

Miss A. S. Rice

BAPTISM:

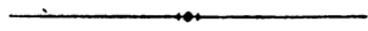
THE

DESIGN, MODE, AND SUBJECTS.



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CONTENTS.



PREFACE.....	PAGE. 7
--------------	------------

DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

Nature of True Religion—Ordinances Generally—Design of Baptism, how learned—Errors of Rome and Campbellism—"Born of Water"—"Remission of Sins"—Prof. Stuart's Criticism—Our Relation to the Church..	9
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MODE OF BAPTISM.

ELEVEN LETTERS TO ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

LET. I.—Proposition to be Proved—Points of Agreement—Difference between John's Baptism and Christian Baptism—General Argument—Ground occupied by Pedo-baptists—Two Questions.....	35
LET. II.—A Priori Argument Answered—Baptism not an <i>Action</i> —Unwarranted Assumption—Facts—Consecration of Aaron and his Sons, etc.—How much Immersionists must prove—Original Meaning of Words—Carson, Campbell, Ernesti, Stuart—Pagan Usage Uncertain Guide—Dr. Campbell.....	48
LET. III.—Meaning of <i>Baptizo</i> —Important Admission—Carson, Gale, and Campbell—Lexicons—Rule for Ascertain	

taining the Meaning of Words—A. Campbell—Word <i>Tropical</i> —Blackstone—Stuart endorsed by Campbell..	60
LET. IV.—Classic Usage in regard to <i>Bapto</i> —Homer, Aristotle, and Aristophanes—Admission of Carson, etc. Bible Usage—Baptism in Dew—Rev., 19 : 3—Syriac and Æthiopic Versions—Latin Vulgate—Origen.....	74
LET. V.—Classic usage respecting <i>Baptizo</i> —Strabo, Hip- pocrates, etc.—Gale's Admission—Bible Usage—Apoc- ryphal Books—Campbell's Translation of Mark, 7 : 3, 4—Divers Baptisms.....	84
LET. VI.—Translations—Syriac, Arabic, Æthiopic, etc...	99
LET. VII.—Early Christian Writers, Greek and Latin— Origen—Baptism of the Altar—Pouring in cases of necessity.....	107
LET. VIII.—Scripture accounts of administration of Bap- tism—How John baptized—Professor Stuart's criticism on <i>polia hudata</i> —Examples of Christian Baptism—Pen- tecost—Paul's Baptism—Cornelius—Eunuch.....	114
LET. IX.—Prepositions—Opinion of the Ancients—Prof. Stuart's Criticism—Dr. Dick—Dr. Scott.....	126
LET. X.—Examination of Romans, 6 : 1-4—Mr. Camp- bell's argument from legal sprinklings—Personal Im- mersions not in the Law of Moses—Sprinklings com- manded—Holy Spirit poured out.....	134
LET. XI.—Argument from <i>Convertible Terms</i> considered— Baptism of the Spirit and Water—Conclusions.....	143

INFANT BAPTISM.

CHAP. I.—Its importance—Mr. Pendleton's extreme posi- tion—Presumptive argument—How the majority of wise

- and good men have understood the Scriptures—God has owned Pedo-baptist Churches—Baptist Divisions..... 159
- CHAP. II.—Commission to Apostles—Real points of discussion—Definition of a Church—Identity, in what it consists—Points of difference—Same religion—Mr. Campbell's argument on "Jews' Religion"—Three points in Religion—Jewish church not secular organization—Differences between Church and State—Abraham and Christian Church—Good olive tree—Christian church not a new church—Apostles not baptized—Objections—Campbell and Carson..... 168
- CHAP. III.—Baptism in place of Circumcision—Mr. Campbell's sixteen arguments..... 213
- CHAP. IV.—*Onus probandi* on anti-pedo-baptists—Apostolic Commission examined—Law of membership not changed—Positive proof—Luke, 18: 15, 16—1 Cor., 7: 14—Household Baptisms..... 227
- CHAP. V.—Historical argument—When Infant Baptism began—Language of Irenaeus—Tertullian opposed to Infant Baptism—Value of his testimony—Origen—Cyprian and the Council—Augustine, Jerome, and Pelagius—Infant Communion..... 257
- CHAP. VI.—Waldenses Pedo-baptists—They are Pedo-baptists now—Were so at the Reformation—Testimony of Jones—Of Papists—Luther's endorsement of their Confessions—Declaration in 1608—In 1535—1568—Testimony of Messengers of Louis XII—Jones' corruption of Perrin—Waldenses condemned superstitious additions to Infant Baptism, but not baptism itself—Book of Anti-christ, A. D. 1120—Testimony of enemies—Conclusions of Dr. Wall—Value of the historical argument..... 286

CHAP. VII.—Practical uses of Infant Baptism—Its influence on parents—On children—On the church—Application.....	301
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P R E F A C E .

THE baptismal controversy is one of long standing. That much that is new can be said upon it, is not to be expected. Yet, as the exclusive claims of anti-pedo-baptists are still urged with as great zeal as ever, and as older books are gradually disappearing, it is necessary that others be published, adapted to the ever-varying phases of error. The following work has been prepared, and, is now published, in compliance with promises made to ministers and laymen, in different parts of the country, for some years past. Having paid much attention to the subjects discussed, I have thought the views here presented, may contribute to the advancement of truth. The mode of discussing the different points, which I have adopted, may possibly strike some minds, as calculated to present them in a clear light.

The letters addressed to Alexander Campbell, on the Mode of Baptism, were published in the Presbyterian of the West, several years ago, on the appearance of his book on Baptism. Mr. Campbell, at that time, desired to reply to them through the columns of the same paper; but as his propositions were regarded as entirely unfair, they were promptly declined. These

letters, with the notes appended, it is hoped, will prove a satisfactory defence of Baptism by pouring or sprinkling.

I have not attempted to say all that might be said on the subjects discussed. Yet I have not left unanswered any argument against our views, which seems to deserve refutation. It has been my object to give a brief, clear, and satisfactory discussion of each point, and to aid Christians in the discharge of the duties and in the improvement of the privileges connected with the ordinance of Baptism. How far I have succeeded, I cheerfully leave each reader to determine for himself. My prayer is, that God will bless it to the edification of his people.

THE AUTHOR.

DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

I. TRUE religion is holiness of heart, manifested in obedience to the commands of God; or, in other words, it is love supreme to God and love to men, manifested in the discharge of our duties to God and to men. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." This love, in a regenerated soul, begets repentance for past sins, a heartfelt faith in Jesus Christ, our Saviour from sin, and obedience to all the commandments of God. Peter could say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee;" and, therefore, when reminded of his sin, "he went out and wept bitterly." True faith "worketh by love;" and such a faith produces corresponding works. "Faith without works is dead." Such, briefly, is true religion.

II. The efficient agent in begetting and perfecting true religion in the hearts and lives of men, is the Holy Spirit; and the principal means employed in this work are the word and the ordinances of the Gospel. "Of his own will," says James, "begat he us with his word of truth." God begat us; but he did it by means of his word.

Ever since God has had a people in the world, he has not only made to them revelations of his will, but has appointed ordinances for their observance. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;" and that sacrifice, which could not have been offered by *faith* unless Divinely appointed, consisted "of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof." So far as the Scriptures inform us, there were no ordinances, except bloody sacrifices, and perhaps thank-offerings, instituted, until the calling of Abraham. Then circumcision was instituted, "a seal of the righteousness of faith," a seal of the covenant between God and his people. At Mount Sinai, many more ordinances were appointed, chiefly of two classes—bloody sacrifices and ablutions. At the close of the Old Dispensation, the burdensome ritual of the Jewish church gave place to two simple, significant ordinances—the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

III. Ordinances, though the observance of them as Divinely appointed, is important and obligatory as means of grace, were never designed to be efficacious in imparting saving grace, or, under all circumstances, essential to salvation. He who, having the opportunity, refuses to observe ordinances appointed of God, gives clear evidence that he has no piety, and cannot therefore be saved; and he who relies for salvation upon the observance of ordinances, mistakes the shadow for the substance.

Under the Old Dispensation, it was the duty of pious men to offer sacrifices; but Samuel said to Saul: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."* And David said, "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."† And so far was circumcision from being regarded as essential to salvation, that for forty years, during the sojourn of the Jews in the wilderness, it was omitted.‡ It was the duty of the Jews to tithe mint, anise and cumia; but judgment, mercy and faith were "the weightier matters of the law."

In every age there has been a strong tendency in men to attribute to ordinances an efficacy and an importance they never possessed, and, consequently, to depend upon them for salvation to the neglect of vital godliness and good works. In this respect, multitudes of professing Christians have erred as egregiously as did the Jews. It has been too common to see them neglectful of sound morals, just in proportion to their zeal for outward observances. The church of Rome presents a striking confirmation of this statement.

Yet we may run to the other extreme, and undervalue ordinances. The fact that God has appointed

* 1 Sam. 15: 22. † Ps. 51: 16, 17. ‡ Josh. 5: 5.

them, is sufficient evidence that his blessing will attend the proper observance of them, and that those who willfully neglect them forfeit that blessing. We are under obligation to observe them, because God commands it; and we need them, because they impress truth on our minds, impart a stronger sense of our obligations, and encourage us in the midst of trials and temptations.

On this general subject, the following three truths are clear and most important:

1. The mere observance of ordinances will never save a sinner. They are in their nature *material*, and touch only the body; but true religion belongs to the mind, and is seated in the heart. So far, then, as ordinances impress truth on the heart, and so far as that truth is attended by the Holy Spirit, they become means of growth in holiness. "Sanctify them through thy truth."

2. No one ever was or will be lost for lack of ordinances, which he had not the opportunity to observe. That is a glorious truth announced by Peter, when he saw that God had accepted Cornelius the centurion: "Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him."* Cornelius was "a devout man, and one that feared

* Acts 10: 34, 35.

God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always ;” and his purity of heart and exemplary life were as truly acceptable to God before his baptism, as afterwards.

3. No one who willfully neglects ordinances divinely appointed, can rationally hope for salvation ; for such persons openly rebel against God, and treat with contempt his wisdom and his grace. True piety prompts us cheerfully to obey every command of God, and to prize and improve every means of grace he has appointed. Its language is : “ Therefore, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right ; and I hate every false way.” *

With these general remarks, I proceed to a careful examination of the *design*, the *mode*, and the *subjects* of baptism.

We place the *design* of baptism first in the order of discussion, for two reasons. In the first place, the value of the ordinance is in its design—the end or ends it is intended to accomplish in the plan of salvation. Mistakes on this point may render the ordinance worthless or injurious ; for instead of impressing truth on the mind, it may thus mislead it. For example, he who regards baptism as a regenerating ordinance, will think himself regenerated, because he has been baptized ; and he who regards it as securing remission of sins, will imagine himself par-

* Ps. 119: 128.

doned, for the same reason. In the second place, a knowledge of the meaning and design of baptism will aid us in determining the *mode* and the *subjects*. Those who insist on immersion, and reject infant baptism, differ from Pedo-baptists as much, or nearly so, as to the design of the ordinance.

The design of baptism may be learned—

I. *From the name into which we are baptized.*

The apostolic commission says: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." * The preposition here translated *in* is *eis*, which many prefer, and perhaps correctly, to render *into*. The same preposition is used in 1 Cor. 10: 2, where the Jews are said to have been "baptized unto (*into*) Moses in the cloud and in the sea." To be baptized in the name of the Father, etc., says an eminent writer, is to be consecrated to him for worship, so that the baptized person is called after him as his Lord. To be baptized into any one, or in the name of any one, says the learned Poole, is to subject and devote one's self to him, and to be willing to be called by his name. Dr. Gill, the Baptist commentator, explains the expression to mean "*by the authority of three divine persons,*" and adds: "And as they are to be invocated in it, so the persons baptized not only profess faith in each divine person, but are devoted to their service

* Matt. 28: 19.

and worship, and are laid under obligation to obedience to them." The late Professor Stuart says, the word baptize, "when it is followed by a person, means, by the sacred rite of baptism, to bind one's self to be a disciple or follower of a person, to receive or obey his doctrines or laws."

We may, then, safely conclude, that baptism signifies *consecration to the service of God in the Gospel of Christ*. It is to be administered to those who are separated from the world for that service. In receiving this ordinance, they covenant to be faithful in it, and express their faith in the divine promises, without which they cannot serve God acceptably. This is all we mean, when we say, baptism is *a seal of the covenant of grace*. God says to sinners: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."* Those who accept this invitation, receive baptism, thus accepting the terms of the covenant. Whether believing parents are authorized and required to enter into covenant for their infant children, and have them baptized, will be subject of inquiry in another part of this work.

II. The design of baptism may be learned, secondly, from *the element* used in the administration. It is *water*. No other fluid was ever used by the

* Isaiah 55: 3.

apostles. And as water cleanses the body, so it is a suitable emblem of spiritual cleansing. Under both the Old and the New Dispensation, it was so used. Thus, God said to the Jews: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you," etc.* So Paul said to the believing Corinthians: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed," etc.† And Ananias had said to him "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins," etc.‡ God is holy; his service is a holy service; and, therefore, it is especially proper that the element by which those who have been sinners, are consecrated to that service, should be significant of purity. Dr. Carson, the Baptist controvertist, agrees with us, that "washing away sin is the thing which it always signifies," though he says this is not the whole of its meaning.§ Dr. Gill says, the grace of the Spirit in regeneration, "both in the Old and in the New Testament, is frequently signified by water, and called a baptism, or a being baptized." ||

Baptism, then, seals our consecration to the service of God in the Gospel, and signifies that holiness by which only we can render acceptable service.

* Ezekiel 36: 25, 26. † 1 Cor. 6: 11. ‡ Acts 22: 16. § On *Bap.* p. 266. || *Com. on 1 Cor 12: 15.*

III. But inasmuch as holiness is obtained only by the influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart, baptism points to the Spirit's work. Therefore, the two things—the sign and the substance—are constantly connected in the Scriptures. Accordingly Paul teaches, that God saves us “by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ.”* For this reason, regeneration itself is called baptism. John the Baptist said: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”† For though the baptism of John was only a ceremony introductory to the Christian Dispensation, and not Christian baptism, it had the same significance, as indeed all the Jewish ablutions had. Paul says: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit.”‡ The union of believers to Christ is effected, not by water, but by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as Dr. Gill says: “By which spiritual baptism, or by whose grace in regeneration and conversion, they are brought into *one body*; the mystical body of Christ, the universal and invisible church.” Strange-

* Tit. 3: 5, 6. † Matt. 3: 11. ‡ 1 Cor. 12: 13.

ly enough, some Baptists, in the heat of controversy, have convinced themselves that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was confined to his miraculous gifts, and has long since ceased. The passage under consideration is a clear refutation of this notion.

Here, again, men have run into fatal error, mistaking the shadow for the substance—the outward sign for the inward grace. This is true of the church of Rome. The Catechism of the Council of Trent defines baptism as “the sacrament of regeneration by water in the word.” It tells us, that our Lord, when baptized by John, “gave to the water the power of sanctifying” — “the power of regenerating to spiritual life.” It further declares, “that such is the admirable efficacy of this sacrament, as to remit original sin, and actual guilt however enormous ;” and that those regenerated by baptism “become innocent, spotless, innoxious, and beloved of God.”* Very nearly the same efficacy is ascribed to this ordinance by High-church Episcopalians. The erroneousness of this doctrine is clear from the following considerations :

1. It is chargeable with the gross absurdity of ascribing the production of holiness in the mind to a material agent applied to the body.

2. It is contrary to the uniform teaching of the Bible, which represents regeneration as the work of

* pp. 114, 116, 127.

the Holy Spirit on the heart. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."* It was the habit of the inspired writers to connect the significant ordinance with the thing signified; and men have most erroneously concluded, that the former is essential to the latter. Thus, when our Lord said to Nichodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God;" it is assumed that the water refers to baptism, and that it is a regenerating ordinance. Now, here is a double assumption. In the first place, it is assumed that to be born of water, is to be baptized. What evidence is there of this? When this conversation occurred between our Saviour and Nichodemus, Christian baptism had not been instituted; and if he referred to it, Nichodemus could not possibly have understood him. Yet the Saviour censured him for his ignorance: "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Besides, in no other instance in which the new birth is spoken of in the New Testament, is *water* mentioned. The simple truth seems to be, that Jesus Christ was explaining to a Jewish teacher the necessity and the nature of the new birth; and he illustrated it, as the inspired writers often do, by

* Eph. 1: 1, 5.

reference to water, the emblem of spiritual purity. To be born of water and of the Spirit, is to experience that renewal of heart which is the fruit of the Spirit, and of which water is the appropriate emblem.

But suppose the reference in this passage were to the ordinance of baptism, what reason is there to suppose that persons are regenerated always and only in connection with baptism? The fact, that an outward ordinance stands associated with the inward grace, does not prove that both are equally necessary, or that they are always, in fact, connected.

3. The doctrine I am opposing is liable to the very serious objection, that it makes the salvation of the soul depend, in many instances, upon mere circumstances, or upon the faithfulness of other persons. A dying infant must perish, only because its parents neglect to have it baptized, or because it is left to the care of strangers who care not for its soul, or do not believe in the baptism of infants. "Infants," says the Catechism of Trent, "unless baptized, cannot enter heaven, and hence we may well conceive how deep the enormity of their guilt, who, through negligence, suffer them to remain without the grace of the sacrament, longer than necessity may require, particularly at an age so tender as to be exposed to numberless causes of death." To avoid, as far as possible, this difficulty, Rome allows "even the laity, men and women, to whatsoever sect they may belong," and even "Jews, infidels, and heretics," to

administer the ordinance; "provided, however, they intend to do what the Catholic church does in that act of her ministry." * The very fact, that a license so general and so unscriptural is given in the administration of baptism, is sufficient proof of the falsity of the doctrine which made it necessary.

But not infants only suffer, if this doctrine be true; for adults are very often placed in circumstances in which, however truly penitent and believing, they cannot receive baptism. Those dying in such circumstances must, of course, be lost. Yet our Saviour says: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." †

No, baptism *signifies* regeneration; but it does not regenerate. It impresses on us the necessity of sanctification; but it does not sanctify. It is the shadow; the Spirit's agency on the heart is the substance. The two stand associated in the Bible, as a man and his shadow.

4. But since sinners can approach God only through the mediation of Christ, and since the Holy Spirit is given through his intercession, and his mediation is based upon his death; baptism visibly identifies us with Christ, and especially with his death. We are, therefore, said to be "baptized into Christ," and thus to "put on Christ;" and also to be "baptized into his death." As Christ died to de-

* Cat. of Treat, pp. 124, 140. † 1 John 3: 36.

liver his people both from the condemnation and the dominion of sin, baptism into Christ signifies and requires death to sin and a life of holiness, or sanctification through him; and it stands intimately associated with *remission of sins*.

Here, again, human nature has exhibited its characteristic infirmity; for some who are not chargeable with the absurdity of ascribing to baptism a sanctifying efficacy, hold that it is a *justifying ordinance*. This is the doctrine of Alexander Campbell and the sect to which he has given rise. He says: "From the time the proclamation of God's philanthropy was first made, there was an act of obedience proposed in it, by which the believers of the proclamation were put in actual possession of its blessings, and by conformity to which act a change of state ensued.

* * * Whatever the act of faith may be, it necessarily becomes the line of discrimination between the two states before described. On this side, and on that, mankind are in quite different states. On the one side, they are pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved; on the other, they are in a state of condemnation. This act is sometimes called immersion, regeneration, conversion."*

There are two principal grounds on which this doctrine is defended:

1st. The language of Christ to Nicodemus is ap-

* *Chris. Sys.* pp. 200, 201.

pealed to: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The new birth, according to Mr. Campbell, is not a change of *heart*, as commentators have generally supposed, but a change of *state*—a passing from a state of condemnation to a state of justification. But as we have already shown, there is no evidence that this passage has any direct reference to baptism. Besides, if it had, it would not sustain the doctrine of Mr. Campbell; for the new birth is most evidently a change of *heart* from sinfulness to holiness—not a change of *state*. This is clear, first, from the reason assigned, why the new birth is necessary, viz: "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." The word *flesh*, as contrasted with *spirit*, in the New Testament, signifies *depravity*, as is evident from Rom. 8: 1-9, and Gallatians 5: 19-25. The works of the *flesh* are only evil, the works of the *Spirit* are good. The Saviour, then, teaches that men must be born again, because being born of depraved parents, they are themselves depraved. Being born of the Spirit, makes them like the Spirit, holy. That the new birth is a change of heart, is further proved by its *fruits*. "Whosoever is born of God," says John the Apostle, "doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, be-

cause he is born of God."* The new birth leads men to turn from sin, and work righteousness; most evidently, therefore, it is a change of heart. But we observe, that in his late book on baptism, Mr. Campbell seems entirely to abandon this passage on which he had so much relied.

2d. The second ground on which the doctrine of baptismal justification is defended, is the force of the Greek preposition, *eis*. Peter said to the anxious inquirers, on the day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for (*eis*) the remission of sins." The word *eis*, here translated *for*, as Mr. Campbell insists, means *in order to*; and, therefore, Peter commanded men to be baptized *in order that their sins might be remitted*. In his *Christian System*, he says: "Immersion for the forgiveness of sins, was the *command* addressed to these believers, to these penitents, in answer to the most earnest question, and by one of the most sincere, candid, and honest speakers ever heard. This act of faith was presented as that act by which a change in their state could be effected; or, in other words, by which alone they could be pardoned."† In his late book on baptism, he says: "The form of expression is exceedingly familiar and intelligible; and, were it not for the imaginary incongruity between the means and the

* 1 John, 3: 9. † p. 203.

end, or the thing done and the alleged purpose or result, no one could, for a moment, doubt that the design of baptism is 'for the remission of sins.'* But there are two very conclusive objections to this argument, viz :

The first is, that men are not commanded *to be baptized for the remission of sins*. There is no such command in the New Testament. Wherever baptism is mentioned in connection with remission, *repentance* is also mentioned. Thus, John the Baptist did not preach baptism for the remission of sins, but "the baptism of *repentance* for the remission of sins."† Peter did not command the anxious inquirers, on the day of Pentecost, to be baptized for the remission of sins, but to "*repent and be baptized*," etc. Now, the question arises, whether it is repentance or baptism that secures remission, or whether both are equally necessary. This question is answered by two important facts, viz :

1st. In no part of the New Testament is baptism *alone* connected with remission of sins.

2d. Remission of sins is promised both to repentance and faith, without reference to baptism. After his resurrection, Christ said to his disciples: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in

* p. 249. † Mark, 1: 4; Luke, 3: 3.

his name among all nations." * Peter said: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." Again, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," etc. And when Peter narrated to the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, the conversion of Cornelius and his family, "They held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." † These passages and others, evidently promise to all true penitents the remission of sins. Other passages promise remission to *faith*. "He that believeth on him is not condemned;" and again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." ‡ And to the trembling jailor, Paul said: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." § Moreover, in the epistle to the Romans, he discusses at length the doctrine of justification, and his conclusion is stated thus: "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law;" and again, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." || These and many similar passages teach, unequivocally, that every true believer, baptized or not, is justified. Inasmuch as repentance,

* Luke, 24: 46, 47. † Acts, 3: 19; and 5: 31; and 11: 18.
 ‡ John, 3: 18, 36. § Acts, 16: 31. || Rom., 3: 28; and 5: 1.

faith and conversion are always associated in the same mind, remission of sins is promised sometimes to repentance, sometimes to faith, sometimes to conversion. If there be, then, any penitent, any believer, who is not justified, the passages just cited would not be true. But, confessedly, there are multitudes of true penitents, of true believers, who have not been baptized; nay, many such, there is reason to believe, have died unbaptized, certainly *unimmersed*. Most evidently, then, it is repentance, and not baptism, which secures remission; and baptism is connected with repentance and remission, only as the *sign* and *seal* is connected with the thing sealed or signified.*

But let us admit that the preposition *eis* stands immediately connected with baptism; the question then arises, what does it mean? That it sometimes signifies *in order to*, is not denied; but that it quite as frequently has other meanings, is certain. Let us, then, compare Acts, 2: 38, and Matt., 3: 11. In the former of these passages, Peter says: "Repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ,

* In the Lexington Debate, Mr. Campbell sought to evade the force of the argument founded on John 3: 18, 36, by saying, the unbaptized believer has eternal life "in grant, in right, according to the will of God." p. 457. But if still under condemnation, it is not true that he has it in grant, in right. Besides, the language of Christ is: "He that believeth in him, is NOT CONDEMNED." Of course, then, he is justified, whether baptized or not.

(*eis*) for (or into) the remission of sins." In the latter, John the Baptist says: "I indeed baptize you with water (*eis*) unto (or into) repentance." In these two passages, the preposition (*eis*) is the same; and the expressions precisely similar. The one, therefore, may explain the other. Will any one pretend that John baptized the Jews *in order that they might repent*? No one holds a notion so absurd. Then how can it be proved that the preposition *eis*, in the other passage, means *in order to remission of sins*?

The following is Professor Stuart's explanation of this preposition, in connection with baptism: "A person may be baptized into a thing (doctrine.) So in Matt., 3: 11, 'I baptize you with water into (*eis*) repentance;' that is, into the profession and belief of the reality and necessity of repentance, involving the idea, that themselves professed to be subjects of it. In Acts, 19: 3, we have 'into (*eis*) one body,' all in the like sense, viz: by baptism the public acknowledgment is expressed of believing in, and belonging to, a doctrine, or one body. So in Acts, 2: 38, "Baptized on account of Jesus Christ into (*eis*) remission of sins; that is, into the belief and reception of this doctrine; in other words, by baptism and profession, an acknowledgment of this doctrine, on account of Jesus Christ, was made."*

* This is substantially the view held by all evangelical de-

Not only is the doctrine of baptismal justification unsupported by those Scripture passages relied on by its advocates, and contradicted by many other passages, but it is liable to the charge of making the salvation of men dependent upon the reception of an ordinance, which they cannot administer to themselves, and which they may not be able to have administered by others. Thus, a penitent believer, dying unbaptized, must be lost, though in the sight of God his heart was right. "So in religion," says Mr. Campbell, "a man may change his views of Jesus, and his heart may also be changed towards him; but unless a change of state ensues, he is still unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost to all Christian hope and enjoyment."* The heart may be right, but because an external ordinance cannot be received, the individual remains in a state of condemnation, and in danger of eternal ruin! A greater abuse of ordinances was

nominations. It is singular enough, that Mr. Campbell, whilst holding that baptism is to be administered IN ORDER TO the remission of sins, should quote Calvin as agreeing with him. The following language of this great reformer, will set this matter at rest: "We may see this exemplified in Cornelius, the centurion, who, after having received the remission of his sins and the visible grace of the Holy Spirit, was baptized—not with a view to obtain by baptism a more ample remission of sins, but a stronger exercise of faith, and an increase of confidence from that pledge." Inst. B. iv., ch. 15, sec. 14.

* Chris. Sys., p. 200.

never known. Such a doctrine is not simply unscriptural; it is degrading to the character of God.*

We can now see, at a glance, the leading design of baptism. It signifies consecration to the service of God, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. It binds us to the service of God; and it points to the cross of Christ, through whom only we can approach God, and to the Holy Spirit, through whose influence only we can be fitted for the divine service and for heaven. In a word, it is the seal of the covenant of grace.

5. But as baptism is significant of our relations to God, and of our obligations, and of the Divine promises; so it is significant of our relations to *his visible church*. God has been pleased to separate his professing people from the world, and to organize them into a church; and the same ordinance which visibly unites them to him, introduces them into his church, giving them a right to the means of grace, and subjecting them to proper discipline. This ordinance

* In his debate with McCalla, Mr. Campbell, though his different statements are contradictory, gave very nearly the true view of the connection of baptism with remission of sins. He said: "The water of baptism, then, **FORMALLY** washes away our sins. The blood of Christ **REALLY** washes away our sins. Paul's sins were **REALLY** PARDONED when he believed; yet he had no solemn **FLEDGE** of the fact, no **FORMAL** acquittal, no **FORMAL** purgation of his sins, until he washes them away in the water of baptism." p. 135. A **FORMAL** pardon, as distinguished from a **REAL** pardon, can mean nothing more than an outward **SIGN** or **SEAL** of that which is already done.

was administered, for the first time, on the day of Pentecost. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day, there were added to them about three thousand souls."*

Such being the design of baptism, its practical uses are easily perceived. They are as follows:

1st. It is to be regarded as a powerful and urgent argument in favor of *holy living*. The awful name of the God of holiness has been called upon the baptized person. Henceforth his glory amongst men is, to some extent, placed in the keeping of his professed people. How powerful the motive, then, to "walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being faithful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Again, the *element* employed is the emblem of spiritual cleansing, and of consecration to the holy service of God. Let us never forget, that *water* has been put upon us in the name of the Triune God, and thus we were solemnly separated forever from sin and uncleanness. Let the recollection of this fact ever urge us to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord."

Besides, baptism is the seal of the covenant of grace. Into that covenant, sealed with the blood of Christ, and witnessed by the Holy Spirit, we have entered, or our pious parents entered into covenant

* Acts, 2: 41.

on our behalf. Shall we despise or lightly treat that gracious covenant? It is not only obligatory upon us, but it offers our only hope of salvation.

2d. Baptism not only urges, but it *encourages* to good works. It points to the cross of Christ, "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Not only does the object of our Saviour's death make an affecting appeal in favor of holy living, but his blood seals to us all the precious promises of God—promises of justification, of sanctification, and of adoption. Baptism in the name of Christ, therefore, urges to a life of holiness, and, at the same time, promises grace to enable us so to live. Let us never forget that we have been baptized into the death of Christ, that we might die to sin, and live a new life.

Baptism points to the Holy Spirit, warns us against grieving him, and encourages to go forward in the path of duty. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God, in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

The advantages to be derived from baptism, then, are not confined to the time of its administration.

On the contrary, it is to exert an influence upon the believer, until he shall have passed beyond the reach of ordinances. It is to be an ever-present motive and encouragement to a life of holiness. It is not, like the Lord's supper, to be often repeated; but it is to be constantly remembered. It is one solemn consecration for life and forever—one seal of the never-failing promises of the covenant-keeping God.

MODE OF BAPTISM.

LETTER I.

REV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL:

DEAR SIR: Your long expected book on baptism, which was partly printed more than eight years ago, has, at length, made its appearance. It is, I think, you have said, your last work on this subject, which, for more than thirty years, has occupied your mind and employed your pen. You have taken ample time to review the arguments on both sides, since I had the pleasure of meeting you in the Lexington Debate. This book, of course, presents your most mature views, supported by your strongest arguments. If it fails to sustain the opinions of anti-pedobaptists, we may fairly conclude that they are indefensible. I propose, by way of complying with requests repeatedly made, to weigh your arguments in the scales of the sanctuary, and thus to give to the public the results of the investigations I have made on this subject.

Passing your "antecedents," I propose, first, to examine your arguments on what you call the "Action

of Baptism." You have undertaken to establish the following proposition: "Immersion in water into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is the only Christian Baptism." If you have succeeded, two serious conclusions follow inevitably, viz :

1st. That the overwhelming majority of Protestant Christians, to say nothing of Roman Catholics, are *unbaptized*. Amongst these, are found great numbers of the wisest and best men the world has known.

2d. That the churches which practice *pouring* or *sprinkling*, are not true churches of Christ, and their ministers are not true ministers of Christ, but intruders into the sacred office, and profaners of sacred things. For you will scarcely undertake to prove, that the Scriptures recognize unbaptized churches, or an unbaptized ministry.

These consequences, I admit, should not deter us from a thorough examination of the subject; but they should teach us not lightly or hastily to adopt views which bear in their train consequences of so grave importance. They should induce us to approach the subject with all possible candor, and to examine it prayerfully and thoroughly. For the church of Christ, all counted, is "a little flock." No true Christian would be willing to reject from his fellowship any portion of them. Besides, to reject those whom Christ receives, and to produce

schism in his mystical body, are sins of no ordinary magnitude.

On the following points, we are happily agreed, viz :

I. That Christian baptism was instituted by our Lord after his resurrection, when he gave to his apostles the great commission : " Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," etc. In times past, our Baptist friends have earnestly contended, that the baptism of John is Christian baptism. In your Christian Baptist, you have pointed out the radical differences between the two, and have strongly maintained, that Paul did re-baptize certain disciples of John. You say : " I know to what tortures the passage has been subjected by such cold, cloudy, and sickening commentators as John Gill. But no man can, with any regard to the grammar of language, or the import of the most definite words, make Luke say that when these twelve men heard Paul declare the design of John's immersion, they were not baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." * Again, " Nothing can more fully exhibit the pernicious influence of favorite dogmas, than to see how many of the Baptists have been Gillized and Fullerized into the notion that these twelve men were not baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, when they heard Paul expound to them the design and

* pp. 646-648.

meaning of John's immersion." The language of the great Robert Hall on this point is as strong as yours. "In the whole compass of theological controversy," says he, "it would be difficult to find a stronger instance of the force of prejudice in obscuring a plain matter of fact; nor is it easy to conjecture what could be the temptation to do such violence to the language of the Scriptures, and to every principle of sober criticism, unless it were the horror which certain divines have conceived against everything which bore the shadow of countenancing ana-baptistical error." Just here let me ask, whether it has ever occurred to you, that possibly that same powerful prejudice which induced such men as Gill and Fuller to misinterpret and pervert the plainest language in Scripture, may have misled them and even yourself in interpreting other language in the same volume, on the same subject? May it not be, that your zeal and theirs for exclusive immersion, is simply the result of that prejudice?

II. We agree, that on all points important to the Christian faith, the language of the Bible is plain, and easily understood. On the point now under consideration, you assert, that it is too plain to be misunderstood. In the Lexington Debate, you made the following emphatic declaration: "I solemnly affirm it now, as I have before affirmed it, and, as I believe, already shown it, that there is not now, nor has there ever been, at any past period, a term in

universal speech, more definite and fixed in its meaning, than this same specific term *baptism*, now before us."* You contend, then, that our Lord, in instituting the ordinance of baptism, did, in the plainest and most unequivocal language, command his ministers to perform the *specific action of immersing*, and that no other action can be regarded as obedience to that command. "Baptism," you have asserted, "*is a specific action*, and the verb that represents it is a verb of specific import," etc. In the year of our Lord, 1820, you claim the honor of having discovered and exposed the mischievous sophistry which lay concealed in the apparently harmless word *mode*, the very use of which secured to the Pedo-baptist at least half a victory over his unsuspecting opponent. "Since 1820," you have said, "the word *action* is being substituted for *mode*."

I now state a general argument, which is of great weight against your doctrine, that immersion is the only Christian baptism, viz: The whole Christian world, in all ages, so far as history can inform us, with the exception of a mere handful, stand arrayed against you. Either they or you have misunderstood the language of Jesus Christ. The late learned Professor Stuart, whom you have honored with the title of your "American Apostle," makes the following statement: "From all that has been said

* p. 90.

above, it is manifest that the great body of Christians have long come to the full conviction, that no one particular mode of baptism can be justly considered as essential to the rite itself." * This is not true simply of the more ignorant classes, but of men of the most eminent learning. It is not true of those who have given the subject but a passing notice, but of those who have given it the most patient and thorough examination. They have not taken the ground, that although Jesus Christ commanded *immersion*, men may venture to substitute *pouring* or *sprinkling*; but they have deliberately denied that he did command immersion. They have said, with Professor Stuart, "that no injunction is anywhere given in the New Testament, respecting the manner in which this rite shall be performed." This ground has not been taken only by those who believe that the apostles baptized by sprinkling, but by those who have favored the opinion that immersion was generally practiced in the apostolic age. CALVIN was disposed to make this admission; and yet he says: "It is of no consequence at all (minimum refert) whether the person baptized is totally immersed, or whether he is merely sprinkled by an effusion of water. This should be a matter of choice to the churches in different regions." † He did not say, as he has been represented, that the church has a right

* Mode of Bap. p. 92. † Inst. B. iv., chap. 15, sec. 19.

to *change* the ordinances so as to do something different from that which Jesus Christ commanded; but he denied that he gave any command respecting the mode of administering baptism.* His language is as follows: "Pro ipsa quidem baptismi ceremonia, quatenus nobis a Christo tradita est, centies potius ad mortem usque digladiandum, quam ut eam nobis eripi sinamus: sed quum in aquæ symbolo testimonium habemus tam ablutionis nostræ, quam novæ vitæ: quum in aqua, velut in speculo, sanguinem nobis suum Christus repræsentat, ut munditiem inde

* Mr. Campbell, in his debate with McCalla, most singularly and grossly misrepresented the language and the sentiments of Calvin, and, at the same time, equally misrepresented the sentiments of other learned Pedo-baptists. This misrepresentation was exposed in the Lexington Debate, (p. 323,) and Mr. C. made little or no effort to defend himself. Let the reader compare the following, which is copied from the debate with McCalla, with the following language of Calvin, as given above:

"But because I have quoted Calvin, Luther, and many other Pedo-baptists as declaring that BAPTIZO signifies to immerse, to dip, to plunge literally, Mr. M. and Mr. R. are exceedingly exasperated and would have such concessions construed into insignificant words, seeing those men practiced SPRINKLING. But why did they practice SPRINKLING? Most certainly, not because they supposed this to be either the meaning of the term, nor the ancient practice. Why then? I will let Calvin declare, Hear him. Hear him, my friends: 'THE CHURCH DID GRANT LIBERTY TO HERSELF SINCE THE BEGINNING TO CHANGE THE RITES SOMEWHAT, EXCEPTING THE SUBSTANCE.' This is the reason, then, why they tolerated sprinkling; and their concessions are unimpaired by this declaration. Some

nostrum petamus : quum docet nos Spiritu suo re-
 fingi, ut mortui peccato, justitiæ vivamus ; nihil quod
 ad baptismi substantiam faciat, deesse nobis certum
 est : Quare ab initio libere sibi permisit ecclesia, ex-
 tra hanc substantiam, ritus habere paululum dissim-
 iles: nam alii, ter, alii autem semel tantum mergebant.”
 That is, “ As regards the ceremony itself of bap-
 tism, as it was delivered to us by Christ, it were
 a hundred times better that we perish by the sword
 than permit it to be taken from us : but when in the
 symbol of water we have the testimony, as well of
 our cleansing as of our new life : when in water,

pages of Mr. R.'s illnated criminations, for quoting those
 concessions, assume the gaseous form in the presence of these
 words of Calvin. The fact is, those learned Pedito-baptists
 conceded the points at issue now, but pleased themselves with
 the supposed power the church had, from the beginning, of
 ‘ CHANGING THE RITES SOMEWHAT.’ Hence they
 changed IMMERSION into SPRINKLING, and a RIVER or a BATH
 into a BASIN. For ‘ Calvin, Arctius, Piscator, Grotius, and
 Macknight declare that the reason why John baptized at Ænon,
 was because the water was deep enough to immerse.’ The
 only question between those learned Pedito-baptists and us, is
 not about the meaning of BAPTISMA, for in this we agree, but
 about ‘ this RIGHT the church granted herself. We allege the
 essence of popery is contained in this right or assumption,
 those men did not see this, or if they did, did not think proper
 to abandon it. I fearlessly affirm that the Presbyterian church
 is founded on the very principle assumed in those words of
 Calvin. They have granted unto themselves the liberty of
 CHANGING THE RITES SOMEWHAT, sometimes scarcely retain-
 the substance.’”

as in a mirror, Christ represents to us his blood, that thence we may seek our purification: when he teaches us to be renewed by his Spirit, that being dead to sin, we may live to righteousness, it is certain that we lack nothing which pertains to the substance of baptism. Wherefore, from the beginning, the church has freely allowed herself, beyond this substance, to have rites a little dissimilar; for some immersed thrice, but others only once." Jesus Christ, Calvin contended, delivered to us the ordinance, and that we must preserve it in its purity. Concerning the mode of administering it, he gave no command. Therefore, the church has, "from the beginning"—from the days of the apostles—felt perfectly at liberty to practice different modes.

The same ground is taken by the learned Turretine, who has so long been regarded as amongst the very first standard writers on theology. He contends, that *aspersio* as well as *immersio* was practiced in the apostolic age; and amongst the reasons in favor of the former, is the following: "Because the word *baptisma* and the word *baptizesthai* are used not only concerning immersion, but also concerning *aspersio*."* Many other men of eminent learning

* Dr. Doddridge favored the idea, that in the apostolic age, baptism was generally performed by immersion, which he thought not remarkable, "considering how frequently bathing was used in those hot countries;" yet he said: "I see no

hold the same view. Indeed, it is the prevailing view among Protestants.

But this view of the subject is not confined to modern times. It was universally held, so far as we can learn, by the ancient church. In the third and immediately succeeding century, it is true that trine immersion was extensively practiced, with the candidate divested of his garments, and with the sign of the cross, milk and honey, and other supersti-

proof that it was essential to the Institution." Cornelius and his family he believed to have been baptized by **POURING**. Commenting on Acts 10: 47, he says: "But it seems most natural to understand it, (as Dr. Whitby does,) 'Who can forbid that water should be brought?' In which view of the clause, one would naturally conclude they were baptized by pouring water on them, rather than by plunging them into it."

That baptism, by **pouring** or **sprinkling**, is valid and scriptural, was held by such men as Martin Luther, Theodore Beza, Witsius, Owen, Lightfoot, Scott, Henry, Watts, Flavel, Dr. Adam Clarke, Dr. Timothy Dwight, Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Dick, etc., etc. All either deny that immersion was at all practiced by the apostles, or hold that, there being no command as to the mode, it is a matter of indifference.

Dr. Owen, whose eminent learning no one will question, says: "**BAPTIZO** signifies to **WASH**; as instances out of all authors may be given—Suidas, Hesychius, Julius Pollux, Phavorinus, and Eustachius. It is first used in the Scripture: Mark 1: 8; John 1: 33; and to the same purpose in Acts 1: 5. In every place, it either signifies to pour, or the expression is equivocal. 'I baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;' which is the accomplishment of that promise, 'that the Holy Ghost shall be poured on them.' Again, "No one place can be given in the Scriptures, wherein **BAPTIZO** doth

tions. Stuart states, "that all candidates for baptism, men, women, and infants, were completely divested of all their garments, in order to be baptized. Revolting as this custom was, yet it is as certain as testimony can make it." * But it is a remarkable fact, that even in those days of superstition, when so great efficacy was attributed to the ordinance, and when trine immersion was the prevailing practice, none ventured to maintain, with Mr.

necessarily signify either to dip or plunge.' Again, 'In this sense, as it expresseth baptism, it denotes to wash only, and not to dip at all; for so it is expounded—Titus 3: 5, etc.' Again, 'Wherefore, in this sense, as the word is applied unto the ordinance, the sense of dipping is utterly excluded.'—Owen's Works: vol. 21, p. 557.

Dr. George Hill, Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrew's, a very learned man, says: "Both sprinkling and immersion are implied in the word BAPTIZO; both were used in the religious ceremonies of the Jews, and both may be considered as significant of the purpose of baptism, etc."—Hill's Divinity, p. 659.

Dr. John Dick, Professor of Theology to the United Session Church, says: "We have seen that nothing certain as to mode can be learned from the original term BAPTIZO, because it has different meanings, signifying sometimes to immerse, and sometimes to wash, etc."—Divinity, pp. 470, 471.

Dr. Adam Clark, an eminent linguist, says: "In what form baptism was originally administered, has been deemed a subject worthy of serious dispute: Were the people dipped or sprinkled? for it is certain that BAPTO and BAPTIZO mean both."

Dr. Thomas Scott, the Commentator, quotes Bishop Leighton, as saying: "It (BAPTIZO) is taken more largely for any

* Mode of Bap., p. 75.

Campbell and other immersionists of modern times, that baptism is *the action of immersing*. In cases of sickness or of imminent danger, it is certain that effusion or sprinkling were permitted. Cyprian, who lived in the third century, and who was one of the most eminent of the fathers, decidedly maintained the validity of baptism thus administered, and forbade re-baptizing such persons. The Council of

kind of washing, rinsing, or cleansing, even where there is no dipping at all;" and then remarks: "The word was adopted from the Greek authors, and a sense put upon it by the inspired writers, according to the style of Scripture, to signify the use of water in the sacrament of baptism, and in many things of a spiritual nature that stood related to it. Some, indeed, contend zealously that baptism always signifies immersion; but the use of the words baptize and baptism, in the New Testament, cannot accord with this exclusive interpretation." This he gives as a conclusion resulting from "many years' consideration and study."

Dr. Timothy Dwight, who stood prominent amongst the most learned men in the United States, says: "I have examined almost one hundred instances in which the word BAPTIZO and its derivations are used in the New Testament, and four in the Septuagint, and these, so far as I have observed, being all the instances contained in both. By this examination, it is, to my apprehension, evident, that the following things are true: That the primary meaning of these terms is cleansing—the effect, not the mode, of washing; that the mode is usually referred to incidentally, whenever these words are mentioned, and that this is always the case, whenever the ordinance of baptism is mentioned, and a reference made, at the same time, to the mode of administration; that these words, though often capable of denoting any mode of washing, whether by effusion, sprinkling, or immersion, (since cleansing was familiarly

Neo-Cæsarea and the Council of Laodicea sanctioned such baptisms.*

Now, I have two questions to ask, viz :

1st. If the Bible is a plain book, easily understood on all points of great importance ; and if, as Mr. Campbell affirms, our Lord did, in the most specific

accomplished by the Jews in all these ways,) yet, in many instances, cannot, without obvious impropriety, be made to signify immersion ; and in others, cannot signify it at all." *Theology*, vol. 5, p. 331.

Dr. Samuel Hopkins, one of the most eminent divines of New England, says : " As to the mode of baptism, and the form and manner of applying water in this ordinance to the person baptized, it does not appear to be decidedly fixed in the Scripture, whether it be by plunging, pouring on water, aspersion, or sprinkling. Each of these ways has been embraced and practiced by different churches ; and some do insist, that plunging the person wholly under water is the only scriptural mode of baptism, and that none are really baptized, who are not thus plunged. But when the Scripture is carefully examined, it will not appear that this form of baptism was instituted by Christ, or practiced by the apostles ; or that the word in the original, translated BAPTISM, or TO BAPTIZE, invariably signifies plunging the whole body in water. This has been particularly considered and proved over and over again, by writers on this subject : therefore, their opinion and practice, with regard to baptism, seems to be most agreeable to Scripture, who think no particular form of applying water in baptism is prescribed there, by precept or example, or by anything that is there said on this point," etc.—Hopkins' *System*, vol. 2, p. 261.

Authorities from the most eminent theologians might be multiplied indefinitely ; but these are sufficient to show the general opinion of learned Protestants.

* Euseb. B., vi, ch. 43.

manner, command immersion ; how shall we account for the fact, that all the ancient church and the overwhelming body of Christians in modern times, have so strangely misunderstood him ? Certainly, on this supposition all those professing Christians must be charged with a most amazing stupidity or perverseness.

2d. Is it not far more probable that modern immersionists have been misled by that common frailty of human nature which attaches undue importance to modes and forms, than that the whole Christian world besides, embracing multitudes of the eminently wise and good, should have failed to understand one of the plainest precepts ever given ? Mr. C. admits that such a prejudice induced Drs. Gill and Fuller, with multitudes of Baptists, to misunderstand and pervert an exceedingly plain historical narrative in Acts, 19 : 1-5.

I leave these questions for the reflection of the candid reader.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR : Immersionists, as we have seen, make very large demands upon our credulity, leaving us in doubt whether most to wonder at the amazing blindness which has prevented all other Christians from understanding one of the plainest precepts, or to

admire the perfect clearness with which, without any perceptible reason, they see what all the world besides never could see. The probability evidently is, that they are laboring under mistakes.

Unwilling to rely, in defence of your views, upon the interpretation of the language of Inspiration, you have advanced what you call an *a priori* argument. Baptism, you tell us, is "a positive ordinance," and, therefore, a specific action. Consequently, it was to be expected that it would be expressed by a specific term, which term is *baptizo*. Now, it is true that baptism is a positive ordinance; but it is not true that every positive ordinance is an *action*. No ordinance, I admit, can be administered without the performance of one or more actions; but it does not follow, either that an ordinance is an action, or that the same actions precisely must be invariably performed in the administration of an ordinance. A watch cannot be made without the performance of certain acts; but a watch is not a series of actions. The Passover was a positive ordinance, and so is the Lord's Supper, but who ever read or heard of *the action* of the Passover, or *the action* of the Lord's Supper? Yet such language would be quite as proper as *the action* of baptism. Again, if baptism were an action, whenever that action is performed, baptism would be administered. Consequently, if any man, woman, or child, should plunge another into water, milk, oil, or any other fluid,

whether in sport, anger, or in religious zeal, such individual would receive Christian baptism! You answer, no, the action must be performed by a proper person, upon a proper subject, in a proper fluid, in a proper name. So then it appears, that there are several other things as essential to baptism, to say the least, as the action; and these things are the constituent parts of baptism. How absurd, then, to say, that baptism is an action! It would be just as true to say, that baptism is water, or that baptism is the repetition of the prescribed formula, "in the name of the Father," etc.

But you are confident that Jesus Christ "must have intended some particular action to be performed by his ministers, and submitted to by his people, in the command to baptize them;" and you further think, that he must have expressed that action by one specific term. Therefore, you say, "It follows that he did select such a word, or that he could not, or would not, do it." Either of the last suppositions, viz: that he *could* not, or *would* not, select such a word, you are sure, would reflect injuriously upon the character of our Lord. In reply to this, let me inquire—

1st. How do you know that Jesus Christ *must* have intended some particular action to be performed? Are you, or any other finite being, capable of deciding what Infinite Wisdom *must* have intended? We can know his intentions only so far as he has ex-

pressed them ; and all such reasoning is both inconclusive and dangerous. Let us remember who has said, " My thoughts are not your thoughts ; neither are your ways my ways." If the opinion of the overwhelming majority of wise and good men be true, that the mode of applying the water in baptism is not of essential importance ; then, there is no reason to suppose, our Lord intended one particular action to be performed. You very quietly *assume*, without proof, one of the main points in debate, viz : that the mode of applying the water is essential ; and from this assumption you reason in favor of immersion !

2d. But your reasoning is directly in the face of facts. It is a fact, that God has appointed positive ordinances, in the administration of which no particular action was required—ordinances which might be administered in different modes. He said to Moses : " Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them there." * The word here translated *wash*, is *rahatz*, in the Septuagint, *ouo*, and you have said, " Washing is a generic term, under which sprinkling, pouring, dipping, may be specific terms." † You must admit, therefore, that Moses might have obeyed the command by using water in either of these modes. And yet, why may we not apply your logic here, and

* Exod., 29 : 4. † Debate, p. 99.

say, God *must* have intended Moses to perform some particular action, and would, therefore, choose a word definitely expressing such action ; and, consequently, *rahatz* (*wash*) is a specific, not a generic term ? The logic would be quite as good in the latter case, as in the former ; but it would prove what you admit not to be true.

Another positive ordinance very similar to this, is found in Num., 19 : 19, where a man ceremonially unclean is commanded to “ bathe himself in water.” The word translated *bathe*, is *rahatz*, the literal translation of which is *wash* ; and you will not pretend that either *bathe* or *wash* expresses any definite action. Nor will you deny that *bathing* or *washing* may be performed in different ways. In Deut. 21 : 6, we find the following language : “ And all the elders of that city that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer,” etc. You will not pretend that any definite action is here expressed by the word *wash*.

Here, then, we have three positive ordinances (and others might easily be mentioned) in which no particular action is commanded—ordinances in the appointment of which God employed a *generic* term, expressing *the thing to be done*, but not *the mode of doing it*—ordinances which might be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or dipping. Why may not the same be true of baptism ? Who shall venture to assert, in the face of such facts, that every positive

ordinance is a definite action, which must be expressed by a specific word?

3d. But are not the probabilities in the other direction? Baptism, you acknowledge, is constantly presented in the Scriptures as an *ablution*, a *washing*. I have been quite interested in reading the following statement, which I find in your *Christian Baptist* for January 7th, 1828 :

“ In the outer court of the Jewish Tabernacle, there stood two important articles of furniture of most significant import: the brazen altar next to the door, and the laver between the brazen altar and the sanctuary. In this laver, filled with water, the priests, after they paid their devotion at the altar, as they came in, and before they approached the sanctuary, always washed themselves, etc. Paul, more than once, alludes to this usage in the Tabernacle in his epistles, and even substitutes Christian immersion in its place; that is, Christian immersion stands in relation to the same place in the Christian temple or worship, that the laver, or bath of purification, stood in the Jewish,” etc. And in the succeeding number, you prove “ that frequent allusions to baptism in the sacred epistles, represent it as an ABLUTION;” and you refer correctly to Eph. 5: 26; Tit. 3: 5; Heb. 10: 22; 2 Peter 1: 9.

Now, if baptism is an *ablution*, a *washing*—if such is the meaning of the ordinance, is it not very probable that in instituting it, our Lord would

select a word expressive of its meaning? He did so in appointing other ordinances. The word *passover* does not express any action to be performed, but the *meaning* of the ordinance. The word *wash*, and the word *laver*, as connected with the purification of the priests, express the meaning of the ordinance—a *cleansing*—not any *action* to be performed. And if baptism takes, in the Christian temple, the place of the *washing* in the Jewish temple; and if it is constantly represented as a *washing*, is it not exceedingly probable that the word *baptizo*, as used by the Jews in relation to their religious ablutions, signified *washing, cleansing*, and that in this sense, it was employed by Christ and his apostles?

Thus we find the *a priori* argument decidedly against you. Let us now inquire more directly into the meaning of the word *baptizo*. And let our readers note particularly how much the immersionist must prove, before he can sustain his doctrine.

1. Suppose him to prove that the *primary* or *original* meaning of *baptizo* was to *immerse*, will it follow that such was its ordinary meaning when our Saviour was on earth? No; for words are constantly changing their meaning. Mr. Campbell himself says: "A living language is continually changing. Like the fashions and customs in apparel, words and phrases, at one time current and fashionable, in the lapse of time become awkward and obsolete. But this is not all. Many of them, in a

century or two, come to have a signification very different from that which was once attached to them. Nay, some are known to convey ideas not only different from, but contrary to, their first signification." * Mr. Carson, a learned and zealous Baptist, says : " A word may come to enlarge its meaning, so as to lose sight of its origin. This fact must be obvious to every smatterer in philology." † This rule is laid down by all writers on interpretation. When, therefore, the immersionist has proved by the Lexicons, that the *original* meaning of *baptizo* was to *immerse*, he has done very little toward establishing his doctrine ; for the word had been long in use when our Saviour was on earth, and may have entirely changed its meaning. For instance, suppose an individual should insist that the word *prevent*, found in a book written half a dozen years ago, means to *precede*, or to *come before*; he might turn to all English Dictionaries, and triumphantly prove that such is its primary meaning. If he would turn to Johnson's large Dictionary, he would find to *hinder* given as the *fifth* meaning. What would be thought of such a man, if he should insist that the word, as used by a writer in our day, must be understood in its primary sense ? Mr. Campbell himself admits that, although two hundred years ago this word meant to *precede*, " now it is commonly used as equiv-

* Pref. to N. Test., p. 1. † Mode of Baptism, p. 62.

alent to *hinder*." * (Preface to New Testament, p. 5.)

2. Suppose the immersionist to prove, that even in our Saviour's day, the word *baptizo* was used by PAGAN GREEKS ordinarily in the sense of *immersing*; would it follow, that the *Jews* employed it, with reference to religious ablutions, in the same sense? No; for multitudes of Greek words are used in the Septuagint and in the New Testament in a sense in which they are never found in classic authors. On this point, the following declarations of Prof. Stuart are pertinent:

“ New Testament usage of the word, (*baptizo*),

* Ernesti, a learned linguist, says: “ The primitive or proper signification, strictly understood, often becomes obsolete, and ceases, for a long period, to be used. In this case, the secondary sense, which originally would have been the tropical one, becomes the proper one. This applies especially to the names of things. Hence, there are many words which, at present, never have their original and proper sense—such as etymology would assign them—but only the secondary senses, which may, in such cases, be called the proper sense,” etc. In like manner, the tropical sense of certain words has become so common, by usage, that it is better understood than the original sense. In this case, too, we call the word proper; although, strictly and technically speaking, one might insist on its being called tropical. If one should, by his last will, give a library (BIBLIOTHECAM) to another, we should not call the use of BIBLIOTHECA tropical; although, strictly speaking, it is so, for BIBLIOTHECA originally meant the shelves or place where books are deposited.”

Professor Stuart says: “ The literal sense (of words) is the

in cases not relevant to this rite, clearly does not entitle you (*immersionists*) to such a conclusion with any confidence. If you say, 'The classical usage of the word abundantly justifies the construction I have put upon it,' my reply is, that classical usage can never be very certain in respect to the meaning of a word in the New Testament. Who does not know that a multitude of Greek words have received their coloring and particular meaning from the Hebrew, and not from the Greek classics. Does *theos*, (God,) *ouranos*, (heaven,) *sarx*, (flesh,) *pistis*, (faith,) *dikaïosune*, (righteousness,) and other words almost without number, exhibit meanings which conform to the Greek classics; or which, in several respects, can even be illustrated by them? Not at all. Then, how can you be over confident in

same as the primitive or original sense; or, at least, it is equivalent to that sense which has usurped the place of the original one. For example, the original sense of the word tragedy has long ceased to be current, and the literal sense of this word now, is that which has taken place of the original."—Notes on Ernesti, p. 8.

One of the chief defects in the arguments of immersionists, is the entire disregard of this most important principle of language. When they have proved, as they suppose, that the primary meaning of *BAPTIZO* is to immerse, they imagine themselves entitled to the conclusion, that such was its meaning at the time when our Saviour and the apostles used it. And they quote Greek writers, without the slightest reference to the period in which they wrote. I have not observed a similar proceeding in regard to any other word.

the application of the classical meaning of *baptizo*, when the word is employed in relation to a rite that is purely Christian? Such a confidence is indeed common; but it is not the more rational, nor the more becoming on that account."

Dr. Campbell, of Scotland, who was favorable to immersion, lays down the same principle. He says: "Though the New Testament is written in Greek, an acquaintance with the Greek classics, (that is, with the writings of profane authors in that tongue, in prose and verse,) will not be found so conducive to this end, [the understanding of its language,] as an acquaintance with the Hebrew Scriptures. I am far from denying that classical knowledge is, even for this purpose, of real utility. I say only, that it is not of so great utility as the other." Again: "How many meanings are given to the word *sarx*, flesh, in that sacred volume, for which you will not find a single authority in any profane writer." And after pointing out *six* meanings of the word, he adds: "Now, for any of the six meanings above mentioned, except, perhaps, the first, as to which I will not be positive, we may defy those critics to produce classical authority." *

Now, it is a fact, that the word *baptizo* was used by the pagan Greeks, not only with reference to water, but to any other fluids; whilst the Jews never

* Prelim. Dis. to Gospels, V. 1, pp. 3, 22, 23.

used it but with reference to water. It is likewise a fact, that the pagan Greeks never used the word with reference to any *religious washing*; whilst the Jews, in their sacred writings, did constantly so use it. The usage of the word amongst pagan Greeks, therefore, proves nothing conclusively concerning its meaning amongst the Jews.

If, then, the immersionist expects to prove his doctrine by this word, he must prove it by *Bible usage*, not by *pagan usage*.

If these positions are tenable, (and no scholar will controvert them,) a large part of the evidence relied on by immersionists will not avail them. If they prove by lexicons, that *immerse* was the *primary* meaning of *baptizo*, the answer is, that words are constantly changing their meanings, so that but few are now used in their original sense. If they prove that pagan Greeks used it in the sense of *immersing*, the answer is, that they also used it in other senses; and, moreover, the pagan usage proves nothing conclusively concerning its Jewish and Christian usage. We must come to the *Bible usage*.

But in our next, we propose to notice the lexicons and classics.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR: Let us keep in view the doctrine you have attempted to prove, viz: Not that immersion is the better or more Scriptural mode of administering baptism, but that immersion is the only Christian baptism. Against this doctrine, I have offered *two* arguments, viz:

1. That the whole Christian world, in ancient and modern times, with the exception of a comparative handful, are arrayed against it; and it is far, very far, more probable that Immersionists have been misled by a very common weakness of human nature, than that all other Christians, even those who preferred and practiced immersion, should have wholly misunderstood one of the very plainest precepts.

2. That the claims of exclusive immersion are defended upon the false assumption, that baptism is a *specific action*. The very fact, that its advocates have felt obliged to take a position so glaringly unscriptural, is evidence of the weakness of the cause.

Let us now examine your argument, founded upon the force of the word *baptizo*. This word, as you correctly state, is a derivative from *bapto*. These two words, Dr. Gale, the learned Baptist controversialist, contended, "are *insodunamai*, exactly the same as to their signification."* Carson agreed

* Wall's Hist. V. 3, p. 230.

with him, that, "as to mode or frequency," they are identical in meaning.* But he contended, that while *bapto* has two meanings, viz: to *dip* and to *dye*, *baptizo* has but one.† You agree with Mr. Carson, that *bapto* has two meanings—the one specific, and the other generic.‡

We have here a very important principle conceded, viz: that a word which was originally *specific*—expressing a specific action—may become *generic*—expressing the thing done, without regard to any particular action. *Bapto*, you and Mr. Carson tell us, originally signified simply to *dip*. In process of time, it came to be commonly used to signify to *dye* in any mode, even by *sprinkling*. Mr. Carson says: "From signifying to *dip*, it came to signify to *dye* by *dipping*, etc. And afterwards, from *dyeing* by *dipping*, it came to denote *dyeing* in any manner. A like process," he adds, "might be shown in the history of a thousand other words." Nay, he goes so far as to say: "*Bapto* signifies to *dye* by *sprinkling*, as properly as by *dipping*, though originally it was confined to the latter." He goes farther, and denies that such applications of the word are metaphorical, as Dr. Gale asserts. "They are," says he, "as literal as the primary meaning. It is by extension of literal meaning, and not by

* Mode of Bap., p. 13.

† p. 13.

‡ p. 130.

figure of any kind, that words come to depart so far from their original signification." *

From these admissions, the following important conclusions may be fairly drawn, viz :

1. If *bapto*, from signifying *to dip*, came to signify *to dye in any mode*, even by *sprinkling* ; and if this latter meaning is as proper and as literal as the former ; then by the same law of language, it might signify first, to *dip* in water, then to *wet or wash by dipping*, then to *wet or wash* in any mode, even by *sprinkling*. We propose hereafter to prove that it has these latter meanings.

2. On the same principle precisely, *baptizo*, if it originally signified to *dip*, might come to signify to *wash by dipping*, and to wash or cleanse *in any mode* ; and this latter meaning might be as proper and as literal as the former. We propose to prove that such is the truth in this case.

3. Thus we easily dispose of your rather amusing effort to prove, that the syllable *bap* always carries with it the idea of *dipping*. Hippocrates, speaking of the dropping of a coloring liquid on garments, says : " When it drops upon the garments, (*bap-tetai*;) they are dyed." Mr. Carson says : " This surely, is not *dyeing* by dipping." †

We have seen that the overwhelming mass of Christians differ from exclusive immersionists, concerning

* pp, 60, 62, 64.

† p. 60.

the ordinance of baptism, denying that it is a specific action, and holding that it may be validly administered in different modes. We now present a still more formidable fact, viz: All lexicographers are arrayed against their position, in relation to the words *bapto* and *baptizo*. You and Mr. Carson contend that *bapto* has only two meanings, viz: to *dip* and to *dye*. The lexicons all assign to it at least *three* meanings, and some give it *four*. Hedericus, Scapula, Coulon, and Donnegan, give it three, viz: to *dip*, to *dye*, and to *wash*, or *cleanse*. Schrivellius gives it these three, together with a fourth, viz: to *draw water*. Ursinus gives it, to *dip*, to *dye*, to *cleanse*, to *sprinkle*. Groves gives it, to *dip*, to *dye*, to *wash*, to *wet*, *moisten*, *sprinkle*, *steep*, etc. Stephanus defines it, to *dip*, to *dye*, to *wash*, *cleanse*. Schleusner defines it, to *dip*, to *wash* or *cleanse* by water.*

* I copy from the Lexington Debate, the following definitions of the word *BAPTO*. I do so, because the lexicons here quoted are admitted to be of the highest authority, and because Mr. Campbell did not call in question the fairness of the quotations:

Hedericus defines *BAPTO* thus: 1. Mergo, immergo. 2. Tingo, intingo. 3. Lavo, etc.—to immerse, to plunge, to dye, to wash, etc.

Scapula—Mergo, immergo—item tingo—inficere, imbuer—item lavo—to immerse, to plunge; also to stain, dye, color; also to wash.

Coulon—Mergo, tingo, abluc—to immerse, to dye, to cleanse.

These lexicons you have pronounced "the most learned and most competent witnesses in this case in the world." Of their authors, you have testified, that "these gentlemen are, and of right ought to be, inductive philosophers." You have even said, "There is no opposing these lexicons."* Yet they, with entire unanimity, testify against Mr. Carson and you, that *bapto* has more than two meanings. They, doubtless, are in the right, and you in the wrong.

But I must not omit to notice the testimony of Professor Stuart, your "American Apostle," whom you quote as "the highest source of American theological authority."† He assigns to *bapto* the fol-

Ursinus.—To dip, to dye, to wash, to sprinkle, (ablucio, aspergo.)

Schrievellius—Mergo, intingo, lavo, haurio, etc.—to dip, to dye, to wash, to draw water.

Groves—To dip, plunge, immerse, to wash, to wet, moisten, sprinkle, to steep, imbue, to dye, etc.

Donnegan—To dip, to plunge into water, to submerge, to wash, to dye, to color—to wash, etc.

These lexicons all agree in assigning to *BAPTO* three meanings, viz: To to immerse or dip, to dye or color, to wash. One of these is specific, the others are generic, expressing the thing done, but not the mode of doing it. Some of these lexicons give additional meanings, such as to moisten, to wet, to sprinkle. How can the action of immersion be proved by the force of a word which has such a variety of meanings? Immersionists are at war with all the lexicons.

* Debate, pp. 58, 78.

† p. 126.

lowing meanings, viz : 1. To dip, to plunge. 2. To dip out. 3. To dye. 4. To smear, bathe by the application of liquid to the surface. 5. To wash, *i. e.*, to cleanse by the use of water. 6. To moisten, wet, bedew. Here are six meanings; and yet you allow only *two*! You will find it no very easy task, Mr. Campbell, to sustain your cause against all the lexicons and your "American Apostle!" Their testimony, fairly presented, is strongly against you.

But the lexicons are equally clear in their testimony against the immersionist view of *baptizo*—the word used by our Saviour in instituting the ordinance of baptism." "*Baptizo*," you say, "indicates a specific action, and, consequently, as such, can have but one meaning. For if a person or thing can be immersed in water, oil, milk, honey, sand, earth, debt, grief, affliction, spirit, light, or darkness, etc., it is a word indicating specific action, and specific action only."* Mr. Carson says: "My position is, *that it always signifies to dip, never expressing anything but mode.*" But he had the candor to say further: "Now, as I have all the lexicographers and commentators against me in this opinion, it will be necessary to say a word or two with respect to the authority of lexicons."† Here we have before us an edifying discrepancy between two learned cham-

* pp. 118, 119.

† p. 79.

pions of immersion — Mr. Carson defending the cause against all the lexicographers, and Mr. Campbell triumphantly appealing to the lexicographers in support of it! How happens this? Did Mr. Carson misunderstand the lexicons? or has Mr. Campbell perverted their testimony? We shall see. We may, however, say in advance, that it is not probable that Mr. Carson, whilst searching for testimony, mistook the advocates of his cause for opponents.

You begin your quotations from lexicons with “the venerable SCAPULA.” He, as you admit, defines *baptizo* to dip, to immerse; also to submerge; also to wash, to cleanse. STEPHANUS agrees with Scapula. The Thesaurus of ROBERTSON, which you pronounce the most comprehensive dictionary you have ever seen, defines *baptizo* by two words, viz: *mergo* and *lavo*—to immerse and to wash. SCHLEUSNER defines it, first, to immerse in water; and secondly, to wash or cleanse with water, (*abluo, lavo, aqua purgo.*) PASOR, whose testimony Mr. Campbell does not give fairly, defines it both to immerse and to wash—*abluo, lavo*. HEDERICUS gives the same definitions. BRETSCHNEIDER, who, as you justly say, is “said to be the most critical lexicographer of the New Testament,” gives the general meaning thus: *Proprie, sæpius intingo, sæpius lavo; deinde 1) lavo abluo, simpliciter, etc.—cum sig. med: lavo me, abluo me, etc., 2) immergo in aquas, etc.—* Properly often to immerse, often to wash; then to

wash, cleanse, simply; in the middle voice, I wash, I cleanse myself, etc., 2.) To immerse in water, etc. SUIDAS not only defines it to immerse, but to *wet, wash, cleanse*, (*mafacio, lavo, abluo, purgo, mundo.*) STOKIUS defines it both to *immerse* and to *wash*. ROBINSON defines it to immerse, to sink; but in the New Testament, first, to *wash*, to *cleanse* by washing.*

* The following definitions of BAPTIZO, by the most celebrated lexicons, I copy from my first speech in the Lexington Debate:

Scapula, one of the old lexicographers to whom Mr. C. appealed, thus defines the word BAPTIZO: "Mergo, seu immergo; Item tingo: ut quæ tingendi aut abluendi gratia immergimus—Item mergo, submergo, obruo aqua; Item abluo, lavo, (Mark 7, Luke 11.)—to dip or immerse; also to dye, as we immerse things for the purpose of coloring or washing them; also, to plunge, submerge, to cover with water; also, to cleanse, to wash." (Mark 7, Luke 11.) BAPTISMOS, he thus defines: "Mersio, lotio, ablutio, ipse immergendi, item lavandi seu abluendi actus." (Mark 7, etc.) Immersion, washing, cleansing, the act itself of immersing; also of washing, or cleansing. (Mark 7, etc.)

Hedericus thus defines BAPTIZO: 1. "Mergo, immergo, aqua obruo. 2. Abluo, lavo. 3. Baptizo, significatu sacro"—To dip, immerse, to cover with water; 2. To cleanse, to wash; 3. To baptize in a sacred sense.

Stephanus defines it thus: "Mergo, seu immergo, ut quæ tingendi aut abluendi gratia aqua immergimus—Mergo, submergo, obruo aqua; abluo, lavo"—To dip, immerse, as we immerse things for the purpose of coloring or washing; to merge, submerge, to cover with water; to cleanse, to wash.

Schleusner defines BAPTIZO, not only to plunge, immerse,

What, then, is the amount of the evidence from the lexicons? With remarkable unanimity, they give to *baptizo* at least *two* meanings, viz: to *immerse* and to *wash*. Some of them give a third—*to wet*. One of these meanings expresses specific action, the other two, viz: to *wash* and to *wet*, are generic, expressive of the thing done, and not of the *mode* of doing it. How much do the lexicons prove in favor of the exclusive claims of immersion?

Most of them favor the opinion, that *immerse* was the *primary* or *original* meaning of *baptizo*. But since it is acknowledged, not only that almost all words have more than one meaning, but that multitudes of words have entirely lost their original meaning, the question arises, (and this question the

but to cleanse, wash, to purify with water; (abluo, lavo, aqua purgo.)

Parkhurst defines it: "To immerse in or wash with water in token of purification."

Robinson defines it: "To immerse, to sink; for example, spoken of ships, galleys, etc. In the New Testament, to wash, to cleanse by washing; to wash one's self, to bathe, perform ablution," etc.

Schrivellius defines it: "Baptizo, mergo, abluo, lavo—to baptize, to immerse, to cleanse, to wash."

Groves: "To dip, immerse, immerge, plunge; to wash, to cleanse, purify—BAPTIZOMAI, to wash one's self, bathe," etc.

Bretschneider: "Propriæ sepius intingo, sepius lavo; deinde (1) lavo, abluo simpliciter—medium, etc; lavo me, abluo me:" properly often to dip, often to wash; then (1) simply to wash, to cleanse; in the middle voice, "I wash or cleanse myself."

Suidas defines BAPTIZO, not only to sink, plunge, immerse, but

lexicons do not settle,) whether the Saviour and the apostles used this word in its original sense. The lexicons all give to *baptizo* another meaning, which is generic, viz: to *wash* or *cleanse*, without regard to *mode*. How are we to ascertain the meaning of a word in any particular case? Mr. Campbell gives the following rule: "If it have but one meaning, testimony or the dictionary decides it at once; but if it have more meanings than one, the proximate words used in construction with it, usually called the context, together with the design of the speaker or writer, must decide its meaning."* The lexicons tell

to wet, wash, cleanse, purify, etc., (*madefacio, lavo, abluo, purgo, mundo.*)

Wahl defines it, first: To wash, perform ablution, cleanse; secondly, to immerse, etc.

Greenfield defines it: To immerse, immerge, submerge, sink; and in the New Testament, to wash, perform ablution, cleanse; to immerse.

In his first speech, Mr. Campbell quoted the Thesaurus of Robertson, of which he said: "It is the most comprehensive dictionary I have ever seen;" and again: "His definitions are generally regarded as the most precise and accurate." Mr. Campbell says: "He defines BAPTIZO by only two words—*mergo* and *lavo*." One of these words is specific, signifying TO IMMERSE; the other is generic, signifying TO WASH, expressing the thing done, but not the mode of doing it. For it is admitted that WASHING may be performed by POURING, as well as by IMMERSION. So that "the most precise and accurate lexicographer" is against immersionists, who assert that BAPTIZO has but one meaning.

* Chris. Restored, pp. 24, 25.

us, contrary to the assertion of Mr. Campbell, that this word has more than one meaning; and Mr. Campbell himself tells us, correctly, that in all such cases the *context*, etc., must determine which of its meanings any word has in any given case. For example, when it is said, that "the feet of the priests who bore the ark in crossing Jordan, were dipped in the brim of the water," * the context leaves no doubt in what sense the word *bapto* is used. And when Hippocrates says of a coloring fluid, "when it drops upon the garments, (*baptetai*,) they are dyed," the meaning is equally plain. Just so, we must ascertain from the passages in which *baptizo* occurs in the Bible, in what sense it is used.

But Mr. Campbell says: "We have, then, the unanimous testimony of all the distinguished lexicographers known in Europe and America, that the proper, and everywhere current signification of *baptizo*, the word chosen by Jesus Christ in the commission to his apostles, is to dip, plunge, or immerse; and that any other meaning is tropical, rhetorical, or fanciful." This statement is wholly incorrect. The lexicons, most of them, give *immerse* or *plunge* as the *original* meaning of the word; but they do *not* say that this is the "everywhere current signification." On the contrary, they assert, that it has other meanings, and most of them find those other

* Josh. 3: 15.

meanings in the Bible. They do *not* say that any other meaning is “tropical, rhetorical, or fanciful.” Almost every lexicon defines the word to *wash* in a *literal sense*. The word *tropical*, as used by critics with reference to the meaning of words, means merely *secondary*. Thus, the *tropical* meaning of the word *prevent* is to *hinder*; its *original* or *literal* meaning, to *come before*. In this sense, to *wash* may be the tropical meaning of *baptizo*. But as a man would make himself ridiculous by contending that the word *prevent*, in a legal document written a few years since, must mean to *come before*, simply because such was its original meaning; so does Mr. C. render himself equally ridiculous, when he contends, that because the original meaning of *baptizo* was to *immerse*, therefore our Saviour used it in that sense. He here very quietly assumes, what every scholar knows to be untrue, and what he himself has elsewhere declared untrue, that the *original* meaning of the word must, of course, be its true meaning in all time and in all cases.

But he says: “It is with the proper and unfigurative, and not with the fanciful and rhetorical meaning of words, we have to do; in all positive institutions;” and he quotes Blackstone as follows: “The words of a law are generally to be understood in their usual and most known significations—not so much regarding the propriety of grammar, as their general and popular use,” etc. All true; but what

is "the proper and unfigurative meaning of words?" Is it uniformly or commonly their *original* or *literal* meaning? Mr. Campbell shall answer the question. He quotes, with approbation, the following from Professor Stuart: "The literal sense (of a word) is the same as the *primitive* or *original* sense; or, at least, it is equivalent to that sense which has usurped the place of the original one. For example, the original sense of the word *tragedy* has long ceased to be current; and the literal sense of this word now, is that which has taken the place of the original one."* The proper and literal meaning of a word, therefore, is that meaning which is most commonly assigned to it; and, accordingly, Blackstone does not say, that words are to be understood in their *original* or *primary* sense, but in "their usual and most known signification." Now, we maintain, and are prepared to prove, that to *wash*, *cleanse*, was the usual and most known signification of *baptizo* among the Jews, when our Saviour instituted baptism.

But suppose we try Mr. Campbell's precept of adhering to the "proper, original, and primitive sense" of words in the interpretation of laws. Blackstone mentions a law, which forbade any man "to lay hands on a priest;" and another, which enacted, "that whoever *drew blood* in the streets,

*Chris. Restored, p. 26.

should be punished with the utmost severity." There was a long debate, whether this latter law extended to a surgeon who opened the vein of a person that fell down in the street in a fit. According to Mr. Campbell's principle of interpretation, the doctor must have suffered. Or perhaps he might have escaped on the ground that the original meaning of the word *draw* is to *pull along*; and then the man who hauled a load of slaughtered hogs through the streets, would have incurred the penalty! There was a law in England, forbidding "all ecclesiastical persons to purchase *provisions* at Rome." Now, since the primary meaning of the word *provision* is, "the act of providing beforehand," what would be the meaning of the law, interpreted according to Mr. Campbell's principles? USAGE, as all interpreters maintain, must determine the meaning of words.

The lexicons, then, not only afford the cause of immersion no assistance; they actually contradict the position which exclusive immersionists have felt constrained to take, viz: that *baptizo* is a specific word, and has but one meaning. They declare, that though it sometimes expresses the act of immersion, it also expresses cleansing without regard to mode. They prove nothing in favor of immersion.

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR: We have offered three arguments against the doctrine, that immersion is the only Christian baptism, viz :

I. The utmost universal voice of Christendom, in ancient and in modern times, is against it. Almost all those who have practiced immersion, and those who have practiced pouring or sprinkling, have understood the Scriptures to teach, that the ordinance of baptism is one thing, and the mode of administration another; and that the latter is not essential to the former.

II. The unscriptural position to which exclusive immersionists have been driven—that baptism is an *action*—affords presumptive evidence against them. The defense of the truth is not likely to drive its advocates into serious error.

III. The lexicons, admitted to be very high authority, with remarkable unanimity testify against the position of immersionists—that *baptizo* has but one meaning, and expresses specifically the action of immersing. They give to *bapto*, the root, three or four meanings, only one of which expresses specific action, the others being generic; and to *baptizo*, they give two, three, or more meanings—to dip, sink, plunge—to wash, cleanse with water—to wet, etc. Of these meanings, only the first is specific;

the others express *the thing done*, but not *the mode of doing it*. If the lexicons give *dip* as the *primary* or *original* meaning of the word, this proves nothing for immersion, because it is admitted that words are constantly changing their meaning; and very many of them have entirely lost their original meaning. The testimony of the lexicons, therefore, is decidedly unfavorable to the exclusive doctrine you advocate—inasmuch as they make *baptizo* a *generic* term, expressing washing or cleansing in any mode, as well as a *specific* term, expressing immersion. Immersionists affirm that this word has but one meaning; and, therefore, it definitely requires the action of immersing. The lexicons declare that it has more than one meaning, and is often a *generic* term.

Now, the question arises: In which of these senses did our Saviour employ it? Did he use it in the specific sense of *dipping*, or in the generic sense of *washing, cleansing*? As we have stated heretofore, baptism is represented in the Scriptures as an *ablution*; and this fact you have not only admitted, but asserted. It is probable, therefore, that our Lord used the word *baptizo* in the sense of washing, thus expressing the design of the ordinance.

But it has been proposed to settle this question by ascertaining what meaning the pagan Greeks assigned to the words *bapto* and *baptizo*. We are prepared to go into this inquiry, and to prove that what is

called *classic usage* does not sustain the claims of exclusive immersion.

1. As to *bapto*, Mr. Carson admits that it signifies, not only to *dip*, but to dye in any manner, even by *sprinkling*, and that this latter meaning is as literal and proper as the former. He gives the following amongst other examples: Homer, in his *Battle of Frogs and Mice*, says—"He (the frog) breathless fell, and the lake (*ebapto*) was *baptized* with his blood." Strangely enough, Dr. Gale earnestly contended that the literal sense is, "the lake was dipped in blood;" but he adds, "the figure only means, it was colored as highly as anything that is dipped in blood." This perversion was too glaring; and, therefore, Mr. Carson went so far as to give up the idea of *dipping* in this passage. But unwilling to admit anything in favor of pouring or sprinkling, he placed the passage on the *neutral* list, contending that it "favors neither the one party nor the other," but signifies "*dyeing* without reference to mode." It is impossible, however, to evade the conclusion, that *bapto* expresses the application of a fluid by *dropping* or *sprinkling*. Aristotle speaks of a substance which, being pressed, (*baptei*) *baptizes* the hand. "Surely," says Carson, "there is no reference to dipping here." Aristophanes says: "Magnes, an old comic of Athens, used the Lydian music, shaved his face, and baptized (*bapto*) his face with tawny washes." "Now, surely," says

Carson, "*baptomenos* here has no reference to its primary meaning. Nor is it used figuratively. The face of the person was rubbed with the wash. By anything implied or referred to in this example, it could not be known that *bapto* ever signifies to *dip*." *

The word *bapto* also signifies to *wash* with water, without regard to mode. Aristophanes says: "First, they *wash* (*baptousi*) the wool in warm water, according to the old custom." The lexicographers—Suidas and Phavorinus—says Professor Stuart, interpret the word here, by *plunousi*, they *wash* or *wash out*. He adds: "This shade of meaning is not unfrequent in the sacred writers, though seldom, so far as I have been able to discover, to be met with in profane writers."

Bapto is also used frequently by profane, as well as sacred writers, in the sense of *partial dipping* or *wetting*. Suidas speaks of a person scourged before the tribunal—"and flowing with blood, having *wetted* (*bapsas*) the hollow of his hand, he sprinkles it on the judgment seat." This can scarcely be regarded as even a partial dipping. Ælian speaks of dipping (*bapsas*) a crown of roses into ointment. The idea of immersion here is out of the question. An odoriferous ointment was put upon the crown to increase its fragrance. Jamblicus, in his life of

* Mode of Baptism, p. 64.

Pythagoras, speaks of one of his directions to his disciples, not to *dip* or *wash* in the *perirantaron*, (*embaptein*.) Mr. Carson admits, that the *perirantaron* was too small for dipping the body; and he would save the cause of immersion by supplying a very lengthy elipsis, as follows: "Do not dip the sprinkling instrument, in order to purify!" That *purification* is the thing referred to, Mr. Carson acknowledges; but he insists on a most extraordinary elipsis to avoid the plain truth, that *bapto* is here used in a generic sense, without reference to *mode*. Mr. Carson quotes from Hippocrates the following: "Taking lead and the magnetic stone, rub them smooth, and tie them in a rag; then having *dipped* (*embapsas*) them in breast milk, apply them." Can any one doubt that what was required, was simply to wet the rag containing the lead and stone with breast milk?

But as we have seen that the usage of pagans is a very uncertain guide in determining the meaning of a word amongst the Jews, which was used to express a religious truth, or designate a religious ordinance, let us examine the word *bapto*, as it is used in the Bible. It occurs frequently in the Old Testament, but very rarely in the sense of *immersing*—more generally in the sense of *partial dipping*, *moistening*, *wetting*. In Levit. 14: 6, in the law concerning the cleansing of the leper, it is directed that two birds shall be taken, one of which

shall be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: "As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall *dip* them (*bapsei*) and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water." Here immersion was absolutely impossible.

In several instances, the preposition (*apo*) which follows *bapto*, proves that it is not used in the sense of dipping. "The priest shall moisten (*bapsei*) his finger *apo tou aimatos*—from or by means of the blood of the bullock."* "And he shall moisten (*bapsei*) his right finger with (*apo*) the oil." † "And moistening (the bundle of hyssop) with the blood, (*bapsantes apo tou aimatos.*" ‡) When the reader remembers that the word *apo* is the same which in Matt. 3: 16, is translated "out of"—a translation quite pleasing to immersionists—he will be satisfied that the idea of immersion cannot be admitted. Things may be immersed into a fluid; but certainly they cannot be immersed from or *out of* a fluid.

But the most difficult passage with which immersionists have to contend, is in Dan. 4: 25–33, where it is said, Nebuchadnezzar was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was *wet with* (*ebaphe apo*) the dew of heaven. Two very stub-

* Lev. 4: 17.

† Lev. 14: 16.

‡ Exod. 12: 22.

born difficulties here present themselves, viz: 1st. To discover how a man could be *plunged* or *immersed* into dew; and 2d. To see how such immersion could be expressed by the words *ebaphe apo*—immersed *from* dew. Drs. Gale and Cox contended that the inspired writer referred to the copiousness of the dews in that country, and that he intended to say, that Nebuchadnezzar was *as wet as if he had been dipped in dew*. “It does not,” says Dr. Cox, “imply the *manner* in which the effect was produced, but *the effect itself*—not the mode by which the body of the King was wetted, but its *condition*, as resulting from exposure to the dew of heaven.” But Mr. Carson thought that, in giving such an interpretation of the word, the point was given up in favor of the Pedo-baptist. “Without doubt,” says he, “the verb expresses mode here as well as anywhere else. To suppose the contrary, gives up the point at issue, as far as mode is concerned. This, in fact, makes *bapto* signify simply *to wet*, without reference to mode.”* He pleads for *poetic license*, in order to make Daniel say that Nebuchadnezzar was immersed in dew. “A soulless critic,” says he, “will reply, ‘there was here no literal immersion; the word cannot, then, be used in that sense.’ Were we to pass through the poets, conforming their language to this observa-

* p. 45.

tion, what havoc should we make of their beauties! How dull and lifeless would become their animated expressions!"* Mr. Campbell agrees with Mr. Carson in regarding the expression "as rhetorically, poetically, or, if you please, symbolically, picturesque, and graphic;" and he thinks the immortal Milton "caught his bold and beautiful flight from this passage, in which he sings—

'A cold shuddering dew dips me all over.'

Now, unfortunately for these gentlemen, Daniel was not writing *poetry*; neither was he making any display of *rhetoric*; nor was he talking *symbolically*; nor yet was he telling, in hyperbolic language, *how very wet* Nebuchadnezzar was, whilst exposed to the open skies. He was giving a perfectly plain narrative of facts in the history of that king. The attempt, therefore, to sustain the cause of immersion by converting simple narrative into one of the boldest flights of poetry, only proves the more clearly how impossible it is to sustain it at all. To the unprejudiced mind, it is clear, beyond a doubt, that the word *bapto* is here used in the general sense of *wetting*, and of wetting by the gentle distillation of dew.

Another passage has presented serious difficulty in the way of immersionists: "And he was clothed

† pp. 42, 43.

with a vesture dipped (*bebammenon*) in blood.”* The idea is that of a warrior whose garments have been, in the conflict, sprinkled or stained with the blood of his enemies. It is a remarkable fact, that Origen, the most learned of the Greek fathers, citing this passage almost *verbatim*, has the word *errantismenon*, *sprinkled*, instead of *bebammenon*. It is a fact of even greater importance, (and it is stated by Dr. Gale,) that the Syriac and Æthiopic versions, “which for their antiquity,” says Dr. Gale, “must be thought almost as valuable and authentic as the original itself, being made from primitive copies, in or very near the times of the apostles,” translated the word *bapto* here by a word signifying to *sprinkle*. The Latin Vulgate also has it *aspersa*, *sprinkled*, with blood. There are but two ways of accounting for these facts, viz: 1st. By supposing that the word *rantizo* was the true reading, and that the text was afterwards corrupted by inserting the word *bapto*, and, therefore, Origen quoted it thus, and the authors of those versions gave a corresponding translation. 2. By admitting that Origen and those translators understood the word *bapto*, in this passage, as meaning to *sprinkle*. The first supposition is adopted by Dr. Gale and Mr. Campbell; but there is not one particle of evidence in support of it. It is not pretended that a single

* Rev. 9: 13

copy of the Greek Testament, ancient or modern, has the reading which these gentlemen have imagined. It may be noted as an evidence of the burning zeal of some of the leading advocates of immersion, that they have been willing to alter the word of God, in order to sustain their peculiar views! Mr. Carson, however, could not venture on a step so desperate. After noticing Dr. Gale's reasons for believing the text corrupted, he says: "These reasons, however, do not, in the least, bring the common reading into suspicion in my mind, and I will never adopt a reading to serve a purpose."*

It is evident, then, that Origen and the translators of the Syriac, the Æthiopic and Vulgate versions, did believe that in this passage *bapto* means *sprinkle*. And they, let it be noted, lived in an age when, if we are to believe the advocates of immersion, all Christians were decided immersionists. Besides, they lived when the Greek was a living language, which they were accustomed to read and hear constantly.

We may admire the prudence displayed by Mr. Campbell, in his late work, in passing these two very difficult passages without remark. In the Lexington Debate, they gave him trouble. In the work we are now reviewing, he has thought it wise not to attempt to meet the difficulties again, but rather to keep them out of view.

* p. 37

We may now leave the candid reader to decide, whether *the action* of immersion can be proved from the force of *bapto*—a word signifying sometimes a complete submersion; sometimes a partial dipping; sometimes dyeing in any mode; sometimes wetting or moistening; sometimes sprinkling. It is sometimes *specific*; oftener it expresses that which is done, either dyeing, or wetting, or washing, *without regard to mode*.

In our next, we propose briefly to examine the usage of Pagan, Jewish, and Christian writers, in regard to the word *baptizo*.

LETTER V.

DEAR SIR: The cause of immersion gains nothing by the authority of the lexicons, or by general usage of the word *bapto*. Let us now inquire into the meaning of *baptizo*, as used by the profane Greeks and the Jews.

1. It is frequently used in the sense of *sinking*. Strabo, speaking of a lake near Agrigentum, says: "Things that elsewhere cannot float, do not *sink*," (*baptizesthai*.) Again, he says of a certain river: "If one shoots an arrow into it, the force of the water resists it so much, that it will scarcely *sink*," (*baptizesthai*.) Hippocrates, says Carson, applies

it to a ship sinking by being overburdened—" Shall I not laugh at the man who *baptises* or *sinks* his ship by overburdening it," etc., (*baptisonta.*) Diodorus Siculus applies it to the sinking of beasts carried away by a river—" The most of land animals being caught by the river, *sinking*, perish," (*baptizomena.*) Josephus frequently uses the word in the same sense, as, for example: " After this misfortune of Cestius, many of the Jews of distinction left the city, as people swim away from a *sinking* ship," (*baptizomenes.*) Again, speaking of the storm that threatened the destruction of the ship which carried Jonah, he says: " When the ship was on the point of *sinking*," etc., (*baptizesthai.*) Indeed, in much the larger number of examples quoted by immersionists, the word means, and is translated, to *sink*.

2. *Baptizo* is used to signify the overflowing of land by the tide. Aristotle says: " The Phœnicians, who inhabit Cadiz, relate, that sailing beyond Hercules' Pillars, in four days, with the wind at East, they came to a land uninhabited, whose coast was full of sea-weeds, and not *baptized* (*baptizesthai*) at ebb; but when the tide comes in, it is wholly covered," etc. This passage will not suit Mr. Campbell; for he is laboring to prove, that *baptizo* expresses the *specific action* of immersing; but even he will scarcely contend that the land was *plunged* into the water. He, therefore, sets this

down as an example of the *figurative* use of the word, and translates it *overflowed!* Now, Mr. Campbell, by what principle of language do you make the *overflowing* of land *figurative plunging* or *immersing*? Dr. Gale tried to escape in another way. He says: "Besides, the word *baptizo*, perhaps, does not so necessarily express the action of putting under water, as in general a thing's being in that condition, no matter how it comes so, whether it is put into the water, or the water comes over it," etc.* Now, this admission is fatal to the great argument on which immersionists rely for the support of their cause, viz: that *baptizo* is a *specific word*, definitely expressing *the action* of putting under water. For, if Dr. Gale is right, then if a person were covered with water by pouring, he would be *baptized*. But Mr. Carson says of Nebuchadnezzar: "If all the water in the ocean had fallen on him, it would not have been a literal *immersion*."† He, therefore, admires the beautiful *figure* which he finds in this passage, whilst the equally learned Dr. Gale contents himself with the remark, that "the place makes nothing at all for our adversaries."

3. *Baptizo* is used in the sense of *wetting*, by the application of a fluid to the substance. Hippocrates directed that a blister plaster should be mois-

* Wall's Hist., V. 3, p. 122.

† pp. 11, 44.

tened (*bapsas*) with the oil of roses; and if it should be too painful, it should be *baptized* again (*baptizein*) with breast milk and Egyptian ointment." No one can believe that the word is here used in the sense of immersing. The blister plaster was simply to be *moistened* or *wetted* with breast milk. In the Lexington Debate, we tried in vain to get the attention of Mr. Campbell to this passage; and in his late book, he prudently omits all reference to it. In Num. 19: 17, 18, we find the following law: "And for an unclean person, they shall take of the ashes of a burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel; and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip in the water, and sprinkle it in the tent," etc. Josephus, giving an account of this ceremony, says, they *baptized* (*baptizantes*) the ashes with the spring of water. * Mr. Carson says, by way of saving the cause of immersion, "The Septuagint directs that the water shall be *poured upon* the ashes into a vessel. Josephus relates the fact, *as if* the ashes were thrown into the water!" † A case somewhat similar to these is found in Homer's Iliad, where Ajax is described killing Cleobulus: "He struck him across the neck with his heavy sword, and the whole sword became warm with the blood." Pseudo-Dydimus says, the sword was *bap-*

* Antiq., B. 4, c. 4.

† p. 92.

tized (*ebaptisthe*) with the blood; and Dionysius says: "Homer expresses himself with the greatest energy, signifying that the sword was so *baptized* (*baptisthentes*) with blood, that it was even heated by it." The *action* of immersing is not found here. Plutarch relates, that a Roman general, a little before he died of his wound, "set up a trophy, on which, having *baptized* (*baptisas*) his hand with blood, he wrote this inscription," etc. Every reader can judge for himself, whether he *immersed* his hand in his blood, in order to write.

So far, then, as *classic usage* is concerned, *baptizo* evidently has the following meanings, viz: to *sink*, to *immerse*, to *moisten* or *wet* in any manner. Let us now inquire how this word was used by the Jews, in relation to religious ordinances. Let it be noted, 1st. That in the sacred writings of the Jews, *baptizo* is never used with reference to any fluid but *water*. 2d. That it is used exclusively with reference to *religious* washings or purifications, never in relation to ordinary matters; and 3d. That according to the unanimous opinion of interpreters and critics, the meaning of the word, as used to designate Christian baptism, must be learned chiefly from the usage of the Jews. As we have already shown, classic usage is no certain reliance on such a question, inasmuch as the Jews did not speak or write classic Greek, and inasmuch as they certainly appropriated the word *baptizo* to designate those

religious ablutions of which the Pagan Greeks knew nothing.

The first instance in which the word is used in the Bible, is in 2 Kings, 5: 14. In this instance, the meaning, it is possible, is to *immerse*. Elisha directed Naaman, the Syrian leper, to “go and *wash* in Jordan seven times; and he went down and *dipped* himself seven times.” The Hebrew word is *tabal*. But even here, Jerome, who will not be suspected of any leaning toward *pouring* or *sprinkling*, translates it by the word *lavo*, to wash—“Descendit, et lavit in Jordane,” etc. *Baptizo* is twice found in the Apocryphal books. These examples serve to show in what sense it was used by the Jews, in relation to religious ablutions. Of Judith, 12: 5, it is said: “She went out by night and *washed* (*ebaptizeto*) herself in the camp at the fountain of water.” Did Judith *immerse* herself? The following evidences are conclusive against such a supposition, viz: 1. She was a Jewess; and no law of Moses required immersion, in order to purification. That law, in some instances, required *washing*, but not immersion. The Hebrew word used is *rahatz*, to wash, which is sometimes translated *bathe*, but never *dip*. 2. It is most improbable that a chaste female would immerse herself in a military camp. 3. She *baptized* herself at a *fountain* or *spring*. To suppose that she immersed herself in a spring, is simply ridiculous. 4. Besides, the lan-

guage forbids the idea. It is not said she baptized herself *in* or *into* the spring, but at (*epi*) it. The preposition *epi* never means *in* or *into*. Mr. Carson, however, not discouraged by these difficulties, escapes them all, by simply *guessing* that there were "stone troughs or other vessels," usually provided at fountains for washing clothes and bathing! Mr. Campbell more prudently connects with this another passage, and hurries away, with the general remark, that "these instances constitute no exception from the established meaning of the word in classic and common use!" A figure of speech, a bold conjecture, or a prudent silence, is quite sufficient to deliver our immersionist friends from all their troubles!

Baptizo is used in Eccl. 31: 25: "He that is *baptized* after touching a dead body, (*baptizomenos apo nekrou,*) if he touch it again, what is he profited by his washing?" (*loutro.*) The reader will immediately notice the fact, that the word *baptizomenos* is here used in precisely the same sense as *loutro*; and no one denies that this latter word signifies *washing in any mode*. Now, if he will turn to Num. 19: 16, where the law is instituted to which reference is here made, he will find *sprinkling* required, but not *immersion*. Mr. Campbell, indeed, says, according to this law, "the unclean was never cleansed until he bathed himself in water." But he cannot be ignorant of the fact,

that the word translated *bathe* (*rahatz*) signifies to wash in any mode; and, consequently, no immersion was required. How was it possible, for example, that immersion could have been practiced during the forty years sojourn in the wilderness, during which time this law was in full force?

In the New Testament, *baptizo* and *baptismos* are used several times with reference to the religious washings of the Jews, and in every instance in such connection as to forbid the idea of immersion. In Mark, 7: 3, 4, we read: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, (or baptize—*ean me baptisontai*) they eat not." Dr. Gale earnestly insisted that both in this passage and in Luke 11: 38, the word *baptizo* means "wash the hands by dipping." This seems to have been the opinion of Mr. Campbell in years past; for his translation of the New Testament gives the following rendering of Mark, 7: 3, 4: "For the Pharisees, and indeed all the Jews who observed the tradition of the elders, eat not until they have washed their hands by pouring a little water upon them; and if they be come from the market, by dipping them." This we are constrained to regard as one of the most reckless perversions of the word of God with which we have ever met. In the first place, the Greek word *pugme*, translated in the

common Bible *oft*, is here made to mean, “*by pouring a little water upon them.*” What a prolific little word! But it means no such thing; and no lexicon ever gave it such a signification. In the second place, the words *ean me baptisontai*, literally translated, *unless they baptize*, Mr. Campbell translates, *by dipping them!* Was ever such liberty taken with the Bible, in order to support any cause? *

But Mr. Carson could not agree with Dr. Gale and Mr. Campbell. He says: “It is evident that the word does not here refer to the hands;” and he would, in the face of history and of all probability, make the inspired writer say, “Except they dip themselves, they eat not!” He is not deterred by the undeniable fact, that no trace of any such custom amongst the Jews can be found, and that it is impossible that such a thing should have been gen-

* This singular translation, I took occasion to expose in the Lexington Debate. I then spoke as follows: “By what authority the phrase, ‘by pouring a little water on them,’ is here introduced, I know not. Can it be, that the little adverb, *εως*, contains all this? If so, it is certainly the most remarkable adverb I have ever seen! I assert, that this is no translation at all; it is not akin to a translation. In the original Greek, the expression, ‘they eat not,’ occurs twice. One of these expressions, the gentleman has thrown out, in order to get in the phrase, ‘by dipping them!’ For if he had not rejected part of the Greek, he could not have thus translated the passage. Having got part of the Greek out of his way, he

erally practiced. "There is no need," says he, "to refer to the practice of the time, nor to ransack the writings of the Rabbins, for the practice of the Jews. We have here the authority of the Holy Spirit for the Jewish custom. He uses the word *baptizo*, and that word signifies *to dip*, and only *to dip*."* It is impossible to head such men. We are looking for the usage of an important word, for the purpose of ascertaining its meaning; and when we find it used in a connection which demonstrates that it signifies simply the washing of the hands, we are told that the word does always mean *to dip*, and, therefore, it must so mean in this case, whether the evidence is decidedly against it or not!

Strangely enough, Mr. Campbell has become a convert to Mr. Carson's opinion. He has learned that the little word *pugme*, which he so strangely mistranslated, means the *foot*, and that the word *baptizo* expresses the immersion of the *whole body*!

makes a most singular reading of what remains! The Greek phrase, *EAN ME BAPTIZONTAI*, (literally, unless they baptize,) he translates, 'by dipping them;' that is, he takes a GREEK CONJUNCTION, an ADVERB, and a VERB, in the third person, plural number, and translates them by a preposition *BY*, a participle *DIPPING*, and adds the word *THEM*, which is not in the Greek!! Such a translation, or rather such a perversion of Scripture, I do not remember ever to have seen; and all to sustain the claims of immersion!"

To this severe exposure of his translation, Mr. Campbell attempted no reply!

* pp. 100, 101.

“Hence,” says he. “they dip or bathe themselves, after being to market; whereas ordinarily they wash their hands only up to the wrist!”* He seems to think it unaccountably strange, that in the two passages under consideration, *baptizo* should have been translated *to wash*, although he himself so translated it in Luke 11: 38! It is not at all surprising, that those who can imagine the custom of immersing before dinner, should find no difficulty in the equally improbable, not to say impossible, idea of immersing cups and pots, brazen vessels, and tables.†

The evidence that, in these two instances, *baptizo* does not signify *to immerse*, is absolutely conclusive. For if there was any part of their traditions, in regard to which the Jews were specially attentive, it was their *ablutions*. If, then, the custom had prevailed of personal immersion before dinner; if this custom had been so general, that a Pharisee wondered that Jesus, whom he had invited to dinner, did not first immerse himself, it is impossible that in all the Jewish writings, no trace of such a custom should be found. Yet anti-pedo-baptists, with all their zeal and research, have confessedly failed to discover anything of the kind.

Indeed, it is absolutely impossible that such a custom should have prevailed. How could each

* Mark, 7: 4.

† p. 166.

family, in a dry country like Palestine, be supplied with sufficient water for each member of the family to immerse himself before dinner, and also when he had been to market? And then at a public feast, what would be done to enable each of the company to immerse himself before eating? Happily, we are informed by an inspired writer, how they managed the matter of purification on such occasions. At the wedding in Cana, we learn that "there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece."* These small water-pots were sufficient for all the purifications observed on such occasions. Mr. Carson says: "The water-pots were, no doubt, for the purifications usual at a wedding. * * * The hands and the feet of the guests were washed, and, very likely, the vessels used at the feast," etc.† Certainly, the guests were not immersed in the pots. But the zeal with which our Baptist friends have sought evidence in favor of personal immersion to sustain their cause, is evident from the following fact, brought forward by both Gale and Carson, and from the argument founded upon it: "Mr. Bruce informs us, that in Abyssinia the sect called Kemmont, 'wash themselves *from head to foot* after coming from the market, or any public place, where they may have touched any one of a different sect

* John, 2: 6.

† On Bap., p. 115.

from their own, esteeming all such unclean.' Is it strange, then, to find the Pharisees, the superstitious Pharisees, immersing their couches for purification, or themselves after market?"* But, in the first place, Bruce does not say, the Abyssinian sect *immersed* themselves on coming from a public place. There is a great difference between *washing* the whole body, and *immersing* it. A man might wash his whole body with a basin of water, but if he were about to immerse himself, arrangements must be made on a much more extensive scale. Now, we do not deny the possibility of the Jews *washing* their whole bodies twice or thrice each day, but to *immerse* themselves would be a very different affair.

But it is vain to infer from the conduct of an Abyssinian sect the practice of the Jews. We have full accounts of all the ceremonial observances of the Jews, and amongst them do not find any such custom as that of immersing on coming from the market, and before dinner.

But it is argued that there were evidently two washings observed by the Jews, the one expressed by the word *nipto*, to wash the hands; and the other, when they came from the market, expressed by *baptizomat*, which relates to the whole body. Let us admit, though all the evidence from Jewish cus-

* Carson on Baptism, pp. 115, 116.

toms is against it, that the Jews, on coming from the market, washed their whole bodies; will it follow, that they *plunged* themselves? Remember, you have undertaken to prove, not that *baptizo* expresses the *washing* of the whole body, but that it expresses *the action of immersing!* If it were demonstrated, as it never can be, that the Jews were accustomed, on coming from the market and before dinner, to wash their whole bodies, it would not be made even probable that they performed *the action of immersing themselves.* The simple truth, however, is, that they washed their hands. This is the whole that they did, as is evident from the complaint made by the Pharisees against Christ and his disciples, which was, not that they did not immerse themselves, but that they ate bread with “*un-washen hands.*” * By this neglect, and this only, they were charged with transgressing “the tradition of the elders.” Most evident it is, therefore, that in these instances persons are said to have been baptized, when their hands were washed. And as no one will deny that the hands may be, and amongst the Jews were constantly washed by pouring water on them, the conclusion is inevitable, that *baptizo* expresses the application of water by pouring.

The only other instance we notice in which this disputed word is used in the New Testament,

* Mark, 7: 1, 2; Matt., 15: 1, 2.

in a literal sense, without reference either to John's baptism or to Christian baptism, is in Heb., 9: 10, where we read of "divers washings," (*baptis-moi.*) The Jewish law had a number of *ablutions*, but no *personal immersions*; and inasmuch as the divers baptisms evidently include all their *ablutions*, they must include the *sprinklings*, as well as the *washings*.

From the preceding discussion, we arrive at the following conclusions, viz :

1st. That in the *classics*, the word *baptizo* has some three or four shades of meaning, one or two of which are specific; the others, such as moistening, wetting, etc., are *generic*. Classic usage, therefore, does not enable us to decide in what sense it was used by our Saviour.

2d. In the Scriptures and Apocryphal writings, there is no single instance in which it can be proved to mean *to immerse*, whilst there are several instances in which it is most manifestly used in the sense of *washing, cleansing*. Indeed, this is its prevailing signification, as used by the Jews and by the inspired writers in their sacred books. And inasmuch as our Saviour found the word in use with this signification, there is very strong reason to believe he used it in the same sense.

LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR: In the Scriptures and in the religious writings of the Jews, the word *baptizo*, as we have seen, is used in such connection, when not designating the ordinance of baptism, as to forbid, in almost every instance, the idea of immersion. The application of water to the person by pouring or sprinkling, for the purpose of purification, is evidently meant; and in this sense, it is fair to conclude, our Saviour employed it.

Let us now turn to the different *translations* of the Scriptures into other languages, both in ancient and in modern times, and see what light they throw on the meaning of the word, and the mode of administering baptism.

1. The *Peshito*, an old Syriac version, is the oldest translation of the New Testament in the world. This, together with the Æthiopic, Dr. Gale considers "almost as valuable and authentic as the original itself, being made from primitive copies, in or very near the time of the apostles." Professor Stuart says: "In all probability, it should be dated during the first half of the second century;" and he adds, "withal, it is admitted by those who are able to consult it, to be one of the most faithful and authentic of all the ancient versions." This version, then, is a most important witness in this controversy; and

we would be perfectly safe in agreeing to decide the controversy upon this single authority. Our immersionist friends cannot object to it; for it was made at a period when, if their exclusive views are correct, immersion was universally practiced as the only Christian baptism. Such being confessedly its importance, we cannot but wonder that they have passed it with so slight notice. Dr. Gale, though he quotes it on another point, and gives it the highest commendation, does not at all refer to its translation of *baptizo*; and Mr. Carson observes the same significant silence. Mr. Campbell, less prudent, exposes the weakness of his cause by a superficial attempt to compel this version to testify for him.

1st. It is a remarkable fact, that the primary meaning of the word *amad*, which is uniformly employed in the Syriac version to translate *baptizo*, is *to stand*, and then *to cause to stand*, or *confirm*. This is the meaning of the word in Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Arabic, which are very near of kin of the Syriac. The Lexicons all give the word this derivation. "It is hardly credible," says Professor Stuart, "that the Syriac word could vary so much from all these languages, as properly to mean *immerse*, *dip*," etc.

2d. Besides, the Syriac has a word (*tseva*) which properly means to dip or plunge; and this word is used in every case in the New Testament, where the idea of dipping occurs. But it is not used in trans-

lating *baptizo*. How shall we account for the fact, that instead of using the word signifying to *immerse*, in translating *baptizo*, the Syriac translator uniformly employs a word meaning to *confirm*? “We come almost necessarily to the conclusion, then,” says Stuart, “inasmuch as the Syriac has an appropriate word which signifies to *dip, plunge, immerse, (tseva,)* and yet it is never employed in the Peshito, that the translator did not deem it important to designate any particular mode of baptism, but only to designate the rite by a term which evidently appears to mean *confirm, establish, etc.* Baptism, then, in the language of the Peshito, is *the rite of confirmation simply*, while the manner of this is apparently left without being at all expressed.”

3d. The lexicons, whilst they derive the word *amad* from the Hebrew word meaning to *stand*, give its ordinary meaning to *wash, purify*. You and your principal authority, Mr. Gotch, admit that Castel, Buxtorf, and Schaaf, the most celebrated Syriac lexicographers, are perfectly agreed in defining this word. Schaaf, whose lexicon is now before me, defines it—*Abluit se, ablutus, intinctus, immersus in aquam, baptizatus est; he washed himself, was washed, stained, immersed in water.* Here to *wash* is given as the leading signification in the New Testament; and he refers to no passage where it means *immerse*, except Num., 31 : 23; and if the reader will turn to that passage, he

will be satisfied, that to *go through water* is to be *purified with water*.

4th. That the word *amad* does not mean *immerse*, is evident from the fact that it is used in translating the Greek word *photizo*, which means *to enlighten*.* Baptism was administered to those who professed to have been enlightened, and it was regarded as confirmatory; therefore, *amad* was used with these shades of meaning, together with the sense of *washing*, thus expressing the *meaning* of baptism, not the *mode*.

5th. Mr. Gotch himself, on whom Mr. Campbell chiefly relies, bears a testimony which is fatal to the argument for immersion. He says: "We are, moreover, warranted in concluding, that though the term was peculiarly appropriated to the rite of Christian baptism, as is manifest from its being used as the translation of *photisthentes*, (*enlightened*,) it was, nevertheless, regarded by the Syriac translator as synonymous with *baptizo*, in all the senses in which that word is used in the New Testament, and not as simply expressive of the Christian rite. See e. g., Mark, 7: 4, and Luke, 11: 38, where the word is used in reference to Jewish ablutions. * * But the fact seems clear, that it had acquired, in the time of the Syriac translation, the meaning which the lexicons give—*abluit se*." * Thus, Gotch

* Heb., 6: 5.

not only admits, contrary to the assertion of Mr. Campbell, that *baptizo* has different meanings, but that the word *amad* did have the general meaning of *washing* or *cleansing*.

Now, then, when we remember, that the Syriac has a word which signifies properly to *dip*, how shall we account for the fact that the translator rendered *baptizo* by a word meaning to *confirm*, to *purify*, to *enlighten*, and which does not express *mode*? It will not be pretended that he was swayed by Pedobaptist influence; since if our immersionist friends are in the right, there were then no Pedobaptists in the world. Most evidently, the Syriac translator did not understand *baptizo* as meaning to *immerse*, or he would have chosen a Syriac word which has this meaning.

1. This version furnishes an unanswerable argument against the doctrine of immersionists, and a stern rebuke to those who, losing sight of the meaning and design of the ordinance of baptism, insist on a new translation of the Scriptures, for the purpose of sustaining their notions as to the mere *mode* of its administration. It was made before the ordinance became corrupted, and when not only the meaning of *baptizo*, but the practice of the apostles, was well known; and it is a fact of immense value, that it translates *baptizo* by a word which,

* Append. to Bib. Quest. pp. 164, 165.

Mr. Gotch, who is Mr. Campbell's only witness on this point, testifies, means *to wash* or *cleanse*, (*ab-luit se.*) Why did not the primitive immersionists cry out against such a translation? Simply because there were no such people.

2. The oldest Arabic version, which dates back as far as the seventh century, together with others of later date, translates *baptizo* by *amada*, which is identical in form and meaning with the Syriac word just examined. Of course, these versions are with us, and against immersionists.

3. The Æthiopic version, Mr. Gotch admits, translates *baptizo* by a word signifying *to wash*, as well as *to immerse*; and since it is certainly *generic* in its meaning, it affords the cause of immersion no aid.

4. The Persic version, as Mr. Gotch and Mr. Campbell admit, translates *baptizo* by a word signifying *to wash*. It, therefore, is against the immersionist view of *baptizo*. And, then, it is a fact, of no small importance, that this version was made, not from the original Greek, but from the Syriac, which proves, beyond doubt, that the Syriac word *amad* was then understood to mean, not to immerse, but to *wash*.

5. The Sahidic and Basmuric versions, as Mr. Gotch and Mr. Campbell admit, do not translate *baptizo*, but *transfer* it, just as our English Bible does; and yet both these gentlemen set these ver-

sions down as translating the word by words meaning *immerse*! Now, Mr. Campbell, since you have set down the versions which *transfer* the word, among immersionist translations, why did you not, for the same reason, place King James' translation on the same side? We earnestly ask, *why not?* The simple truth is, these versions prove nothing either way, since they do not translate the word at all.

6. The *old Italic version*, made in the early part of the second century, and in high authority until after Jerome's translation, (the Latin Vulgate,) transferred, and did not translate *baptizo*; and in the only instance in which the Vulgate translates it, it renders it by the generic word *lavo*, to *wash*. Now, these versions, like the Syriac, were made when, if immersionists are to be believed, all Christendom practiced immersion; and since the Latin language has several words which definitely signify to immerse, (such as *mergo*, *immergo*, *intingo*, etc.,) how happened it, that the authors of these versions never once translated the word *baptizo* by either of these? The true answer to this question is easily given, especially when it is remembered that Cyprian, one of the most eminent of the Christian fathers of the third century, declared baptism by effusion or sprinkling valid, and forbade the rebaptizing of those who had received the ordinance in this manner; whilst Aurelius Prudentius, in the fourth century,

held that John's baptism was administered by *pouring*, (*perfundit fluvio.*)

7. The French, the Geneva Bible, the Italic, and Arias Montanus, all either *transfer* the word *baptizo*, or translate it by a generic term signifying to *wash, cleanse*, but never translate it by a word meaning to immerse. And yet Mr. Campbell places these versions on his list, not at all deterred by the plain undeniable fact, that the Christians by whom they are used, have always baptized by pouring or sprinkling!

8. That the German does not favor immersion, is perfectly clear from two facts, viz: 1st. It uses the phrase *mit wasser*—I baptize you *with* water, not *into* or *in* water; and 2d. Those by whom and for whom it was made, have generally practiced pouring or sprinkling. The same is true of the Dutch, Danish, and Swedish translations.

9. The Anglo-Saxon, as Mr. Gotch admits, translates BAPTIZO by a word signifying *to cleanse*.

Here are some *nineteen* of the principal translations of the Scriptures, both ancient and modern, to which it would be easy to add many more, *not one of which translates BAPTIZO by a word meaning IMMERSE*; every one of which either transfers the word just as our Bible does, or translates it by a generic word, signifying the nature and design, not the *mode*, of baptism. The truth is, *there is not, in the world, one respectable translation of the*

Scriptures that renders this word as immersionists insist it should be rendered; and this fact, especially when it is remembered that a number of the versions were made by men who were prejudiced in favor of immersion, is an overwhelming argument demonstrating that baptizo does not express the specific action of immersion, and that it does not express the mode by which baptism is to be administered.

We cannot but remark the fact, that much attention as Mr. Campbell professes to have paid to the translations of the Scriptures, the only author he quotes to show that some translations favor immersion, is Mr. Gotch—a man of no reputation as a Biblical scholar—and even his testimony is not fairly presented!

LETTER VII.

DEAR SIR: We have appealed to *five* classes of evidence, and found each of them to bear strongly against your doctrine of exclusive immersion, viz: The almost universal sentiment of Christendom, in all ages; the unscriptural view of baptism, as an *action*, to which immersionists have been driven; the testimony of the lexicons; the usage of the classic Greeks; the usage of the Jews in their sacred

writings ; and the translations, both ancient and modern. We now proceed to inquire whether the early Christian writers, Greeks and Latins, understood BAPTIZO as expressing definitely *the action of immersing*.

We begin with Origen, the most learned of the Greek fathers. That he understood his native tongue, will scarcely be questioned. His language is as follows : " How came you to think that Elias, when he should come, would baptize, who did not, in Ahab's time, baptize the wood upon the altar, which was to be washed before it was burnt, by the Lord's appearing in fire, etc. But he ordered the priests to do that ; not once only, but says, Do it the second time ; and, Do it the third time ; and they did it the third time. He, therefore, that did not himself baptize then, but assigned that work to others, how was he likely to baptize, when he, according to Malichi's prophecy, should come?" * Origen says, the altar was *baptized* at the command of Elias. Now, if the reader will turn to Kings, 18 : 33, he will see that this baptism certainly was by *pouring* water upon the altar. Mr. Campbell thinks Origen was in error in thus using the word *baptizo*. He says : " We are all in the habit of carrying figures too far, as well as Origen." † When immersionists, in order to sustain their cause, find it necessary to

* Wall's Hist., v. 2, p. 332.

† Lexington Debate, p. 164.

correct the language of the most eminent Greek scholars, it must be desperate. But what *figure* is there? Or how can *pouring* water be *figurative immersing* into water? It will not do to say, the altar was *overwhelmed*; for this is not true in any proper sense of the word *overwhelm*. Besides, Mr. Campbell's doctrine requires him to prove, that *baptizo* definitely expresses a *particular action*, not the *effect* produced by a different action. Here, then, we have an example of baptism by *pouring*, which goes far to settle the meaning of *baptizo*.

Clemens Alexandrinus, speaking of a penitent backslider, says: "He was *baptized* a second time with tears." It requires no great learning to determine the *mode* of this baptism. Athanasius reckons eight several baptisms: That of the flood; that of Moses in the Red Sea; the legal baptism of the Jews for uncleanness; that of John the Baptist; that of Jesus; that of tears; that of martyrdom; that of eternal fire. The reader can decide for himself, whether all these baptisms are *immersions*. Gregory Nazianzen says: "I know of a fourth baptism, that by martyrdom and blood; and I know of a fifth, that of tears." Basil speaks of a martyr who was baptized into Christ with his own blood.

Did these learned fathers understand the Greek language—their vernacular tongue? If they did, the pouring of water on the altar, the flowing of the tears of a penitent over his face, and the flowing of

a martyr's blood over his body, are all properly expressed by the words *baptizo* and *baptisma*. Most certainly, then, these words do not express the *action of immersion*.

It is a fact of great importance in this argument, that those of both the Greek and Latin fathers, who practiced immersion, were accustomed, in cases of sickness, or where it was inconvenient to immerse, to baptize by pouring or sprinkling; and the validity of such baptisms was never disputed. Wall states, that "in the case] of sickness, weakness, haste, want of quantity of water, or such extraordinary occasions, baptism by effusion of water on the face was, by the ancients, counted sufficient baptism. The baptism of Novatian, A. D. 201, is an example of the kind. One Magnus wrote to Cyprian, to inquire, among other things, whether those baptized in bed, as Novatian was, should be baptized again. Cyprian answered in the negative; and to prove such baptisms valid, he quoted the language of Ezeiel—'*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you,*' etc. He quoted also Num., 19: 13, and 8: 7, and said, 'If any one think that they obtain no benefit, as having only an effusion of the water of salvation, do not let him mistake so far as that the parties, if they recover of their sickness, should be baptized again.' The Acts of St. Laurence, who suffered martyrdom about the same time as Cyprian, do tell how one of the soldiers that were to be his execu-

tioners, being converted, brought a pitcher of water for Laurence to baptize him with." * Now, what would be thought of a young immersionist minister, who should inquire of an older or more able minister of the same faith, whether persons *immersed* by *pouring* or *sprinkling* are validly immersed? And what would be thought, if the latter should answer the question affirmatively, and should advise his young brother not so far to err as to *immerse* such persons again? Yet such precisely was the question of Magnus, and the answer of Cyprian, if immersionists are to be believed. For as the Greek was then a living language, and as Cyprian, at least, must have known both the meaning of *baptizo* and the practice of the church; if it be true, that this word was then understood definitely to express the action of immersing, the question of Magnus and the answer of Cyprian, were just such as we have stated. Who can possibly believe it? Besides, how could Cyprian answer the question as he did, without exciting warm controversy, if it was then generally believed that baptism must be administered by *immersion*.

But the undeniable fact is, that both Greeks and Latins did often baptize by pouring and sprinkling. Now, if the word *baptizo* signified to immerse, how could they go to a man on a sick bed, and say,

Wall, v. 2, p. 389.

baptizo se or *baptizo te*, *I baptize thee*, and pour or sprinkle water upon him? How supremely ridiculous would a minister make himself, if he should go to a sick person, and say, "I *immerse* thee in the name," etc., and *pour* or *sprinkle* water on him. Would any sane man do so? Yet precisely this ridiculous thing the Greek and Latin fathers often did, if the word *baptizo* does mean to *immerse*.

That the primitive church did not understand *baptizo* to express definitely the act of immersing, is further evident from the fact, that when they wished definitely to express this action, they employed the word *kataduo*. Professor Stuart says: "The Greek words *kataduo* and *katadusis* were employed as expressive of *baptizing* and *baptism*; and these words mean *going down into the water* or *immersing*." Basil says: "By the three *immersions*, (*katadusesi*,) and by the like number of invocations, the great mystery of baptism is completed." Damascenus says: "Baptism is a type of the death of Christ; for by three immersions, (*kataduseon*,) baptism signifies," etc. The Apostolic Constitutions, written probably in the fourth century, say: "Immersion (*katadusis*) denotes dying with Christ; emersion (*anadusis*) a resurrection with Christ." Photius says: "The three immersions and emersions (*kataduseis kai anaduseis*) of baptism signify death and resurrection." Chrysostom says: "We, as in a sepulchre, immersing (*kataduonton*) our

heads in the water, the old man is buried, and sinking down, (*katadus kato*,) the whole is concealed at once," etc.

These writers, it should be observed, make a distinction between *baptism* and *immersion*. If in these passages, just cited from their writings, you substitute *immersion* for *baptism*, you will make nonsense; and yet this is precisely what immersionists would have us do! With those writers, baptism was one thing, and the mode of administration another. Immersion was not baptism, but one of the modes in which it was administered.

The Latin writers followed the example of the Greeks, *transferring* the word *baptizo* when they spoke of the ordinance, and using *mergo*, *immergo*, *mergito*, *intingo*, etc., when they spoke of one of the modes of administering it, and *perfundo* or *aspergo*, when they spoke of the other mode. Thus, Praxeas says: "Not once, but thrice, according to the several names, etc., are we *baptized*," (*tingimur*.) Tertullian says: "Thence, we are thrice *immersed*," (*mergitamur*.)

Now, if it be true, as immersionists affirm, that *baptizo* does definitely express the act of immersing, how shall we account for the fact, that the Greek and Latin writers did substitute other words to express immersion, and did use *baptizo* in baptizing persons by *pouring* or *sprinkling*? The truth is, the usage of the word amongst the Greek and Latin

fathers proves, beyond cavil, that it has not the meaning which immersionists insist on giving it. With them, it expressed generally the idea of *washing, cleansing, wetting*; and they familiarly use it in such connection as to forbid the idea of immersion, either literal or figurative. This is the more remarkable, since, in the third and fourth centuries, *trine immersion*, and that with the candidates wholly unclad, prevailed. The prejudice was strongly in favor of immersion; and yet the word *baptizo* was used with as great variety of meaning, as Pedobaptists have ever claimed for it.

In our next, we propose to inquire how far the Scripture accounts of baptisms administered, and of the meaning and design of the ordinance, throw light on this subject.

LETTER VIII.

DEAR SIR: The result of our investigations thus far, is as follows:

1st. The lexicons give to *bapto* and *baptizo* several meanings, only one of which expresses the idea of immersion. Consequently, their authority is against you. 2d. The Greek classics employ these words in different senses, expressive of dipping, wetting, washing, even of sprinkling. They, there-

fore, are against you. 3d. The Jews, in their sacred writings, canonical and apocryphal, use these words in the sense of dipping, wetting, moistening, washing, cleansing; and in almost every case where *baptizo* is used, the circumstances and the context prove, that the application of water by pouring or sprinkling is intended. 4th. All the most valuable translations, ancient and modern, either transfer the word *baptizo*, or translate it by a *generic* word, expressive of the meaning and design of baptism, but not the mode. 5th. The Christian fathers, Greek and Latin, used *baptizo* constantly to signify the application of water or blood by pouring or sprinkling; and when they wished definitely to express the idea of immersion, they employed other words, as *kataduo*, *mergo*, etc.

Thus, from *five* important sources of evidence, we find your declaration, that *baptizo* definitely expresses the action of immersion, entirely disproved. We turn now to the Scripture account of the administration of baptism.

1. Immersionists have long been accustomed to refer to John's baptism, in support of their exclusive claims. They find *two* reasons, as they think, for affirming that John's baptism was by immersion, viz: 1st. He baptized in Jordan. 2. He baptized "in Enon near Salem, because there was much water there." Now, we may admit, that John baptized either *at* or *in* Jordan; but the question still recurs, *how* did he

baptize? Did he apply the persons to the water, or the water to the persons? There were other reasons why John both preached and baptized, where there was abundance of water. Great multitudes attended him—"all Judea and Jerusalem;" and they needed water for other purposes, especially since they could not eat, after being in a public place, without *baptizing* themselves.* Moreover, it was a matter of no inconvenience for the Jews to step into the water. But supposing them to be *in* Jordan, did John *immerse* them? If it be said, their being *in* Jordan, is presumptive evidence that they were immersed, we answer—

1st. If we admit this, there are also presumptive evidences on the other side. In the first place, it is not very probable that John could have immersed so great multitudes, during his ministry. Secondly, we read of no preparation for immersion—no baptisteries and no changing of garments. But when immersion did become prevalent in the church, these necessary fixtures are particularly mentioned by historians. Is it likely, if such a custom had prevailed, that neither of the four evangelists would have alluded to any of these very necessary arrangements?

2d. But let us admit, for argument's sake, that John must have baptized by immersion, because he

* Mark, 7: 4; Luke, 11: 38.

baptized in Jordan, and where there was *much water*; is not the inference even stronger that the apostles did not immerse, because they did not baptize in Jordan, or where there was much water, but often in houses, jails, etc. ? He might have baptized in Jordan by pouring, and he might have needed the "much water" at Enon for other purposes; but it is most improbable, if not impossible, that they should have immersed in a private house in Jerusalem, or in Damascus, or in a jail at Phillippi. The conclusion, then, would be, that if John practiced immersion, the apostles did not; or they, like him, would have gone to Jordan or to Enon. And since Mr. Campbell admits that John's baptism was not Christian baptism, he will not deny, that it is more proper to learn the mode of baptism from the practice of the apostles, than from that of John. Yet it is a little remarkable, that although Mr. Campbell makes a distinct argument and a distinct chapter in favor of immersion, from "the places where baptism was anciently administered," he mentions not one place where *Christian* baptism was administered! Is this not a rather unaccountable and inexcusable omission? If it were true that baptism was always or generally administered in large streams, such a fact might be quite favorable to immersion. But this is not true; and especially it is not true of *Christian* baptism—the very ordinance about which we are concerned. Why did not Mr. C., in speaking of the places where

baptism was anciently performed, mention that where the three thousand were baptized in Jerusalem, the jail in Phillippi, and the private dwelling of Simon, the tanner, in Damascus? Did he omit the mention of these places, through a vague apprehension that the argument for immersion would be a little weakened, if they were named? *

2. We now affirm that the Scriptural account of baptism, as administered by the apostles, is de-

*Professor Stuart, after stating that great multitudes of people flocked to John, says: "Nothing could be more natural than for John to choose a place that was watered by many streams, where all could be accommodated." And he goes into a critical examination of the phrase *POLLA HUDATA*, translated *MUCH WATER*, to show that these Greek words being in the plural number, ought to be translated *MANY WATERS* or *RIVULETS*. After a careful examination of the usage of the New Testament, he thus concludes: "No example, then, can be brought in the New Testament of the application of *HUDATA*, to designate merely quantity of water, simply considered as deep and abounding. It is either the vast waters of the sea or lake, as agitated by the winds and broken into waves, or the multiplied waters of numerous springs and fountains, which are here designated by the plural of the word in question."

The general usage of the Septuagint, as he shows, is the same as that of the New Testament. He says: "I do not deny that in the Septuagint, for example, *HUDOR* and *HUDATA* are sometimes promiscuously used, without any perceptible difference of meaning. In most cases, however, this is not the fact; but the plural *HUDATA* is used to designate great bodies of water, or numerous bodies or streams of it, e. g. in Gen., 1: 10, 20, 21, 22; Exod., 2: 19, and 8: 6, and 15: 27, and 20: 4, and often so elsewhere. The promiscuous use, in some cases,

cidedly unfavorable to immersionists. Look at the facts.

1st. In no single instance do we find the apostles either going to streams of water, or going out of their way in search of water, or delaying the baptism of any one, or of any number of persons for lack of water. Converts were uniformly baptized at the time, and at the place of their conversion.

The first example worthy of attention, is the bap-

of HUDOR and HUDATA, in the version of the seventy, seems to be the result of imitating the Hebrew; for the Hebrew has only a plural form to designate the element of water."

The evidence that there were many rivulets—not a deep stream in Enon—Stuart thinks, is much strengthened by the use of the word POLLA, many. He says: "Why should the epithet POLLA be added to HUDATA, in John 3: 22-24, if merely deep water, or a quantity sufficient for immersing, was intended? The natural and primary meaning of POLLUS, is many, in opposition to few. It has merely a secondary meaning, especially so when in the plural number, if at any time it designates largeness of quantity, intensity of degree, etc. On the whole, I cannot divest myself of the impression, that there seems to be something extravagant in the supposition, that not only the plural HUDATA, which naturally designates a large quantity, or many streams of water, but also POLLA should be employed, in order to designate a quantity of water sufficient for baptizing by immersion, when any small rivulet would furnish abundant means for such a purpose. I cannot avoid the belief, therefore, that HUDATA POLLA is designed, as Beza says, to designate many streams or rivulets. John chose a place abounding in these, when removed from the banks of the Jordan, in order that the multitudes who flocked to him might be accommodated."

tism of the *three thousand* on the day of Pentecost. These were the first Christian baptisms ever administered; and, of course, they would be looked to as an example to be followed. Consequently, the inspired historian might be expected to give a full history of all that was of importance. In reading the record in the Acts, our attention is turned to several particulars: 1st. The *place*. The disciples were together in a house in Jerusalem. It is not possible that three thousand persons were immersed in that house in one day; and no intimation is given that they left the place where they were assembled to go after water. 2d. The *water*. Where did the apostles find sufficient water for the immersion of so many? Did they leave the house where they were assembled? The historian does not intimate anything of the kind. If they left the house, could they find any stream of sufficient depth? There is no such stream in or near Jerusalem. Did the Jews, who had so recently crucified our Saviour, open to them their public or private baths, cisterns, etc? Who can believe it? And if they had, would not a fact so remarkable have been mentioned? 3d. The *number*. Could the twelve apostles baptize *three thousand* persons in that day? Immersionists have made precise calculations of the rapidity with which persons might be immersed; but they have omitted several very important items, as, for example, how long Peter was preaching, before the converts were ready for bap-

tism. Luke gives a very brief outline of his discourse, and says: "With many other words did he testify and exhort." Then how long were the apostles in determining who were proper subjects for baptism? What time did it require to find places for baptizing? Some, seeing the serious difficulties attending the immersionist theory, have supposed that others besides the apostles, assisted in baptizing. But what other persons there were authorized to baptize? Others have ventured to guess that the whole number were not baptized on that day; but this conjecture is directly in the face of the inspired record—"Then they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added to them three thousand souls." 4th. But how, on the theory of immersionists, are we to account for the profound silence of Luke concerning all these matters? Not a word does he say about going to any water, or about any delay or difficulty for want of water.

Now, if these baptisms were administered by pouring or sprinkling, every difficulty disappears, and the whole account is both credible and perfectly natural. But the supposition that the three thousand were immersed, is attended with insuperable difficulties. We cannot but commend the prudence of Mr. Campbell in passing by these first Christian baptisms without a single remark, or the slightest notice!

2d. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read of multitudes added to the church from time to time; but in

no instance do we find the apostles or their fellow-laborers going out of their way for water, or delaying the administration of the ordinance for want of it. In this same country, our immersionist friends assure us, it was necessary for John the Baptist to go to Jordan and to Enon, to find water to immerse; but the apostles, it would seem, found abundance of water to immerse very far greater numbers! Truly, the cause of immersion draws rather largely upon our credulity.

3d. In every instance where a particular account of the administration of baptism is given in the Acts, the circumstances are most decidedly against the idea of immersion. If the baptism of the eunuch be considered an exception to this general statement, we will presently notice it particularly.

Paul received baptism in the right mode. *Where* was he, when baptized? He was in the house of Judas, in the city of Damascus. Did he leave the house to be baptized? Nothing of the kind is intimated; nor was his condition very favorable for a walk to a stream of water. In what *position* was he baptized? Ananias said to him: "Arise, (*anastas,*) and be baptized;" "and he arose, (*anastas,*) and was baptized." * Now, the obvious meaning of this language is, that at the bidding of Ananias, Paul rose to his feet, from a recumbent or sitting

* Compare Acts, 9: and 22.

position, and thus was baptized. Mr. Campbell, laying aside the prudence which led him to pass in silence several other difficulties, attempts to defend his cause against this clear, conclusive case. He says: "Almost every orator, indeed, in a persuasive and hortatory address, in our language, uses the term *rise*, when an erect position, or a mere change of position is never thought of." He gives the following illustrations: "Rise, citizens! Rise, sinners! Rise, men, and let us do our duty."* "In this common-sense import of the term," says he, "did Ananias address Paul." But there are two serious difficulties in the way of this exposition, viz:

1st. Ananias was not playing the orator, addressing an audience in impassioned exhortation. He was deliberately and solemnly delivering a divine message to a single individual.

2d. Luke giving the history of this affair in another chapter, says, Paul "arose, and was baptized."† Here, even Mr. Campbell will not pretend to find "a persuasive or hortatory address." It is a simple, plain narrative. Now, if we were to admit that the address of Ananias to Paul might bear the exposition given by Mr. Campbell, the difficulty which presses the cause of immersion would not be removed; for it is certain that the language of Luke, recording the event, admits of no such explanation.

* p. 170

† Acts, 9,

Mr. Campbell did not entirely lose his prudence in arguing this point; for he confines himself, in his criticisms, wholly to the language of Ananias, in Acts, 22: 16, making not the slightest allusion to the language of Luke, recording the baptism of Paul, in the ninth chapter! And yet it is impossible that he could be ignorant of the fact, that it is chiefly upon this last that Pedo-baptists found their argument. Why did he not meet the question fairly? The same unfairness we had occasion, several years ago, to expose in Rev. Mr. Malcom, then President of Georgetown College.

Luke says of Paul: "*Anastas ebaptisthe,*" literally translated, *arising or standing up, he was baptized.* From a multitude of examples which might be adduced, we give a few, that the unlearned reader may judge of the soundness of our argument. "And the high priest arose, (*anastas,*) and said to him," etc.* "And the high priest stood up (*anastas*) in their midst, and asked Jesus," etc.† "And in those days, Peter stood up (*anastas*) in the midst of the disciples, and said," etc.‡ "Then stood there up (*anastas*) one in the council, and said," etc.§ "And he arose, (*anastas,*) and followed him."|| In every instance, the participle *anastas* expresses the act of rising to the feet: and the

* Matt., 26: 62. † Mark, 14: 50. ‡ Acts, 1: 15

§ Acts, 5: 34.

|| Matt., 9: 9.

action following is performed in a standing position. Is it not clear, then, that Paul rose to his feet, and in that position was baptized? The very fact that Mr. Campbell has kept out of view the passage on which, as he knew, the Pedo-baptist argument is chiefly based, proves that he felt himself unable to grapple with it.

Cornelius and his family were the first Gentiles who received Christian baptism. *Where were they baptized?* Peter instructed them in the house of Cornelius; and when he saw that God had accepted them, he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" But not one intimation is given, that they left the house for the purpose of being baptized; and not a word is uttered which looks toward immersion.*

The same may be said of the baptism of the jailor and his family.† They were baptized after midnight, and in the prison. Not an intimation is given that they left the prison, and not a word indicating immersion.

But was not the eunuch immersed? This, let it be noted, is the only example of Christian baptism to which immersionists appeal, as favoring their views! Only think of it—but a solitary instance of Christian baptism in the New Testament, to which immersionists themselves appeal! But was not the

* Acts, 10.

† Acts, 16.

eunuch immersed? The only evidence that he was immersed, is in the following language: "And they went down both into the water, etc., and when they were come up out of the water," etc. Now, let us admit what Professor Stuart has shown cannot be proved—that both Philip and the eunuch went literally *into* the water, and that this fact might seem to favor immersion. Yet the place was a *desert*,* where it is not at all probable that sufficient water could be found to immerse a man. Besides, we read of no change of garments; nor is a solitary circumstance mentioned, which looks towards immersion. The probabilities, therefore, seem quite as strong, to say the least, in favor of *pouring*, as of immersion.

We pass, for the present, all those criticisms upon the *prepositions*, which might strengthen our argument. They are not needed to sustain the mode of baptism for which we are contending. We can afford to leave out of view many arguments which are not destitute of weight.

LETTER IX.

DEAR SIR: I have said that we can admit all that is affirmed by immersionists, concerning the

* Acts, 8: 26.

Greek *prepositions*, and yet successfully vindicate our views of the mode of baptism. Let it be admitted that our Saviour, after being baptized, "went up strait-way out of the water," and that Philip and the eunuch "went down both into the water," and "came up out of the water;" is there any certainty that the baptism, which was administered after they got into the water, was performed by immersion? Does not the cause of immersion rest here upon an uncertain inference? As John was baptizing at Jordan, there would be no inconvenience to persons in stepping into the water to receive the ordinance by *pouring*; and many of the ancients believed that John administered baptism by pouring water on persons standing in the river. "Not a few of the ancients," says Dr. Pond, "entertained the opinion that John baptized by pouring. After this manner, Aurelius Prudentius, who wrote A. D. 390, represents him as baptizing—*Perfundit fluvio*, etc.—*He poured water upon them in the river*. A few years later, Paulinus, bishop of Nola, says, 'He (John Baptist) washes away the sins of believers (*infusis lymphis*) by the pouring of water.' Numerous ancient pictures represent Christ as having been baptized by *pouring*. Bernard speaks of John as having baptized his Lord after this manner: '*Infundit aquam capite Creatoris creatura*'—*The creature poured water on the head of the Crea-*

tor."* If, then, we admit that both the administrator and the subject went *into* water, there is no certainty that the ordinance was administered by immersion.

But is there any satisfactory evidence that they did go into the water? Much importance has been attached to the language of Matthew concerning Christ's baptism. Professor Stuart adduces two arguments to prove that our Saviour did not emerge from the water. The first is, that the word *anabaino*, translated *went up*, is not used in such a sense. "This verb," says he, "means to ascend, mount, go up, viz: a ship, a hill, an eminence, a chariot, a tree, a horse, a rostrum, etc. But as to *emerging from water*, I can find no such meaning attached to it. The Greeks have a proper word for this, and one continually employed by the ecclesiastical fathers, in order to designate emerging from the water; and this is *anaduo*, which means to *come up out of the water*, the ground," etc. The New Testament, he asserts, affords no example of the use of *anabaino* in the sense of emerging from water.

The second argument is, that the preposition *apo*, translated *out of*, "will not allow such a construction." "I have found no example," he says, "where it is applied to indicate a movement *out of* a liquid

* Pond on Baptism, p. 38.

into the air." Indeed, no scholar will pretend that *apo* expresses definitely going *out of a thing*. It means simply *from*. It is, however, not necessary to take so strong ground as does Professor Stuart. It is enough to assert, (what no scholar will deny,) that if our Saviour was on the margin of the river, not at all *in* it, his ascent up the banks would be properly expressed by the very language used by Matthew—*anebe apo*. There is, therefore, no evidence that he was literally in the water.

Nor can it be proved, that Philip and the eunuch went *into* the water. The words translated *went down into*, are *katabaino eis*. Evidently, the word *katabaino* can express nothing more than descending from the chariot to the water. If they went *into* it, this must be expressed by *eis*. Now, it is true that *eis* does sometimes signify *into*; but it cannot be denied, that about as frequently it means simply *to*. "So common, indeed," says Stuart, "is the meaning of *eis*, when it designates direction to a place, or *toward* it, that Bretschneider has given this as its first and leading signification." Of the following examples, the unlearned reader can judge as well as the scholar: "Go thou to (*eis*) the sea, and cast a hook." * "Peter, therefore, went forth, and that other disciple, and came to (*eis*) the sepulchre—and the other disciple did out-

* Matt., 17: 27.

ran Peter, and came first to (*eis*) the sepulchre—yet went he not in.” “And he was nigh unto (*eis*) Jericho.” “He went before ascending up to (*anabainon eis*) Jerusalem; and it came to pass, when he was come nigh to (*eis*) Bathpage and Bethany.” “Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto (*eis*) Gaza,” etc. Examples might easily be multiplied, but these are sufficient to show that the word *eis* would take Philip and the eunuch to the water, but not certainly further.

The words translated “come up out of the water,” are *anabaino ek*. Stuart, as we have seen, strongly maintains that *anabaino* does not properly express the idea of *emerging* from a fluid. It is not necessary, however, to take so strong ground. It is enough for us, that as *katabaino eis* expresses going down to the water, so *anabaino ek* expresses ascending *from* it. The following examples will show how the word *ek* is commonly used; “And he riseth from (*ek*) supper, and laid aside his garments,” etc. “When he shall return from (*ek*) the wedding.” “And they shall gather together his elect from (*ek*) the four winds.” “For a friend of mine in (or from, *ek*) his journey is come to me.” “For she came from (*ek*) the uttermost parts of the earth.”

Evidently, then, nothing more can be proved from the language used with reference to Philip and the

eunuch, than that they descended from the chariot to the water, which, in all probability, was only a spring, and that they ascended *from* it. As Stuart well remarks, "Whether the person thus *going down eis to hutor* (to the water) enters *into* it or not, must be designated in some other way than by this expression, which itself leaves the matter in uncertainty." Dr. Dick, Professor of Theology in the the United Session Church, takes the same view. He says: "It is certain that *eis* does sometimes signify *into*, and *ek*, *out of*; but it is equally certain that at other times the proper translation of the one is *to*, and of the other, is *from*. When Jesus came—*eis mnemeion*—to the *Sepulchre of Lazarus*, (John, 11: 38,) we know that he did not enter *into* it; and when ships came from Tiberias—*ek Tiberiados*—(John, 6: 23,) we do not suppose that they sailed out of the midst of the city, but that that was the place from which their voyage commenced. The The preposition *ek* simply signifies *the point from which* a movement is made. In the present case, nothing more is intimated by the sacred historian, than that Philip and the eunuch went to the place where they saw water, and that after baptism they both left it." *Lect. on Theology*, p. 471. Scott, the learned commentator, says: "The various ways in which the prepositions *en* and *eis*, which are employed on this subject, are rendered in English in our authorized version on other subjects, must convince

any one who examines it, that no weight can be laid upon them in controversial discussion; though the sound of the word may influence a mere English reader." Comment. on Matt., 3: 6 *

The argument from the *prepositions*, then, stands thus: If we admit all that immersionists affirm con-

* It may be interesting to our readers to see the substance of Professor Stuart's criticism on this point. It is as follows:

Did Philip and the eunuch go **INTO** the water? Or did they simply descend to it, and ascend **FROM** it? On this point, Professor Stuart says: "Such a collection of water is usually, of course, in some valley or ravine. Hence it is said, in v. 38, 'They went down **EIS** TO HUDOR, to the water, as some would render it, or **INTO** the water, as others insist it should be translated.' Does **EIS** in this case, admit of either sense? And which is to be preferred? That **EIS**, with the verb **KATABAINO**, (which is to be used in Acts 8: 38,) often means going down to a place, is quite certain; e. g. John 2: 12, 'Jesus went down to (**EIS**) Capernaum;' Acts, 7: 15, 'Jacob went down to (**EIS**) Egypt;' Acts, 14: 25, 'They went down to (**EIS**) Attalia;' Acts, 16: 8, 'They went down to (**EIS**) Troas;' Acts, 18: 22, 'He went down to (**EIS**) Antioch;' Acts, 25: 6, 'Going down to (**EIS**) Cesarea; comp. Luke, 10: 30, 18: 14; Acts, 8: 26, et al. So common, indeed, is the meaning of **EIS**, when it designates direction to a place, or toward it, that Bretschneider has given this as its first and leading signification; but I have confined my examples to its connection with **KATABAINO**. On the other hand, I find but one passage in the New Testament, where it seems to mean into, when used with the verb **KATABAINO**. This is Roman, 10: 7: 'Who shall go down **EIS** ABYSSON, into the abyss.' Even here, the sense to is good. And, in fact, when one analyzes the idea of **KATABAINON**, going down, descending, he finds that it indicates the action performed before reaching a place, the approximation to it by

cerning their meaning, they prove nothing decidedly in favor of immersion. But they will not even take persons *into* the water, much less will they immerse them.

descent, real or supposed, and not the entering into it. ΕΙΣΕΡΧΟΜΑΙ is the appropriate word for entering into; or rather (in distinction from ΚΑΤΑΒΑΙΝΟ) εμβαινο is the appropriate word, to signify entrance into any place or thing. Hence I must conclude, on the whole, that although in several of the above cases of katabaino with ΕΙΣ, we may translate ΕΙΣ by into and still make good sense in English; yet the real and appropriate signification of this phraseology in the New Testament seems plainly to be, going to a place," etc.

I must come, then, to the conclusion, that katebesan amphoterōi eis to hudor, in Acts, 8:38, does neither necessarily nor probably mean, they descended into the water. This conclusion is rendered nearly certain, by the exact counterpart or antithesis of this expression, which is found in v. 39, where, after the baptism, it is said anebesen ek tou hudatos—they went up from the water. We have seen that anabaino is never employed in the sense of emerging from a liquid substance. The preposition ek, here, would agree well with this idea; but anabaino forbids us thus to construe it. As, then, to go up from the water, is to ascend the bank of a stream, pool, fountain; so to go down to the water, is to go down the bank of such stream, fountain, or pool, and to come to the water. Whether the person thus going down eis to hudor, enters into it or not, must be designated in some other way than by this expression, which of itself leaves the matter in uncertainty."

LETTER X.

DEAR SIR: We have examined some *six* different classes of evidence, and found them all against the exclusive claims of immersionists. Let us now see what light is thrown upon this subject by the *nature* and *design* of baptism.

Nothing respecting the mode of administering the ordinance can be learned either from the name of the Trinity, or from the person administering; but something may be learned from the *significancy* of the ordinance.

What reference has baptism to the *burial* of Christ? Immersionists have relied very much on Rom., 6: 4, as conclusive in favor of their views; and not a few Pede-baptists have seemed willing to admit, in this passage, a reference to immersion. We propose, therefore, to examine it with some care. Let the reader turn to the passage, and read it in its entire connection. Then we suggest for his examination two questions:

1. *What is the apostle seeking to prove?* He is answering the objection urged by some against the doctrine of justification by faith, without the works of the law—that it encourages men to live in sin. Grace, he had said, abounds the more where sin has abounded. He anticipates the objection, and asks, whether it follows from this doctrine, that men may

continue in sin that grace may abound? He denies the consequence, and proves that the Gospel, whilst it offers justification by grace, also imparts sanctification—that those who are delivered by Jesus Christ from the curse of the law, are, at the same time, delivered from the power and pollution of sin. As Christ died *for* sin, so the believer dies *to* sin. As Christ was buried, and rose again, so the believer is buried, as to “the old man,” and rises to a new and holy life. *Three* figures are employed in expressing this truth, viz: burial, planting, and crucifixion.

2. *What connection has baptism with this change in the heart and life of the believer?* It is the ordinance which visibly identifies him with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. “How shall we,” the apostle asks, “that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” But how does it appear that the believer is dead to sin? Because, in being baptized in the name of Christ, he professed faith in the saving efficacy of his *death*, and was consequently baptized into his death, and thus became identified with him in his death, burial, and resurrection. Now, since Jesus Christ died to deliver his people from the dominion, as well as from the curse of sin, the true believer *dies to sin*, puts off the old man with his deeds, and rises, as Jesus rose, to a new and holy life.

That such is the meaning of the passage, seems

clear from the whole connection. It is in precise accordance with the object of the apostle's argument, and it gives a consistent exposition of the language itself. The *death* is spiritual—a death to sin; the *resurrection* is spiritual—to a new life. The *burial*, therefore, must be spiritual—a putting off the old sinful nature.

The admission of some Pedito-baptists, that there is probably a reference here to immersion, as it seems to us, is not warranted by the language of Paul, especially when we remember how little resemblance there is between burying, as it was practiced among the Jews, and the plunging of the human body into water; and how little significance such a reference would have amongst Roman Christians, who were familiar with the burning of dead bodies, and gathering up the ashes, and placing them in an urn. Additional force is given to this argument by the fact that in Coloss., 2: 11, 12, this spiritual burial is identical with spiritual *circumcision*, which is nothing else but sanctification.

Let it be remembered that Mr. Campbell himself has contended that in the Scriptures, baptism is an *ablution*. It is “the washing of water.”* It is “the washing of regeneration.”† It is the emblematic washing away of sins.‡ Now, such being the pre-

* Eph., 5: 21.

† Titus, 3: 5.

‡ Acts, 22: 16.

cise meaning of baptism, who does not see that pouring or sprinkling is quite as expressive of cleansing, as immersing, and even more so? Can any reason be given, why an ordinance, the meaning of which is *cleansing*, should be performed in the latter mode, rather than in the former?

But, Mr. Campbell, who glories in his originality, imagines that he has made a new and most important discovery in relation to pouring and sprinkling. He has a chapter on *legal sprinklings*, which contains the following as its leading proposition: "That sprinkling or pouring mere water on any person or thing for any moral, ceremonial, or religious use, was never done by the authority of God since the world began." This proposition he regards as likely to settle the whole controversy! "It will put an end to this everlasting strife about foreign authorities, Greek verbs, nouns, and prepositions. It will decide the wavering; it will strengthen the weak; it will confound opposition; it will silence every demur."* To this rather amusing boast, we have two or three answers, viz:

1. It is a fact, that God did command several washings with mere water—as, for example, that of Aaron and his sons at the door of the Tabernacle; and as Mr. C. admits that *washing* includes pouring and sprinkling, he cannot deny that the washing in

* p. 171.

question might have been performed thus. Nay, more; since Aaron and his sons were to be washed at the door of the tabernacle in the wilderness, it is quite certain that the ceremony was performed by pouring or sprinkling. Mr. Campbell mentions sixteen distinct *bathings* in the law of Moses, and adds, "These washings or bathings are uniformly expressed by *louo*, and contrasted with pourings and sprinklings. How the bathing was accomplished we are not told, only that it was not done by pouring or sprinkling."* Now, it is true, as he says, that these washings are uniformly expressed by *louo*, in Greek, and they are as uniformly expressed by *rahatz*. in Hebrew. These words, as Mr. Campbell admits, signify *washing*, and do not express any particular mode of doing it. It is not true, however, that they are "contrasted with pourings and sprinklings." They stand in *connection with* the sprinkling of water and blood or of water and ashes, but they do not, in a single instance, stand in *contrast* with pouring or sprinkling. Moreover, it is not true, that the Scriptures intimate, either directly or indirectly, that those washings were not performed by pouring or sprinkling. Not a word is used which expresses Mr. Campbell's "*action*." What, then, is his important proposition worth?

2. The question between us and the immersionists,

* p. 174.

is not concerning *the fluid* to be used, but concerning the *mode of using it*. Baptism, it is admitted, is an *ablution—a cleansing*. Is the application of water by pouring or sprinkling an appropriate emblem of *purification*? God himself answers the question—“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,” etc.* Here the application of water by sprinkling, is the divinely chosen emblem of spiritual cleansing—the precise thing of which Christian baptism is the emblem. How, then, can it be possible that baptism, thus administered, is not both valid and scriptural? Let it be admitted, though it cannot be proved, that the reference of Ezekiel is to the water into which the ashes of a blood-red heifer had been cast; what then? It is only the fitter type of Christian baptism, which is the emblem of a *blood-bought* purification. But the casting of the ashes into the water, can have no effect on the significancy of *sprinkling*. Besides, this is a prophecy which looks to the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, when they would, of course, receive Christian baptism, the sprinkling of clean water.

In precise accordance with this, is the prediction

* Ezekiel, 36: 25, 26.

concerning Christ. "So shall he sprinkle many nations."* Mr. Campbell would evade the force of this passage, by referring to Junius and Tremellius, who understand it to mean *to sprinkle with astonishment*; and to the Septuagint, which has the same idea. But the undeniable fact is, that the Hebrew word uniformly means *to sprinkle*; and *to sprinkle with astonishment*, is a phrase most extraordinary, which has nothing resembling it in the Scriptures. Besides, the prophet's theme is the redemption of men by Jesus Christ; and, therefore, the idea of sprinkling, *in order to cleanse*—an idea familiar in the Old Testament—is far more appropriate.

The fact, however, is clear beyond cavil, that pouring or sprinkling is an appropriate and scriptural mode of representing spiritual cleansing; and this is certainly the meaning of baptism, Mr. C. himself being judge.

We may as well now state one or two facts, viz:

1. Not one *personal immersion* is required in the law of Moses. Many *washings* were prescribed for the different kinds of uncleanness; but on no occasion was the Jew commanded to immerse himself in water. We state the fact, and defy contradiction.
2. † In every instance in which the mode of ceremonial cleansing was prescribed in the law of Moses,

* Isaiah, 52: 15.

† See See Levit., 14: 7, 51; Num., 8: 8, and 19: 18, 19.

that mode was *sprinkling*. Now is it not amazing, that the very mode of cleansing chosen by God, and repeatedly alluded to by the prophets, should be thought so unsuitable in these last days, as to be pronounced *invalid*?—the more amazing, since the Jews had no *immersion*, and had “divers baptisms,” (washings.) We place these facts by the side of Mr. Campbell’s important proposition, and let the candid reader decide which should have the greater weight in this argument.

This argument is greatly strengthened by the remarkable fact, that the Holy Spirit, of whose sanctifying influence baptism is the emblem, is uniformly represented as *poured out* upon persons; and in no instance are they said to be *immersed into* the Spirit. Thus the baptism of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, is declared to be the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel—“And it shall come to pass, in the last days, saith God, I will POUR OUT of my Spirit on all flesh,” etc.* And the spiritual baptism of Cornelius and his family is spoken of thus: “The Holy Ghost fell on all them,” etc. †

But, says Mr. Campbell, “There can possibly be no analogy between the pouring of water and the pouring out of the Spirit. There is no resemblance between *Spirit* and *water*,” etc. ‡ How, then, we

* Acts, 2 : 16, 17.

† Acts, 10 : 44.

‡ p. 162.

ask Mr. Campbell, did the inspired writers come to use the phrase, *outpouring of the Spirit*, if there be no analogy, and, consequently, no propriety in the figure? The simple truth is, 1st. That the work of the Holy Spirit, in purifying the hearts of men, is represented in baptism by *water*, which has the quality of *cleansing*; and because, in the ceremonial purifications of the Old Testament, and in the baptism of the New Testament, water was applied by *pouring* or *sprinkling*, the Holy Spirit was spoken of as *poured out*. The figure was, of course, borrowed from the prevalent custom of baptizing by pouring. If not, whence arose this mode of speaking of the Spirit's influence? Can Mr. Campbell tell us?

“But the pouring out of the Spirit,” says Mr. Campbell, “is never called baptism. It is, strictly, the preparation for it, just as the tanner or fuller pours out water in his vat, in order to prepare for immersing into it the subject of these processes. So God poured out the gifts of the Spirit most copiously on Pentecost, that the disciples might be subjected to, or immersed in all these influences.” Again, “The influence of the Spirit poured out, fills some place; into that persons may be immersed,” etc.* Passing the grossness of these allusions, what, we earnestly ask, does Mr. Campbell mean by say-

* pp. 168, 179.

ing, the *gifts* of the Spirit were copiously poured out, and the apostles were plunged or immersed into those gifts? What does he mean by the *influence* of the Spirit filling a *place*, and persons being plunged into that? Such language, we venture to affirm, means nothing. It serves only to blind the simple; and the necessity of resorting to it, shows under how great difficulties the cause of immersion labors. Mr. Campbell contends earnestly, that the word *baptize* expresses the *definite action* of immersing; and yet when the Holy Spirit is said to be *poured out upon men*, he insists that the *influence* of the Spirit is poured, not on men, but *into a place*, and that men are plunged into that *place or influence!* How can men bring themselves to perversions of the Scriptures so glaring? Is it not strange that they would rather make the Scriptures speak nonsense, than allow them to teach what they do not like?

LETTER XI.

DEAR SIR: Amongst the most plausible and least forcible of your arguments for exclusive immersion, is that founded on what you call “convertible terms”—an argument, as you say, “for the special benefit of the more uneducated.” You are right, we think, in supposing that it is better adapted to pro-

duce an impression upon the ignorant. Others might easily detect its fallacy.

The principle on which you found your argument, you state thus: "The definition of a word and the word itself, are always convertible terms. For example, to say law is a rule of action, is equivalent to saying, a rule of action is a law."* You conclude, that since the words *sprinkle* and *pour* cannot be substituted for *baptizo*, in the Bible, this latter word, of course, does not signify to *pour* or *sprinkle*. Let us, for the sake of argument, admit the correctness of your rule, and then show that it proves nothing for your cause.

1. It might prove, what no one denies, that the word *baptizo* does not definitely express the act of pouring or sprinkling; but it would not prove that it does not signify to *cleanse, to wash, to purify, BY POURING OR SPRINKLING*. For example, God commanded Moses to bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the Tabernacle, and *wash* them with water.† It would not do to substitute the word *pour* for the word *wash*, in this passage; and yet, it is clear, that the washing was done by *pouring*. Certainly, it *might* have been so done. And when Origen says, the alter was *baptized* at the command of Elijah, it will not do to substitute the word *pour* for the word *baptize*; and yet we know that the

* p. 178.

† Exod., 11: 12.

altar was baptized by pouring. In this case, the word *baptize* expresses *the thing done*, and the word *pour*, *the mode of doing it*. Precisely so, the word *baptizo*, as used by our Saviour, expresses the administration of a certain ordinance, *the mode of administering* which is to be learned from the *meaning* of the ordinance, and the *circumstances* attending its administration. This is in accordance with one of the simplest principles of language, of which it would be easy to give a thousand examples. One more will suffice. We read* that the eunuch, after being baptized, “went on his way rejoicing.” The word *went* expresses the thing done; but *how* did he go? The context shows, that he went *in a chariot*. Will any one pretend that the word *went* signifies *riding in a chariot*? No; for the eunuch might have gone *on foot*, or on *horseback*.

2. Certain words, in every language, acquire what is called a *technical* meaning, which is not identical with their *popular* sense. Numberless examples might be given from philosophy, law, medicine, and every science. The Christian system also has its *technical terms*. A few examples will suffice. The words *presbyter* and *elder* signify properly an old man; but in the New Testament, they are also used to designate one who fills a certain office, though he

* Acts, 8: 49.

be a *young man*. In 1 Tim., 5: 1, the word is used in the former sense; in Titus, 1: 5, it is used in the latter. The word *deacon* signifies a *servant*, one who serves in any capacity; but it is also used to designate one who fills a particular office in the church. In John, 2: 5, it is used in its popular sense; in 1 Tim., 3: 12, it is used in its technical sense. The word *ordain* belongs to the same class. It is employed in its popular sense in Acts, 16: 4; in its technical sense in Acts, 14: 23. The word *baptize*, also, appropriated to designate a particular ordinance, has acquired a technical sense.

Now, this principle of "convertible terms," does not apply to words in their technical sense. A *presbyter* or *elder*, we have said, is literally an *old man*. Substitute *old men* for *presbyters* or *elders*, in Acts, 14: 23, 1 Tim., 5: 17, James, 5: 14, and see what sense you will make? Substitute, in the same way, the word *servant* for *deacon*. Then substitute the word *decree*, which is the popular meaning, for the word *ordain*, in Acts, 14: 23, Tit., 1: 5.

Truly, it is amazing that any man, having even a tolerable knowledge of language, should attempt to apply the principle of "convertible terms" to words used in a technical sense. But the cause of immersion drives its advocates to many most singular positions.

3. But, after all, will the cause of immersion

itself bear to be tested by this principle? Mr. Campbell affirms that "the everywhere current signification of *baptizo*, the word chosen by Jesus Christ, in his commission to the apostles, is to *dip*, *plunge*, or *immerse*." Now substitute plunge for *baptize*. Then we shall read, that Nebuchadnezzar was *plunged from* the dew of heaven! That Judith went out at night, and *plunged herself at* a fountain! That the Pharisee who invited our Saviour to dine, wondered that he was not *plunged* before eating! That the law of Moses had *divers plungings*! That Elisha commanded the priests, before he called down fire on the sacrifice, to *plunge the altar* three times! That the penitent backslider was *plunged* a second time with tears! These are strange expressions, calculated to provoke a smile; but the cause of *plunging* requires them. Mr. Campbell admits that, in some cases, "the association may appear strange and uncouth in style;" but he insists that "it will always be not only practicable in fact, but good in meaning."* Yes, perfectly practicable in fact to *plunge* Nebuchadnezzar *from* dew—no difficulty at all in *plunging* Elisha's altar with the sacrifice lying on it, and in doing this by *pouring*—perfectly easy for a man to be *plunged* into his tears, or into his own blood! If immersion cannot work miracles, it can certainly

* 1. 179.

do many wonderful things, which, to men of common sense, appear perfectly impracticable.

Mr. Campbell even goes so far as to assert, that the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, were plunged into the Holy Spirit! “The influence of the Spirit poured out, fills some place: into that, persons may be immersed.”* Such language, as we have before remarked, means nothing. It is sheer nonsense to talk of the *influence* of the Spirit being poured into *some place*, and of men being *plunged* into that. The language, says Mr. C., is “strange and uncouth.” Yes, but the cause of immersion cannot be sustained, without putting into the mouths of inspired men, language, not only strange and uncouth, (which is sufficient proof that the doctrine is false,) but absolutely *unmeaning*. They never used a strange and uncouth style; much less, did they use words and phrases without meaning.

But what is to be done with the *baptism by fire*? † “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” ‡ Here is the fulfillment of the promise recorded in Matthew; but there is no *plunging*. The cause of immersion has required the converting of the promise into a terrific threat; so that Matt., 3: 11, should be interpreted to mean—*He shall plunge some of you into the Holy Spirit; and*

* p. 179.

† Matt., 3: 11.

‡ Acts, 2: 3.

others of you he will plunge into hell fire! Mr. Campbell is so determined to make *baptizo* always mean to *plunge*, that he adopts, unhesitatingly, this gross perversion of an important passage of God's word! The plain truth is, that Mr. C.'s principle of "convertible terms," as he applies it, is not only unsound, but it is fatal to his own doctrine. It proves, demonstrably, that the word *baptizo* does not express the definite action of immersing.

And now, Mr. Campbell, allow me to bid you a friendly adieu. The subject, I am aware, is not exhausted; but your main positions have been briefly examined; and evidence abundant, I think, has been furnished to prove that baptism, by pouring and sprinkling, is both valid and scriptural. The following points, if I mistake not, have been made out, viz :

1. That baptism is not *an action*; and the fact, that immersionists have been driven to a view of the ordinance so palpably unscriptural, is presumptive evidence against the exclusive claims of immersion.

2. The almost universal belief of the Christian church, in every age, of those whose vernacular tongue was the Greek, of those who even practiced generally *trine immersion*, is decidedly against you. With the exception of a mere handful, (and those have lived in modern times,) all have understood the Scriptures to teach that *baptism* is one

thing, and the *mode* of administering it another; and that the latter is not essential to the validity of the ordinance. It is far more probable that the comparatively few exclusive immersionists in modern times, have been misled by their unwise zeal, than that all Christendom, for eighteen hundred years, have failed to understand one of the plainest commands in the New Testament.

3. The lexicons, ancient and modern, with remarkable unanimity, contradict your position, that *baptizo* signifies simply and definitely to *dip* or *plunge*. All assign to the word other meanings in accordance with our views, such as to *cleanse*, to *wash*—words which you admit express nothing of *mode*.

4. Classic usage, though a very uncertain guide in interpreting Scripture language, is also against you. Amongst Greek writers, *baptizo* means the moistening of one's hand with one's own blood, the wetting of a blister plaster with breast-milk, and the flowing of water over the ground, as well as the sinking of a ship or the drowning of a man; whilst *bapto* has even a greater variety of meaning.

5. Scripture usage is still more decidedly against you. Thus *bapto* expresses *moistening*, wetting with dew, sprinkling garments with blood, etc. And *baptizo* generally occurs in such circumstances, where the ordinance of baptism is not mentioned, as to show that the water was applied to the person, not the person to the water. The cause of immersion can be

sustained only by supposing the existence of customs among the Jews, which could not have existed, and which are mentioned by no writer, and by making the inspired writers use language "strange and uncouth."

6. The translations are against you; for scarcely one of them, either in ancient or modern times, translates *baptizo* by the words meaning to *immerse*. All are either transferred, as our Bible does, or translated by a generic term, expressing the idea of *cleansing, confirming, etc.*

7. The usage of the Christian fathers is against you. Origen, the most learned of the Greeks, substituted *rantizo*, to sprinkle, for *bapto*, and used the word *baptizo* to signify *pouring* water on an altar. Others spoke of the baptism of tears and of blood. All administered baptism by pouring and sprinkling, when necessary, and none questioned the validity of the ordinance thus administered.

8. The *places* where Christian baptism was administered, offer a conclusive argument against you. In but one single instance did any one go to any stream of water for the purpose of baptizing; and in that case, Philip and the eunuch came to the water, as they were traveling. Multitudes were baptized wherever they were converted, without delay, in the crowded city, (three thousand in a day,) in jails, in private houses, even *standing up*.

9. The meaning of the ordinance affords a power-

ful argument against you. It is, you admit, an *ablution*, a *cleansing*; and the Scriptures constantly represent spiritual cleansing by the sprinkling of water and blood, or of clean water, but never by immersion. Is it not most unaccountable, if immersionists are in the right, that sanctification is never represented by immersion?

10. The language of the Scriptures concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, is decidedly unfavorable to immersion. Men were baptized with the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is represented as *poured* upon them, not poured into a *place*, into which they were plunged, as the defence of immersion compels you absurdly to assert. The word *pour*, as applied to the Spirit, is figurative, and was evidently borrowed from the custom of pouring water in the administration of baptism.

11. Even your favorite principle of “convertible terms” is fatal to the cause it is introduced to support. It will not do to substitute *immerse*, *dip*, *plunge*, for *baptize*, whenever this word occurs.

I may safely close the discussion at this point. The evidence in favor of baptizing by pouring or sprinkling seems to me conclusive. Most abundant is the proof, that the position that immersion is the only scriptural and valid baptism, is unscriptural, and calculated to produce schism in the church of Christ. Great and fearful is the responsibility of those who, on grounds so slender, and against so

much evidence, exclude from their fellowship all who have not received baptism by immersion. The close communion, based on this dogma, is not only unscriptural, but is contrary to the promptings of the strongest feelings of multitudes of pious Baptists.

But you may ask, as others have asked, if immersion is admitted to be *valid baptism*, why will not all agree to practice it, and thus terminate the controversy. I answer:

1. We admit the validity of baptism by immersion, only because we hold the *mode* of administering not essential to the ordinance. It is not, in our view, the scriptural mode. If we were convinced that the mode is essential, we would, many of us, deny the validity of immersion. We cannot give countenance to the error which converts an important and significant ordinance into an *action*, and confounds the mode of administration with the ordinance itself.

2. Those who have been scripturally baptized, cannot agree, contrary to Scripture, to receive another baptism less scriptural, to please those who have fallen into error. We may not do evil, that good may come.

3. In every age, the truth has been compromised, and dangerous error fostered, by attaching undue importance to ordinances; and the entire history of the church shows nothing more extreme, than the doctrine of immersionists. No man knows better

than yourself, Mr. Campbell, how the Baptist church has been divided and filled with strife, by controversies about baptism. Your own sect owes its very existence to the zeal and ability with which you plead for immersion, as the only valid baptism, and magnified its efficacy in securing remission of sins.* You began with the defence of immersion, and you ended by making immersion essential to the remission of sins. Having gone so far as to make it essential to salvation, you felt obliged to contend, that every professed disciple, male and female, may administer the ordinance. Nay, in the ardor of your zeal for the emblem of sanctification, you denied the influence of the Holy Spirit in the work of sanctification, confining it simply to the word of God. Like the Jews of old, you clung to the shadow, and rejected the substance; and into this fatal error you were unhap-

* Dr. Jeter, an able Baptist writer, in his late work on Campbellism, makes the following statement respecting the way in which Mr. Campbell gained so great an influence in the Baptist denomination:

“By his fearless and forcible defence of the distinctive sentiments of the Baptists, in his debates with Walker and McCalla, he secured extensively the confidence and esteem of the denomination. They were proud to acknowledge him as the bold puissant champion of their cause; and they made the acknowledgment with more pleasure, because he had risen up suddenly, and in a quarter least expected. They were, therefore, ready to pay not only a candid, but confiding regard to anything he might publish.” pp. 76, 77.

pily successful in drawing multitudes of your fellow-men.

Even now, you and some in the Baptist churches, who but recently were your zealous opponents, are laboring to destroy the public confidence in the best translation of the Scriptures which was ever made, that you may secure a new *immersionist* translation. Thus, you have succeeded, a second time, in introducing division and strife into the Baptist churches. Your zeal and theirs for immersion, leads to these unhappy results, whilst the great doctrines of the cross are thrown into the shade, or entirely rejected. We must stand firm in opposition to this mischievous delusion.

4. The exclusive claims of immersionists stand intimately associated with erroneous views of the design of baptism. Whilst they admit that it signifies sanctification, or spiritual cleansing, they will have it represent the burial of Christ; and this last evidently is most prominent in their view. Under the New Dispensation, there are but two sacraments. One of these, as all admit, represents the death of Christ. Would it not be strange, that the other should represent his burial?—especially, as in the Bible the mere fact of his being laid in a tomb is never represented as being efficacious in securing salvation. It would be even more strange, that two things so extremely unlike, as burial and cleansing, should be signified by the same ordinance. The

truth is, as the Lord's supper represents the death of Christ, through which men are justified, so does baptism represent the work of the Holy Spirit, by which they are sanctified. We cannot agree to adopt a mode of baptism which stands so intimately associated with error, respecting the design of the ordinance.

5. Multitudes of the human family are so situated, that they cannot, if they would, be immersed. There are regions where, during a large part of the year, the cold is so intense, that it is next to impossible to administer baptism by immersion to any considerable number. And there are regions where there is so little water, that a different mode must be adopted, or the ordinance wholly neglected. I am here reminded of one of the earliest baptisms, the mode of which is distinctly stated. Walker tells of a Jew who, while traveling with Christians in the time of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, about sixty or seventy years after the apostles, was converted, fell sick, and desired baptism. Not having water, "they sprinkled him thrice with sand, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." He recovered, and his case was reported to the bishop, who decided that the man was baptized, (*si modo denuo aqua perfunderetur,*) if only water were poured on him again.* This fact shows, that at that early period, the exclusive claims

* Pond on Baptism, p. 45.

of immersion were unknown. There are many, moreover, particularly females, whose infirm health renders it highly dangerous for them to be immersed. We do not believe that our Saviour ever appointed an ordinance to be received by all persons, in all places and conditions, the administration of which is attended with so many difficulties; and we cannot depart from what we regard as the scriptural mode, to favor a mode so unadapted to the necessities of the people.

6. Even if all would agree to be immersed, no union could be effected, unless we would renounce that covenant which embraces believers and their children, and exclude these last from the privileges which the children of believers have enjoyed since there was a church on earth. We may not make so great a sacrifice of covenant blessings.

In another and more permanent form, I may continue this discussion, embracing *the subjects* of baptism. Your book, however, so far as I can learn, excites but little attention, and is accomplishing but little for the cause of immersion. The LEXINGTON DEBATE, Mr. Campbell, fixed public sentiment, with regard to your defence of your peculiar views of baptism, and of your entire reformation. No book which you can write now, is likely to change that public sentiment. You failed in that contest, in which you laid out your whole strength. You failed, after having for years challenged discussion. Your

failure was complete ; it was manifest to all. What you then lost, you cannot recover.

But, Mr. Campbell, you and I are growing older—approaching rapidly the termination of our public labors. It is not the true interest of either of us to mislead others on subjects of so great moment. I would rejoice to see you spend the closing years of your life in repairing the injury which, for so many years, your talents and learning have enabled you to do—in proclaiming that truth which you have so striven to subvert.

With kind wishes, etc.,

N. L. RICE.

INFANT BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE nature and design of baptism we have briefly considered. We now proceed to the question—*To whom is baptism to be administered?* That it is to be administered to *believers*, all, except Quakers, admit. The great majority of professing Christians maintain, that it is to be administered also to *the infant children of believers*. This is the doctrine of Presbyterians.

The subject is one of great practical importance, 1st. As it respects the duty of parents to God and to their children. For if God has made it the duty and the privilege of believing parents to bring their children into a covenant relation to him, the consequences of disregarding his will, and of rejecting such a privilege, cannot be happy. And if ever we are specially bound to examine thoroughly, candidly, and prayerfully, it is when we are called to act for our children, who cannot speak for themselves.

2d. The subject is of incalculable importance, as

it stands related to the *validity* of baptism, and the existence of the visible church. The Baptists of all classes deny the validity of baptism, as administered by Pedo-baptists, on two grounds, viz: because they baptize infants, and because they baptize by pouring or sprinkling. Denying the validity of such baptism, they refuse to commune, at the Lord's table, with Pedo-baptists, and to recognize their churches or their ministers. We have before us a pamphlet recently published by Elder J. M. Pendleton, of Bowling Green, Kentucky, on the question. "Ought Baptists to recognize Pedo-baptist preachers as Gospel Ministers?" This question he answers negatively. On pages 7 and 8, he writes as follows:

"The unwarranted substitution of sprinkling for baptism, of itself invalidates the claim of Pedo-baptist societies to be considered churches of Christ. But there is another fact that renders that claim utterly worthless. It is the element of infant membership in these societies. Why is the distinctive epithet Pedo-baptists applied to them? Because they practice what is called infant baptism. They seem, in the judgment of Baptists, at least, to make a specific effort to subvert the foundation principles of the New Testament church organization. They introduce unconscious infants into their churches, falsely so called; thus practically superseding the necessity of personal repentance, faith, and regeneration, in

order to membership. If it were the object of Pedo-baptists to thwart the purpose and the plans of Jesus Christ, in reference to the organic structure of his churches, I cannot conceive how they could do so more effectually than by making infant membership the predominant element of their organizations. It is the predominant element. This arises from the well-known fact which secures an increase of population, namely, that there are more children than parents. How, then, can it come within the limits of the widest possibility for a Pedo-baptist society to be a church of Christ, when the infant enters more largely than the adult element into its composition?"

Mr. Pendleton, who, a few years since, was one of the most liberal of the Baptist preachers, contends earnestly, (and we cannot deny his position,) that this exclusiveness, equalled only by that of Rome, is the legitimate carrying out of Baptist principles. If, then, the Baptists are right, there are no true churches on earth but theirs; and Pedo-baptist ministers are intruders into the sacred office, and profaners of the ordinances of God's house. By the way, it may be noted, as one of "the signs of the times," that just now, when Papists are everywhere taking the extreme positions of their intolerant creed, the Baptists, on the other hand, are keeping up with them in the extreme exclusiveness of theirs.

Against the Baptist views, and in favor of Infant Baptism, we will, first, offer *two* general arguments; and then we will meet the question with *direct* scriptural proofs. The true interests of us all require the utmost sincerity and impartiality in the examination of this question. May God, in his mercy, guide us to right conclusions.

1. A presumptive argument of great weight in favor of infant baptism, is the fact, *that the great body of the wise and good, in every age, have understood the Scriptures to teach the doctrines.* We pass, for the present, the testimony of the early Christian writers, and of the Waldenses who lived before the Reformation, and confine the argument to *Protestants.* It is not denied, that Luther, Calvin, Knox, and all the distinguished reformers of the sixteenth century, understand the Bible as teaching this doctrine. And in our own day, after a discussion of three centuries, the whole body of Protestant Christendom, with the exception of a comparative handful still understood it in the same way. We earnestly ask the candid reader, whether it is *credible* that so large a portion of those whose learning and piety are unquestionable, have so fatally erred in a matter essential, not only to the *purity*, but to the very *existence* of the church of Christ? Is not the Bible a plain book, easily understood on all points essential to salvation, or essential to the existence of the visible church? And do not Baptists and Camp-

bellites represent the baptism of infants as *obviously* and *ridiculously* unscriptural and absurd? If, then, they are right, the blindness and stupidity of Pedo-baptists, amongst whom confessedly have been, and are, multitudes of the wisest and best men, are perfectly amazing. How do you account for it, that those who, on all other important doctrines and duties of Christianity, have shown themselves as enlightened, to say the least, as the Baptists, have been so perfectly stupid or perverse on this particular subject? Have they insisted on the authority of *tradition*? On the contrary, they have wholly rejected it. Have they refused or neglected to investigate the subject? On the contrary, they have examined it carefully, learnedly, thoroughly, over and over again; and still they are under the clear conviction, that the Bible requires the baptism of the infant children of believers. Now one of two things is true, viz: either the Baptists are wrong, or the overwhelming majority of the wise and good have been, and are, laboring under a stupidity or a perverseness on this one subject, which is perfectly unaccountable. The teaching of the Bible on this question, essential to the very existence of the church, we are assured, is perfectly plain in favor of Baptist views; and yet the stupid or perverse Pedo-baptists cannot see it!

But we are equally puzzled to understand how our Baptist brethren came to gain superior illumination on this particular subject. It will not be pretended,

that their *learning* is, or has been, superior to that of Pedo-baptists. On the contrary, it must be admitted, that in this respect the advantage has been decidedly with the Pedo-baptists. Some of us remember, when it was common to hear Baptist preachers declaim fluently against *an educated ministry*; and even now, not a few of them have no pretensions to learning. It will not be affirmed that the Baptists have possessed *a spirituality* so superior to that of the Pedo-baptists, as to account for their superior illumination on this subject. We desire not to detract an *iota* from what is due them on this score; but we hazard nothing in affirming that the standard of piety has been and is quite as high in the Pedo-baptist, as in the Baptist churches. Look at the Christian walk of their respective members; inquire into the history of revivals; read the devotional works published; go and hear their respective ministers preach; and see if it be not as we state. It is, moreover, a very singular fact, that the peculiar illumination of our Baptist friends has been *confined to this one subject!* On no other subject, is it pretended that they have excelled all others in understanding the teaching of the Bible. As to *ministerial qualifications*, they have confessedly been not particularly enlightened. They have even learned wisdom from those whom they practically excommunicate. Respecting the duty of sending the Gospel to all the world, not a few of them have been,

and are now in the dark. We find amongst them a due proportion who are *anti-mission*—opposed to missionary operations, Bible societies, and the benevolent operations of the day, and to temperance. They have even been divided on the all-important question respecting baptismal regeneration; the influence of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification; the nature of faith, and the like. Yet the persons divided on these vital subjects, are perfectly united in claiming extraordinary enlightenment on the *mode* and *subjects* of baptism! We make these remarks in no unkind spirit. We mean distinctly to say, that it is incredible, on the one hand, that the majority of the wise and good should have so strangely and so long misunderstood the Bible on subjects so essential to the existence of the church, when on all other subjects of anything like equal importance, they have rightly understood it. And it is incredible, on the other, that a small handful of people, inferior in learning, not superior in piety, in error or divided on other doctrines of far greater importance, should have been peculiarly enlightened on the *two points*—the mode and subjects of baptism. It is far more probable that our Baptist brethren, having once adopted these peculiar views, and given them great prominence, have still been misled by prejudice. When, therefore, Baptists, Campbellites, Dunkards, etc., tell us that not only we, but forty-nine fiftieths of the readers of the

Bible, embracing the great body of the wise and good, are unbaptized, have wholly misunderstood the teachings of the Bible, in regard to what baptism is, and, whilst supposing ourselves called of God to the Gospel ministry, are intruders into the sacred office; in a word, that our churches are not churches; we smile at their presumption, their self-confidence, and their absurdities. This presumptive evidence appears to us very nearly conclusive.

2. *God has owned and greatly prospered the Pedo-baptist churches.* If, as Baptists assert, they are not churches of Christ, and their ministers are not even members of his church, would he put his seal on their ministry? Would he not rebuke their presumption by withholding his Spirit from their profane ministrations? When a portion of the Congregationalists of New England denied the Divinity of Christ, they were shorn of their power. Revivals no longer blessed their ministry; and they have had as much as they could do to *exist*, without being able to propagate their principles. The New Lights of the West rose in the midst of religious excitement; but, rejecting fundamental doctrines of the cross, they soon lost their strength, and were absorbed by Campbellism. But do not our Baptist friends admit, that glorious revivals have attended the ministry of those who, according to them, are not ministers? Has not their ministry been as fruitful of good, to say the least, as their own? Are not

their churches as free from scandal, as exemplary, as active in every good work? Has not the Saviour gone with their ministers to pagan lands, and greatly blessed their labors to the conversion and salvation of the heathen? Has he not fulfilled to Pedo-baptist ministers the promise he made to the apostles—"Lo, I am with you?" Now, it may seem a small matter to Mr. Pendleton and others, to disown those whom the Lord owns. Certainly, it is to us, when we know that our Saviour owns us as his ministers, a *very* small matter, that brethren, wise in their own conceit, refuse to admit our official claims. But we appeal to the candid reader, and ask: Is it *credible*, that for generations together God would abundantly bless the labors of those whose success must tend to prevent the very existence of his church, and who habitually profane the most sacred ordinances? Would he put no difference between such men and their organizations, and his true ministers and churches?

On the other hand, do not the divisions and troubles of the Baptists, *growing out of their exclusive views*, give reason to doubt whether they are scriptural? In the abundance of their labors in favor of immersion and against infant baptism, many of them have fallen into *antinomianism*. Not a few have fought against the very commission which authorizes us to administer baptism—opposing the carrying the Gospel to all nations. Sabbath-breaking and intemperance have given scandal. A

learned advocate of those exclusive views mounted them as a hobby, and divided the churches, sweeping hundreds of them into fundamental error. And now, divisions and troubles of a distressing character have arisen in connection with what is called *Bible-revision*, which is nothing more or less than putting the Bible on the rack, to make it teach Baptist doctrines. Do such facts show that the blessing of God rests upon those doctrines ?

These are *presumptive* arguments ; but, as we sincerely believe, they possess very great weight. In our next chapter, we propose to inquire *directly* into the teachings of the Bible.

CHAPTER II.

I HAVE offered a *presumptive* argument, which, as I think, is of great weight in favor of infant baptism. I now proceed to the direct scriptural argument.

Immediately after the resurrection of Christ, he sent forth his apostles to preach the Gospel, under the following commission : “ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and, lo, I am with you always, even

unto the end of the world. Amen." The anti-Pedo-baptists agree with us, that the first word in this commission, translated *teach*, signifies *to disciple*, or to *make disciples*. The command, therefore, is to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them.

This commission, let it be observed, says nothing about the organization of a new church. It is likewise an important fact, that it mentions neither adults nor infants. It is a commission to make disciples of all nations. This was to be done, so far as human instrumentality was concerned, by baptizing and teaching; but whether teaching must, in all cases, precede baptizing, the commission does not decide. This question must be settled by reference to other parts of the Scriptures. The precise purport of the commission will be more particularly examined hereafter.

On one point anti-pedo-baptists agree with us, viz: that baptism is to be administered to all who have the right to membership in the visible church. The only important point of controversy between us, therefore, relates to *the law of membership*. They hold, that the church is to be composed exclusively of professed believers. We maintain, that the church is intended to be a school, in which, not only believers, but their children, shall be trained for the service of God, and for heaven. How shall this controversy be settled? Our opponents insist that as baptism is

a New Testament ordinance, "to the New Testament we must look for a precept, or a precedent for infant baptism." But this is by no means clear. It is true, that baptism is an ordinance of the New Dispensation; but is it designed for the benefit of a *new church*, or of a church previously in existence? We ascertain, in reading the Bible, that there had long been in the world a people, separated from all others, acknowledged by God as *his people*—a church of which he calls himself the Lord, the Husband, etc. It is very clear, too, that this church sustains important relations to the church of the New Dispensation. It is evident that Abraham is the father of the church before, and of the church after the crucifixion of Christ.

Now the important question is, what relation does the Christian church sustain to the previously existing church? If the Christian church is a *new organization*, essentially different from the church of the Old Dispensation, then we must look for the law of membership in the New Testament. But if it is the *same church* with new ordinances and forms, suited to new circumstances, then two questions arise respecting the law of membership, viz: 1st. What was the law of membership under the preceding Dispensation?

2d. Were any changes made in this law at the introduction of the New Dispensation? and, if so, what were those changes?

The first and most important question before us,

then, is as to the *sameness* or *identity* of the church under the two Dispensations. In order to determine this point, it is necessary to give a definition or description of the church; and then we must determine in what the identity of the church, at different periods, consists.

In the Lexington Debate, I gave the following definition or description of the church, which, as Mr. Campbell did not object to it, may be regarded as confessedly correct: *The church is a body of people separated from the world for the service of God, with ordinances of divine appointment, and a door of entrance, or a rite by which membership shall be recognized.* The word *church* is frequently used in the New Testament to signify such a body worshipping in a particular place. Thus, we read of the church at Corinth, the church at Ephesus, etc. But it is also used in a larger sense, embracing all throughout the world, who profess the true religion. In this larger sense, I employ the word in this discussion.

The question respecting the identity of the church, under the Old and New Dispensations, is of essential importance in determining the right of the children of believers to membership. In what, then, does it consist? I answer:

1st. It does not consist in its having the *same persons* as its members; for then it could not continue its identity through any two generations. This will not be disputed.

2d. The identity of the church does not consist in its having the *same positive institutions and ordinances*. These are not the church itself, but are appointed for the benefit of the church; and a change in the circumstances of the church may require a change in such institutions and observances. We may illustrate the principle by reference to the identity of a state or civil government. The State of Kentucky, for example, is the same political body known by this name fifty years ago. And yet there have been constant changes in its laws. New laws have been enacted, and old laws repealed almost every year. This is not all. Some important changes have been made in its Constitution. In what respect, then, is it the same political body? I answer, it is the same, because it has continued to hold the same *political creed*—the same fundamental principles of civil government. If it had become an aristocracy, an oligarchy, or a kingdom, its identity would have been destroyed, and it could no longer claim a place as one of these United States.

The principle applies, in all its force, to the church. It is a body organized for the preservation, promotion, and propagation of *the true religion*. It is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” A material change in its circumstances may require a corresponding change in its positive institutions and ordinances; but its identity remains, so long as it continues to hold *the same religion*. We hold, that

the Christian church of the present age is identical with the apostolic church, because its faith, its religion, is essentially the same. We deny that the church of Rome possesses this identity, because its faith, whatever may be said the succession of its ministry, has undergone changes of a fundamental character.

Now, let us inquire in what respects there are differences between the church under the Old Dispensation and the church under the New, and in what respects they are the same. There are two points of difference which strike us at a glance.

1st. The church of the Old Dispensation had a *civil code*, which does not belong to the church of the New. The Jews were constituted a *nation*, as well as a *church*. It is perfectly manifest, however, that the civil code, which was enacted at Sinai, constituted no part of the church, and was not essential to it. But inasmuch as anti-pedo-baptists constantly confound the Jewish state with the church, it is important to point out the essential differences between them.

In the first place, the Abrahamic church existed some four hundred years, before it had any civil code divinely appointed. During the stay of the Jews in Egypt, they were, of course, subject to the civil law of that country. But when Moses was to conduct them to the land of Canaan, their circumstances were essentially changed. In that land, they

were not to be subject to the civil law of any government existing there. It was designed that they be kept distinct from all other nations, until the Messiah should come. But since they were to possess property, and since they must be protected against invasion from surrounding nations, it became absolutely necessary that they should have a civil government. God, therefore, gave them a code of laws to be executed by proper officers. But when Christ came, and the church was no longer to be kept distinct from other people; this civil code, of course, passed away. Indeed, before his advent, the sceptre had departed from Judah; and the Jews were placed under Roman law. Still, however, the Jewish church, as all admit, remained the same. Since, then, the Abrahamic or Jewish church existed before it had a civil code, and after that code had been suspended by Roman law, it will not be pretended that the civil code was essential to the identity of the church.

Secondly. This truth is the more obvious, when we remark, that the terms of *citizenship* and the terms of *membership in the church* were quite different. Strangers might and did dwell in the land amongst the Jews, and were protected by the laws; and yet, unless they professed faith, they were not members of the church, and could not partake of its ordinances. "And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let his males be circumcised, and then let him come near

and keep it ; and he shall be as one that is born in the land.” * Besides, proselytes from amongst the Gentiles might be members of the church, entitled to all its privileges, whilst not subject to the civil code of the Jews, and possessing none of the rights of citizenship ; and Jews might become the subjects of other civil governments, and still retain all their rights as members of the church. The Ethiopian eunuch baptized by Philip, was, doubtless, such a proselyte as I have mentioned, and so was Cornelius. And on the day of Pentecost, there were great numbers of Jews who resided in other countries, without losing their membership in the church. “ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” †

The Jewish church, then, was a thing quite different from the Jewish state ; and the latter was not at all essential to the former. If the Presbyterians of these United States should emigrate in a body, and settle in an uninhabited country, they would find it absolutely necessary to organize a civil government. They could not exist without such a government. And then, if, in the course of years, they should become dispersed amongst surrounding nations, and become subject to their laws, their civil government would necessarily pass away. But who would be foolish enough to insist, that the Presbyterian church

* Exod., 12: 48.

† Acts, 2: 5.

was only a *nation*, or that its civil code, adopted to meet a particular exigency, was essential to the existence of the church?

2d. Another point of difference between the church of the Old Dispensation and that of the New, relates to *ordinances*. The ceremonial law, which was "a shadow of good things to come," of course, passed away at the crucifixion of Christ. This law, with all its observances, was appointed for the church, but was not the church, nor essential to it. Before the call of Abraham, there were no ordinances of divine appointment, so far as we know, except bloody sacrifices. These were offered by the father of the family, acting as priest, and leading the family devotions. When the covenant was made with Abraham, circumcision was appointed to be the seal of that covenant. We do not learn that any other ordinances were appointed, until Moses led the Israelites from Egypt to Mount Sinai. There a large addition was made to the previously existing ceremonies; and a particular order of men were set apart to minister at the altar, and to give religious instruction. But no one pretends that these changes in the ordinances affected the identity of the church. No one denies that the Abrahamic church which Moses led to Sinai, was the same church which he led from Sinai to Canaan. And yet, during their stay at Sinai, great changes were made in their laws and ordinances. So when Christ came and made a

real, efficacious atonement, there was no more need for types and shadows. And then the church was to lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes, for the reception of the Gentiles. Her ministers were to go forth amongst all nations, and her members were to be scattered over the face of the earth. These altered circumstances required a corresponding change in ordinances. Consequently, instead of the Pass-over and bloody sacrifices, the Lord's supper was instituted; and instead of circumcision and "divers washings," baptism was appointed. But as the addition to the ordinances made at Sinai did not destroy the identity of the church, so neither did the change of ordinances at the commencement of the New Dispensation. One might as well deny the identity of a man, because he wears a new coat, or dwells in a new house, as to assert that a change in ordinances, made for the benefit of the Church, destroys its identity.

If, then, the Abrahamic church is not identical with the Christian church, the proof that it is not, is not to be found in the passing away of the Jewish civil code, or of the ceremonial law.

Let us now consider in what respects the Christian church is identical with the Abrahamic church. And I remark generally that its *faith*, or its *religion*, is the same. Strangely enough, this point is controverted. In the Lexington Debate, Mr. Campbell said: "Luke never confounds the Jewish and Chris-

tian religions. He always speaks of Jews and Christians, or disciples, as not only a distinct people, but as having a different religion. He reports the speeches of Paul, when he tells of his 'conversation in the *Jews' religion*;' how Paul 'profited in the Jews' religion;' how, 'after the strictest sect of our (Jews) RELIGION, he lived a Pharisee.' There is sometimes a volume of sense in a single sentence, as there are some whole volumes without one good idea. The JEWS' RELIGION commended by Luke—OUR RELIGION, too. Yet this amateur of Luke and his fine style, will contend that the Jewish church and the Christian had '*one and the same religion*;' that is, the Jew's religion and the Christian religion are just one and the same religion!! Yet Paul positively, directly and literally places them in opposition. Hear him say: 'You have heard of my behaviour in the *Jews' Religion*—how that, beyond measure, I persecuted *the church of God*, and wasted it.' Here is the most explicit contradiction of Mr. Rice, and his theory of identity, that can be imagined. Here is 'the church of God' and 'the Jews' religion,' directly, literally, formally contrasted, and that, too, by the most learned apostle, and the greatest teacher of Christianity the world ever saw, or ever will see. Which of us now, fellow-citizens, pays the greater deference to the sacred style? I state this fact, that in the year of our Lord 58, when Paul wrote to the Galatians on the difference

between the law, the covenant, and all the dispensations of redemption, he then spoke of 'the church of God' and 'the Jews' religion,' in direct and positive contrast. No one can, in my humble opinion, dispose of this fact and argument against this assumed identity. Yet Mr. Rice argues that the Jews' religion and Christ's religion are one and the same religion!!"*

It is amazing that any man, even tolerably familiar with his Bible, could offer such an argument. Who does not know that "the Jews' religion," in the days of Paul, was radically different from the religion possessed and inculcated by Abraham, Moses, and the prophets? When the Jews said to Christ, "Abraham is our father," he answered, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham? † When they gloried in being Moses' disciples, did he not answer: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me?" ‡ That is, if they had truly embraced the religion of Abraham and Moses, they would have been Christians. Here we have a strong contrast drawn by our Saviour, between the religion of the Old Testament and "the Jews' religion." Yet Mr. Campbell could bring himself to believe, that the religion which rejected and crucified Christ, who was

* Debate, pp. 393, 394.

† John, 8: 38, 39.

‡ John, 5: 46.

foretold and prefigured throughout the Old Testament, and which clung to the obsolete ceremonies pointing to Christ—the religion which made Paul a bitter persecutor and blasphemer, was the same religion taught by God to Abraham, Moses, and the Jews! Dr. Gill, with all his zeal against infant baptism, could not embrace such absurdities. Commenting on this phrase—“the Jews’ religion,” as used by Paul—he says: “Besides, he (Paul) was brought up in the religion of the Jews, not as it was founded and established by God, but as it was corrupted by them; who had lost the true sense of the oracles of God committed to them, the true use of sacrifices, and the end of the law; had added to it a load of human traditions; placed all religion in bare doing, and taught that justification and salvation lay in the observance of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders.” The answer which I, at the time, gave to Mr. Campbell’s triumphant argument, placed the subject in its true light. It was in the following words: “I have said, that there has been, properly speaking, but one *true religion* on earth, and that the Saviour did not send his apostles to establish a new one. Mr. Campbell insists that this cannot be true, because Paul says, that before his conversion to Christianity, he profited in the *Jews’ religion*. But at the time when Paul was converted, the Jews’ religion was false. The prophecies and the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed them to

the Messiah, as the Saviour of men. They, in their blindness, rejected the glorious substance, and clung to the shadow. They had rejected the Saviour, and were unbelievers—apostates. Their religion, therefore, was false. But does this prove that the piety of Paul as a Christian, was essentially different from the piety of Abraham, the father of believers; or from that of Daniel, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or other devout servants of God, under the former dispensation?" Now, let me ask the unprejudiced reader, whether he believes that the defence of the truth leads men into such errors as that of Mr. Campbell, respecting "the Jews' religion."

There are two general arguments which prove conclusively, that the religion of the church under both dispensations, is the same.

1. The relations, duties and necessities of men have always been substantially the same. Therefore, true religion, whose nature and office it is to teach what those relations are, and what duties arise from them, and to provide for those necessities, must always have been substantially the same. It will scarcely be denied, that the great design of true religion is, to acquaint men with their relations and duties, and to provide for their necessities. The following points, then, are clear: 1st. The relations of men have always been substantially the same; and, therefore, their duties, arising out of these relations, have been the same. They sustain to God

the relation of *creatures*, dependent upon his goodness for existence, and for all the blessings of life; and out of this relation arises the obligation to worship, love, and obey him. They sustain to him the relation of *sinful* creatures; and hence arises the obligation to repent and reform. They sustain to one another the relation of *fellow-creatures*; and out of this relation arises the duty to love our neighbor as ourselves. Then there are other particular relations, as of husband and wife, parent and child, ruler and subject, out of each of which arise corresponding duties. These relations and the duties arising from them, have always been substantially the same; and, therefore, religion, so far as it consists in a correct knowledge of these relations and duties, and a faithful discharge of the duties, has always been the same.

2d. The *character* and *necessities* of men have always been the same; and, therefore, all, in every age, have needed the same method of salvation. Since the fall of man, all have been *sinners*; and, consequently, by the deeds of the law, none could be justified. All have equally needed the atonement and intercession of Christ; and, all must be justified by faith in him, not by their own works. All have been *depraved*; and, therefore, our Saviour's declaration to Nichodemus is equally true of all—
“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

And as all have needed regeneration by the Holy Spirit, so "the fruits of the Spirit" in regeneration and sanctification, have always been the same. Love, faith, repentance, meekness, humility, etc., have always characterized true piety. Men, in every age, have always been equally *helpless*, and, therefore, equally dependent upon Divine Providence. So far, then, as religion relates to the salvation of lost men, it has always been the same.

How can the conclusion be avoided, that there has been in the world but one true religion, which has always been the same? Will it be denied, that the relations and the moral obligations of men have ever been the same? Most certainly, it will not. Will it be denied, that the character and the necessities of men have been the same? No one will be so unreasonable. Will it be denied, that true religion is that which teaches men these relations, and these duties, and which provides for these necessities? Impossible. The conclusion, then, is demonstratively correct, that true religion has always been the same; and consequently, that the religion which God taught Abraham, and Moses, and Isaiah, and David, is the same as that of Peter, and John, and Paul.

2. That the faith or religion of the church under both dispensations is the same, is evident from the abundant teaching of the Bible. Religion embraces three principal points, viz: the object of worship, the rule of moral obligation, and the plan of salvation.

Let us consider each of these. 1st. It will not be denied, that under both dispensations, the church worships and serves *the same God*. In the Lexington Debate, Mr. Campbell resorted to a singular evasion of this plain fact. Said he: "Does not the same God reign over Kentucky and Jerusalem? The same God reigns over the Ottoman Empire and the United States; are they, therefore, the same people?"* Thus, he confounded the fact, that God reigns over the wicked, in spite of their opposition, with the widely different fact, that God's people willingly worship and serve him. All who truly worship and serve the same God, undoubtedly have the same religion. 2d. Under both dispensations, the church obeys the same moral law. The sum and substance of this perfect law, as given by Moses, in Deut., 6: 5, Lev., 19: 18, and by our Saviour, in Matt., 22: 37, 39, is the same precisely. Perfect love, acted out in all the relations of life, is the requirement of the law, as expounded both in the Old and New Testaments. Mr. Campbell, in the same debate, sought to evade this argument, by saying—"Massachusetts colony, for a time, adopted the law of Moses for her law. Was Massachusetts and the Jewish church, therefore, identical? They have also adopted the same code of morality in Kentucky; but is this commonwealth and the Christian church identical?" †

* Debate, p. 300.

† Ibid.

This is the merest quibble. It is not true that either of these States ever adopted the *moral law*; and if it were, a single point of identity does not constitute the identity of a religious body. If, for example, a body of people could be found, professing to keep the moral law, it would not follow that they are Christian people. Why? Because they would not hold the Gospel of Christ. And so, if a body could be found, professing to receive the Gospel, but rejecting the moral precepts of the Bible, they could not be called a Christian people. Why? Because they would make the Gospel lead to licentiousness, and make Christ a minister of sin. There are three things essential to religion, and the moral law, as the rule of obligation, is only one of them.

3d. The third thing embraced in religion, is the *Gospel* or the *plan of salvation*. Now, it is demonstrably true, that under both dispensations, the church has received and trusted in the same Gospel. This is clear from the following considerations:

First. The Gospel was preached to Abraham in the covenant into which God entered with him. Paul says: "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."* It was to this covenant promise that our Saviour referred, when he said to the Jews:

* Gal., 3: 8.

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.” * Accordingly, we are taught, that Abraham was justified by faith, and that “they which are of faith are the children of Abraham,” and “are blessed with faithful Abraham.” †

Secondly. There are two leading doctrines in the Gospel, viz: the *atonement*, through which believers are justified, and *sanctification*, by which sinners are prepared for the service of God and for heaven. These two doctrines are abundantly taught in the Old Testament.

The great doctrine of the atonement is taught in the Old Testament in two ways. In the first place, it is taught by *the prophets*. For, said Peter, “To him (Christ) give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.” ‡ And who can read the fifty-second and fifty-third chapters of Isaiah, without having the cross of Christ and the atonement placed vividly before their minds? “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes, we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord

* John, 8: 56.

† Gal., 3: 7-9.

‡ Acts, 10: 43.

hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The same doctrine was taught by every bloody sacrifice upon the Jewish altar. How clearly does the apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, demonstrate that the Levitical priesthood, with all their sacrifices, was merely typical of Christ and his one great sacrifice, possessing in themselves no efficacy. "How blind must they be," says Mr. Carson, "who do not see the atonement by the blood of Christ, in the sacrifices of Israel!" * So in the New Testament, we learn that the atonement of Christ was efficacious in securing the remission of sins under the preceding dispensation. "And for this cause, he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." † On this passage, Dr. Gill says: "The sense is, that though legal sacrifices could not atone for sins, nor ceremonial ablutions cleanse from them; yet the sins of the Old Testament saints were expiated, their iniquities pardoned, and they justified and saved through the blood of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It is clear, then, beyond all question, that under both dispensations men were justified by faith in the same atonement, through the merits of the same Mediator.

* On Baptism, p. 344.

† Heb., 9: 15.

With equal clearness was the doctrine of sanctification, by the Holy Spirit, taught under the Old Dispensation; so that our Saviour censured Nicodemus for being a teacher in Israel, and yet being ignorant of this doctrine. "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"* How could the doctrine be more clearly taught, than by Ezekiel, 36: 25, 26?—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," etc. It was in view of the same doctrine, the Psalmist prayed—"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." †

Since, then, these two great doctrines of the Gospel are taught in the Old Testament, all the other important doctrines must be there; for they are inseparably connected with these. There is a necessary connection between the atonement and justification by faith; and accordingly Abraham's faith and justification are represented as identical with Christian faith and justification. Read the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the third chapter of

* John, 3: 10.

† Ps., 51: 10.

the Epistle to the Galatians. So there is an inseparable connection between regeneration by the Holy Spirit and "the fruits of the Spirit." Under the Old Dispensation, as now, men were convinced of sin, repented, believed, loved, rejoiced. The religious experience of pious people, being the fruit of the Holy Spirit, must be substantially the same. And what Christian ever read the Old Testament, especially the Psalms, without feeling that such is the fact?

It is scarcely necessary to show, that the Old Testament saints rejoiced in the hope of eternal life, as do Christians. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country."* The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is also taught in the Old Testament. Indeed, all the doctrines of the Gospel are taught there with more or less plainness. The evidence, therefore, is conclusive, that under both dispensations the church has received the same Gospel, and trusted in the same plan of salvation. Mr. Campbell's evasion of this argument shows the weakness of the anti-pedobaptist cause. He said "He (Rice) argues the identity

* Heb., 11: 13, 14.

of the ancient and modern churches, because they have the same Gospel. But this is not strictly true, unless upon the principle that France and England have the same language, because they have the same alphabet. The Christian Gospel is not that *the Messiah is to come*; yet that was the Jewish Gospel." * Mr. C. acknowledges that the only difference between the Christian Gospel and the Jewish Gospel is, that the latter proclaimed the Messiah *to come*, and the former proclaims the Messiah *as having come*. Through types and prophecies, the Jews looked *forward* to the advent of the promised Messiah and his atonement, and trusted in him; whilst through the inspired record and the Lord's supper, Christians look *back* to the Messiah as having come and offered the one efficacious sacrifice for sin. But, confessedly, both Jews and Christians trusted in the same Saviour, and, therefore, had the same faith, the same religion. Is there, then, any such difference as between the French and English languages?

It is, then, clear, beyond all question, that in the three points which constitute the substance of religion—the object of worship, the moral code, and the plan of salvation—the Abrahamic church had the same religion which the Christian church has. If, then, the identity of the church consists, as we have proved, in its continuing to hold the same

* Lexington Debate, pp. 333, 334.

religion, the identity of the church, under the Old and New Dispensations, is demonstrated.

But it may be said, that though pious Jews had the same religion which Christians have, yet the Jewish church, as a body, was a *secular organization*, not professing, nor requiring, individual members to profess religion. The opposers of infant baptism, as I have before remarked, constantly confound the Abrahamic church with the Jewish state, although the Scriptures represent them as quite distinct. The following differences between the church and the state have already been pointed out.

1st. The church existed four hundred years before the state—before the descendants of Abraham had any civil code.

2d. A civil code was enacted for the church, because it was to be kept separate, until the advent of Christ, from all other nations. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that a civil government should be organized.

3d. The terms of *citizenship in the state*, and of *membership in the church*, were quite different. Gentiles might become citizens, without becoming members of the church. They might be “proselytes of the gate,” observing the civil law, without becoming “proselytes of righteousness,” and submitting to circumcision.

4th. Proselytes from the Gentiles might become members of the church, without becoming citizens

of the Jewish commonwealth. There were many such, who continued to reside in their own countries, but attended the festivals at Jerusalem.

5th. A Jew might become the subject of another civil government, without forfeiting his standing as a member of the church. Many such were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out in his converting and miraculous powers.

6th. It may be added, that the officers in the church were entirely different from those in the state. In the former, priests, Levites and prophets officiated; in the latter, judges and kings ruled. But a civil officer could not minister at the altar; nor an ecclesiastical officer administer the civil law. In some instances, as in the case of Samuel, the two offices were filled by the same man, just as we sometimes see a minister of the Gospel a member of the Legislature; but they were never confounded.

It is most evident, then, that the church and the State, though in large part composed of the same persons, were quite different organizations. The church was strictly a religious body, professing the only true religion. This is evident from the following considerations:

1st. The church entered into a covenant with God, which required its members truly to worship and serve him; and of this covenant, circumcision was the seal. "This ordinance," says Rev. Andrew Fuller,

a very able Baptist writer, "was the mark by which they (Abraham and his descendants) were distinguished as a people in covenant with Jehovah, and which bound them by a special obligation to obey him. Like almost all other positive institutions, it was also prefigurative of mental purity, or putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." * That the covenant between God and the Jews required piety, is further evident from the following language: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." †

2d. All the ordinances of the church were strictly religious; and the proper observance of them required true piety. Circumcision was a *religious rite*. Since it was the seal of a covenant between God and his people, how could it be otherwise? To Abraham it was "a seal of the righteousness of faith." † And Paul pronounces it worthless, without regeneration and true piety. "For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. * * * For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is

• * Lect. on Gen., 17.

† Exod., 19: 5, 6.

‡ Rom., 4: 11.

outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.” * It is amazing, that any one acquainted with his Bible, should regard this ordinance as merely or chiefly a *national sign*. It secured to its subjects no national privileges. To the Gentile proselyte and his family, residing in their own country, it secured none but religious privileges, and required none but religious duties.

It will not be denied, that the bloody sacrifices and ablutions, and the entire temple service, were strictly religious. The bloody sacrifices pointed to the atonement of Christ, and the ablutions, to the work of the Holy Spirit. And the entire service was designed to beget and cherish true religion ; and over and over again are we taught, that the wickedness of the people rendered their attendance upon the ordinances wholly unacceptable. Read, for example, the first chapter of Isaiah.

3d. The relation between God and the Jewish church is represented, just as that between Christ and his church, by the *marriage relation*. “ For thy Maker is thy husband ; the Lord of Hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer the Holy one of Israel.” † And the idolatry of the Jewish church is compared to the unfaithfulness of a wife to her husband. ‡

* Rom., 2 : 25-29.

† Isaiah, 54 : 5.

‡ Jer., ch. 3.

Mr. Carson says: "God is everywhere in the Old Testament considered as the husband of Israel."* Will any one pretend, that God could represent himself as the husband of a body of people, who did not even profess to be pious?

These facts and others that might be mentioned, demonstrate, not only that the religion of pious individuals amongst the Jews was identical with that of Christians; but that this true religion was professed by the Jewish church as a body. Most certainly it was, at times, exceedingly corrupt; but the same charge must be made also against the Christian church. But departures from the path of truth and righteousness do not prove that a contrary profession was not made.

We come, then, to the clear and unavoidable conclusion, that the church under both dispensations professes the *same religion*; and, consequently, that the Abrahamic church is identical with the Christian Church.

There are several other ways in which the same truth is established. Consider the following:

1. The relation between Abraham and Christians, *is that of a father to his children*. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." † "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness

* On Baptism, p. 355.

† Gal., 3: 29.

of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised.* Let the fact be noted, that Christians are never called the children of Enoch, of Noah, of David, or of any other eminent believer; but they are called "Abraham's seed." Evidently, therefore, they sustain to him a peculiar relation. What constitutes this relation? I answer, the covenant into which God entered with Abraham, to which Paul refers, when he says, in the passage just quoted, Christians are "heirs according to the promise." This covenant, which is mentioned in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, repeated in the fifteenth, and ratified by circumcision in the seventeenth, contained three promises, viz: of a numerous natural seed; that that seed should inherit the land of Canaan; and that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. This last, which is the great promise, is declared by Paul to contain the Gospel. Two of these promises have received their fulfillment. The third is now being fulfilled. The Scriptures make a distinction between the Abrahamic covenant and the covenant made at Sinai, four hundred and thirty years after. The latter, which is called "the law," Paul says, "was added [to the Abrahamic covenant] because of transgressions, till the

* Rom., 4: 11-16.

seed should come to whom the promise was made.”* It was a temporary addition, designed to serve a particular purpose, till Christ should come. This law or covenant of Sinai, is compared in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to an old garment or article which is worn out. “Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.” † But the covenant with Abraham is never called old, or represented as passing away. On the contrary, it is declared to contain the Gospel itself, which cannot pass away. Dr. Gill, commenting on Gal., 3: 16, says: “The promises design the promises of the covenant of grace, mentioned in the next verse, which are exceeding great and precious, better than those of any other covenant; and which are all yea and amen in Christ, and are chiefly of a spiritual nature,” etc. This covenant is called *new*, not as to the substance of it, but only as to the mode of administration under the New Dispensation. Dr. Gill, in expounding Heb., 8: 8, says—the *new covenant* is “so called, not because new-made; for, with respect to its original constitution, it was made from eternity; Christ, the Mediator of it, and with whom it was made, was set up from everlasting; and promises and blessings of grace were put into his hands before the world began; nor is it newly revealed, for it was made known to Adam, and, in some measure, to all the

* Gal., 3: 19.

† Heb., 8: 8–13.

Old-Testament saints, though it is more clearly revealed than it was; but is so called in distinction from the former administration of it, which is waxen old and vanisheth away," etc.

Some anti-pedo-baptists have been quite unwilling to admit that the covenant of circumcision, recorded in Genesis 17, is the covenant of grace, or contains the promise of spiritual blessings; for if this covenant made Abraham the father of the visible church of God, under both dispensations, it would be impossible to escape the proof of the identity of the church before and after the death of Christ. But Rev. Andrew Fuller, one of the ablest Baptist writers, in his lecture on this passage, says :

“The first promise in this covenant is, that he shall be the father of *many nations*; and, as a token of it, his name in future is to be called ABRAHAM. He had the name of a *high* or eminent *father*, from the beginning; but now it shall be more comprehensive, indicating a very large progeny. By the exposition given of this promise in the New Testament, (Rom., 4: 16, 17,) we are directed to understand it, not only of those who sprang from Abraham’s body, though these were many nations; but also of all that should be *of the faith of Abraham*. It went to make him the father of the church of God in all future ages; or, as the apostle calls him, *the heir of the world*. In this view, he is the father of many, even of *a multitude*

of nations. All that the Christian world enjoys, or ever will enjoy, it is indebted for it to Abraham and his seed. A high honor this, to be the father of the faithful, the stock from which the Messiah should spring, and on which the church of God should grow." *

Mr. Carson tries to evade the force of this argument, by saying, "the promise—'I will be a God to thee,' etc., has a letter and a spirit." † And Mr. Campbell thought, it promised only temporal blessings. ‡ But, as Fuller shows, the promise that Abraham should be a father of many nations, makes him the father of the Christian church, and this promise was sealed by circumcision.

Now, would it not be a singular proceeding to contend, that the father and part of the children were in one church, and the rest of the children in another church of a radically different character?—to have two churches, the one carnal, and the other spiritual, built upon the same covenant?—to have the spiritual father, and part of his spiritual children, live and die in the carnal organization, and the rest of his spiritual children placed in a spiritual church? To such inconsistencies are those driven, who deny the identity of the church under the Old and New Dispensations.

* Fuller's Works, vol. 5, p. 153.

† On Bar., p. 354.

‡ Lex. Debate, p. 345.

2. Christians sustain to the church which existed before Christ came, the relation *of the branches of of a tree to the tree*; and no one denies, that the branches are part of the tree. Will the reader take his Bible, and read carefully in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, from the sixteenth to the twenty-fourth verse? The first question that arises concerning this Scripture, is respecting the good olive tree; what is it? This question, Mr. Campbell answered as follows: "A portion of the Jews believed—they became the nucleus of the New Dispensation. They are the *first fruits*, and the *root* of the Christian church. They hold by *faith*, and not by flesh, all the spiritual blessings promised Abraham. Paul compares them to a good olive tree, of which, in one sense, Abraham was the root—standing as a spiritual father to the believing Jews, and as containing in the covenant, made with him concerning Christ, all these blessings."* Now, if Mr. Campbell means, as he evidently does, that a *new church*, organized of the first converts to Christianity, radically different from the previously existing church, was the good olive tree, he is met by two insurmountable difficulties. In the first place, the unbelieving Jews were not *broken off* from those first converts; for a branch cannot be broken from a tree with which it has no connection. But the

* *Lex. Debate*, p. 397.

apostle says, the Jews were broken off from the good olive tree. That tree, then, must be the church of which they were members. In the second place, the unbelieving Jews could not be called "*the natural branches*" of the first Christian church; nor could it be called "*their own olive tree.*" For anti-pedo-baptists insist, that the Christian church is established on principles as different from those of the Jewish church, as *spirit* and *flesh*. "The two principles of *flesh* and *spirit*, natural and supernatural birth," says Mr. Campbell, "are now clearly shown to be the differential character of the two institutions. We have, then, two communities, under two very distinct constitutions, of very different spirit, character, and circumstances." * Now, the puzzling question is, how could the members of the *fleshly* institution be "the natural branches" or members of the *spiritual* institution? How could Paul, speaking of the *fleshly* members, call the *spiritual* institution "their own olive tree"—their own church? It is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that the good olive tree is the Jewish church; for the Jews were the natural branches of no other; and they could claim no other as "their own."

But two important truths are stated by the apostle. The first is, that the Gentile converts were grafted into the same olive tree from which the Jews

* Lex. Debate, pt 332.

were broken off; and the second is, that the Jews, when converted to Christianity, shall be again grafted into their own olive tree — the same tree from which they were broken off. Now, it is admitted, of course, that the Gentile converts were received into the Christian church; and that all converted Jews are received into the same church. I declare solemnly, I do not see how prejudice itself can evade the conclusion, that the church existing before the crucifixion of Christ, is identical with the Christian church. If a tree and the branches growing on it, constitute one tree, then the church, under the Old and New Dispensations, is one and the same church.

3. The Christian church is represented in the Scriptures, *not as a new church, but as the same church which previously existed, enlarged for the reception of the Gentiles.* Isaiah thus addresses the church: “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.* Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be

* Isaiah, 54: 1-3.

inhabited." Read this entire chapter, and it will be perfectly clear—1st. That the prophet addresses the Jewish church in her barrenness and affliction ; 2d. That he predicts a time when her children shall wonderfully increase by the conversion of the Gentiles ; and 3d. That preparatory to their reception, suitable changes should be made in her ordinances and worship, which is called lenthening her cords, enlarging the place of her tent, etc. Now, let me ask the candid reader, when did the Jewish church, here addressed as barren and afflicted, increase the size of her habitations, and receive the Gentiles ? Never, until the New Dispensation. The Gentile converts entered, not into a new church, but into the old church prepared for their reception. And when were the glorious promises, made in this chapter, to the Jewish church, fulfilled ? It is absolutely certain that they were not fulfilled under the Old Dispensation ; and they are not completely fulfilled even yet.

The same truth is plainly taught in the sixtieth chapter of this same prophecy : " Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people ; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see ; all they

gather themselves together, they come to thee ; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then shalt thou see, and flow together, and thy heart shall fear, and be enlarged ; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee ; and the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee." Read this entire chapter and the following chapter, and say whether these glorious promises, made to the Jewish church in her afflictions, were ever fulfilled under the Old Dispensation. Most certainly they were not. Then if they be fulfilled at all, the same church to which they were made, must have continued under the New Dispensation, and must continue even to the present day.

The same truth is confirmed by the apostle James, in his address to the council at Jerusalem. " Simeon hath declared how God, at the first, did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this, I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down ; and I will build again the ruins thereof ; and I will set it up : that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called," etc.* Dr. Gill, the Baptist commentator, says : " The tabernacle of David designs the spiritual kingdom or church of Christ, who is here called

* Acts, 15 : 13-17.

David ;” and that “ the raising up and rebuilding of the tabernacle must design the reviving of true religion, the doctrine and practice of it, the enlargement of the church of God, by the conversion both of Jews and Gentiles.” It is, then, perfectly clear, that at the introduction of the New Dispensation, a new church was not organized, but the existing church, which had become dilapidated, was *built again*, and the Gentiles received into it.

4. The argument for the identity of the church under both dispensations, is greatly strengthened by the fact, *that the apostles and the one hundred and twenty disciples* did not receive Christian baptism.* In times past, our Baptist brethren contended earnestly that John’s Baptism was Christian baptism ; but this ground is now, I believe, generally abandoned. In his *Christian Baptist*, Alexander Campbell has demonstrated the radical difference between them. † Mr. Carson says : “ The baptism of John was in two points essentially different from the baptism of the apostolic commission.” These points, he thus states : “ John did not baptize unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : he did not baptize into the faith of Christ as come, but as about to be made manifest.” Again, “ John’s baptism did not serve for Christ’s.” On Bap., pp. 281, 284.

* Acts, 1: 15.

† pp. 647, 648.

John's ministry and baptism really belonged to the Old Dispensation, and were only *preparatory* to the New. His work was "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."* The Old Dispensation, with all its ceremonies, continued until the crucifixion of Christ; and, therefore, one of his last acts, before suffering death, was to partake, with his disciples, of the Passover. The baptism of John, which was identical with that administered by the disciples of Christ, was administered to those who professed repentance and a willingness to receive the Messiah. But it was not an initiatory rite, and was not administered in the name of the Trinity.

That John's baptism was not Christian baptism, is demonstrated by the fact, that his disciples were re-baptized by Paul. At Ephesus, he found certain disciples, and asked them—"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were you baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him, which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."† Dr. Gill comments on this last

* Luke, 1: 17.

† Acts, 19: 1-5.

verse as follows: “ *When they heard this*—that is, the people to whom John preached, his hearers; when they heard of the Messiah, and that Jesus was he, and that it became them to believe in him, *they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*; not the disciples that Paul found at Ephesus, but the hearers of John.” But Alexander Campbell, after asserting that all the disciples of John were required to receive Christian baptism, says: “I know to what tortures the passage has been subjected by such cold, cloudy and sickening commentators as John Gill. But no man can, with any regard to the grammar of language, or the import of the most definite words, make Luke say, that when those twelve men heard Paul declare the design of immersion, (baptism,) they were not baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Nothing but the bewildering influence of some phantasy, of some blind adoration of some favorite speculation, could so far becloud any man’s mind as to make him suppose for a moment, that those twelve persons were not immersed (baptized) into the name of the Lord Jesus.” Robert Hall, one of the most eminent Baptists of England, says: “In the whole compass of theological controversy, it would be difficult to find a stronger instance of the force of prejudice in obscuring a plain matter of fact.”

It is, then, perfectly clear, that John’s baptism was not Christian baptism. The question, then,

arises, when did the apostles of Christ receive Christian baptism? And by whom was it administered to them? That they did not receive Christian baptism, was admitted by Mr. Campbell, in the Lexington Debate; but he said, "When a person is appointed by God to set up an institution, he is not himself to be regarded as a subject of that institution. * * Some one must commence the institution — there must be some one to commence Christian baptism; that could not be done till Jesus had died, was buried, and rose again," etc.* But this evasion of the difficulty will not answer. Abraham set up the institution of circumcision, and yet he was himself circumcised. Aaron, the first Jewish high priest, was consecrated just as were his successors. Why, then, did not the apostles receive Christian baptism?

But the argument is yet stronger. Let any unprejudiced person read the account given in the Acts of the Apostles, of the baptisms on the day of Pentecost; and he will be satisfied, that not only the apostles, but the disciples associated with them, amongst whom was the mother of Christ, were members of the Christian church, without receiving Christian baptism. Not an intimation is given, that any but the new converts received baptism. "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the

* p. 356.

same day, there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”* No new church was organized; but the young converts were added to the existing church. The apostles and the disciples associated with them were the branches of the good olive tree, that were not broken off because of unbelief. They, therefore, did not receive the new initiatory rite. Being already in the church, they did not come in by the new door. Those who had rejected Christ, and had been rejected by him, as were the great body of the Jews, when converted, were grafted again into the good olive tree; they came in by the existing door. For no body would acknowledge and use two initiatory rites at the same time, especially when one of these had become the badge of apostates and enemies. The fact, that those who did not reject Christ, but associated themselves with him and his disciples, were members of the Christian church *by virtue of their circumcision*, demonstrates, beyond cavil, the identity of the church under both dispensations.

The very fact, that anti-pedo-baptists have felt constrained to deny a truth so abundantly taught in the Scriptures, as the identity of the church under both dispensations, affords strong reason to suspect that infant baptism is scriptural. Opposition to an unscriptural doctrine, could not drive men into the

* Acts, 2: 41.

denial of important truths, plainly taught throughout the Scriptures. Some of them are willing to admit *similarity* between the Jewish and Christian church, but not *identity*. Mr. Campbell says: "Mr. Rice argues that the Jewish and Christian churches are identical. But he seems to confound similarity with identity. They are, indeed, very different predicaments."* But what are the points of similarity between two institutions as different in their nature as *flesh* and *spirit*? The Bible says nothing of similarity; but it does present identity. Under both dispensations, the church worships and serves the same God, not a similar God; obeys the same moral law, not a similar one; rejoices in the same, not a similar, Gospel. It has the identity of one family receiving its blessings through the same covenant. It has the identity of a tree and its branches, the identity of a house repaired and enlarged, the identity of membership—the apostles and earlier disciples being the connecting link between the two dispensations.

Mr. Carson and others, who deny the identity of the church under the two dispensations, regard the Jewish church as a *type* of the Christian church. Carson says: "The church of Israel was the type of the church of the New Testament, containing, no doubt, the body of the people of God at that time

* Lex. Debate, p. 333.

on the earth, and in this point of view, may be called the same. Both are called the kingdom of God, and both were such, but in a different sense. The one was a kingdom of this world; the other is a kingdom not of this world." Again: "As the church of Israel was the church of God, typical of his true church, and containing, in every successive age, a remnant of the spiritual seed of Abraham, according to the election of grace, the New Testament church is spoken of in the Old, under the figure of Israel, Zion," etc.* Truly, here are some strange things. In the first place, we are told, that God has, or has had, two kingdoms—one of this world, and the other not, and that yet they are, in a sense, the same kingdom! And then we are told of the church of God and the *true* church of God; the "church" being typical of the "*true* church." So that there have been two churches of God, one which was a *true* church, and the other not! We read here of a church of God which was "of this world;" and yet it had a holy temple service, priests and prophets to conduct the worship of God, and to teach his truth; and in it, multitudes were trained for heaven! But what a confusion of ideas. Abraham is the father of the Christian church; and yet he and a large portion of his spiritual seed were *typical* of the rest!—one part of the family typical of the

* On Bap., pp. 374, 375.

other! The good olive tree is *typical* of the branches grafted into it! The *typical* church is called upon to lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes, that she may receive the *true* church!

Since, then, the church remains the same under the two dispensations, it is clear that in our inquiries respecting the law of membership, we are not to begin with the New Testament. The ordinance of baptism, it is true, is a New Testament ordinance; but since it is an initiatory rite, to be administered to all who are entitled to a place in the visible church, the great question is—who or what characters are entitled to membership? Baptism was instituted by Jesus Christ, after his resurrection; but it was instituted for a church which had long been in existence, and which was now to be placed in new circumstances, and to commence a great work extending to all nations. It, therefore, required new ordinances.

Two questions, then, claim attention, viz: 1st. What was the law of membership before the death of Christ? 2d. Did Christ and his apostles, in introducing the New Dispensation, make any such change in that law, as would exclude the children of believers from the place they had hitherto occupied? These questions we now proceed to discuss.

CHAPTER III.

THAT professed believers and their children were placed, by the express command of God, in the Abrahamic church, cannot be questioned. Before the call of Abraham, the church of God had existed in the *patriarchal* form. Every pious family was a little church, of which the father was the officiating priest. By him the morning and evening sacrifices were offered; and he led the family devotions. Thus, we find, that Abraham, wherever he spent a night, built an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord. And as every pious family was a little church, so were the children members of that church, trained by the father for God's service. In some instances, men, celebrated for their wisdom and piety, became to some extent public instructors and priests of God. Such was Melchisedek. But the time came, when God saw it best to begin to gather his people into one body. For this purpose, he entered into a covenant with Abraham, and appointed circumcision as the seal of that covenant. This became thenceforward the ordinance which distinguished those in covenant with God from the world. It was administered to Abraham and to all the males of his household, who were afterwards called God's people. "For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the

Assyrian oppressed them without cause." * And to Pharaoh, Moses said—" Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me." †

Here we find a people called out of the world, for the service of God, with ordinances of divine appointment, and an initiatory rite. This is an organized church; and, as I think I have proved, it is identical with the Christian church. Into this church, God did, by positive law, put professed believers and their children. Abraham was circumcised, and so was his infant son Isaac. Henceforth, circumcision was to be administered to all the male children of professed believers, on the eighth day after their birth. Parents and children occupied their places together in the church, until the death of Christ. When, we ask our Baptist friends, were the children of believers excluded?

But it is objected, that baptism has not taken the place of circumcision; and it has been thought, that by proving this objection, a triumph would be gained over Pede-baptism. I answer:

1st. It is a matter of no importance, so far as the baptism of infants is concerned, whether baptism has taken the place of circumcision, or not. It cannot be denied, that baptism is an initiatory rite, and must be administered to all who have the right to

* Isaiah, 52: 4.

† Exodus, 9: 1.

membership in the church ; and, therefore, when I establish the right of the children of believers to be in the church, their right to baptism, the initiatory ordinance, follows of necessity.

2d. But it is a truth, clear as light, that baptism has taken the place of circumcision ; and the labored efforts which have been made to disprove it, only expose the weakness of the opposite doctrine, and exhibit the strength of the doctrine of infant baptism. What do we mean by saying, that baptism has taken the place of circumcision ? We mean simply, that it answers the same purposes in the church, under the New Dispensation, which circumcision answered under the Old. Those purposes were the following :

In the first place, circumcision was the door into the Abrahamic church. No Gentile could become a member of the Abrahamic church, without submitting to circumcision ; and no descendant of Abraham could be recognized as a member, unless circumcised. “ The uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people.” * Precisely so, baptism is the door into the Christian church. No adult can enter it without baptism ; and no child, though born of believing parents, can be recognized as a member, unless baptized.

* Gen., 17 : 14.

In the second place, circumcision and baptism have the same significance; and, therefore, baptism impresses on the mind the same truth which circumcision formerly impressed. This, Mr. Carson, though an extremely zealous Baptist, acknowledges. He says: "Circumcision and baptism correspond in meaning. They both relate to the renewal of the heart." * Indeed the Scriptures so abundantly teach the identity of the meaning of these two ordinances, that few will dispute it.

In the third place, circumcision was the seal of the covenant of grace; and so is baptism. Speaking of circumcision, Rev. Andrew Fuller says: "This ordinance was the mark by which they [Abraham and his seed] were distinguished as a people in covenant with Jehovah, and which bound them by a special obligation to obey him." † And is not the same thing true of baptism? Is it not the ordinance which distinguishes Christians from the world, as a people in covenant with God? And does it not bind them by a special obligation to his service? Does it not seal to the believer the remission of sins, according to God's gracious covenant?

It is, then, clear, that baptism answers the same ends in the church now, which were answered by circumcision formerly; and this is all that is meant by saying, it has come in place of circumcision.

* On Baptism, p. 367.

† Lect. on Gen. 17.

In the Lexington Debate, Mr. Campbell adduced *sixteen* arguments to prove that baptism has not come in the place of circumcision; and although not at all necessary to the defence of infant baptism, a brief notice of these arguments may do good.

1st. The first argument is, that "*males* only were the subjects of circumcision." *Answer.* Females, both adults and infants, entered the Jewish church in connection with males; therefore, the initiatory rite was administered only to the latter. But under the New Dispensation, it constantly happens, that females enter the church *alone*; therefore, the initiatory rite is administered to them also. Under both Dispensations, infant females entered the church in the same manner as adult females. But will any one seriously pretend, that the more extensive application of baptism is inconsistent with its taking the place of circumcision?

The second argument is, that "adults circumcised themselves;" and the fourth, which involves the same principle, is, that "infants were circumcised by either parent." Both these arguments proceed upon the assumption, that one ordinance cannot take the place of another, unless the administrators are the same. But this is not true. Before the appointment of the Levitical priesthood at Sinai, the bloody sacrifices were offered by the father of each family. After that time, this duty was confined to the priests. But no one has ventured to contend, that this change

of administrators made any change in the nature of the sacrifices. If, then, a change of administrators makes no change in the nature of an ordinance, how can such a change prevent one ordinance from taking the place of another? Moreover, this argument comes very inconsistently from Mr. Campbell, who teaches, that "there is no law in the Christian Scriptures authorizing any one class of citizens in the Christian kingdom to immerse, to the exclusion of any other class of citizens;" and that even females may administer baptism.*

The third argument is, that "infant males were to be circumcised the eighth day." *Answer.* The time of administration was not an essential point; for circumcision was postponed for forty years, during the passage of the Jews through the wilderness.† How, then, can it be pretended, that one ordinance cannot take the place of another, unless the time of administration be precisely the same? May not the changed circumstances of the church justify a change in the time of administering ordinances?

The fifth argument is, that "a Jew's property in a man or child, constrained his circumcision. Abraham's servants, adults and all, *because his property*, were circumcised." It is true, Abraham's servants were circumcised; but it cannot be proved

* Millen. Harb., v. 3, pp. 236, 237.

† Joshua, 5th ch.

that he had a single adult servant, who did not profess to be a worshipper of the true God; nor is there the slightest evidence, that any adult servant of the Jews was circumcised, until he professed faith. The law of Moses says: "But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof,"* (*i. e.*, of the Passover.) But it does not require that every such servant shall be circumcised. "It does not appear," says Dr. Scott, "that any servant or stranger was compelled to be circumcised; but, till he was circumcised, he must not be allowed to eat the Passover." There is something extremely revolting in the idea, so much urged by anti-pedo-baptists, of administering the seal of God's covenant to servants, simply as *property*. What could be the meaning or design of such administration? Why not administer religious ordinances to other property? The idea is profane; and Mr. Carson carries it out to the extreme, when he says: "Abraham would have been justified in circumcising his slaves, had every one of them submitted with reluctance, or had endeavored to resist."† To such errors does opposition to infant baptism drive men.

The sixth argument is, that "circumcision was not the door into any church or religious institution. It was no initiatory rite into any meral institution.

* Exod., 12: 44.

† On *Bap.*, p. 561.

The Ishmaelites and Edomites, and many other nations by Keturah, were circumcised. Into what church did they enter? The Jews were members of the politico-ecclesiastical church by natural birth. Circumcision was no initiatory rite or door to them." Here are certainly some strange assertions. The Ishmaelites and Edomites were apostates from the religion of Abraham. And will it be pretended, that the abuse of circumcision by apostates, proves that it was not an initiatory rite? Why not argue, that since Mormons practice baptism, and yet do not enter into the Christian church, baptism cannot be an initiatory rite? Such arguments are almost too weak to admit of refutation. But circumcision, we are told, could not be an initiatory rite to the Jew, because he was a member of the church *by birth*; and yet the Scriptures declare plainly, that the uncircumcised man-child should not be a member of that church.* Desperate, indeed, must be the cause which drives its advocates to such assertions. When a Gentile desired to enter the Jewish church, and partake of the passover, he was directed to be circumcised.† Beyond all controversy, circumcision was an initiatory rite.

The seventh argument is, that "the qualification for circumcision was *flesh*." This assertion is utterly untrue. If it had been so, how could a Gentile

* Gen., 17: 14.

† Exod., 12: 48.

proselyte have been circumcised? What *flesh* qualification had he? The Gentile was not a descendant of Abraham according to the flesh. What, then, was the qualification necessary to admit a Gentile to circumcision? There were amongst the Jews two classes of proselytes, viz: the proselytes of the gate and the proselytes of righteousness. These last received circumcision on professing their faith. The Jews, in the days of Paul, agreed with the view maintained by Mr. Campbell—that the qualification for circumcision was *flesh*; but he was careful to correct the mischievous error. He said: “For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.”* How could the apostle more strongly assert, that circumcision requires true piety, and is useless without it? How can any man keep the law of God without piety?

The eighth argument is, that “circumcision was not a dedicatory rite.” Circumcision was the seal of a covenant which required the circumcised person to serve God, and which required the parents of cir-

* Rom., 2: 25-29.

cumcised children to train them up for that service. In this sense, it was a dedicatory rite, and in this sense only is baptism a dedicatory rite.

The ninth argument is, that "circumcision, requiring no moral qualification, communicated no spiritual blessings." But circumcision, as we have just proved, did require moral qualification; and it did communicate spiritual blessings, just so far as an external ordinance ever communicates such blessings. For Paul says, in the passage just quoted, "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law;" and in the following chapter, in answer to the question, "What profit is there of circumcision?"—he answers, "Much every way."* Circumcision sealed the covenant which contains the precious promise—"to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee."† Those who kept that covenant received abundant spiritual blessings. The same, precisely, is true of baptism.

The tenth argument is, that "*idiots* were circumcised." This is a mere quibble. The law of circumcision says not a word about idiots. But why should not a Christian parent have an idiotic child baptized? It has a soul, and must be saved by the blood of Christ. Why should not the afflicted parents place upon it the seal of God's covenant, and plead his promise?

* Rom., 3: 1, 2.

† Gen., 17: 7.

The eleventh argument is, that circumcision "was a visible appreciable mark, as all signs and seals are. Is sprinkling so, or any use of water?" The argument is, that circumcision was a *sign* and *seal*; and baptism cannot take the place of circumcision, because it is not "a visible, appreciable mark, as all signs and seals are." And yet, in his late book on baptism, Mr. Campbell uses the following language: "Circumcision is said to have been, in one case at least, a *sign* and a *seal*. Baptism, in the same sense, and in a similar case, is also both a *sign* and a *seal*," etc. Again, "Baptism, according to the apostolic church, is both 'a *sign*' and 'a *seal*' of remission of all former sins."* Is it not strange, that such a man should so flatly contradict himself on such a subject? But the argument now is all on our side. Baptism, said Mr. Campbell, cannot take the place of circumcision, because it is not "a visible, appreciable mark," and, therefore, not a *sign* and *seal*, as was circumcision. I answer, baptism has taken the place of circumcision, because it is, as Mr. C. confesses and maintains, both a *sign* and a *seal*, "in the same sense!"

The twelfth argument is, that "circumcision was binding on parents, not on children. The commandment was, 'Circumcise your children.' But the Christian word is, 'Be baptized every one of

* p. 272.

you.” *Answer.* The command to adults was, “Be circumcised;” and so is the command to adults, “Be baptized.” But it was the duty of parents to have their children circumcised; and it was the duty of circumcised children, when old enough to understand their obligations, to keep the covenant of the Lord, engaging in his service. The same is true of baptism. Therefore, it has taken the place of circumcision.

The thirteenth argument is, that “the right to circumcision in no case depended upon the faith, the piety, or the morality of parents. The infant of the most impious Jew had just as good a right to circumcision as the son of Abraham, David or Daniel.” This is a bold assertion; but it is not true. Not a passage in the Bible can be found to sustain it. God commanded Jewish parents to keep his covenant; and he commanded them to place the seal of that covenant upon their children; but he did not intimate that apostates had the same rights as the truly pious.

The fourteenth argument is, that “circumcision guarantied certain temporal blessings to the Jews. Query—what temporal blessings does baptism secure to infants?” *Answer.* Circumcision did not guarantee any special temporal blessings. The Gentile proselyte, though circumcised, had no inheritance amongst the Jews. A Jew had certain temporal blessings, not simply because circumcised, but be-

cause he belonged to one of the twelve tribes. The Gospel promises to the Christian the same temporal blessings which circumcision promised to the proselyte, viz: the providential care of God.

The fifteenth argument is, that circumcision “was not to be performed into the name of any being whatever, neither in heaven nor on earth.” *Answer.* Circumcision was performed by the command, and, therefore, in the name of the true God. Whether precisely the same words were spoken in the administration of it, as in the administration of baptism, is of no importance; for certainly no man in his senses will maintain that an ordinance cannot take the place of another, unless the very same words are repeated in the administration of it.

The sixteenth argument is, that “the subject of circumcision, was a debtor to keep the law of Moses in all its institutions. Query—Are those infants baptized, debtors to keep all the Jewish ordinances? If not, how does baptism fill the place of circumcision?” *Answer.* The circumcised person was bound to observe all the *existing* laws and ordinances of God, not to observe any that had been *repealed*; and the baptized person is bound to observe all *existing* laws and ordinances, but not those that have been repealed. How perfectly absurd to say, that one ordinance cannot be substituted for another, unless it require the observance of *repealed* laws.

I have now done a work of supererogation, so far as infant baptism is concerned. For when I have proved the right of children to membership in the church, as before remarked, their right to baptism follows necessarily, whether it came in the place of circumcision or not. But I have given proof, which seems to me conclusive, that baptism has taken the place of circumcision; and a brief examination of Mr. Campbell's sixteen arguments has served fully to expose their utter weakness. Each argument is founded upon a false assertion, or is a mere quibble.

But let me now further say, that the whole sixteen arguments rest upon a false and flimsy assumption. The assumption is, that if one ordinance take the place of another, it must answer in every particular to the other. This would be true, if this were the only change made. For instance, if baptism had been substituted for circumcision *during the continuance of the Old Dispensation*, it must have conformed, in all respects, to the law of circumcision. But when a New Dispensation takes place of the Old, and all the ordinances are changed to prepare the church for new circumstances and new labors, then baptism must conform to this new state of things, not to that which has passed away. It is not simply true, that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, but that all the ordinances of the Old Dispensation have been supplanted by those of the New. Nothing, certainly, but the dire necessities of

anti-pedo-baptism could have induced its advocates to offer such arguments as we have just been considering.

CHAPTER IV.

Two most important points, I think, are fully established by the preceding discussion, viz: 1st. That the Christian church is identical with the Abrahamic; 2d. That the law of membership in this church did embrace believers and their children, from the ratification of the covenant with Abraham to the crucifixion of Christ. Or, in other words, the covenant with Abraham, upon which the church was organized, embraced believers and their children; and, therefore, both received the same initiatory rite, the same seal.

Now, it devolves upon the opposers of infant baptism to prove, that Christ or his apostles did so change the covenant and the law of membership, as to exclude from the church the children of believers. For unless such a change was made, they are still embraced in the covenant, and in the law of membership, and, consequently, have the right to the initiatory ordinance. We prove, that when the church was organized, God did put believers and their children into it, and that they both remained together,

till the advent of Christ. Then let those who propose henceforth to exclude children, produce Divine authority for so doing. The burden of proof rests upon them.

1. The first proof on which they rely, is the commission given by our Lord to the apostles: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. Amen."* So confident was Mr. Carson that this commission excludes infants from baptism, that he said, "I am willing to hang the whole controversy on this passage;" and he adds, "If I had not another passage in the word of God, I will engage to refute my opponents from the words of this commission alone."† Mr. Campbell says: "Now, I will stake the whole cause for which I now plead, upon a fair, grammatical, and logical construction of this single document."‡ Let us look carefully at this formidable evidence. It presents several points for careful consideration.

1st. It will be perceived at a glance, that this commission says nothing about the organization of a *new church*. It simply sends the apostles to prose-

* Matt., 28: 19, 20.

† On Baptism, p. 278.

‡ On Baptism, p. 278.

lyte all nations, baptizing and teaching them. It is certainly remarkable, if a new church, on entirely new principles, was to be organized, that the commission gives no intimation of it.

2d. It is equally plain, that the commission mentions neither infants nor adults. It sends the apostles to "all nations." I am aware, that Mark, 16: 15, 16, is appealed to in this connection; but the language of Christ, as given by Mark, simply enjoins the duty of preaching the Gospel, and fixes the terms of salvation for those capable of hearing and understanding the Gospel. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Here, say our opponents, baptism is confined to believers. But there is another declaration in the same sentence, viz: "but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Why not say, here *salvation* is confined to believers, and, therefore, infants and idiots cannot be saved? If the first part of the sentence excludes infants from baptism, the last part must exclude them from salvation. "Certainly," says Mr. Carson, "if there were no way of saving children but by the Gospel, this conclusion would be inevitable. The Gospel saves none but by faith. But the Gospel has nothing to do with infants, nor have gospel ordinances any respect to them." * Whether the Gospel has anything to do with infants or not, it is

* Lex. Debate, p. 368.

certain that the Author of the Gospel, when on earth, had something to do with them. And when he took them in his arms and blessed them, saying, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," he very clearly intimated, that the plan of salvation had something to do with them. And since the apostles of Christ gave the same directions with regard to the training of children, which Moses gave, it is quite probable that, as in the days of Moses, ordinances had respect to them, so they may have now.

But this is not the point. A passage of Scripture is adduced to prove, that baptism is confined to believers, and cannot be administered to infants. If, however, you apply the passage to infants, so as to exclude them from baptism, it necessarily excludes them from salvation. The truth is, the language of our Saviour has reference exclusively to persons capable of understanding the Gospel; and, therefore, neither settles the question of the baptism, nor of the salvation of infants.

3d. Our opponents agree with us, that the first word translated *teach*, in the commission, signifies to *disciple*, or *make disciples*. "It is well known," says Carson, "that the word corresponding to *teach*, in the first instance in which it occurs in this passage, signifies to *disciple*, or *make scholars*."* The duty, then, enjoined upon the apostles was to *make*

* On Baptism, p. 274.

disciples of all nations. We are agreed also, that a *disciple*, in the Scripture sense of the word, is a true *learner*—one who loves to sit at the feet of Jesus to learn heavenly wisdom, that he may obey the truth.

But now the question arises—*How* were the apostles to make disciples of all nations? What means were they to employ? The answer is, *by baptizing them and teaching them the whole will of God.* Alexander Campbell has contended, that “the active participle always, when connected with the imperative mood, expresses the manner in which the thing commanded is to be performed.” And he gives several examples, as the following: “Cleanse the room, washing it; clean the floor, sweeping it; cultivate the field, ploughing it; sustain the hungry, feeding them; furnish the soldiers, arming them; convert the nations, baptizing them, are exactly the same forms of speech.”* Whether this criticism of Mr. Campbell is correct or not, is of no importance, since the truth is admitted, that ministers of Christ can make disciples only by using the means embraced in the terms *baptizing* and *teaching*. The duty enjoined in the commission is to make disciples; and it is certain they *could* do this work only by baptizing and teaching them. Whatever additional influence was necessary for their conversion, God himself must exert.

* Chris. Bap. p. 630.

So far all is clear. But here arises another question, viz: *Does the commission require that teaching shall, in all cases, precede baptizing?* Our opponents affirm; we deny. It is contended, that the word (*matheteuo*) translated *teach*, necessarily implies *instruction*—that no one can be called a disciple, until he is instructed in the first principles of the Gospel. Admit it. The question is not whether, in making disciples, it is necessary to teach, or how much instruction must be given. The commission requires *two* things to be done, viz: *baptizing* and *teaching*; and the question is as to the order in which these duties are to be performed. Does the language of the commission settle this order? It does not. It says, make disciples by baptizing and teaching; but whether teaching must, in all cases, be first in order, it does not say; this question must be settled by other parts of the Bible. In the case of adults, the minister will, of course, teach both before and after baptism. In the case of infants, he will teach after baptism. But in both cases, he will make disciples by *baptizing and teaching*; and this is all the commission requires.

But let us go further than the language requires, and admit, that the passage under consideration refers exclusively to adults, or to persons capable of understanding the Gospel; yet if we find, in the word of God, evidence that the children of believers are to be baptized, the language here used cannot be

so interpreted, as to exclude them. For the language of the commission does not express the whole of the duties of the ministry. The utmost that can be maintained from the commission is, that, taken by itself, it does not *authorize* the baptism of infants. But the command to baptize adult believers, cannot *exclude* infants. We are seeking now for a law excluding the children of believers from the place in the church, which they had, for centuries, occupied. Anti-pedo-baptists profess to find such a law in the passage under consideration; but on examination, we discover that, even admitting more than the language proves, it simply sends the apostles among all nations to baptize those who profess conversion, but says nothing directly or indirectly concerning infants. And is this a law excluding them from the church? It cannot be.

But it is affirmed, that the law of membership has been changed—that *flesh* was the sole qualification for membership in the Abrahamic church; whilst *faith* is the qualification in the Christian church. It is not true, that *flesh* was the sole qualification for membership in the Abrahamic church. So far from it, that it was not a necessary qualification at all. Proselytes from the Gentiles were constantly received on the sole ground of *faith*. They were not descendants of Abraham, but, professing the faith of Abraham and Moses, they were admitted to full membership. I have said, *flesh* or natural descent from

Abraham, was not a *necessary* qualification. I go further, and affirm, that it was not a qualification at all. The Ishmaelites and Edomites were natural descendants of Abraham; they had, therefore, the *flesh* qualification; yet they were not members of the Abrahamic church, or even of the commonwealth of Israel. Besides, a Jew might forfeit his right to membership in the church by improper conduct, though he had the flesh qualification. This is evidently what is meant generally by the expression, "cut off from his people." Thus, the man who ate leavened bread during the festival of the Passover, was to be "cut off from Israel."* A man who, after touching an unclean thing, should eat of the flesh of a peace-offering, was to suffer in like manner.† I am aware that some commentators have regarded this expression as the denunciation of some awful judgment of God; but it seems to me clear, that they have not rightly interpreted it. The sins to which this punishment is annexed, are not generally of a character so heinous, as to justify this interpretation. I agree, therefore, with Dr. Clarke, that the punishment "appears to have been nearly the same with *excommunication* among Christians."

Certain it is, that *flesh* was not the qualification for membership in the Abrahamic church. If it had been, how could the Jews have been broken off from

* Exod., 12: 15.

† Levit., 7: 21

the good olive tree, and rejected, *because of unbelief?* If faith was not required, how could unbelief exclude them? Even in the case of infants, *flesh* was not the qualification, but the professed *faith* of the parent. If Jewish parents became pagan idolaters, their children, though the *flesh* qualification continued unaltered, would have had no right to membership; and the profession of faith by Gentile parents, though there was no *flesh* qualification, placed their children, so far as the church was concerned, upon as perfect equality with the children of Jews.

The truth is, anti-pedo-baptists have utterly failed to find a law for excluding the children of believers from the visible church. They, therefore, have the right to remain where God originally placed them, and there to be trained for the service of God and for heaven. They, consequently, are entitled to the initiatory rite.

But we take stronger ground. We undertake to find, in the New Testament, authority for baptizing the infants of believers. "And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." This interesting occurrence is related by three of the evangelists in

very nearly the same language.* In examining the language of our Saviour, the first question that arises, is concerning the "kingdom of heaven." Here, happily, both parties are agreed. Anti-pedobaptists admit that "the kingdom of heaven" here means the *Gospel church*. The whole controversy, then, turns upon the words *of such, (toi autou.)* Does this expression mean, that the church of Christ should be constituted of persons who have spiritual dispositions resembling or analogous to the dispositions of little children? Or does it mean that the privileges of the church of Christ belong to children such as these? Dr. Gill explains it as follows: "And it is as if our Lord should say, don't drive away these children from my person and presence; they are lively emblems of the proper subjects of a Gospel church-state, and of such that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: by these, I may instruct and point out to you, what converted persons should be, who have a place in my church below, and expect to enter into my kingdom and glory above; they are, or ought to be, like such children, harmless and inoffensive—free from rancor and malice," etc. The same explanation is given by Mr. Carson. "Every way," says he, "in which the words can be understood, imports that the heirs of the kingdom are *such as children*—not that they are children.

* Luke, 18: 15, 16; Matt., 19: 13, 14; Mark, 10: 13, 14.

The term *such* does not signify identity—cannot signify identity—but likeness.” Again, “It is the temper of children to which our Lord gives his approbation, and the things referred to are in all children.” Again, “Indeed, the dispositions of children are not considered here in reference to God, but in reference to men. Children believe their parents implicitly; and they are comparatively unambitious. But they are no more ready to believe God than adults are.”*

To this explanation of our Saviour’s language there are insuperable objections. Indeed, the fact that anti-pedo-baptists have felt compelled to resort to it, in order to defend their doctrine, affords decided evidence against it. For, 1st. The word (*toioutos*) translated *such*, uniformly signifies *sameness of kind*, not *resemblance*. The following examples will enable the unlearned reader to decide upon the meaning of the word, as well as any critic could: “Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation,” (*toiauta.*) The meaning evidently is, of the same trade. “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things, (*toiauta,*) are worthy of death,” etc. Here such things mean crimes of the same kind. “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator,

* On Baptism, pp. 321, 322, 323.

or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one (*toiouto*) no not to eat." Here such a one means one of the same character. "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things (*toiauta*) shall not inherit the kingdom of God." "From such (*ton toiouton*) withdraw thyself."* In every one of these instances, the word in dispute signifies sameness of character or kind, not partial resemblance. It has the same meaning in the following passages: "And with many such (*toioutais*) parables spake he the word unto them." "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such (*toioutous*) to worship him." "Who having received such a charge, (*toiauten*) thrust them into the inner prison." "But now ye rejoice in your boasting: all such rejoicing (*toiauta*) is evil."† In all these passages, it is perfectly evident that the word sig-

* Acts, 19: 25; Rom., 1: 32; 1 Cor., 5: 11; Gal., 5: 21; 1 Tim., 6: 5.

† Mark, 4: 33; John, 4: 23; Acts, 16: 24; James, 4: 16. The reader may examine the following passages; and in all of them, he will find the meaning of the word to be sameness of kind or character: Matt., 9: 8; Mark, 6: 2; John, 9: 16; Luke, 9: 9, and 13: 2; Heb., 12: 3; 2 Cor., 13: 2, 3, 5; Acts, 22: 22; 2 Cor., 2: 6; Rom., 16: 18; 1 Cor., 16: 16, 18; 2 Thess., 3: 12; Titus, 3: 11; Acts, 21: 25; Eph., 5: 27; Heb., 11: 14; Acts, 26: 29; Heb., 7: 26, and 8: 1.

nifies, not mere resemblance, but sameness of kind or character. Indeed, this is the uniform meaning of the word. The only *apparent* exception in the New Testament, is in Matt. 18: 1-5. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." But here the word *toiouton* (*such*) relates, not to the little child, but to the true convert whom the Saviour had just compared to a child. Whoever shall receive a person of such a character, receives Christ. So that the word is here used in its ordinary sense. It is a most significant fact, that anti-pedo-baptists have been obliged to assign to this word a sense it rarely, if ever, has, in order to escape the force of the argument drawn from it in favor of infant baptism.*

2d. The anti-pedo-baptist interpretation of this

* "Τοιούτος," says the late Dr. Woods, of Andover Theological Seminary, "the same as TALIS in Latin, properly signifies the nature or quality of the thing to which it is applied, and not the resemblance which something else bears to it. Accordingly, the real import of *ton gar toiouton estin he basileia tou ouranou*, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven,' is the same as of these and such as these is the kingdom of heaven, includ-

passage destroys the sense of our Saviour's language, and makes him talk absurdly. They make him say, "Suffer little children to come to me, because pious adults do, in some respects, resemble them." Now, let it be remembered, that those children were brought to Christ, that he might put his hands on them, and bless them. Can any man bring himself to believe, that the resemblance between little children and believers, (confessedly not a *moral* resemblance, so far as the children are concerned,) constitutes any reason why they should be brought to Christ, that he might bless them? Might not *lambs*, or *sheep*, or *doves*, have been brought to him for the same reason? For believers are called Christ's lambs and his sheep; and they are to be "harmless as doves." But why should children, because they are emblems of humility, be brought to Jesus Christ? "For," as Whitby well remarks, "this they are as much when they come not, as when they come." And why should the fact, that children are emblems of humility, make it proper that our Saviour should put his hands upon them, and bless

ing, of course, the children themselves, as having a right to the blessings of Christ's Kingdom. * * * This appears to be the sense of *τοιοῦτος*, except when it is employed in a peculiar, unusual manner. Accordingly, the phrase, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven,' must mean of such children as these, the very children that were brought to Christ being included." Lect. on Infant Baptism, pp. 62, 63.

them? Is it not evident, that the anti-pedo-baptist interpretation of this passage of Scripture, makes him reason most absurdly? It cannot, therefore, be correct.

Indeed, some of the ablest opponents of infant baptism have felt this difficulty, and have attempted to escape it in different ways. Dr. Gill thought the children were not *infants*, but were *probably* capable of "going alone; yea, of receiving instructions, of understanding the Scriptures;" and he added, "Nor is it probable that infants just born, or within a month, should be had abroad."* But unfortunately for this conjecture, Luke calls them *infants*, (*brephe*); and Mark says, "He took them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them."† How could the inspired writers more plainly tell us, that they were babes? The statement concerning the public appearance of infants just born, or within a month, is a quibble which shows how hardly the text under examination presses the opponents of infant baptism. Who does not know, that infants are many months old, before they are capable of understanding the Gospel? "Moreover," says the Doctor, "these were such as Christ called unto him. Luke, 18: 16." This is an

* Commentary on Matthew, 19: 13.

† Luke, 18: 15; and Mark, 10: 16.

entire mistake. Christ did not call the children, but he called those who brought the children.

Dr. Gill was evidently not satisfied with his proof, that the children were of sufficient age to receive instruction. He, therefore, resorts to another conjecture, viz: that "probably some of those infants, if not all of them, were diseased, and brought to be cured; otherwise, it is not easy to conceive what they should be touched by him for." Now, if the Saviour had said, "Suffer these little children to come to me, that they may be healed," all would have been plain. But can any one conceive what the healing of these diseases had to do with their being emblems of Christian character? Dr. Gill evidently felt that the reason for their coming to Christ, which his interpretation made him assign, was no reason at all; and, therefore, he labored to find other reasons, such as their diseases or their capability of receiving instruction.

Mr. Carson also felt the difficulty which pressed his interpretation of this passage. He saw the absurdity of representing Christ as taking infants in his arms and blessing them, just because they were emblems of humility. He, therefore, says: "That children are capable of being brought to Christ and blessed by him, is clearly established by this passage; and in this light, it is of inestimable value."*

On Baptism, pp. 323, 324.

Very true; and this was a good reason why those children should be brought to him; but it is not the reason which Mr. Carson makes our Saviour assign. They are capable, it is admitted, of being brought to Christ and blessed by him. Then they are capable of enjoying the blessings of his kingdom. In the name of reason, then, why should they be excluded from that kingdom, as it is organized in the world? And if there was propriety in our Saviour's laying his hands upon them, and blessing them, though they understood not what he did, who will venture to assert, that there is impropriety in administering to them an ordinance they cannot yet comprehend?

It is perfectly clear, then, that the anti-pedo-baptist interpretation of our Lord's language, labors under two insuperable difficulties. It puts upon one of the most important words in the passage, a sense which it never has, or, at least, is very extraordinary; and it makes the reason assigned why little children should be brought to him, perfectly absurd. Our interpretation, on the contrary, is perfectly natural and obvious. Let little children come to Christ; for to them belong the privileges and blessings of his church and kingdom.

But our anti-pedo-baptist friends are still unwilling to give up the argument. They say, after all, Christ did not *baptize* those children. No; for Christian baptism was not then instituted; and "the baptism

of repentance" was not intended for infants. But instead of intimating that they were to be henceforth excluded from his church, he did plainly declare, that they were still to occupy their place in his visible kingdom; and, if so, all admit that they are entitled to the initiatory rite. They have the right to be in the church; and, therefore, they must receive that ordinance by which this right is recognized. The argument seems to be absolutely conclusive.

"But," says Mr. Carson, "to argue that children must be baptized, because they may be blessed by Jesus, has no color of plausibility." And he adds, "The whole argument may be reduced to a single sentence. *Children may be blessed, without being baptized, therefore, the blessing of the children by Jesus, is no argument for infant baptism.*"* It is true, that the blessing of the children by Jesus is not an argument for infant baptism; nor do Pedo-baptists rely on any such argument. But the language of Christ, teaching that to such children belong the privileges of his church, does prove their right to membership, and, consequently, their right to the initiatory ordinance.

"But," says Mr. Carson, "let this passage be ever so finely wiredrawn, it cannot include infant baptism. It applies to children in general, and not merely to the children of believers." This is a mis-

* On Baptism, 324.

take. Our Saviour said, "Of *such* is the kingdom of heaven." Those were children of Jews who were by profession believers; and it is to *such* children the right of membership belongs.

I think I have now examined and refuted every argument and objection by which anti-pedo-baptists have sought to escape the force of this most interesting passage of Scripture; and, so far as I am capable of seeing the force of a plain argument, it appears to me perfectly satisfactory. Thus, we find, in the New Testament, authority for baptizing the children of believers.

The language of Paul, in 1 Cor., 7: 14, has been very generally understood to authorize the baptism of infants, one or both of whose parents are professed believers. The apostle directs the wife of an unbelieving husband not to separate from him. "For," says he, "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." This passage has been one of great difficulty to anti-pedo-baptists. It is perfectly clear, that there is a sense in which the children of believers, and they only, are *clean, holy*. Dr. Gill understood these words as expressing *legitimacy* and *illegitimacy*. He thus paraphrases the declaration: "Else were your children unclean," etc. "That is, if the marriage contracted between them, in their state of infidelity, was not valid,

and, since the conversion of one of them, can never be thought to be good, then the children begotten and born, either when both were infidels, or since one of them was converted, must be unlawfully begotten, be base-born, and not a genuine legitimate offspring; and departure upon such a footing would be declaring to all the world that their children were illegitimate; which would have been a sad case indeed, and contains in it another reason why they ought to keep together; whereas, as the apostle has put it, the children are holy in the same sense as their parents are; that they are sanctified, or lawfully espoused together, so the children born of them were, in a civil and legal sense, holy, that is, legitimate." Drs. Gale and Carson take the same view. The great objection, however, to this interpretation, is, that the words *holy* (*hagia*) and *unclean* (*akatharta*) are never used to express legitimacy and illegitimacy. Lexicons attribute to them no such meaning; and anti-pedo-baptists refer to no instances in which they are so used. These words have, in the Scriptures, two meanings. They signify *moral qualities*—personal holiness or unholiness; and also *consecration*, or the opposite. Thus, when God says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy;" the word *holy* expresses moral qualities. But when we read, that the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, was "holy," we understand that those animals were consecrated to

the service of God in sacrifice. And when we read of holy ointment, holy linen, holy crown, etc., as connected with the temple service, we understand the word in the sense of consecration. And so the Jews were a holy nation, and their children a holy seed.*

The words *clean* and *unclean* are similarly used. In Isaiah, 35: 8, the latter word expresses moral qualities. In Leviticus, 5: 2, and in a multitude of passages, it is used to signify ceremonial impurity. In these two senses, the words in question are constantly used, but never in the sense of legitimacy or illegitimacy.

Dr. Whitby says: "The word used for a bastard by this apostle being *nothos*, Heb., 12: 8, and the word *gnesios* being the proper word for a legitimate offspring, had the apostle intended such a sense, he would have used the words, which in the Greek writers are generally used in that sense, and not such words as in the Septuagint, and in the Jewish language, always have a relation to federal holiness, or the want of it; but none at all to the legitimacy or spuriousness of the birth." He, therefore, explains the passage thus: "He doth not say, else were your children bastards, but now they are legitimate; but else were they unclean, that is, heathen children, not to be owned as a holy seed, and, there-

* Num., 18: 17; Deut., 7: 6, and 14: 2; Ezra, 9: 2.

fore, not to be admitted into covenant with God, as belonging to his holy people. That this is the true import of the words *akatharta* and *hagia*, will be apparent from the Scriptures, in which the heathens are styled the *unclean*, in opposition to the Jews in covenant with God, and, therefore, styled *an holy people*." Dr. Doddridge says: "On the maturest and most impartial consideration of this text, I must judge it to refer to infant baptism. Nothing can be more apparent than that the word *holy* signifies persons who might be admitted to partake of the distinguishing rites of God's people. And as for the interpretation which so many of our brethren, the Baptists, have contended for, that *holy* signifies *legitimate*, and *unclean*, *illegitimate*; (not to urge that this seems an unscriptural sense of the words,) nothing can be more evident, than that the argument will by no means bear it; for it would be proving a thing by itself, *idem per idem*, to argue that the converse of the parents was lawful, because the children were not bastards; whereas all who thought the converse of the parents *unlawful*, must, of course, think that the children were *illegitimate*." Dr. Scott, the commentator, explains the passage thus: "If this had not been so appointed, and if Christians had been commanded to put away their unbelieving partners, as the Jews did their idolatrous wives; the children of such marriages would have been accounted relatively 'unclean,' and so excluded

from baptism, even as those of the Jews in the above-mentioned case were from circumcision: but on the contrary, they were accounted holy in the Christian churches, and thus admitted among them, as a part of the visible kingdom of God." In relation to the meaning attached to the words *unclean* and *holy* by anti-pædo-baptists, he says: "But in all the places where these words are found in Scripture, there is not one which will admit of this sense. No doubt, the children of the heathen, who were lawfully married, were as *legitimate* as those of Christians, yet they were never said to be 'holy.' Something more must be meant, by the believer 'sanctifying' the unbelieving party, than merely legalizing their marriage; for that would have been valid and lawful, if both had been unbelievers: and the children would not *really* be more 'holy,' in respect of their nature, if one parent was a believer, than if both were unbelievers. But as the word 'unclean' is frequently used in a relative sense, denoting *unfit to be admitted to God's ordinances*, and 'holy,' the contrary, as in this sense the male children of the Jews were 'holy,' and so partakers of circumcision; while those of the Gentiles, and even such as had one idolatrous parent, were '*unclean*,' and excluded from circumcision; I cannot but conclude, after long attention to the subject, that the baptism of the infant offspring of Christians is here evidently re-

ferred to, as at that time customary in the churches," etc.

Such are the views of the ablest commentators and critics, respecting the meaning of this passage of Scripture. It is certainly remarkable, that the opponents of infant baptism, in order to evade its force, have been compelled to assign to the words *holy* and *unclean*, meanings which they never have. But if such liberties are taken with the language of the Scriptures, there is nothing which they may not be made to teach.

Alexander Campbell saw the difficulty of sustaining the interpretation of this passage, so long adopted by the opponents of infant baptism. Declaring both Baptists and Pedeo-baptists in error, he gives a new interpretation. He says: "It is not, then, *legitimacy* of wives, husbands, and *their* children; but whether believing and unbelieving parties might, according to the law of Christ, continue together. Paul's response is briefly thus: They may live together—they are sanctified or clean persons, as to one another, in this relation. If you may not do so, you must put away your children also; for all your children stand to you as do those unbelieving, unholy persons. If you must reject your unchristian, unprofessing husbands and wives, you must, for the same reason, reject all your unprofessing, unbelieving children." * A very brief notice of this in-

* Lexington Debate, p. 384.

terpretation, will be quite sufficient to expose its weakness.

1st. The very fact, that Mr. Campbell could produce no commentator, theologian, or critic, who adopted this interpretation, is very nearly sufficient to condemn it; for it is most improbable that the ablest men, repeatedly and carefully examining the passage, should all have entirely failed to get the true meaning of it.

2d. Paul was never chargeable with the absurdity of reasoning from the conjugal to the parental relation, as if they were identical. If it were true that a Christian wife might not continue to be the wife of an idolater, it would not follow that Christians must exclude their children from their presence. The two relations are so totally different, that no reasonable man would place them on the same footing.

3d. According to this interpretation, when Paul says, "Else were your children unclean, but now they are holy," he means that parents may lawfully live in the same house, and eat at the same table with their children! Why, in this sense, every pagan in the world is holy; for in this same epistle, Paul allows Christians to attend feasts prepared by their pagan friends. *"If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no ques-

* 1 Cor., 10: 27.

tion for conscience' sake." Verily, this interpretation gives to the word *holy* a sufficiently comprehensive meaning! It is scarcely necessary to say, that the word never has any such meaning. Such liberties taken with the language of inspiration, by the ablest opponents of Infant baptism, show how extremely difficult it is to evade the clear evidence found in the New Testament in favor of the doctrine.

But why, it is asked, do we find no distinct mention of the baptism of infants in the New Testament? Several reasons may be given :

1st. Christian baptism was not instituted until after the resurrection of Christ; and, therefore, there could not be, in the four Gospels, any mention of the baptism of infants.

2d. The Acts of the Apostles contains, in twenty-eight chapters, a very brief and rapid sketch of the success of the Gospel, and of the history of the church, for a period of about *thirty years*. Indeed, Luke, the writer of the Acts, confines himself mainly to an account of the journeyings and labors of *one* of the apostles. Necessarily, therefore, many things done by the apostles must have been omitted; and, of course, those things would be omitted, which are made sufficiently plain in other parts of the Bible, and about which there was no controversy. Thus, for example, there is no specific mention of the change of the Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week, or of the appointment of the Christian

Sabbath. All we learn in the New Testament, on this subject, we get indirectly and inferentially. Yet the Sabbath is quite as important to the church and the world, as the most ardent Pede-baptist would consider the baptism of infants. And it is worthy of remark, that not a few have rejected the Christian Sabbath on precisely the same grounds on which infant baptism is rejected.

3d. This is a subject respecting which there was not likely to be any controversy during the apostolic age, unless, indeed, infants had been excluded from baptism. The converted Jews clung, with remarkable tenacity, to all their former observances. They did not give up circumcision, until the council at Jerusalem had commanded them to do so; and they still insisted on the distinction between meats, and on the the observance of the Jewish holy days. Now, it is indeed most marvellous, if, whilst thus tenacious of Jewish rites and observances, they quietly gave up infant membership, without a word of controversy. But if, in this respect, no change was made, but the children of believers sustained to the church the same relation they had so long sustained, there was no more reason for particularly mentioning the baptism of infants, than the change of the Sabbath. Indeed, this silence of the inspired writers is strong presumptive evidence that no change was made in the law of membership.

4th. But we do find the inspired historian, in

22*

recording the baptisms administered, using language which precisely accords with the practice of Pedo-baptists, but does not suit that of our opponents. He does record the baptism of a number of *families*. Two of these are recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Acts. Of Lydia, it is recorded, that the Lord opened her heart, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul. "And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us," etc. The other family mentioned as baptized, is that of the jailor. Several others are mentioned. Now, we do not undertake to prove, that there were infants in these families. We simply call attention to the remarkable fact, that the inspired historian mentions the conversion of the head of the family, and says nothing of the conversion of the family, but does say they were baptized. If he was a Pedo-baptist, and if the infants of those families were baptized, he wrote just as he might have been expected to write. The fact is truly remarkable, that amongst anti-pedo-baptists we find no *such* records of the baptism of families. Some years ago, I took occasion to present to the consideration of some Baptist editors this singular discrepancy between the manner of recording baptisms adopted by Luke, and that adopted by Baptists, and called on them to produce amongst their accounts of baptisms, a record like that in the case of Lydia. They succeeded in finding a few baptisms of whole families; but they had

been so unfortunate as to mention the *conversion* of the members of the families, as well as their baptism. They, therefore, failed to find any record like that of Luke. This argument was urged in the debate with Alexander Campbell, and no attempt was made to reply to it. I then said, what I now repeat—"One thing is certain, we write as Luke wrote, and our anti-pedo-baptist friends do not. Would it not be truly wonderful, should it turn out to be true, that those who *write* like Luke, do not *act* like him; whilst those who do not *write* like him, are the very persons who *act* like him?" On this point, the late Dr. Woods, of Andover, uses the following language: "It will be observed, that whenever the apostles speak of baptizing households, they speak of it without any restriction. They do not say that Lydia was baptized, and *those of her family who believed*; or that the jailor was baptized, and as many of those who belonged to him as believed. There is no such limitation as this. *Lydia was baptized, and her family. The jailer was baptized, and all his.* And, considering how succinct the history of baptism is, the number of *household baptisms* particularly mentioned, must be allowed to be considerable, and to be quite a noticeable circumstance in that history. Now, is this a circumstance ever to be met with in histories written by those ministers who do not baptize infants? For them to speak familiarly, and without restriction or explana-

tion, of baptizing *families*, would be inconsistent with their views and their practice.”

But, says Mr. Carson, in reply to this argument, “There are not now any examples of the abundant success that the Gospel had in the apostles’ days. We do not find that men believe by households, more than they are baptized by households. I suppose that the Baptist missionaries have a *baptized household* as often as they have a *believing household*.” * Just so. But the apostles had household baptisms in cases where, so far as the record shows, there were not believing households. This, precisely, is the difference between the apostles and the Baptists. The latter, it is true, have baptized families; but then, in giving an account of these baptisms, they always mention the faith, not only of the head of the family, but of all the members. The apostles baptized families; and in their account of them, they mention the faith of the heads, but not of the members. Mr. Carson entirely fails to account for this difference. If the apostles were Pede-baptists, all is plain; if not, the fact that they wrote so little like Baptists, and so much like Pede-baptists, is unaccountable.

* On Baptism, p. 305.

CHAPTER V.

THERE are two methods which Christians have been accustomed to adopt, in order to reach a satisfactory conclusion in regard to a controverted doctrine.

1st. They have inquired how wise and good men, who have made the Scriptures their study, have generally understood them. For as it is agreed amongst Protestants, that all important doctrines are clearly taught in the Scriptures, it is far more probable that a comparatively small number of persons of some one denomination, have been misled by prejudice or party spirit, than that the great body of Christians of different denominations, in different ages and countries, have misunderstood the obvious teaching of the Bible. So far as this principle has weight, (and it is admitted to have much,) it is decidedly in favor of infant baptism. For it is an indisputable fact, that the overwhelming majority of the readers of the Bible, embracing the most eminent critics and commentators, ministers and laymen, in every age and country, have understood the Bible to teach this doctrine. The number of those who have rejected it, has been, and now is, comparatively a mere handful.

2d. The second method adopted to aid in deciding a controverted doctrine, has been to inquire into its

history, and to ascertain how nigh to the apostolic age it can be traced. For as it is certain, that the apostles promulged none but sound doctrines, and as great errors could prevail in the church only by gradual progress; the nearer any important doctrine can be traced to the apostolic age, the greater the probability of its truth. Thus, we can trace the Sabbath back to the earliest ages of Christianity. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ, is sustained by similar testimony; and so are all the leading doctrines of the Gospel. But we can go back in the history of the church, to a period when no mention is made of the Pope, of the worship of saints and angels, of the veneration of relics, of the sacrifice of the mass, of auricular confession, of purgatory, of prayers for the dead, of the celibacy of the clergy, etc. And then we can trace the gradual rise of all the leading errors of popery.

But can we go back, by the light of history, to a period, when no mention is made of *infant baptism*? If it is an error, which arose after the apostolic age, it could not have commenced simultaneously in all countries. It must have been introduced in some particular part of the church; and as it would have been a novelty calculated to arrest attention, it must have excited some controversy. It is not like the power of the Pope, which was of very gradual growth, and, therefore, excited little attention; nor like the worship of pictures and images, which were

first placed in churches, without any purpose of having them so used, and which grew by imperceptible degrees. On the contrary, the baptism of the first infant would have been an innovation so remarkable as to have arrested attention, and produced a strong sensation. Reflect for a moment. Up to the time when the first infant was baptized, all the churches everywhere, we are to suppose, held the doctrine, that none but believers should be baptized. Now, either all of them passed precisely at the same time from Baptist to Pedo-baptist sentiments, or the doctrine that infants ought to be baptized, was first embraced in some one place, and gradually spread over the entire church. The first supposition is so improbable, not to say impossible, that no one will advocate it. If, then, the doctrine was advanced in some one place, whilst everywhere else Baptist sentiments prevailed, it is impossible that there should have been no controversy respecting it, nor the slightest intimation as to the time of its rise, and as to its progress among the churches. Suppose the attempt made now to introduce infant Baptism or baptism by sprinkling into the Baptist churches, in this and other countries. Would it be possible to succeed without warm opposition and earnest controversy? And how was it with regard to other innovations upon the doctrines of the church? When Montanus, in the second century, introduced serious doctrinal errors, the result was controversy and

division. When Origen, in the third century, introduced new doctrines, drawn from the Platonic Philosophy, again the church was agitated with controversy. When Arius, in the beginning of the fourth century, denied the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, the whole church was violently agitated and divided. In a word, through all those early ages, we meet with warm controversies on many points of far less importance, and less adapted to excite attention, than infant baptism.

Now, can any one tell us in what age infant baptism commenced in the church? We confidently assert, that no one can. Indeed, our anti-pedobaptist friends, with all their zeal and investigation, throw no light on this subject. No writer has chronicled the rise of infant baptism, and not one word of controversy, as to whether it is scriptural, appears in the writings of the Christian fathers. On the contrary, when we first find it mentioned, it is spoken of as if universally prevailing, and as by all regarded as scriptural. Certain questions did, indeed, arise at an early day, respecting unimportant circumstances connected with infant baptism; but none were found to advocate the sentiments of anti-pedobaptists.

Let us now examine carefully the testimony of the early Christian writers. The first writer, whose testimony I give, is Irenaeus, who was born in the apostolic age, or about the year 97, four years

before the death of the apostle John.* He was chosen Bishop of Lyons, in the year 167, sixty-seven years after the apostolic age. His language is as follows :

“ Therefore, as he (Christ) was a Master, he had also the age of a Master. Not disdaining nor going in a way above human nature, nor breaking, in his own person, the law which he had set for mankind, but sanctifying every several age by the likeness that it has to him. For he came to save all persons by himself : all, I mean, who by him are regenerated unto God—infants and little ones, and children and youths, and elder persons. Therefore, he went through the several ages ; for infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants,” etc.† The argument from this passage depends upon the meaning of the phrase, “ regenerated unto God.” Did Irenaeus mean by this phrase Christian baptism ? If he did, the passage is a clear proof, that the doctrine of infant baptism prevailed in the church in the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles. Dr. Wall says : “ Irenaeus himself uses it so in all other places of his book that I have ever observed.” ‡ Alexander Campbell, in his debate with McCalla, many years ago, denied that by the word *regenera-*

* Some date his birth a few years later ; but the difference is too small to be of any importance.

† Adv. Haeres. Lib. 2, ch. 39.

‡ Vol. 1, ch. 3, p. 73

ted Irenaeus meant *baptized*; but he afterwards changed his opinion. In the Millen. Harb. Extra, v. 2, pp. 28, 29, he writes as follows :

“ In my debate with Mr. McCalla, I objected to the substitution of the word *regenerated* for *immersed*, in the extracts from Irenaeus, and the other primitive fathers, as they are called, on the ground of their not being exactly representatives of the same ideas universally. I admitted, that sometimes they used the word *regenerated* for *baptized*, but not always; and, indeed, not at all in the *popular sense* of *regenerated*. Well now, it comes to pass, that I represent ALL the primitive fathers as using the term *regenerated* as equivalent to the term *baptized*. All this is true; and what then? Why, at that time, I used the word *regenerated* as expressive of a *spiritual change*, and found that these fathers spoke of a *spiritual change*, as well as we. I could not, therefore, reconcile this to the exclusive application of the term *regenerated* to the act of immersion; but on a more accurate and strict examination of their writings, and of the use of this term in the New Testament, I am assured that they used the term *regenerated* as equivalent to immersion, (baptism,) and spoke of the spiritual change under other terms and modes of speech,” etc. Now, if Dr. Wall and Mr. Campbell are right as to the use of the word *regenerated* by the Christian fathers, the testimony in favor of infant baptism is

conclusive. For it will not be pretended, that it could have prevailed at so early a period, unless taught and practiced by the apostles. This point was pressed upon Mr. Campbell, in the Lexington Debate, and the passage just quoted was read. His only answer was the following: "Suppose I admit that all the fathers from Justin Martyr down to Theodoret, 423, used baptism and regeneration as synonymous, and Irenæus generally with the others, though he lived A. D. 178; what does it prove in the case before us? That infant baptism is a divine institution, because it is *probable*, even *certain*, that Irenæus referred to it, under another name, at the close of the second century?"* Observe, Mr. Campbell here admits, that Irenæus did refer to infant baptism; but he seeks to place him, as far as possible, from the apostles, by saying, he lived A. D. 178, as if he had lived but a single year! But the truth is, he was a disciple and friend of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. Eusebius speaks of an epistle written by Irenæus to Florinus. "In that epistle, indeed," says he, "which we have already mentioned, he again speaks of his intimacy with Polycarp." Irenæus says to Florinus, "For I saw thee when I was yet a boy in the lower Asia with Polycarp, moving in great splendor at court, etc. I remember the events of those times better

* p. 430.

than those of more recent occurrence. As the studies of our youth growing with our minds, unite with it so firmly, that I can tell also the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse; and also his entrances, his walks, the complexion of his life and the form of his body, and his conversations with the people, and his familiar intercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord. How also, he used to relate their discourses, and what things he heard from them concerning the Lord. * * * These things, by the mercy of God, and the opportunity then afforded me, I attentively heard, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart; and these same facts I am always in the habit, by the grace of God, to recall faithfully to mind." * Now, if the Apostle John taught anti-Pedo-baptist principles, it is certain that Polycarp held and taught the same; and as Irenaeus was taught by Polycarp, and held him in great veneration, he certainly agreed with his teacher. Since, then, Irenaeus taught the doctrine of infant baptism, both Polycarp and John the Apostle must have taught the same.

As the testimony of Irenaeus is of especial importance, we think it proper to appeal to the learned Neander, to ascertain the meaning of his language.

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist., ch. 20, pp. 205, 205.

He says: "Irenaeus is the first church teacher in whom we find any allusion to infant baptism, and in his mode of expressing himself on the subject, he leads us, at the same time, to recognize its connection with the essence of Christian consciousness." And after quoting the passage on which we are remarking, he says: "It is here especially important to observe, that infants (*infantes*) are expressly distinguished from children (*parvuli*) whom Christ could *also* benefit by his example; and that they are represented as capable of receiving from Christ, who had appeared in their age, nothing more than an objective sanctification. This sanctification becomes them in so far as they are regenerated by Christ to God. Regeneration and baptism are in Irenaeus intimately connected; and it is difficult to conceive how the term regeneration can be employed, in reference to this age, to denote anything else than baptism." * Without adopting the sentiments of Wall, Campbell, or Neander, respecting the design of baptism, we cannot but think there is strong evidence that Irenaeus refers to infant baptism.

Dr. Wall is quite confident that Clement Alexandrinus refers to the same thing, when giving directions to Christians respecting their ornaments, he advises to the use of such pictures and engravings as are innocent, modest, and useful. "Let your seal,"

* Hist. of Church, vol. 1, p. 311.

says he, " be a dove, or a fish, or a ship under sail," etc. And if any one be by trade a fisherman, he will do well to think of an apostle, and the children taken out of the water."* Wall says: " An apostle's taking, drawing, or lifting a child out of the water, cannot refer to anything that I can think of, but the baptizing of it. And *infantem de fonte levare*, is a phrase used by the ancients, denoting the baptizing of it, almost as commonly as the word baptizing itself. And as the emblem of an anchor, or of a ship under sail, used for the impress of a seal-ring, does suppose those things to be commonly seen, known, and used; so St. Clement's advising the emblem of an apostle baptizing an infant, to be used by the Christians in his time (which was but about ninety years after the apostles) for the sculpture of their seals, does suppose it commonly known by them, that the apostles did perform that office." It is difficult to refute this argument; and for this reason, probably, Dr. Gale, in his reply to Dr. Wall, passed it unnoticed. Would a Baptist advise his brethren to use a seal with such a device on it?

The argument for infant baptism, derived from the language of Tertullian, who lived within about one hundred years of the Apostle John, is very strong. His testimony is the more important, be-

* Vol. 1, p. 84.

cause he opposed the baptism of infants. He says:

“ But they whose duty it is to administer baptism, are to know that it must not be given rashly. *Give to every one that asketh thee*, has its proper subject, and relates to alms-giving; but that command rather is here to be considered, *Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine*; and that, *lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s faults*. * * Therefore, according to every one’s condition and disposition, and also their age, the delaying of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of little children. For what need is there that the godfathers should be brought into danger? Because they may either fail of their promises by death, or they may be mistaken by a child’s proving of wicked disposition. Our Lord says, indeed, *Do not forbid them to come to me*. Therefore, let them come when they are grown up; let them come when they understand, when they are instructed whither it is that they come; let them be made Christians, when they can know Christ. What need their guiltless age make such haste to the forgiveness of sins. Men will proceed more warily in worldly things; and he that should not have earthly goods committed to him, yet shall have heavenly. *Let them know how to

* Wall’s Hist., v. 1, pp. 93, 94.

desire this salvation, that you may appear to have given to one that asketh.”

In this language of Tertullian, there are several things worthy of special notice :

1. Tertullian was an opposer of infant baptism ; and, therefore, so far as his testimony favors the doctrine, it is the more conclusive. Yet he was not sound in the faith, but was led astray by the heresies of Montanus. Whilst, therefore, his testimony to a *fact* is unobjectionable—especially when that testimony was against his opinions—his views of Scripture doctrine are of little worth.

2. The fact that he writes against infant baptism, is proof conclusive, that it then existed in the church. It cannot be imagined, that he would oppose a doctrine which had no existence. Dr. Gale felt compelled to admit that the language of Tertullian may prove “there were some persons at that time, who among many other vile notions, were about to introduce this of the necessity of baptism to the salvation of infants.”

3. The grounds on which he opposes the baptism of infants, prove the general prevalence of the doctrine, and the general belief, that it was scriptural and valid. Every man, when opposing a doctrine, of course, employs against it the strongest arguments with which he is acquainted. Doubtless Tertullian did so. But observe :

1st. He did not say the practice of baptizing

infants is *unscriptural*. And his evasion of the argument, which he knew to be founded on the language of Christ, is puerile. "Our Lord," says he, "says indeed, *Do not forbid them to come to me*. Therefore, let them come when they are grown up." Precisely this ground was taken by the disciples; and, therefore, the Saviour rebuked them, and allowed the children to come *immediately*. But why did not Tertullian pronounce the baptism of infants unscriptural and invalid? Evidently, because he did not believe it to be so.

2d. He did not oppose infant baptism as a *novelty*, which errorists were attempting to introduce into the church, and which had not been generally adopted. Why did he intimate nothing of the kind? If he could have pronounced it unscriptural and a novelty, these would have been the most conclusive arguments against it. Will it be pretended, that he designedly omitted to adduce the very arguments which would have had most weight, and which were constantly used with reference to other doctrines?

But, says Dr. Gale, "Had it been the settled practice and judgment of the church, and what they thought was supported by the authority and tradition of the apostles, etc., it cannot be imagined that Tertullian should venture to oppose it; or, if he did, that he should employ no more pains to excuse what seemed to contradict the practice of the apostles and the whole church." A similar argument is used by

Neander. But this reasoning goes much further than its author designed; for it is certain, that Tertullian did, in the same connection, oppose the baptism of unmarried persons, those never married, and widows and widowers, until old age. He said—

“For no less reason, unmarried persons ought to be kept off, who are likely to come into temptation, as well as those that never were married, upon account of their coming to ripeness, as those in widowhood for the miss of their partner, until they either marry, or are confirmed in continence. They that understand the weight of baptism, will rather dread the receiving it, than the delaying of it. An entire faith is secure of salvation.”

Now, let us borrow the logic of Dr. Gale, and argue thus: “Had it been the settled practice and judgment of the church, and what they thought was supported by the authority and tradition of the apostles, that young or unmarried persons, and widows and widowers should be baptized, it cannot be imagined that Tertullian should venture to oppose it,” etc. Is not this argument just as good as Dr. Gale’s? Is it not precisely the same argument, applied to a different class of persons? The argument, reduced to a syllogism, is as follows:

Tertullian would not have opposed a doctrine sustained by the settled judgment and practice of the church, and, as they believed, by the authority and tradition of the apostles.

But he did oppose the doctrine of infant baptism.

Therefore, the doctrine of infant baptism was not supported by the settled judgment and practice of the church.

Now, let us try another syllogism on the same principle. Take the following :

Tertullian would not have opposed a doctrine sustained by the settled judgment and practice of the church, etc.

But he did oppose the baptism of young and unmarried persons, and of widows and widowers.

Therefore, the baptism of such persons was not sustained by the settled judgment and practice of the church.

This syllogism is just as good as the other. It stands on precisely the same principle. Yet it proves what all admit untrue. The major proposition is untrue ; for Tertullian *did* oppose a doctrine admitted to be sustained by the practice of the church and by apostolic authority.

3. The language of Tertullian necessarily implies, that he himself believed the baptism of infants to be both scriptural and valid. The "godfathers," he says, are brought into danger. How? By the profanation of a sacred ordinance? No; but because they may fail to fulfil their promises. Is this antipedo-baptist doctrine? And then he asks—"What need their guiltless age make such haste to the

forgiveness of sins?" If he did not believe infant baptism to be of divine authority, how could he regard it as efficacious in securing remission of sins? If he had been an anti-pedo-baptist, would he not rather have asked—"What propriety is there in so gross a profanation of a sacred ordinance?" The truth evidently is, that Tertullian ascribed a superstitious efficacy to baptism, as securing the remission of all sins; and he regarded sins committed after baptism as more dangerous than those committed before. On this ground, and not because he held anti-pedo-baptist views, he advised the delay of baptism, not only in the case of infants, but of others.

This argument, then, stands thus: Tertullian was opposed to infant baptism. His writing against it proves its existence in the church in his day, which was within one hundred years of the apostolic age. He did not venture to oppose it as *unscriptural*, or as a *novelty*. We are, therefore, warranted in the conclusion, that at that time infant baptism was universally practiced, and was universally regarded as derived from Christ and his apostles, and, therefore, as scriptural. Now, is it credible, is it possible, that within one hundred years after the death of the last of the apostles, it had been introduced into the church, without the least controversy, and had continued so long, and had become so universally practiced, that Tertullian ventured not either to

condemn it as unscriptural, or to assail it as a novelty? Verily, Tertullian, though an opposer of infant baptism, is a most important witness in favor of it.

The next witness we shall call, is Origen, who was the most learned of the Christian fathers. Jones, the Baptist historian, quotes with approbation, the following language of Dr. Priestley, respecting him: "He was a man so remarkable for his piety, genius, and application, that he must be considered an honor to Christianity and to human nature." Origen was born in the year 185, or about eighty-five years after the death of John the apostle. His grandfather, or, at least, his great grandfather, says Wall, "must have lived in the apostles' time." And he adds, "As he could not be ignorant whether he himself was baptized in infancy, so he had no further than his own family to go for inquiry how it was practiced in the times of the apostles." And this information he could obtain the more accurately, because his ancestors were Christians. His father died as a martyr in the persecution under Severus, in the year after the apostles, 102." Eusebius says: "The Christian doctrine was conveyed to him from his forefathers."* He was a man of eminent learning. He traveled extensively, and was consulted on religious subjects by persons in all parts of the

* Eccl. Hist., Lib., vi, ch. 19.

world. It is, therefore, impossible that he could be ignorant, either of the practice or of the faith of the church, from his own age to that of the apostles. In his Homily on Luke 14th, he says :

“ Having occasion given in this place, I will mention a thing that causes frequent inquiries among the brethren. Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or how can any reason of the law in their case hold good, but according to that sense that we mentioned even now; none is free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth? And it is for that reason, because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptized.” Again, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, he says: “ For this also it was, that the church had from the apostles a tradition to give baptism even to infants. For they to whom the divine mysteries were committed, knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit.” This testimony is clear and conclusive. The manner in which Origen mentions infant baptism, in connection with original sin, shows, that it was universally practiced in the church, and that it was believed to be sustained by the authority of the apostles. Is it probable, is it possible, that a man born within eighty-four years of the apostles, whose ancestors

were Christians—a man of so great learning and general information—could have been mistaken as to the practice of the church in his day, and as far back as the apostolic age? Is it possible, if the primitive Christians were anti-pedo-baptists, that their faith and their practice could have undergone so great a change in a few years, and so quietly that the best informed men in the church believed there had been no change at all?

Dr. Gale, in his reply to Wall, sought to invalidate this testimony of Origen, on the ground that his writings have been interpolated and corrupted. But in the Lexington Debate, Mr. Campbell attempted no such defence. In this he was wise; for in addition to the testimony of his writings, we have that of Jerome, a constant reader of his works in the original Greek, that he held to infant baptism.

The next witness in favor of infant baptism, is Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. In the year 253, he, with sixty-six bishops, were assembled in council; and Fidus, a country bishop, wrote to them, inquiring whether an infant might be baptized before it was eight days old. To this inquiry, they replied as follows:

“ We read your letter, most dear brother, in which you write to one Victor, a priest, etc. But as to the case of infants, whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born; and that the rule of circumcision is to be

observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born ; we were all in the assembly of the contrary opinion. For as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind, but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born."* Dr. Gale, who sought to deprive us of the testimony of Origen, confesses that Cyprian "does plainly enough speak of infant baptism, as practiced in Africa in his time." Here, then, within one hundred and fifty years of the apostles, we find infant baptism universally practiced in Africa, and regarded as of divine authority, by Cyprian, one of the greatest men in the church. Observe the character of the question put by Fidus—not whether infants should be baptized—a matter about which there was no dispute, but whether their baptism should be delayed till the eighth day. Let it be remarked, too, that Cyprian and Origen were cotemporaries, the former having become Bishop of Carthage, A. D. 248, and the latter having died about the year 254. So that as infant baptism certainly prevailed in Africa A. D. 253, Origen was undoubtedly a Pedo-baptist.

But if infant baptism had prevailed in Africa, and not in other parts of the church, this difference

* Wall's Hist., v. 1, p. 129.

must have been noticed by the writers of that age ; and some controversy must have resulted. It is not pretended, however, that this decision of the council caused any controversy ; nor have anti-pedobaptists been able to find the slightest trace of difference of sentiment in the church in the third century.

We appeal now to the testimony of Jerome and Augustine, two of the most learned and eminent ministers in the church, in the latter part of the fourth and beginning of the fifth centuries. I will first quote a passage from the writings of Jerome.

“ This is said of those that have understanding of such as he was, of whom it is written in the Gospel, ‘ He is of age, let him speak for himself.’ But he that is a child, and thinks as a child, (till such time as he come to years of discretion, etc.,) his good deeds, as well as his evil deeds, are imputed to his parents. Unless you will think the children of Christians are themselves only under the guilt of the sin, if they do not receive baptism ; and that the wickedness is not imputed to those also who would not give it them, especially at that time, when they that were to receive it, could make no opposition to the receiving of it.”

Augustine says : “ Men are wont to ask this question also : ‘ What good the sacrament of Christ’s baptism does to infants ? Whereas, after they have received it, they often die before they are able to

understand anything of it. As to which matter, it is piously and truly believed, that the faith of those by whom the child is offered to be consecrated, profits the child. And this the most sound authority of the church, does command, etc. For how could the widow's son be holpen by his own faith, whereof being dead, he could have none? And yet his mother's faith was useful for his being raised to life again." In his book against the Donatists, he says: "And as the thief, who by necessity went without baptism, was saved; because, by his piety he had it spiritually; so when baptism is had, though the party, by necessity, go without that [faith] which the thief had, yet he is saved. Which the whole body of the church holds, as delivered to them, in the case of little infants baptized: who certainly cannot yet believe with the heart unto righteousness or confess with the mouth to salvation, as the thief could; nay, by their crying and noise, while the sacrament is administering, they disturb the holy mysteries: and yet no Christian man will say they are baptized to no purpose. And if any one do ask for divine authority in this matter; though that which the whole church practices, and which has not been instituted by councils, but was ever in use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing delivered by authority of the apostles: yet we may, besides, make a true estimate, how much the sacrament of baptism does avail infants, by the circumcision which God's former people received.

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

Again, commenting on Rom., 5: 12–14, he says the language of Paul “ can have no other sense but

such an one by which it has come to pass, that the whole church has from of old constantly held that *fideli* (or baptized) infants do obtain remission of original sin by the baptism of Christ." He then quotes the letter of Cyprian to Fidus, and proceeds in the following language :

“ And now some people, by the boldness of I know not what disputing humor, go about to represent that as uncertain which our ancestors made use of as a most certain thing, whereby to resolve some things that seemed uncertain. For when this began first to be disputed, I know not; but this I know, that holy Jerome, whose pains and fame for excellent learning in ecclesiastical matters is at this day so great, does also make use of this as a thing most certain, to resolve some questions in his book,” etc. Then, quoting some passages from Jerome, he says : “ If we could with convenience come to ask that most learned man, how many writers of Christian dissertations and interpreters of holy Scripture in both languages could he recount, who from the time that Christ’s church has been founded, have held no otherwise, have received no other doctrine from their predecessors, or left any other to their successors ; for my part, (though my reading is much less than his,) I do not remember that I ever heard any other thing from any Christians that received the Old and New Testament—neither from such as were of the Catholic church, nor from such as belonged

to any sect or schism. I do not remember that I ever read otherwise in any writer that I could ever find treating of these matters, that followed the canonical Scriptures, or did pretend to do so. From whence this trouble is started up upon us, I know not; but a little while ago, when I was there at Carthage, I just cursorily heard some transient discourse of some people that were talking, that infants are not baptized for that reason that they may receive remission of sins, but that they may be sanctified in Christ," etc. Wall's History, v. 1, ch. xv.

The testimony of these two eminent men, Jerome and Augustine, proves beyond all question, not only that in their day the doctrine and the practice of infant baptism prevailed universally amongst all sects, but that it was not known or believed that there had ever been any anti-pedo-baptists.

The testimony of Pelagius is, if possible, still more conclusive. He denied the doctrine of *original sin*; and as the doctrine of infant baptism was conclusively urged by Augustine in proof of original sin, it was his interest, if possible, to prove infant baptism to be an innovation. In his letter to Innocent, of Rome, he says: "Men slander me, as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, or did promise the kingdom of heaven to some persons, without the redemption of Christ, which is a thing that I never heard, no not even any wicked heretic, say."

I have not appealed to these early Christian writers, either as interpreters of Scripture, or to ascertain their views of the nature and design of baptism. I have simply called them up as *witnesses to prove a fact*, viz: that in their time, and as far back as their information extended, infant baptism was practiced universally, and was as universally believed to be sustained by apostolic authority. Their testimony proves, beyond all question, the following facts, viz :

1. That for the first four hundred years after Christ, not one writer or one individual could be found, who held that infant baptism is *unscriptural*.

2. That during the same period, not one individual denied that infant baptism had been practiced by the entire church from the time of the apostles.

3. That it was common for the most distinguished Christian writers to adduce the universally admitted doctrine of infant baptism, as a conclusive argument in favor of the doctrine of original sin.

Now, let us suppose that the apostles were antipedo-baptists, and all the churches planted by them, of the same faith. Those churches were planted in countries widely separated from each other, speaking different languages, and having little intercourse, in Asia, in Greece, in Gaul, in Africa. The Apostle John lived to the close of the first century. Until his death, the churches, of course, must have con-

tinued to be anti-pedo-baptist. Let us suppose, that at the close of the first century, there began to be tendencies toward infant baptism. Now, let me ask the candid reader two questions, viz: 1st. How long a time would have been required for all the churches, in all countries, to have been converted to the belief and practice of infant baptism? Remember, intercourse between the different parts of the church was necessarily limited. 2d. Would it have been possible for a change so important and so palpable to have taken place in the faith and practice of the churches, and to have become universal, without the least controversy, and without leaving the slightest trace of any disagreement? If such a thing did happen, it stands as a *miracle* in history, having nothing else to match it! It does seem to me, that the only rational conclusion to which we can come from the testimony of history, is, that infant baptism was taught and practiced by the apostles of Christ.

But it is objected, that there is the same evidence in favor of infant *communion*, as of infant baptism. But this is not true. This argument was urged by Alexander Campbell, in the Lexington Debate; and it is reasonable to believe, that on that occasion he brought forward the strongest evidence that can be found. He quoted from Cyprian the following: "I will tell you what happened in my own presence. The parents of a certain little girl, run-

ning out of town with fright, had forgot to take any care of their child, whom they left in the keeping of a nurse. The nurse had carried her to the magistrates: they, because she was too little to eat the flesh, gave her to eat, before the idol, some of the bread mixed with wine, which had been left of the sacrifice of those wretches. Since that time, her mother took her home. But she was no more capable of declaring and telling the crime committed, than she had been before of understanding or of hindering it. So it happened that once when I was administering, her mother, ignorant of what had been done, brought her along with her. But the girl being among the saints, could not, with any quietness, hear the prayers said, but sometimes fell into weeping, and sometimes into convulsions, with the uncasiness of her mind; and her ignorant soul, as under a wreck, declared by such tokens as it could, the conscience of the fact in those tender years. And when the service was ended, and the deacon went to give the cup to those that were present, and the others received it, and her turn came, the girl, by a divine instinct, turned away her face, shut her mouth, and refused the cup," etc.

Now, it is truly remarkable, that this passage should be cited to prove the practice of *infant* communion; for Cyprian speaks of a *little girl*, old enough to hear and understand prayers, not of an *infant*. It is impossible to determine how old she

was, when she partook of the pagan sacrifice, or how long after that it was that the occurrence here narrated took place. Dr. Wall concludes, with good reason, that she was not less than four or five years old. And he states this important fact, that “before the year 412, there is no author produced but St. Cyprian” in favor of infant communion. Tertullian, though he opposed infant baptism, said not a word against infant communion. If such a thing had existed, would he not have opposed it even more strongly than he opposed the baptism of infants? The learned Origen testifies to the universal prevalence of infant baptism, but says nothing of infant communion. The matter, then, stands thus: 1. The evidence is conclusive, that within one hundred years after the death of the Apostle John, infant baptism not only existed, but was universally believed to be of divine authority. 2. There is no evidence for the practice of infant communion for *four hundred* years after Christ. It is easy to see how this last practice originated in connection with the doctrine of the saving efficacy of the sacraments; but it seems to me impossible that infant baptism could have originated so early, and have become so universal as we find it in the church, unless it is of divine authority.

It would be easy to multiply evidences to any extent, that from the fifth century down to the Reformation, infant baptism was universally prac-

ticed ; but it is unnecessary, since the fact will not be denied. I propose to inquire particularly into the faith of the Waldenses, who were the witnesses for the truth in the dark ages. For some anti-pedobaptists have been disposed to deny that they were in favor of infant baptism.

CHAPTER VI.

THE value of the testimony of the Waldenses in favor of infant baptism, does not arise from any extraordinary learning possessed by them, but from the fact that they rejected the errors of Popery, and received the Scriptures as their only rule of faith ; and from the additional fact, that their piety was uncommonly deep and pure. During a long period of darkness and superstition, they bore a suffering testimony to the pure doctrines of the Gospel. The most cruel and protracted persecutions could not drive them from the cross of Christ, or induce them to connive at the errors of Popery. Anti-pedobaptists have been fond of representing infant baptism as a Popish error, even as the prolific cause of all the corruptions of Rome. But here we find a people, whose history runs back many centuries beyond the Reformation—a people adopting the Protestant rule of faith, and fearless in their denun-

ciations of the errors of Popery—a people regarded by all evangelical denominations as witnesses for the truth in the dark ages. It is interesting and important to inquire how they understood the Scriptures on the subject of infant baptism.

Whether they arose under the preaching of Peter Waldo, an eminently pious merchant of Lyons, in the twelfth century; or whether, as some think, they may be traced to the apostolic age, I shall not now inquire. That they were pedo-baptists, is clear beyond question, from the following considerations:

1. It is admitted that all the Waldenses are now Pedo-baptists, and that they believe their ancestors always to have held the same faith. Rev. Robert Baird, D. D., who has repeatedly visited this interesting people, says: “On the subject of baptism, these churches are, as has already been intimated, Pedo-baptist. And their pastors have assured us, that it is their belief, founded on their histories and traditions, that they have ever been such from their earliest times. * They stated to us, that if ever there was a time in which they did not baptize their children, it was in those ages of oppression, when they were not permitted to do it themselves, and they would not suffer the Roman Catholic priests to administer that ordinance, inasmuch as they added to it several superstitious practices, which they utterly

* Prot. in Italy, pp. 397, 398.

reject." If there ever was a time when they were anti-pedo-baptists, every trace of such sentiments has been lost, and every evidence of a change from Baptist to Pedo-baptist views, has been obliterated.

It has been strenuously contended, that at the time of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, through the influence of the reformers, and in order to escape persecution, they adopted Pedo-baptist sentiments. But at that time the eyes of all Christendom were turned upon them; and it is impossible that such a change, if it had occurred, could have escaped the notice of the writers of that age. Yet no historian and no writer mentions anything of the kind; nor does any historian of modern times pretend to have found evidence of such a change. Even Jones, the Baptist historian, gives not the slightest intimation, that their faith had undergone any such change. It is, therefore, certain, that the alleged change never occurred.

2. That the Waldenses were Pedo-baptists at the time of the Reformation, is clear from their entire agreement in faith with the reformers. Jones says: "An impartial review of the doctrinal sentiments maintained by the Waldenses, the discipline, order, and worship of their churches, as well as their general deportment and manner of life, not to mention their determined and uniform opposition to the church of Rome, affords abundant evidence of the similarity of their views and practices to those held by Luther,

Calvin, and the other illustrious characters, whose labors, in the sixteenth century, contributed so eminently to effect the glorious reformation. Most of the Catholic writers, who lived about the time of the Reformation and in the age which succeeded it, clearly saw this coincidence between the principles of the Waldenses and those of the reformers, and remarked it in their works." The same historian says: "Lindanus, a Catholic bishop, of the see of Ghent, who wrote in defence of the tenets of the church of Rome, about 1550, terms Calvin the inheritor of the doctrine of the Waldenses." He also quotes Mezeray, the celebrated historiographer of France, in his abridgment of Chronology, as saying: "They held nearly the same opinions as those who are now called Calvinists." He says further, Gualtier, a jesuitical monk, in his chronographical tables, drew up a catalogue consisting of seven-and-twenty particulars, in which he shows that the principles of the Waldenses and those of the Calvinists, coincided with each other."* Now, it is impossible, if the Waldenses had rejected infant baptism, and held that it is not valid baptism, that a difference so important between them and the reformers should have passed unnoticed.

But the evidence is yet stronger. Jones says: "Luther, in the year 1530, published the Confes-

* Church History, p. 357.

sions of the Waldenses, to which he wrote a preface. In that preface, he candidly acknowledges, that in the days of his popery he had hated the Waldenses, as persons who were consigned over to perdition. But having understood from their confessions and writings the piety of their faith, he perceived that those good men had been greatly wronged, whom the Pope had condemned as heretics, for that, on the contrary, they were rather entitled to the praise due to holy martyrs. He adds, that among them he had found one thing worthy of admiration, a thing unheard of in the Popish church, that, laying aside the doctrines of men, they meditated in the law of God, day and night; and that they were expert, and even well versed, in the knowledge of the Scriptures. * * * Moreover, having read the Waldensian Confessions, he returned thanks to God for the great light which it had pleased him to bestow upon that people, rejoicing that all cause of suspicion being removed which had existed between them and the reformed, they were now brought together into one sheepfold, under the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls." †

The Confessions to which Luther wrote a preface, and which he so fully endorsed, showed, of course, not only the faith of the Waldenses at the time he wrote, but in preceding generations; for it is not pre-

† Church History, p. 353.

tended, that they had adopted any *new* Confessions differing from those of their forefathers. And it is certain, that Luther never would have given such an unqualified endorsement to *anti-pedo-baptist* confessions; nor could he have said, that "all cause of suspicion" was removed, and they were "brought together into one sheepfold," if the Waldenses had not acknowledged the validity and scriptural character of infant baptism. It is, therefore, certain that in the beginning of the sixteenth century, they were Pedo-baptists, and that their Confessions and writings, endorsed by Luther, proved them ever to have been of this faith.

That the Waldenses were Pedo-baptists, is further proved by a declaration of their faith, published by the Waldenses of the Valleys of Maties and Meane, and the Marquisate of Saluces, made in the year 1603. In this, they declare their agreement in faith with the reformed churches of France, Switzerland, Germany, Geneva, England, Scotland, Denmark, etc; and they say: "Beseeching, in the meantime, (in the middle of our exile and calamity,) the reformed churches to hold us, and acknowledge us, to be true members thereof, being willing to seal with our blood (if God will have it so) the confessions of faith made and published by them; which we acknowledge in all things, and throughout, conformable to the doctrine taught and written by the holy apostles, and therefore truly apostolical." And they

declare, that this faith had been held and taught by their forefathers "time out of mind, and from father to son." *

In the year 1535, the Waldenses of Provence and Dauphine assembled at Angrongne, and after hearing read the letters from the reformers, sent by George Morell and Peter Masson, whom they had sent to confer with them, they adopted a confession of their faith, which, they declare, was "conformable to the doctrine, which hath been taught them from the father to the sonne for these many hundred yeeres, and taken out of the word of God." The seventeenth article of this Confession is as follows: "Touching the matter of the sacraments, it hath been concluded by the holy Scriptures, that we have but two sacramental signs, the which Christ Jesus hath left unto us; the one is Baptism, the other the Eucharist, which we receive, to show what our perseverance in the faith is, as we have promised when we were baptized, being little infants; as also in remembrance of that great benefit which Jesus Christ hath done unto us, when he died for our redemption, washing us with his most precious blood."†

"In the year 1508," says Jones, "about ten years before Luther began the Reformation, and

* Perrin's History, B. 2, ch. 5.

† Perrin's History, B 2, ch. 4.

during the reign of Ladislaus, King of Hungary and Bohemia, a dreadful persecution broke out against that class of his subjects, who held the principles of the Waldenses. The latter, to justify themselves from several charges erroneously imputed to them by their adversaries, drew up an apology addressed to the King, which was still extant in the time of Perrin, and as he handed down to us the substance of it, I shall here extract a few of the more interesting particulars." * The apology here mentioned by Jones, is contained in Perrin's history of the Waldenses; and it settles the question, whether they were Pedeo-baptists. "The fourth calumny," says Perrin, "was touching baptism, which, it is said, they denied to little infants; but from this imputation, they quit themselves as followeth: 'The time and place of those that are to be baptized is not ordained, but the charity and edification of the church and congregation must serve for a rule therein, etc. And, therefore, they to whom the children were allied, brought their infants to be baptized, as their parents, or any other whom God had made charitable in that kind.'" † It is to be regretted, that Jones did not think proper to publish this interesting part of the apology. It proves, that before the days of Luther, the Waldenses were firm believers in the doctrine of infant baptism.

* Church History, p. 341.

† Book 1, ch. 4.

They were sometimes charged with rejecting infant baptism ; and, as we have seen, they treated the charge as a calumny. Louis XII, King of France, hearing many severe charges made against them, sent Adam Fumee and a doctor of Sorbon to visit those of Provence, and inquire into the truth of the charges. " They visited all their parishes and temples, and found neither images, nor so much as the least show of any ornaments belonging to the Masses and ceremonies of the church of Rome, much less any such crimes as were imposed upon them, but rather that they kept their Sabbaths duely, causing their children to be baptized according to the order of the primitive church, teaching them the articles of the Christian faith and commandments of God."* Jones, the Baptist historian, in quoting this language of Perrin, strangely alters the phraseology, and instead of the phrase, " causing their children to be baptized," he has it, " observed the ordinance of baptism, according to the primitive church." † This is taking a most unwarranted liberty with history. We might suppose that Jones had quoted some other author, but he refers directly to Perrin as his authority. Certainly, if the Waldenses had been anti-pedo-baptists, sufficient evidence could have been found without resorting to such means.

* Perrin's History, B. 1, ch. 5.

† Church History, p. 348.

In addition to the testimony already given, I need only state the two following facts, viz :

1. The Waldenses, whilst they boldly testified, as their writings show, against all the corruptions of Popery, never mentioned infant baptism amongst those corruptions. If they had believed, with modern anti-pedo-baptists, that infant baptism is not only a Popish corruption, but the chief of the corruptions of Rome, would they have passed it in silence ?

But it is remarkable, that they bore a distinct testimony, not only against the corruptions of baptism, but against the additions made by Rome to infant baptism. In the Doctrine of the Waldenses and Albigenes, as given by Perrin, we find the following : “ The things that are not necessary to baptism, are the exorcisms, the breathings, the sign of the cross upon the infant, either the breast or the forehead, the salt put into the mouth, the spittle into the ears and nostrils, the unction of the breast, the monk’s cowl, the anointing of the chrism upon the head, and divers like things, consecrated by the bishop, as also the putting of the taper in his hands, clothing it with a white vestment, the blessing of the water, the dipping of it thrice in the water : all these things used in the administration of the sacrament, are not necessary, they neither being of the substance, nor requisite in the sacrament of baptism, from which things many take occasion of error and superstition, rather than edification to salvation.

Now, this baptism is visible and material, which maketh the party neither good nor evil, as it appeareth in the Scripture, by Simon Magus and St. Paul. And whereas, baptism is administered in a full congregation of the faithful, it is to the end that he that is received into the church, should be reputed and held of all for a Christian brother, and that all the congregation might pray for him, that he may be a Christian in heart, as he is outwardly esteemed to be a Christian. And for this cause it is, that we present our children in baptism, which they ought to do, to whom the children are nearest, as their parents, and they to whom God hath given this charity." *

In the "Book of Anti-christ," which, according to Perrin, dates back as far as A. D. 1120, we find the following: "The third mark of Anti-christ consisteth in this, that he attributeth the renewing by the Holy Ghost to an outward dead faith, and baptizeth children into that faith, and that by it, we have the baptism and the regeneration," etc. This passage has been strangely relied on to prove the Waldenses opposed to infant baptism; but it is perfectly evident, that the objection is not to baptizing infants, but to the "dead faith," and to the sanctifying efficacy ascribed to the ordinance. And accordingly, in the fourth chapter of this same

* Book 1, ch. 6.

book, we read as follows : “ The things that are not necessary in the administration of baptism, are the exorcisms, breathings, the sign of the cross upon the forehead and breast of the infant, the salt put into his mouth,” etc.

These passages from their writings, prove that the Waldenses believed in the doctrine of infant baptism, and objected only to the superstitious additions of the church of Rome.

2. Those of their enemies who were best acquainted with them, never charged them with rejecting infant baptism. Jones, who was most likely to find such charges, if made by credible writers, gives the testimony of “ two noted authors who have left us a particular account of the faith and practices of the Waldenses in Bohemia, during the 14th century, at which time their numbers had increased very considerably, and they had to sustain the fire of papal persecution.” The first is an inquisitor of the church of Rome, who professed to have “ exact knowledge of the Waldenses, at whose trials he had often assisted, in several countries.” His testimony is very important. He says : “ Concerning the sacrament of baptism, they say, that the catechism signifies nothing, that the absolution pronounced over infants avails them nothing, that the godfathers and godmothers do not understand what they answer the priest. That the oblation which is called *Al wogen* is nothing but a mere human invention. They reject all exorcisms

and blessings.”* Most certainly, the Waldenses with whom this inquisitor was acquainted, were Pedo-baptists; for they made no objection to the baptism of infants, but only to those superstitious additions to it, which all evangelical Pedo-baptists condemn.

The second witness brought forward by Jones, is Claudius Seisselius, Archbishop of Turin, who wrote a treatise against the Waldenses towards the close of the fifteenth century, a little before the time of the Reformation. “His residence in the very heart of the valleys of Piedmont,” says Jones, “must have furnished him with the best opportunities of becoming acquainted with the principles and practices of his non-conformist neighbors, and he has transmitted to posterity a narrative sufficiently circumstantial and explicit, to enable any impartial person to form a tolerably correct judgment of them.” This important witness gives not the slightest intimation, that the Waldenses rejected the doctrine of infant baptism, which, most certainly he would have done, if such had been the fact.

It is clear, then, beyond all controversy, that the Waldenses were Pedo-baptists. Dr. Wall thought it possible that a small sect from amongst them, called Petrobrussians, rejected infant baptism, *on the ground that infants are incapable of salvation*. But if there was such a sect, they soon passed away.

* Church History, p. 324.

Dr. Wall, after gathering together the evidences from history on this subject, comes to the following conclusion: "Lastly, as these evidences are for the first four hundred years, in which there appears one man, Tertullian, who advised the delay of infant baptism in some cases, and one Gregory, that did, perhaps, practice such delay in the case of his children, but no society of men so thinking, or so practicing, nor no one man saying it was unlawful to baptize infants; so in the next seven hundred years, there is not so much as one man to be found, that either spoke for, or practiced any such delay. But all the contrary. And when, in 1130, one sect among the Albigenes, declared against the baptizing of infants, as being incapable of salvation, the main body of that people rejected their opinion; and they of them that held that opinion, quickly dwindled away and disappeared, there being no more heard of holding that tenet, till the rising of the German antipedo-baptists, anno 1522."*

The argument from history, then, stands thus:

1st. It has all the weight which human testimony can give it. Commencing from the present day, we trace it distinctly up through every age almost to the very days of the apostles. Not to insist upon anything that can be regarded as doubtful, we are safe in saying (for all admit it) that Tertullian

* History of Infant Baptism, v. 2, ch. 9.

speaks of infant baptism. It, of course, *then* existed; and since he does not intimate, either that it was a novelty, or that it was unscriptural, but speaks of it as if he regarded it as valid, it is clear, that within one hundred years after the death of the last apostle, it prevailed universally in the church, as of divine authority. It does seem utterly impossible that at so early a day, it should have become so universal throughout the church, without the least controversy, unless it was practiced by the apostles. We can go back in the history of the church to a period when there was no Pope, no prayers to saints, no auricular confession, no celibacy of the clergy; but we cannot get back to the period when infant baptism commenced.

2. It has all the weight of the testimony of that people who, for so many centuries, resisted the errors of Popery, and preached the Gospel in its purity. Evidently, they held and practiced infant baptism, because they found it, as they believed, in the sacred Scriptures.

3. It has all the weight which is due to the judgment of the overwhelming body of the wise and good in every age, concerning the meaning of the Scriptures. At the end of a discussion of three centuries, the opponents of infant baptism are in an exceedingly small minority, and have against them the very great majority of the wisest and most faithful students of God's word.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER all, it will be asked, of what practical use is the baptism of the children of believers? The question is an important one, not only for the satisfaction of those who doubt or deny the truth of the doctrine, but that Christian parents and baptized children may reap the benefits of the ordinance.

1. In the first place, it is certain that the blessing of God attends the proper administration and reception of every ordinance which he appoints. Some have imagined, that the baptism of both adults and infants is an unnecessary ceremony; but God knows what is in man, and He knows how important ordinances are to growth in grace. It should be enough for us, that He has instituted baptism, even if we were unable to see its necessity or importance.

2. The advantage of infant baptism may be seen in the influence it exerts upon the minds of parents. There are two difficulties which pious parents experience in the religious training of their children. The first is their proneness to neglect it; the second is the discouragements that attend their efforts to train them aright. Infant baptism, to a considerable extent, removes these difficulties.

As to the first, it cannot be doubted that if a truthful man solemnly promises to attend to a duty, he is more likely to do it, than if no promise had

been made. The duty itself creates one obligation, and his promise creates another. His promise he regards as sacred. Now, God commands parents to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and natural affection, together with divine grace, prompts them to obey. Yet it is a sad truth, that there is, on the part of many professedly religious parents, great neglect of this most important duty. But God brings them under a most solemn promise to himself, that they will be faithful; and this promise is sealed by the ordinance of baptism. The ordinance itself reminds parents of the depravity of their children, and of their need of the atonement of Christ and of the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. Now, will any one pretend, that a promise made to the great God, and sealed in the most solemn manner, will exert no influence in inducing parents to be faithful in the use of the divinely appointed means for the conversion and salvation of their children? If a promise made to *men* exerts an influence, how much more a promise made to God?

But pious parents often feel discouraged by the thoughtlessness and waywardness of their children. Their instructions are unheeded; and their admonitions and exhortations seem to fall powerless on the ear. Their hearts are deeply depraved; and the world is full of temptations, which the enemy of man and his children well know how to present.

How often the hearts of pious parents sink within them, as they think of the difficulties in the way of the conversion of their children. But as God excites them to faithfulness by exacting from them a solemn promise ; so he encourages them in the discharge of their difficult duties by the promise of divine assistance. “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant ; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.” The precious promise of the covenant-keeping God has sustained the sinking heart of many a believing parent, has stimulated them to perseverance, and given earnestness and faith to their prayers ; and it has encouraged them to hope in the darkest hour, even though the blessing be apparently long withheld. There is thus a double advantage derived from infant baptism—an advantage to parents, who are excited and encouraged to discharge their duties, and an advantage to the children, who thus receive a more faithful training and more earnest prayers, and are, consequently, more likely to be converted. Alexander Campbell, years ago, expressed, in the *Millennial Harbinger*, the decided opinion, that there is a greater probability of the salvation of the children of Presbyterians, than of the children of Baptists, because of the greater fidelity of the former in the religious training of their children. This is an important concession, especially in view of the great

importance attached by Mr. Campbell to baptism. No ordinary difference could have forced upon his mind such a conviction. Now, how are we to account for the greater fidelity of Presbyterians in the training of their children? The only answer is, they have entered into covenant with God to train them up for his service; and they are encouraged by his precious promise to bless them in their efforts. If there were no other advantage derived from infant baptism, this is of incalculable importance.

3. Another advantage of infant baptism is its effect upon the minds of children. When they arrive at an age to understand their relations and obligations, let the parents explain to them, that in the days of their infancy they entered into covenant with God to train them up for his service—that they had the seal of his covenant and the emblem of sanctification placed upon them. Let them feel, as they grow up, that their parents are acting under covenant engagements in restraining and instructing them. Let them understand their obligation to take upon themselves the duties of the covenant, and avail themselves of God's promised blessing. Let them understand the advantages they enjoy as children of the covenant, and the responsibilities that rest upon them. Will considerations such as these have no influence in arousing their consciences, in encouraging them to struggle against temptation, and in urging them to an early consecration of

themselves to the service of God? It is evident that infant baptism presses upon the minds of children powerful motives to early piety; and there is reason to hope, that the Holy Spirit will give efficacy to those motives.

4. Infant baptism is of great advantage, because of its influence on the church in the religious training of the young. The church is a school of Christ, in which disciples are to be instructed and trained for the service of God. Infant baptism recognizes the children of believers, as entitled to the special watch and care of the church, whose duty it is to see that they be properly instructed and brought early and constantly under the influence of the means of grace, and to make them the subjects of constant prayer. To baptized children, this care of the church is a blessing of inestimable value.

Some, indeed, have supposed that as the children of believers are members of the church, they ought, when arrived at the period of accountability, to be required to come to the Lord's table; and, in case of refusal, they should be subjected to discipline, as other members. But this is a serious error, and, if carried into practice, would be followed by unhappy consequences. Discipline is either admonition, suspension, or excommunication. That children should be instructed, and kindly exhorted and admonished to discharge all duties, is certainly true; but such means will prove far more effectual, we cannot but

think, when employed otherwise than as ecclesiastical discipline. Suspension would only restrain them from the Lord's table; but as, in the case supposed, they have not partaken of the supper, and do not propose to do so, it would have no meaning. Few, it is presumed, would urge excommunication. Discipline is to be exercised for the neglect of duties *voluntarily assumed*, or for the violation of obligations *voluntarily acknowledged*. Its design is either to bring back-sliders to repentance, or to protect the church from the reproach of having, in her bosom, members who disgrace their profession, or for both of these ends. It is not, therefore, applicable to those who have not professed conversion.

5. The history of the church demonstrates that the blessing of God has attended the baptism of the children of believers. In the inquiry how far God has blessed the children of the church, we put out of view those churches in which the ordinance of baptism has been corrupted, or its nature and design have been misunderstood. The church of Rome regards baptism as possessing a sanctifying efficacy, whether administered to adults or to infants. She, therefore, administers the ordinance, not as the emblem of the Spirit's influence, and as the seal of the covenant of grace, but in order to regenerate the soul in the very act of administration. High-church Episcopalians fall into the same error. The blessing of God, of course, will not attend the *perversion* of the ordinance of baptism.

But with the history of the Presbyterian church, we are so well acquainted, as to be able to affirm, that the blessing of God has, to a remarkable extent, rested upon the baptized children. In the revivals with which this church has been blessed, a large proportion of the converts, often the great majority, have been the children of the covenant. The same thing has been true of the conversions under the regular ministrations of pastors. We have constantly witnessed the fulfillment of the precious promise—“I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.”* Again, “For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.”† Still again, “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; and I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.”‡ And now the great majority of the most able and efficient ministers and members of the Presbyterian church are the baptized children of the church—the children of the covenant.

* Isaiah, 61 : 8, 9.

† Isaiah, 65 : 23.

Isaiah, 44 : 3, 4.

It is vain, then, for opposers of infant baptism to declaim against it as tending to corrupt the church, and to fill it with unconverted members. The history of the Presbyterian church in its different branches, and of every other Pedo-baptist church, in which infant baptism has been practiced, with the exceptions already mentioned, disproves the charge, and proves it an unspeakable blessing.

6. Finally, infant baptism offers strong consolation to pious parents, both in the early death of their children, and when called to die, and leave their children at an early age. In the first part of this volume, on the Design of Baptism, I have disproved the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and I utterly repudiate the doctrine, held only by the church of Rome and those of kindred faith, that any infants are lost. Yet it is a great consolation to sorrowing parents, when they weep over their infant children sinking into the grave, to be able to commit them to the hands of their Heavenly Father, pleading the unailing promise of his covenant. And when parents are called to leave their children in this world of temptation, of sin and sorrow, it is an unspeakable consolation to be permitted to commit them to the care of Him who has promised to be a God to them and to their children. Again and again, have we witnessed the "strong consolation" which dying parents have drawn from God's gracious covenant in behalf of their children. Who would be willing to be deprived of it?

These are the principal advantages of infant baptism. The subject makes a strong appeal to pious parents. Two important questions I desire to press upon them, viz :

1. Have you had your children baptized? I do not ask, whether you have had them *christened*. I dislike the word. The sooner it goes entirely out of use, the better. But have you had them *baptized*? In too many instances, pious parents delay the discharge of this duty, and quiet their consciences with trivial excuses; and then, if one of their children is likely to die, they send off in great haste for their pastor to administer the ordinance. All unnecessary delay is the neglect of an important duty, and arises from undervaluing one of the most precious privileges. It looks very much like trampling under foot God's gracious covenant. If God has committed to you a young immortal, bound to you by the tenderest ties, delay not to give it to him in the everlasting covenant, and humbly claim his promised grace in the momentous and difficult work of training it up in his nurture and admonition.

2. Are you conscientiously and faithfully discharging the duties which stand connected with the baptism of your children? Too many, it is to be feared, think little of qualifying themselves to discharge the sacred duties imposed upon them and recognized by them in the covenant. There is no

virtue in the mere administration of an ordinance. It is worse than useless to enter into covenant with God, and to have the seal of that covenant applied to our children, unless we are careful to keep the covenant—to discharge the duties it enjoins. What kind of example do you set before your children? Do they see, in your daily walk, an exemplification of the Christian spirit? Do you faithfully instruct them in the truths of God's holy word? Do you gather them, morning and evening, around the family altar? Or if you are the wife of an unconverted husband, or a widow, do you pray with and for your children? Do you exercise over them a firm and affectionate discipline? In a word, is it your daily prayer and effort, so far as your instrumentality can, to make them true and devoted disciples of Christ? Do they see that you are far more anxious that they should be disciples of Christ, than shine in the fashionable circles of society?—that you are much more concerned that they be “rich in faith,” than that they possess earthly treasures? Examine yourselves; for God has, in large part, committed to you the future happiness of your children, in this life and in the life to come. Your example will inspire them with respect for the religion you profess, or harden them against it. Your prayers, accompanied by faithful efforts, will call down the blessing of God upon them; as your unfaithfulness

will be followed by his judgments. May God, in mercy, help you to be faithful.

This subject appeals to the officers of our churches. Baptized children are placed under their watch and care. They are solemnly bound to see to it, as far as possible, that they have suitable religious instruction—that they be brought under the influence of the means of grace. It is to be feared, that whilst, in some respects, the children of the church enjoy a greater variety of religious instruction, than in preceding generations, there is less care taken to have them taught in the *doctrines* of the Gospel. One of the unhappy consequences is, that they oftener wander from the church of their fathers, and are carried away with dangerous error; and another is, that the piety of those who remain, is of a less healthy and vigorous growth. It becomes the officers of the churches to look after the spiritual interests of the children committed to their oversight.

This subject appeals to baptized children of the church. The seal of God's covenant of grace is upon them. From earliest infancy, they have been the subjects of parental prayers, and have received parental instructions. They have enjoyed precious privileges. The parents who gave them in covenant to God, may now be in heaven; but their prayers are remembered by the God of Abraham. The question now arises—Will you ratify what your pious parents have done for you? Or will you thrust from

you the blessings of the everlasting covenant, and thus incur aggravated guilt? To trifle with that covenant made in the blood of Christ, is no slight matter. Hasten, then, to make your peace with God, and humbly to claim his precious promise.

THE END.