conditions of success in the gospel ministry.

Where shall we find our model minister? the ideal pastor? What constitutes the highest excellence in this calling? One instinctively points to the great "Shepherd of the sheep," as being the archetypal "teacher sent from God," the very incar-

*Inaugural Address in Union Theological Seminary, Va., May, 1894.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCHES OF APOSTOLIC TIMES ACCORDING TO NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING.

"Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy."—
I Cor. 7: 14.

The children of believers were members of that visible church which was authoritatively re-established and cultivated by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. The inspired teachers of the Apostolic Age regarded and treated the infants of believers as members of the several local churches to which their parents respectively belonged.

This affirmation is denied, indeed, by many devout and even wise men. It is the one doctrine relative to the membership of the Apostolic church that has proven the occasion of a serious division among genuinely evangelical Christians. Evangelical Christendom is practically united in the view, that adult additions to church-membership, under Apostolic supervision, were made after a credible profession of faith in Christ. It is the common belief that all who had a right to membership in the church, were entitled to, and received, a formal recognition as members, by the application of the significant rite of baptism. And it is generally agreed that if the infants of believers were church-members, they received baptism. But evangelical Christians are sadly divided in respect to whether infants were members of the churches under Apostolic supervision.

The Paedobaptist majority is large and eminently respectable, but the anti-Paedobaptist minority is neither small nor destitute of names of great weight for scholarship and soberness of judgement.

Now, it should be admitted at the outset that the New Testament has not spoken at length, has not spoken as fully and plainly, on this subject as on some others. But this relative brevity and obscurity of treatment should have been anticipated by the student of the Word. For several reasons it was natural that little space should be given to the subject of infant church-membership, in the New Testament: 1. As old Richard Baxter says, Scripture speaks sparingly "In speaking

of those to whom it speaks not; God speaks more fully to men of themselves, but of others he speaks less." He speaks "little concerning the heathen that never had the Gospel." "And so for infants; they hear not the word; it is not spoke to them, and therefore it speaks more sparingly of them."* The truth of these quaint words every ready of the Bible may verify. Hence we naturally expect little to be made in the New Testament of infant church-membership. 2. While Scripture handles fully subjects on which controversies were waging at the time of its writing, it gives less of space to matters on which the people of God were then at rest. In the Apostolic Age controversies raged, on the Messiahship of Jesus, and on the repeal of the Mosaic ceremonial law. On these subjects we expect the New Testament to speak at length, and it does. On the other hand, there are no signs of a controversy on infant-membership. We should not be surprised, then, to find little said on this subject. An incidental statement or two is about all we should look for, just as on many an other topic, the subject of bitter controversy since the time of Christ, we should hardly expect to find in the New Testament more than the general principle in accord with which the proper solution of the controversy is to be reached. 3. †If a thing has been fully and sufficiently taught in the Old Testament, we should not expect much to be made of it in the New. How little is made in New Testament of the oath before the magistrate, of the Sabbath, and of many other institutions of great importance! The Old Testament had treated the subjects so fully. The rights of children, too, in the ecclesiastical covenant have a relatively large place in the Old Testament. The Jews had learned the privileges of their children well. We should not look for treatment of those rights at length in the New Testament, therefore.

For these, and such reasons, a comparative silence about infant church-membership in the New Testament is what might fairly have been anticipated. Yet the Apostles and Christ speak with a plainness and sufficiency on the subject which should be convincing to all whose minds are not filled with misconception and warped by prejudice. We might divide the New Testament evidence for infant church-membership more than once and still have enough to morally oblige us to regard

*Baxter: Infant Church-Membership and Baptism, p. 3.

† Cp Baxter: Infant Church-Membership and Baptism, p. 3. ff.

and treat the infants of believers as church-members.

Our limits will permit only a very partial presentation of the passages which might be adduced as teaching directly or inferentially that in Apostolic times infants of believers were members of the visible church. Accordingly, our present purpose is merely to set forth some of the more important classes of New Testament passages containing this teaching. And to this work without further preliminaries we at once proceed.

1st. We call attention first to that class of passages which *assert that the children of believers are members of the visible church*. I Cor. 7: 14; Mark 10: 14; Matt. 19: 13-15; Luke 18: 15-17; Act 15: 10 *et al.*, are examples of the class.

The Pastor of Kidderminster speaks of I Cor. 7: 14, as "that full plain text, against which men do wilfully cavil in vain, as if they were sorry that God speaks so plainly." In the newly formed church in Corinth many perplexing questions had arisen. Among others, the question as to whether a believer should continue to abide in the marriage relation with an unbelieving partner. Paul answered, that the believer should not despise such relations, but should abide in them if the unbeliever would permit; and then added, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: *else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.*" Here he asserts as an admitted and received fact, that the children of one believer are *holy, i. e.*, are church-members. Paul's teaching in these words may be paraphrased as follows: "The children of these mixed marriages are universally recognized as holy, that is, as belonging to the church. If this be correct, which no one disputes, the maintenance of the marriage relation must be consistent with living a Christian life. The unbelieving must be sanctified by the believing partner. Otherwise your children would be unclean, that is, born out of the pale of the church."

This text teaches plainly, indeed, that the children of believers were recognized as of right, church-members by the Apostles, that they were *holy*. It teaches that in cases where only one of the parents was a believer the children were holy; and, of course, in cases where both the parents were believers. But a widely prevailing ignorance as to the meaning of the term *holy* and certain ingenious misinterpretations have rendered this Scripture's clear teaching, forceless with great multitudes.

1. Some have said that Paul here asserts that the children

of believers are morally holy ; that he teaches that they have that spiritual rectitude which constitutes so large a part of salvation ; that such children are saints, members of the invisible church of the innermost kingdom of God. But this can't be true. It is against fact. Among the children of believers there are many whose lives show only too plainly that they have not moral holiness. Many Elis and Davids have mourned over reprobate sons. Scripture, too, is equally against the interpretation now disputed. It represents all men as by nature the children of wrath, and as standing in need of regeneration by the spirit of God, in order to see God's kingdom.

2. Some, on the other hand, hold that Paul here means by the holiness which he predicates of the children of a believer *legitimacy* ; that he means to say that the children of a believer, even though he be married to an unbeliever, are *legitimate*. This is nugatory and made simply to obviate the true interpretation. Marriage is an ordinance of natural religion. It is not a sacred thing in the sense that it belongs in any peculiar way to the church. The marital tie was established for man as man, and not for man regarded as an object of redemption. It was established in Eden. It obtained before the church of the redeemed did ; and after the church was instituted, the marriage relation was valid not only between members of the church, but between man and woman outside of the church. Nor could a valid marriage between two pagans be rendered illegitimate by one of the couple's subsequently professing Christianity. It is worse than empty to say of such a couple, that "the unbelieving husband is *legitimated* by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is legitimated by the husband : else were your children illegitimate, but now are they legitimate. It is worse than empty, we say, for it makes by implication the charge that marriage among unbelievers is illegitimate.

Moreover, the term *holy*, *hagios* and its Hebrew equivalents, occurs in the Scriptures nearly six hundred times, and never once in the sense of bare *legitimacy*, unless in this passage. Nor is the word *hagiadzo*, or its equivalent *hagidzo*, in the classic Greek, known, as far as we can discover, ever to have the meaning of bare *legitimacy*. Hence it appears that the common usage of the word as well as the demands of the immediate context force us to cast this interpretation aside. Paul did not mean to say, "Else were your children illegitimate, but now are they legitimate."

The common and true exposition represents Paul as affirming that the children of believers are separated to God as his peculiar people, Israel, were separated to Him, and as His church of the present is separated to Him. Holy was a term whose usage and significations were familiar to the Corinthian Christians. They knew that, frequently both in the Old Testament and in the New, it "expresses the state of a person or thing specially separated to the service of God, and in which, by reason of that separation, he acquires a peculiar property."* God himself uses the word with this signification, e. g., in Lev. 20: 26, "*Ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord your God am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine.*" "This severing was effected by his covenant with them. They were "holy" because they belonged to his church which he had erected to put his name and his glory there."* The term "*holy*," *hagios*, occurs abundantly in this sense. The "saints" are said to have been "persecuted;" to have received "contributions;" they were "greeted." The children of believers are here called saints; spoken of as members of the visible church.

"Unclean" as contrasted with "holy" denoted anything not separated to God's service; not regarded as appropriated to God. Paul denies that children who have one believing parent are unclean. He asserts that they are God's by special appropriation. He even represents it as *universally admitted* that the children who have only one believing parent are to be numbered among the people of God. Of course, if children who have only one believing parent are thus holy, much more are those both of whose parents were believers.

There can be no reasonable doubt as to the correctness of this interpretation. The nugatory or positively false teachings derived through the other interpretations, as well as the usage of the word and the demands of the context shut us up to the view that the Apostle teaches in our text that the children of believers belong to the Christian community—have a formally recognized connection with that community, are church-members.

"The only plausible objection to this view is, that if the terms "holy" and "unclean" have the meaning asserted for them, then the word sanctified must have the same extent of meaning; and if so the unbelieving partner to the marriage relation

*Mason: Church of God. Vol. IV, p. 119, of Works.

must become a member of the church in consequence of the church-membership of the other partner.”*

In response, we freely grant that in the absence of other Scriptures teaching the contrary, we might be forced by this passage to the view, that unbelievers marrying church-members have a right to church-membership; but there are Scriptures forbidding the view. “The covenant of God never founded the privilege of church-membership upon the mere fact of inter-marriage with his people; but it did found it expressly upon the fact of being born of them.”† Further, by a positive statute adults were not to be admitted into the church except upon profession of faith. Paul’s language, therefore, in the passage under discussion, must be interpreted alongside this statute. The believing partner does sanctify the unbelieving. That is affirmed. But the unbeliever is not thereby made of right a church-member. The unbelieving partner is sanctified as regards his children by the believing. Though the arguments against the right to church-membership on the part of a child, one of whose parents is a believer and the other an unbeliever seem just as strong as those in favor of his church membership, God graciously determines to the side of mercy. He says, in the cases of such, the children shall be treated as the children of believers. The unbelieving partner shall be regarded as sanctified by the believing. It is plain that the Christian people of Paul’s day were certain about the right of the children. In order to steady perplexed believers married to unbelievers, and pondering as to whether consistently with their Christian profession they could continue to live in marital relations with them, he seized upon the recognized ecclesiastical standing of children of mixed marriages and inferred a kind of sanctification of the unbeliever by the believer, at least with reference to all the children that should be born to such a union.

The children then of believing Corinthians were church-members. If the children of believing Corinthians, then the children of all believers. This it needs no argument. There was nothing exceptional in the case of Corinth, wherefore children of believers there should have been members if not elsewhere.

In Mark 10: 14, our Lord declares that the children of church-

*Peck : Ecclesiology, p. 45.

†Peck : Ecclesiology, p. 45. This will be proven in a subsequent paper.

members are members of the visible church. People had been bringing little children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples had rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw their rebuking, he was much displeased, and said unto them, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for *of such* is the kingdom of God." *For of such is the kingdom of God.* The Savior does not say, "Of persons like little children *in disposition* is the kingdom of God." If he means that, he means much more, and he is careful to show that he intends more. He does not use *toiouton* alone; he uses the article along with *toioutou*; he says *ton gar toiouton*. The grammarian Winer says that, "*toioutos* is joined to a noun without an article when *such, any such, of this sort, is meant:*" and that, "when, on the other hand, a particular object is pointed out, as *such a, or of such a sort, the noun naturally takes the article.*"* In other words, as we understand him, he teaches that the descriptive demonstrative *toioutos* when accompanied by the article, not only summons before the mind a class of a given kind, but points to an individual of that class. And this is exactly what the phrase does. We have examined every case of *toioutos* with the article in the New Testament, and have found that in every instance the writer not only intends to describe a class but to point out examples of it.

To cite a few instances: In Acts 22: 22, the mob around the temple, on occasion of Paul's arrest by the centurion, are said to have given him audience, until he had told of God's having sent him unto the Gentiles; but they then "lifted up their voices and said, "Away with *such a fellow.*" The mob was not in a mood to talk of men of a certain class in general way; while expressing its abhorrence of the class it would point definitely at an example of the type. It said away with *ton toiouton* away with all such fellows; away with *him*. He is a perfect example. In 2 Cor. 2: 6, 7, Paul is speaking of a man who had been excommunicated by the Corinthian church. He says, "Sufficient to such a man, *toi toioutoi,* is this punishment which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and to comfort him, lest perhaps *such an one, ho toioutos,* should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow." The Corinthian offender himself, as well as men of his sort, was to be comforted. Paul indicates that fact clearly. He uses

*Winer (Thayer): New Testament Grammar, p. 111.

the article with the demonstrative ; and not the demonstrative alone which, as usage shows, might denote all he wishes, but would not unmistakably do so. In 2 Cor. 11 : 13, Paul says of the deceitful self-styled apostles who were opposing him, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. He does not wish merely to say that all such as were *like* his individual enemies just referred to, in aim, spirit, and claim, were false apostles, but to assert as well that these very individuals were false apostles. He does not say *toioutoi gar*, which might have been understood definitely enough, but says, *ton gar toiouton*, affirms definitely that those very individuals are false apostles. Again, in 2 Cor. 12 : 2, 3, Paul says, "I knew a man in Christ * * * * *such an one* caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man * * * *." Now, Paul did not wish to leave the possibility of the impression that he had known merely a man with certain attributes common to a class—a man whose particular attributes he knew not. He wished to make the unmistakable impression that he was himself the individual of the remarkable class known. He says *ton toiouton* used the article with the adjective.

And so it is in every case of the article with *toioutos* in the New Testament. In every case an example of the class spoken of is pointed out. By the use of the article, the writer definitely points out examples of the class. And we are not aware that any deny this truth save in connection with those texts which speak of children as members of the church. There is no reason for denying the truth in connection with those texts, save such as is grounded in prejudice and misconception. When, in our passage from Mark, Jesus says, "For of such, *ton gar toiouton*, is the kingdom of God," he means to say not only that others like these are in the kingdom of God, but that "these children are members of the kingdom of God ; here are examples of members of that kingdom."

Old Richard Baxter makes no senile remark in saying that, "The Saviour does not mean *of persons like little children in disposition* : otherwise, he might have taken up lambs or doves and blessed them, and said, Of such is the kingdom of God." And this falls in with the argument just made and believed to be irrefutable from the usage of *toioutos with the article*. There is no reasonable ground of denial. The children of the Jews in the time of Christ were members of the kingdom of God just being set up.

If we ask, What is *the kingdom of God* in which these children have right to a place, the answer must be the visible church. We cannot say the invisible church, because only an occasional infant, so far as appears, is sanctified from the womb; and very many children of believers grow up into Godless men and women. They are not members of the invisible church. Again, the answer cannot be the Messianic dominion given to the Son for the purpose of gathering in God's elect, because within that dominion are all men—the Son now rules as the God of providence; his dominion is over all things to that extent. Such an answer would reduce the words of Christ to utter emptiness. Besides it is shown to be altogether false by the words which immediately follow: "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Certainly there came many under the providential dominion of Christ who never entered thereunder as little children.

The only answer which remains to be given, therefore, is that by the kingdom of God, here is meant that spiritual or ecclesiastical successor to, and counterpart of, the Jewish kingdom—the visible church. Christ then said, Of such is the visible church.

In spite of the plainness of this teaching, some have said that the words immediately following Mark 10: 14, viz: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein," show that Christ did not have in mind at all the relation of infants to the kingdom of God, but that he was setting forth the qualities of mind and heart which must characterize every inrant into the kingdom of God. Of course, this is silly. In verse 14, Christ had in mind supremely the relation of infants to the kingdom of God. He was defending the rights of the children against the disciples and instructing the disciples as to the relation of the children to the kingdom of God. In the next verse our Lord does proceed to teach the disciples that all who enter the kingdom of God must have childlike humility. But he was always teaching practical, personal lessons from historical incidents; he does so here. In this passage the context does not make for the view that the lesson of humility to the disciples was uppermost in Jesus's mind. The teaching as to the rights of the children was first; then as an apparent afterthought came the practical lesson to the apostles. We must allow for progress and life in the teach-

ing of Jesus—grant him the right of moving from a central truth to a suggested practical application here, as in other cases we should recognize his right to move from a specific case to the general truth.

The objection considered is invalid. The careful forms of speech used in the passage shows that Christ asserts the right of children whose parents were in the church—the children he spoke of were Jewish children—to church-membership themselves.

The same teaching is recorded in plain language also, in Matt. 19 : 13-15, and in Luke 18 : 15-17. And, if we mistake not, Peter, Acts 15 : 10, calls the infants of believers disciples. The occasion for his calling them so came about thus : Certain men had gone down from Judea to Antioch and had “taught the brethren and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” They had stirred up a great commotion among the Christians in Antioch. At length Paul, Barnabas and certain others of them were sent up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and elders about the question. Among the Christians in Jerusalem, certain from the sect of the Pharisees again taught that it was necessary to “circumcise the Gentile disciples and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” Then, after much discussion, Peter said, Acts 10 : 10, “Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.” The question before the Synod was simply this : Shall the Gentile disciples be circumcised as engaging to keep the law of Moses. The yoke of which Peter speaks, is circumcision as engaging to keep the law of Moses. Now, upon whom would this yoke have been imposed if the council had decided in favor of Pharisaic disturbers ? Upon the adults of that time and their children and upon the children of subsequent generations. We lay no great stress on this point, yet Peter seems, to us, in this place to call children, as well as their believing parents, disciples.

The fifteenth chapter of Act suggests another argument in favor of our contention : If infant children of believers were not recognized as members of the visible church why did not some man arise and say, Whatever may be said as to circumcising Gentile adult believers, we must except infants of believers from circumcision. They are not members of the visible church. No one seems to have suggested any such

idea. The parties alike seem to have regarded children as going with their parents. The silence is remarkable—so remarkable that it at least grounds a probability that such children were universally regarded as members of the church.

2nd. In the *second* place we call attention to the class of Scriptures which speak of Christian houses, sometimes further described as *baptized* houses. Acts 10:2, 44, 48; Acts 16:15; Acts 16:33; I Cor. 1:16, are instances. These passages tell us that the *house of Cornelius, the house of Lydia, and the house of Stephanus*, were each baptized. This is the language of men who believe in infant baptism and hence in infant church-membership. They speak of an *oikos*, a family, a cluster of one lineage, a social unit, as having been baptized. It is exceedingly improbable that there were no children in those houses and that they are not received to baptism on the faith of their parents.

It is objected, indeed, that children, if any belonged to these houses, could have not been baptized. The objectors say that Scripture elsewhere teaches that one must believe before it is proper to baptize him. They point to Mark 16:16, among other texts, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," as teaching that faith must precede baptism. This objection is silly. It is founded on gross misapprehension of the Scripture passages to which the objectors refer. Those passages do not set forth the conditions of infant baptism. If they do, they teach infant damnation. Infants can't believe. But we are not ready to hold of the infant, "He that believeth not shall be damned." This Scripture does not expressly set forth faith as the condition of the baptism of adults even. Scriptures elsewhere do. But this Scripture sets forth the condition of *salvation*. It makes that condition to be faith (and baptism). The Scriptures present no barriers to infant baptism—to infant church-membership, in the way of exercise of rational christian graces. No Scripture stands in the way of our believing that children of the baptized houses were received into the church.

3rd. There is, again, a large class of texts in the New Testament which represent the visible church of New Testament times, not as something new but as something which had existed throughout the preceding dispensation; and which, therefore, in the absence of other legislation to the contrary, represents children as having a right to membership in the

visible church of the Apostolic Age. For it is certain that children had membership in the ecclesiastical covenant which obtained from Abraham. This is asserted in this article. It will be proven in a later article. We are under the necessity of anticipating its truth, in order to see important evidence for infant membership really lying in the New Testament. But few Scriptural doctrines are more abundantly taught. The reader is hazzarding nothing by accepting tentatively the assertion that children had right of membership in the visible church under the Mosaic Dispensation.

The class of New Testament texts referred to as setting forth the visible churches of the Mosaic and Christian Dispensation as one single organism, is represented by Acts 7:38, "This is he, that was in the *church in the wilderness*, with the angel which spoke to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Heb. 3:5, 6, "Moses verily was faithful in all *his house* as a servant, for a testimony, of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over *his own house*, whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Rom. 11:17, 20, 24, which represents the Gentile members of the New Testament church as grafted into the old stock whence Jewish members had been broken off. The teaching that the visible church of the New Testament is one with that of the Old is frequent in the New Testament.

But as we have asserted and shall make clear, *children of adult members of the visible church of the Old Testament were of right, members of that church.* And unless we find a retraction of this right in the New Testament we *must* grant it them. As we have no right to add to the word of God—as we cannot add to his word without incurring a curse—we must still continue to regard and treat such children as, of right, members of the visible church.

Those who oppose infant membership often attempt to twit the advocates of the doctrine with so little's being made of the alleged right of children, in the New Testament. But they can not afford to say anything about "silence." Since children were members of the Old Testament visible church, we could explain an entire silence. But they can *not*. This argument is set forth with such splendor and force by Dr. John M. Mason in his "Church of God," that we feel justified in the following lengthy extract from that valuable work :

“To insist, therefore, that we shall produce, from the New Testament, a precept directly instituting the church-membership of infants, is to make a demand with which we are under no obligation to comply. Such a precept was not necessary. The relation which we are inquiring into had been instituted long before; it had subsisted without one moment’s interruption for more than nineteen centuries. During this great lapse of ages it had enlisted on its side, in addition to its divine original, the most irrefragable prejudices of antiquity, the most confirmed national habit, and the fastidious jealousy of prerogative. In this state of its prevalence was the evangelical dispensation announced. If the same relation of infants to the church was to continue under the New Testament form, nothing is more easy than to assign the reason why it was not instituted anew. The principle was undisputed; it was acted upon as a principle which the change of dispensation did not touch, and consequently, a new institution was superfluous. The silence of the New Testament on this head, is altogether in favor of those who maintain that the union of parents with the church of God, includes their children also. But on the supposition that this principle was to operate no longer; that the common interests of children with their parents in God’s covenant was to cease; the silence of the New Testament is one of the most inexplicable things which ever tortured the ingenuity of man. If there is any point of external privilege which ought to have been settled with the most definite precision, one would imagine that this is the point. But we are taught to believe, that a constitution which is engrafted upon a principle that penetrates the essence of human society; which coincides with the genius of every other divine constitution respecting man; which is incorporated with his animal, his intellectual, and his moral character; which is interwoven with every ligament and fibre of his, shall be torn away; and yet the statute book of the kingdom in which this severity originates, shall contain no warrant for executing it, nor a syllable to soothe the anguish which it has inflicted. Is it thus that God deals with his people? Does this look like his wonted condescension to their infirmities? Does it bear the character of that loving kindness and tender mercy which belong to him who “knows their frame and remembers that they are dust.”

When the economy of Moses was to be superceded by that of Jesus Christ, he prepared the way in the most gradual and gentle manner; he showed them from their own Scriptures, that he had done only what he had intended and predicted from the beginning; he set before their eyes a comparative view of the two dispensations, to satisfy them that they had lost nothing, but had gained much by the exchange. But when he touched them in the point of most exquisite sensibility—when he passed a sword through their souls by cutting off their children, unable to distinguish between good and evil, from all the interest which they once had in his church, the heavy mandate is preceded by no warning, is accompanied with no comfort; it is followed by nothing, to replace the privation; is not even supported by a single reason. The thing is done in the most summary manner, and the order is not so much as entered into the rule of faith. The believing mother hears that the son

of her womb is shut out from the covenant of her God, but hears not why! Is this the ordinance of him who, as a father pitieth his children, so pities them that fear him? It can not be!

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

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

4th. The New Testament represents the penalty for unbelief, to be excommunication from the people of God—from the visible church; and if it admits of no right of infant church-membership, it represents believing parents as suffering under the *same penalty*, so far as their children are concerned.

In the course of a sermon in the temple, Peter repeated the words of Moses, applying them to the New Testament Dispensation: "Every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." Acts 3:23. The people referred to is "Not the nation of the Jews; for they were the rebels that were to perish from among the peoples a people who were to continue in the divine protection. Not the elect; for God never 'cast away his people whom he foreknew,' and they who committed this crime never belonged to the elect—never were among them. If neither the Jewish people nor the elect, it could be no other than that people whom he owns as his, and who are called by the collective name of the church."* This passage occurring in Moses and in Acts is a proof of the unity of the visible church and its perpetuity in the two dispensation. And it makes the assertion that for unbelief in Christ members of that church shall be destroyed from the visible church. By destruction is meant, in this passage, "Not temporal death for that penalty was never ordained for the sin of unbelief in the Messiah.

*Peck's Ecclesiology, p. 44.

Not exclusion from the Jewish nation, for this effect did not take place; and further, if it had it was as likely to prove a blessing as a curse. It must mean exclusion from the communion of the visible church. This is its technical sense in the Old Testament.* See Ex. 12:15:19. Lev. 7:20-27. And "the execution of this threatening involved the casting out of the children of those on whom it was executed."

The teaching of Acts 3:23 is, then, that men should be cast out of the church for unbelief in our Lord—they and their children cast out.

We must stop by the way to say that the clear implication is that while the unbeliever's children along with himself should be cast out the *others should remain* in the church. But we are under the necessity of holding that these children of believers, too, were cast out if the New Testament be supposed to allow no right of membership to infants; and that believing parents suffer the same penalty as unbelieving so far as their children are concerned.

We would not believe this in the absence of the New Testament teaching which we have, as to the valid right of church-membership on the part of infants of believers. It is out of harmony with the gracious liberty of the New Dispensation. And, be it said with all reverence, it would seem like an unmerciful retrogression in the self-manifestation of God. Moreover, we know the Jews would have struggled against the deprivation of their children of the privileges of the church. See how they fought over circumcision. We have seen that the rights of their children—the peculiar rights—were very dear to them. Would they have given them up without remonstrance? The best mothers and fathers of Israel would have prized church-membership for their children most. Yet there is not the least evidence of any disturbance on the subject. There are no battle scars of a fight for a prized right; there is no echo of a wail for something torn irretrievably away. These people, tenacious of all their customs, gave up such a precious one as this without a sigh! The very apostles slow to make changes, yet made this one without regarding it! The people turbulent in defense of all to which they were attached, yet surrendered this one to which they were married without an effort!

*Peck's Ecclesiology p. 44.

Who can believe they were deprived of their privilege? Who can believe that every believing Jew suffered in his children the penalty pronounced against the unbelieving for his unbelief and yet made no outcry. The struggle that would have attended such a deprivation would have been so inwrought with Apostolic church history that there would have been no writing of the latter without the former. Christian parents can have suffered in no such way. There can have been no such penalty on Christian believers.

We have now seen that there is a class of passages which asserts that children of believers are members of the visible church; that another class of passages refers to families in the church as units, the probability being that there were infant children in at least some of the families; that another class of texts represents the church as *one* in the two Dispensations, and children as members of it in the New if in the Old that another class makes the peculiar penalty for unbelief, exclusion from the visible church whereas the antagonists of infant membership; would inflict it on the believer himself in the persons of his children, and that the silence of the New about the retraction of these privileges of children is utterly inexplicable on the supposition that the privileges have been retracted. And we beg leave to remind the reader, again, that this paper pretends to nothing more than a meagre and partial setting forth of the New Testament evidence for infant membership.

In conclusion, we would further remind him that if our study has made only probable that children have a right to membership he is still morally bound to treat them as having that right. Probability in the moral sphere always grounds obligation to act according to the probability. If New Testament teaching could make it appear merely probable that the children of believers are church-members, all Christians would be under obligation to act accordingly. But we have more than probable evidence. We have clear Scripture teaching. We must, therefore, treat children of believers as having a right to a place in the church. And as baptism is the initial rite, we must baptize them. All admit that if children have a right to church-membership they have a right to baptism.

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