

Liturgy of the Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

Agnew Coll. on Baptism, No.

SCB
10350

A
DISSERTATION
ON THE
NATURE AND ADMINISTRATION
OF THE
ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY WM. SOMMERVILLE, A.M.

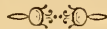


PAISLEY—ALEX. GARDNER.

EDINBURGH—OLIVER & BOYD, AND OGLE & MURRAY.
GLASGOW—D. BRYCE & CO., G. GALLIE, AND M. OGLE & CO.
BELFAST—C. AITCHESON.

1866.

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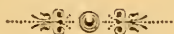
SECOND EDITION.



PAISLEY—PUBLISHED BY ALEX. GARDNER.

1866.

INTRODUCTION.



PREFATORY REMARKS ON RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

THERE are many who profess to be opposed to all controversy, but, especially, to religious controversy. Of these, not a few make the profession under a misapprehension of its nature, invariably confounding it with the spirit of severity and revenge, which collision never fails to rouse in the unsanctified mind. Such are accustomed to view and represent it as directly opposed to the spirit of the Gospel, which enjoins love to enemies. Many are really opposed to religious discussion. Some do not like to have the even current of their musings ruffled, and, being perfectly satisfied with themselves, shrink from the agitation of questions, however important, the results of whose investigation might diminish their self-complacency, and furl the sails of spiritual pride. Some are too ignorant of the importance of scriptural truth, its influence upon the spiritual state of individuals, and its bearing upon the advancement of the kingdom

of God, and are, consequently, too indifferent to its definite character, to allow themselves *to believe any thing*, or to say that *any believe*, in religion, *what God has not revealed, or what He condemns*. To such, truth and error are hardly distinguishable; the friends of truth, and the friends of error, who say Lord, Lord, are equally acceptable. Some proclaim Peace, Peace, and plead the cause of liberality, that the friends of sound doctrine may be reduced to a state of profound security, and, while they repose, the seeds of error may be more successfully sown. The natural tendency of the human mind is to error and corruption, and there never has been, accordingly, an age of professed liberalism, an age not disposed "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," which did not dig the grave of evangelical truth and vital godliness.

Do we always find these lovers of peace, who would sacrifice truth upon its altar, the most active promoters of peace? Do we find those who plead, in opposition to religious controversy, the precept, "Love your enemies," furnishing the brightest example of obedience? Very far otherwise. Their clamorous demands for Peace, very frequently constitute the chief element of disorder in the land. They are furious in favour of moderation, and pursue, with rancorous animosity, those whom they are pleased to consider destitute of the spirit of

love. I have somewhere met with an allusion to a eulogium pronounced upon a departed friend, in which his liberality was very prominently displayed, and evidenced by the fact, that "he could not endure a man who was not as liberal as himself." This discovers the full extent of popular charity. The admirers of it love those that love them. Christian charity "rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth."

Controversy is never sought by the minister of Christ. Like the Prophet's message, it is the *burden* which the Lord has given him to bear. The object of it is the advocacy of truth and righteousness, in opposition to error and vice; the maintenance of God's cause, in opposition to satan's sway, and satan's stratagems. So long as flesh and spirit exist together, the spirit will lust against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit. So long as truth and error, piety and ungodliness, are in the world, there shall be controversy. The moment it ceases, either error and ungodliness have disappeared, or truth and piety have ceased to exist but in name. The cause of God has never been signally advanced in the world, but by men who, disdaining the scorn of infidelity and latitudinarianism, and the bribes of the interested supporters of evil, have stood forth, the uncompromising advocates of the truth as it is in Jesus, and the unflinching foes of all known deviation from that truth, or perversion of it. It is

opposition to God which alone is ruinous to men's souls, and that man hates his brother in his heart who suffers sin upon him, and allows it to pass without rebuke. Those who spare the sinful principles and practices of men, manifest more love of self than of God, and of man's eternal welfare. We may not confound the profession and appearance of religion, with pure and undefiled religion. In the words of Walker, which I quote from memory,—“There is more difference between true religion, and the most specious form of false religion which looks most like it, than there is between the latter and gross idolatry.”

Accordingly, stare and flounce who will, there is not a more controversial book in the world than the *Bible*. This I might verify by a multitude of references, but my limits do not admit of their introduction. A few shall suffice.—What was the ministry of Elijah, but a continued course of controversy with false worship and foul practices? Behold him standing alone, upon Mount Carmel, against the King of Israel, four hundred and fifty priests, and a deluded and oppressed people, to decide a question as difficult then, as any scriptural question that is at this day in dispute, may be to us. Is *Jehovah* or *Baal* God? Had modern liberality seen the disputants ranged on opposite sides, it would have scorned the presumption which would put a single man forward against the united judg-

ment, and voice, and worship of king, and priests, and people. Had its advocates heard the loud and earnest cry, "O Baal, hear us," and marked the fervour, the sincerity, and the gushing blood of the congregated priests; and had they turned to see the prophet gathering his mantle around him, to mark the sarcastic smile playing upon his features, and to hear his sneering voice, "Cry aloud, for he is a god," &c., I doubt not, with them the fervent devotion of the priests would have commanded respect and admiration, and the prophet appeared a profane infidel. God seeth not as man seeth. Was not our Lord moved by love, love of enemies? How did He discover it? Read His sermon on the mount. Its pervading character is controversial. He spares no arrows, when perverted principles and practices are the object. The question stands between Him and the men of old time whom the people followed, and He meets their recognised principles with a flat contradiction, and unequivocal condemnation. He denounces the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, the leaders of the people, as that by which a man can never enter into the kingdom of heaven. Not satisfied to inculcate the duty of prayer, He must proclaim the ostentatious hypocrisy of pretenders, which is to be shunned. He points out the danger of following false prophets, their meek, and gentle, and attractive bearing,—their sheep's clothing,—notwithstanding.

His example is copied by all the apostles. Would you see a specimen of vigorous controversial discussion, turn to the epistles to the Galatians, Romans, and Hebrews. Not even the mild and affectionate John is free of what, in modern phrase, is heartless bigotry. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." We condemn the *rage* and *harshness* of Luther and Calvin, of Knox and Melville,—their style of preaching would not suit the "ears polite" of our polished times. But these men saw satan as lightning fall from heaven, whilst error smiles at our well-turned periods and gentle aspect, and the monster which was crushed by their giant tread, has revived to shake the thrones of kingdoms, and even Britain's Ministry bow in awe, and purchase favour.

Still, controversy must be regulated by certain rules, to be conducted to an honourable and a profitable issue.

1. Let the language employed be *just*. Many imagine they can divine the spirit by which a man is actuated by the mere complexion of his language. Here ignorance may roam at large, and prejudice find an escape from every blow aimed against it. The mildest words may hide a deceitful heart; for there are those who "by good words and fair

speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." Christ does not forfeit his divine character by pronouncing the scribes and pharisees to be hypocrites, persecutors, remorseless extortioners, serpents, a generation of vipers; nor dare we condemn Paul's spirit, when, after one of their own poets, he asserts the Cretians to be "always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." If I utter a lie against a man, I am actuated by a bad spirit, though my face be as bright as the polished mirror, and honey be upon my tongue. If I call a man a liar or a thief, at random, I deserve to be punished; but if *I prove him guilty* of lying and theft, no man may blame my spirit if I call him liar or thief. I quote the words of Dr. Wardlaw, as I find them in the Church of S. Mag. vol. 1, pp. 60, 61, and let them be my apology for the severe terms I have used in times past, and now use, in dealing with the Antipedobaptists. "If any reader shall consider the terms in which I have spoken as too severe, and as exposing me to the charge of rendering 'railing for railing,' I would only entreat him to remember, that it is often impossible to call things by their true and simple names, without an appearance of this. The reason lies in the essential badness of the things themselves, and if men will act in such a way that you cannot describe their actions truly, in any other terms than those which are expressive of moral turpitude, are we obliged, on this account, to speak falsely, or not

to speak at all?" The principle here stated regulated all the inspired writers. They must speak truth, and things essentially bad demand severe terms.

2. Let questions at issue be fairly stated. It is easy to beat down the man of straw we ourselves have formed, and to prove what nobody denies. I charge upon the Antipedobaptists, the violation of this rule. As I have not entered upon the subject of infant baptism, I shall not refer to the false principles assumed by them, in that branch of the baptismal controversy. In their discussion of the mode of baptism, they assume our denial that baptize signifies to *immerse*. Carson has occupied many pages, indeed the greater part of his work, in proving this, which never was, to my knowledge, doubted. The question is not what the word *signifies*, but what is the *sense* in which it is used by the inspired writers; or, in other words, what is the form of the ordinance indicated by the word baptism. Philologists, I presume, will not generally object to the distinction between the signification of a word, and the sense in which it is used in a given instance. Nobody can be ignorant of the signification of *Candlestick*, yet it would be very ridiculous to attempt to show, from this signification, that it is not commonly used in the sense of a utensil of iron, brass, or silver. Because the term *vapours* signifies *exhalations*, mingling with the atmosphere, it will

not be denied that the sense in which it is frequently used, is melancholy. Antipedobaptists disregard this distinction altogether, in treating of the mode of baptism.

Whilst the Antipedobaptist argument takes for granted our denial that *baptize* signifies *immerse*, should an unfortunate *sprinkler* explicitly make the admission, forthwith he shall be told that he has conceded all his opponents want—that the word is used in *no other sense*. My own experience confirms this.

3. Let us beware of introducing, in controversial discussions, evidence which has no bearing upon the subject discussed, or statements calculated to excite prejudice, but not partaking of the nature of evidence. The contrary practice is well adapted to operate upon ignorance and secure its suffrage, but can have no other effect, among intelligent persons, than to excite contempt or indignation against those who are capable of such conduct.

In particular, personal character should remain inviolate. Were a disputed point to be determined by the testimony of men, then, as the credibility of the witness will depend, in a great degree, upon his personal integrity, it is proper to ascertain the moral character he sustains. The case is very different when an appeal is made to the word of God. The proof of a given position is, in this instance, neither better nor worse for the personal character

of the man who produces it. Judas's hypocrisy neither invalidated his commission nor deteriorated the character of his proclamation. Paul understood this. He rejoiced, and expressed his determination to rejoice, that Christ was preached, even when he knew that He was preached, in some cases, by unprincipled persons from envy, and to add affliction to the apostle's bonds. He knew that neither the claims of Christ crucified, nor its efficacy, depended upon the spiritual condition of any man.

This rule is commonly and flagrantly violated. The rulers of the Jews could not meet Jesus in argument, but if they can persuade the people that He is a Samaritan, has a devil, and is mad, they may prevent them from listening to Him. Paul, in writing to the Galatians, must prepare the minds of the brethren, for weighing, without prejudice, the evidence of his doctrine, by a vindication of his character, which had been assailed by false teachers, for the purpose of depriving him of the confidence which might be subservient to his overthrow of their false principles. Luther is able to bring unanswerable arguments against the mass, because the devil taught him! And Presbyterian influence in Ireland, in promoting the reformation of religion, must be neutralized by the current report that Presbyterians had *black mouths*,—an unanswerable argument of the bad state of the inner man.

I charge Antipedobaptists with walking in the steps of these unworthy predecessors.

All their writings that I have read,—a work written by Mr. Innes of Edinburgh, excepted,—contain statements clearly insinuating a charge of moral and religious delinquency against Pedobaptists—a wilful disregard of divine authority.

And I am not alone, in bringing this accusation against the Antipedobaptist mode of conducting the controversy. I pass by British and American writers whom I could quote, and adduce the words of “A Baptist,” the author of letters to Gurney.

“Charges are preferred against the Bible Society, which, if they allow the piety of the Committee, sadly impeach their knowledge and judgment,” p. 11.

“I think, sir, that this fact (that the Committee of the Bible Society has always been composed of men of known integrity) has been too much forgotten in this controversy, (respecting the Bengalee version), during which it has been almost assumed that a strict regard for biblical truth is confined to the Baptist denomination.” p. 25.

He next quotes the following passage from the memorial of the Baptist union :—“The question then comes to this, Are human opinions to control the Bible, or is the Bible to control human opinions? The Committee of the Bible Society say in effect the former : for their rule determines that since the New Testament will not speak in a certain manner, it shall not speak at all. *They insist that the mean-*

ing shall be pushed aside, blinked, studiously suppressed, when it does not harmonize with the creed of all the parties composing the institution." This might form a text for a long sermon. Were such a charge preferred against Antipedobaptists, as it is by them, we should hear such a yell as would frighten Christendom out of its propriety. But we shall hear what this "Baptist" has farther to say to Gurney.

"You are fully aware, sir, that it is almost universally stated in our denomination, that these Missionaries (the Pedobaptists of India) were fearful of the Baptists making converts, if they translated the passages relating to Baptism their own way: and that their appeal to the Bible Society on the subject, had no other motive than a sordid fear of the truth, which they are said to have admitted in theory, but denied in practice. Thus, men who 'have jeopardized their lives in the high places of the field' for the gospel of Christ, are made the victims of injurious suspicions. We are, by insinuations like these, required to believe that the committee of the Bible Society, and the missionaries of India, know that the Baptists are right, and tremble for the safety of that system to which, without any regard to conscience, they adhere! They determine, *at all events*, to uphold that system, and to accomplish their object, in the worst spirit of Popery, wrap the divine records in obscurity! A morbid

fear of the heathen becoming baptists banishes every other feeling! Conscience cannot be heard, and the sweet accents of truth are disregarded!" pp. 27, 28.

The calumny which is here so severely but justly reprehended by one of themselves, has been repeated by Dr. M'Clay of New York, who came to Nova Scotia to plead the cause of the American and Foreign Bible Society,—a Society for sustaining those versions of the Scriptures, which, by translating baptize, by words tantamount to *immerse*, are made to speak the language of Antipedobaptists; or more properly, he has come to preach a crusade against Pedobaptism and Pedobaptists. Dr. M'Clay in my hearing, charged the Bible Society with asking the Baptists to *conceal*, by nontranslation, the meaning of the word baptize, as the condition upon which they could obtain any assistance in publishing their versions. Disguise it as we may, the statement insinuates a charge of positive dishonesty, and in a matter, too, that affects the intercourse of God and man. I deny, in the name of Pedobaptists, the truth of the charge. We ask no concealment. The nontranslation of the word *baptize*, upon the part of Pedobaptists, is not *concealment*. When we ask our brethren to leave the word untranslated, we ask them not to give what we believe and know, *even upon their own principles*, to be a view of a divine ordinance, at once defective and false. And Dr. M'Clay ought to know this.

In an address delivered in Glasgow, 1840, when acting as the accredited agent of the American and Foreign Bible Society, to the Baptist churches in Britain," Dr. M'Clay uses the following calumnious language, *published by request*, and of course, having the approbation of the meeting. "If these denominations, (composing the American Bible Society) hold any *errors*,—for example, *that sprinkling is Baptism, their Bible must not condemn that error*, by giving a faithful translation of the word *baptizo*, so as to express the precise meaning of the *action*, in which baptism consists; because such a course might not be compatible with the *views and creeds* of the denominations of which the society is composed; and it might not be considered *prudent* to admit such a version of the Bible into their schools and communities, lest the rising generation might become convinced that *sprinkling is rantism*, and consequently not baptism." Again, "To leave certain words of the Bible untranslated, so that the common people may be obliged to depend for their meaning upon the priests, is a distinguishing feature of the papal system. Against this popish principle, *lately adopted by the American Bible Society,*" &c.

If Pedobaptists are to be stigmatized as dishonest *before God and man, to God and man*, because they would leave the word *baptizo* untranslated, what shall we think of the men, the very men who bring

the slanderous imputation, translating the same word by one that *they themselves know to be wrong*, and which every Greek scholar knows to be wrong. That the *American Bible Union* have thus contradicted their own principle and promise, and confessed that the word *baptizo* cannot always accept *immerse* as an equivalent, read Mar. x. 38, 39, of the translation published by it. "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink, and endure the immersion which I endure?—Ye shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and endure the immersion which I endure." Here we have the word *baptizo* four times in the two verses rendered *endure*.

"When our common English version was made, King James commanded the *translators not to change* the old *ecclesiastical words*. Under the class of old ecclesiastical words, *baptizo*" (at least so says Dr. M'Clay,) "was included, and therefore, the translators did not feel themselves at liberty to *translate* it. The king, it would seem, did not wish the meaning of the word to be known; our translators acquiesced, and so 'they wrap it up' in obscurity. But our Baptist brethren," (he speaks of the Serampore translators, what may be presumed to be equally true of their successors,) "engaged in translating the Scriptures, were not manacled by the mandates of any earthly monarch, but feeling themselves under the most sacred obligations to obey Him, who has all authority in heaven and upon

earth, they faithfully translated every word of the divine oracles." Now I shall take the liberty of translating a little. Our English translators, throwing off the manacles of the king's mandates, have in several instances translated the word *baptizo*; and "our Baptist brethren," having no manacles of royal mandates to make them afraid, and disregarding "the most sacred obligations to Him who has all authority," have translated the same word *unfaithfully, upon their own principles*, for leaving which *untranslated* simply, without violation of any principle or profession, Pedobaptists have been vilified and held up to suspicion in both the Old World and the New. For this I do not hold Dr. M'Clay responsible, persuaded that, if he had lived, he would have protested, and carried out his principle, though the translation should make no sense at all. He was a rabid enemy of sprinkling and of infant baptism, but he was an *honest fanatic*.

But the misrepresentation of personal character, and the proclamation of defeat, are not the only means employed by our friends to stimulate prejudice, and which are not adapted to produce conviction of error. The use of unqualified denunciation, uttered merely for effect, is of the number. Of this nature is Dr. M'Clay's assertion that Pedobaptism is the "very worst part of Popery." For his own sake, I should be glad to number this among the hasty statements of an excited mind,

which would not be deliberately repeated. But I cannot. Whether for the sake of exciting a senseless horror in such as better understand the strength of an assertion than the force of an argument, or from a conviction of its accordance with the fact, I believe he would abide by the position. So it would have been better for Europe, better for the world, better for the church of God, that the Reformers had cast off infant baptism, and retained the ascription of the honour due to Christ to a wafer, the worship of saints, and angels, and images, than to have pursued the course they did. Better for me and my people to worship a piece of bread, pray to angels and deified men, deny the doctrine of justification by faith, than to administer and receive the baptism of infants. Are the ministers of the Baptist Association of Nova Scotia and their people prepared to admit this? Do they indeed glory more in the exclusion of infants from *their churches*, who, according to their own opinions, are never excluded from *heaven*, than in the absence of idolatry and justification by works? No. Much as I consider them to blame, I cannot believe this.

But perhaps all the other errors are to be traced to infant baptism? Then there must have been infant baptism in the days of the apostles, for "the mystery of iniquity" was working at that time, and only awaited the removal of a particular impediment to be fully unfolded,—the doctrine of justification

by the law had obtained a footing in the churches, and the disciples needed to be cautioned against “the worshipping of angels,” and “voluntary humility.” Nay, infant baptism must have spread, before the times of the apostles, over Greece and Rome, for they were guilty of worshipping the gods which their own hands had made, and gave divine honours to dead men and women, and to men and women who had probably never lived, as Papal Rome does. How unfortunate, when the apostle tells us that the “man of sin” should sit in the temple of God, and claim divine honours,—that this usurper should “forbid to marry, and command to abstain from meats,” that he omitted to forewarn us of the greatest abuse of all, that they would *sprinkle infants*!! If Paul had been an Antipedobaptist, anything resembling any one I have ever known, we should have heard of this, though other things had been omitted; or if the spirit that dictated the scriptures were the same that moves an Antipedobaptist upon the subject of baptism, this would have been communicated.

To the statement which has been often made,—a statement not at all affecting the merits of the question, but adapted to excite contempt of the Westminster Divines and their labours,—that in the Westminster Assembly, the cause of *sprinkling* as opposed to *immersion* was sustained by a majority of only one, and *that* the casting vote of the

president,—I oppose no mean authority on any question respecting the facts of Ecclesiastical history, the authority of Dr. S. Miller, of Princeton, and with his words shall close these prefatory remarks.

“It has been sometimes ignorantly and most erroneously asserted, that the Westminster Assembly of Divines, in putting to vote, whether baptism should be performed by *sprinkling* or *immersion*, carried it in favour of *sprinkling*, by a majority of *one only*. This is wholly incorrect. The facts were these. When the Committee who had been charged with preparing a “directory for the worship of God,” brought in their report, they had spoken of the mode of baptism thus: “*It is lawful and sufficient to sprinkle the child.*” To this Dr. Lightfoot, among others, objected; not because he doubted of the entire sufficiency of sprinkling; for he decidedly *preferred* sprinkling to immersion; but because he thought there was an impropriety in pronouncing that mode *lawful* only, when no one present had any doubts of its being so, and when almost all preferred it. Others seemed to think, that by saying nothing about *dipping*, that mode was meant to be *excluded*, as *not a lawful* mode. This they did not wish to pronounce. When, therefore, the clause, as originally reported, was put to vote, there were twenty-five votes in favour of it, and twenty-four against it. After this vote, a motion was made and carried, that it be

re-committed. The next day, when the Committee reported, and when some of the members still seemed unwilling to exclude all mention of *dipping*, Dr. Lightfoot remarked that to say that *pouring or sprinkling* was *lawful*, would be “all one as saying, that it was *lawful* to use *bread and wine* in the Lord’s Supper.” He, therefore, moved that the clause in the “Directory” respecting the mode of baptism, be expressed thus:—“Then the minister is to demand the name of the child, which being told him, he is to say (calling the child by name)—

I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

As he pronounceth these words, he is to baptize the child with water, which, for the manner of doing it, is not only *lawful*, but *sufficient* and *most expedient* to be, by *pouring or sprinkling* of the water on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony.” This was carried. See *Lightfoot’s Life*, prefixed to the first volume of his *Works*, (folio edition,) p. 4; compared with *Neale’s History of the Puritans*, vol. II. p. 106, 107, compared with the Appendix No. II. (quarto edition,) where the “Directory,” as finally passed, is given at full length.

We do not learn, precisely, either from Lightfoot’s biographer, (who was no other than the indefatigable Strype,) or from Neale, by what vote the clause, as moved by Lightfoot, was finally

adopted; but Neale expressly tells us, that “the Directory passed the Assembly with *great unanimity*.”

From this statement, it is evident, that the question which was carried in the Assembly, by a majority of *one*, was, not whether *effusion* or *sprinkling* was a *lawful* mode of baptism; but whether all mention of *dipping* as *one* of the *lawful* modes, should be *omitted*. *This*, in an early stage of the discussion, was carried by a majority of one in the affirmative. But it would seem that the clause, as finally adopted, which certainly was far more decisive in favour of effusion or sprinkling, was passed “*with great unanimity*.” At any rate, nothing can be more evident than that—the clause, as it originally stood, being carried by one vote only, and afterwards, when re-committed, and so altered as to be *much stronger* in favour of sprinkling, and then adopted without difficulty,—the common statement of this matter by our Baptist brethren is an entire misrepresentation.”—*Miller on Baptism*. NOTE E. pp. 120—122.

A DISSERTATION, &c.



What is Baptism?

In an investigation of the manner in which the ordinance of Baptism is to be administered, it is essential to the correctness of our conclusions, that the premises from which they are drawn be just. According to the line of argument adopted by Antipedobaptists in general, the determination of the *mode* must turn upon the original, and (what is assumed, not very accurately, to be identical,) the proper signification of the term Baptize or Baptism: and the advocates of the *rite* of *pouring* or *sprinkling* have, to a considerable extent, acquiesced with them in this; their reasonings seeming often tacitly to take for granted, that if the term employed to denote the ordinance be found invariably to denote *Immersion*, the ground must be abandoned to their opponents.

It seems to me extremely probable, that the paramount reliance placed by Antipedobaptists upon the determination of the original or proper meaning of the single word, and the admission, by their opponents, of the important relation which it

is thought to bear to a satisfactory adjustment of the ideas of Christians on the *mode* of Baptism, is to be traced to a striking apparent anomaly in the direct scriptural allusions to that ordinance. In the New Testament, in which alone the word Baptize or Baptism occurs, it is unaccompanied by any explanatory details bearing upon the mode in which Baptism is to be administered. The speakers, whose words are recorded by the inspired writers, evidently proceed upon the assumption, that those who heard them, so fully understood what ideas were intended to be communicated by the word in question, that any explanation or particular description of the mode of administering the ordinance indicated by the term Baptism, would be entirely superfluous. And the inspired writers also obviously take for granted the perfect intelligibility of their phraseology when speaking of the dispensation of that ordinance. “And were *baptized* of him in Jordan,—Teach all nations, *baptizing* them,—Why *baptizest* thou then?” In fact, throughout the New Testament, for our knowledge of what constitutes Baptism as a divinely instituted rite, if we except incidental allusions not primarily intended to cast light upon the present inquiry, we are left to look to the word in its naked individuality.

Here, then, there might seem to be—nay, according to the impression that the first and last question must be, What does the word BAPTIZE mean?

—there certainly is an anomaly in the plan of Divine doctrine respecting positive ordinances. No such source of embarrassment and doubt exists in the case of any other rite,—no such meagreness of instruction upon the subject of instituted duty. Under the former dispensation, circumcision, oblation, sacrifice and festival, were enjoined. But in no one of these branches of Divine service, is the knowledge, upon the part of either the people or the priest, of the manner in which obedience is to take form, suspended upon the knowledge of a solitary word. The specification of the mode of procedure, that the intention of the Head of the Church might be understood and fulfilled, is often so minute as to appear, to our simplicity, superfluous,—so complete as to remove all cause of controversy. Accordingly, it is a fact, that, divided as the Jews were in the latter period of their eventful history, upon points of high import, there is no evidence of the existence of more than one opinion upon the form of the instituted rites of the ceremonial law; and exposed to heavy censure for encumbering the service of God with traditional practices, our Lord charges them not with informality in their approaches to the Holy One, in consequence of having turned aside from the letter of commanded customs. And when we turn to the New Testament, we do not find it otherwise. The Lord's Supper is unquestionably peculiar to the last days of the world.

Being required to keep the feast, we are not left to gather from the word *Supper*, the mode in which the Divine will is to be fulfilled. Lest the by no means imperfect information supplied by three Evangelists, should still leave room for misapprehension, the Holy Spirit takes occasion from the excesses into which the church in Corinth had run: or perhaps it would be more correct to say, the Saviour permits the Corinthians to run into excesses, under the notion of commemorating his death, for this among other reasons, that occasion might be taken, to supply, by the pen of Paul, instruction so much more definite, that all but deviation from the will of God simply voluntary might be anticipated. And has any disputation taken place respecting the mode of dispensing and eating the Lord's Supper among men who receive the word of God as an infallible rule of faith and practice, to be used by every man for his personal direction? None respecting *the meaning of what is written*. That bread and wine are the elements to be used—that they are not used to answer the purposes of corporeal nourishment—that the repast is social, and to be enjoyed without limitation as to the frequency of the observance, are fully admitted. Different views are entertained and defended, not about things specified, but about the propriety of circumstances of which nothing is specifically mentioned or enjoined.

Is, then, BAPTISM the exception, the solitary exception, to the gracious and condescending particularity with which the Head of the Church has been used to exhibit the duty of His members, when they would observe a positive ordinance according to His word? That word “is profitable for all things, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” Must the meaning of the word *Baptize* determine the precise nature of our duty?—Whether we are in Baptism to be immersed, or have the water applied to us?—Whether we must be covered, or have a small quantity poured or sprinkled upon us? Must we direct the inquirer into divine things, to the lexicographer, and the critic, to teach him his duty? And are we to admit that, in one instance, the will of God is so expressed, that an important and imperative positive appointment is to be hidden from our view, or exhibited before the Church, according to the false or correct interpretation of a single Greek vocable? Shall a divine ordinance be displaced by human invention, or come under our notice in the reflection of divine light, according to the error or accuracy of a translator in rendering a single word? And if that word remain untranslated, must we remain in utter ignorance of one prominent part of commanded duty? So say the Antipedobaptists, with few exceptions. And as their doctrinal adversaries are not prepared to admit positions so

difficult, if the matter stand as they allege, it is much to be feared that the controversy shall not soon come to a termination, the asseveration of the Rev. Dr. Carson notwithstanding, that he has settled the question respecting the mode of Baptism as certainly as axioms are true. The bootless and pedantic boast, so very unseemly in one who had more than once found cause to change his ministerial profession and practice, is nevertheless in the full spirit of the people among whom he had cast in his lot. To Antipedobaptists every thing here appears so plain, that they are hardly able to reconcile opposition to their peculiar views with a willing subjection to the laws of Christ. The lettered advocate of Immersion finds the application of the original word so easy and conclusive, that a child can be at no loss to learn that "Baptism means to lay under water;" and the unlearned, with a smile of conscious superiority, or the scornful glance due to wilful ignorance or obstinate impiety, rises in triumph over sanctified talent and education, adorned with the fruits of practical piety, when found in opposition, holding aloft in his nervous grasp, a flag inscribed thus—"HE WENT DOWN INTO THE WATER, AND CAME UP OUT OF THE WATER."

And is it, indeed, so easy to ascertain the nature or the form of a positive ordinance, from the particular name by which it is indicated? Could the nature of the ordinance in question have been easily

determined from its name, by them to whom that name was familiar as one of their native tongue? Let us try how near we could approach to a knowledge, according to this rule, of the nature of other ordinances, and the order of their observance. Out of the many, we shall select, for the sake of experiment, two: not because they are better adapted to serve our purpose than others, but that the names given to them by inspiration have been reduced to equivalent terms in the authorised English version. These are the PASSOVER and the LORD'S SUPPER. In regard to neither shall we find reason to believe the distinctive name appropriated to it, intended or adapted to afford the information necessary to its due observance according to divine appointment.

1. PASSOVER.—The name appropriated to this ordinance, intended to perpetuate among the Israelites the remembrance of their wonderful deliverance from the land of Egypt, and the means by which it was effected, was taken from the circumstance that the destroying angel who traversed the land and smote all the first-born of the Egyptians, on that night on which it was first solemnized, and which immediately preceded their escape from bondage, *passed over* the houses of the Israelites, the lintels and door-posts of which were sprinkled with the blood of a lamb, slain and eaten according to the command of God by Moses.

Now, from the term *Passover*, who could derive any information respecting the nature of the ordinance of which it is the scriptural denomination? Not one, it may be unhesitatingly affirmed, could form the most remote idea of it. The literal and allowed meaning, which is not connected except by instituted association with the festival, affords not the most vague hint of its technical import. From the words *pass over*, no deduction could lead the mind to the contemplation of an annual observance—the use of a lamb of the first year—the roasting of the lamb in opposition to every other mode of culinary preparation—the eating of it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, by persons in the equipments of travellers—the necessity of using every part of it,—and the careful avoidance of breaking one of its bones. Nor could the reason of man, borne away on wings of the wildest fancy, discover from *pass over*, uninfluenced by information previously imparted, or the association of ideas formed by familiarity with an established custom, a single one of those particulars. It is in its technical application alone, that the phraseology in which it is introduced appears neither absurd nor unintelligible. If we should suppose the compound word used in its original, literal, and allowed import, what could we understand by killing the *pass over*, roasting the *pass over*, eating the *pass over*, holding or keeping the *pass over*? With more surprise and confusion

than seized the disciples when our Lord said, "A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me," might those who knew, or would know, nothing but the original and literal meaning of *Passover*, exclaim, hearing such language from the lips of any one, "We know not what he saith."

2. LORD'S SUPPER.—Similar remarks apply to this ordinance also. How shall we ascertain that the repast must consist of bread and wine—that it is to be eaten in company with our brethren—that it belongs exclusively to members of the Church—that it is commemorative of the death of Christ—that the bread must be broken and the wine poured out, and that they are the symbols of His broken body and shed blood, and that we do not eat to satisfy the cravings of animal appetite? Will the word *Supper* teach us? No. It would lead us to the ideas of a full meal—the latest repast of the day—a solitary or social meal, as it might fortuitously occur—and a meal consisting of any esculents that might be desired or could be procured. In this instance again, the name appropriated to the commemorative ordinance is taken, not from its nature or form—of course it is not indicative of either—but from the use of such things as constitute food, and the time when it was instituted.

The preceding remarks shew that there are two ordinances known by divinely prescribed names,

not indicating their nature or mode of administration, but originating exclusively in the evanescent circumstances of their institution. And it will be found, that the proper and distinctive designations of other positive ordinances will, no more than these, supply us with the information necessary to an acquaintance with their nature, mode of solemnization, or design. So far is it from being true in any case, that we are made acquainted with a positive ordinance by its name, that we need first to know the ordinance, to understand the origin and reason of the name.

In the face of facts, shewing that the adoption of the rule must leave us entirely at fault in observing other positive ordinances, or lead to most distressing embarrassment and suspense, not to say despair, of ever arriving at definite information respecting the order of procedure, it is passing strange that Christians should be held bound down to the literal and proper, or if it seem good, the established and universally admitted signification of the appropriated designation of the ordinance, in ascertaining what God requires when He commands us to be *Baptized*. If the word *Supper* would lead us wide of the mark, when we would attend upon one ordinance; and *Passover* leave us standing still, utterly at a loss how to proceed to the observance of another, why should there be so much confidence that the appropriated denomination of the initiatory ordi-

nance of the New Testament shall competently fill a place and serve an end, which the proper names of other ordinances are not designed or adapted to do. Or why should any be seriously animadverted on, because, after admitting that the original and literal signification of *Baptize* is to *immerse*, they hesitate to admit that *the ordinance of BAPTISM* is identical with *IMMERSION*.

Still, it may be said, if we be not supplied with definite information from other sources—if we be left to glean our knowledge of the ordinance from its proper name (and it has been admitted that the New Testament supplies not one sentence of direct information upon the subject,) what are we to do? Are we not to use what light the word *baptize* supplies? or are we to lay aside the ordinance till God condescend to separate the litigants by an immediate adjudication between them? We might, without offence, suggest to Antipedobaptists the propriety and comeliness of a little moderation, of a little less dogmatism—a more sparing use of “great swelling words.” Surely the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. Let not him that immerses despise him that immerses not. The advocates of the simple and unostentatious rite, administered by pouring or sprinkling a little water upon the face of an adult or infant, have not been forward to condemn the practice of exclusive immersion. They have stood

for the most part upon the defensive. Perhaps, in the sequel, there may be found some reason to hesitate to make so ample a concession as that which is usually made, that there is no objection to *Immersion* being considered *one* mode in which the ordinance of Baptism may be administered. That the mode is indifferent might have remained the concession of indolence, and gratifying to indolence. But when Antipedobaptists refuse to give repose—when they will persevere in asserting that to be unquestionable, which has again and again been denied—when they ascribe to others concessions which were never made—when they do not cease to insult, to depreciate the intellectual, and hold up to suspicion, the religious character of those who differ from them—when they continue virtually to invalidate the orders of every other than an immersed minister of the gospel, and excommunicate every professed follower of the Lamb who follows not with them—when they not only claim and desire to possess a distinctive privilege, but insist that we must surrender what we believe to be an honest possession; it is natural, and, by no means unreasonable, to look a little more closely into their title to what they hold.

But what are we to do? Scholars of the first name, and of close and accurate research, have applied themselves to the investigation of the *word*, and the end of the controversy is not seen, even

afar off. Dr. Carson, armed with axioms, and canons, and a dogmatism possessed by few, and supported by an imposing array of heathen subsidiaries, has failed to produce submission in the minds of his opponents. He has pushed aside, very unceremoniously, the ablest writers on his own side of the question, and taken upon himself the whole burden of the controversy, that he might sweep away every cobweb within which the Pedobaptists have hitherto ensconced themselves, by his more extensive research, his more accurate criticism, and his more exact philosophy: and the objects of his assault still enjoy, in their places, an undisturbed security, unappalled by the thunder-cloud of divine vengeance, to which he has, as with his finger, once and again pointed: although I think there are among them some few, who at once possess integrity, fear God, and are capable of appreciating an argument.

We do not propose to enter the field, in which so many, more able to improve it, have laboured, of a dry critical examination of a word or words, barbarous to the overwhelming majority of those who are equally interested in the decision. There is no necessity for it. God has not forgotten, in His condescension to the infirmities and wants of His children, His little ones, when He requires them to be *baptized*, more than when He says, "Do this in remembrance of me." The necessity of confining

our attention to the word *Baptize*, assumes that Baptism is an ordinance peculiar to the New Testament dispensation, and that therefore all the scriptural information to be obtained respecting it, must be sought in the pages of the New Testament. This is the assumption of the Antipedobaptists. It is a groundless assumption. Baptism is not an ordinance peculiar to New Testament times. It is a *divinely-instituted rite of the former dispensation*. Let it be remembered that the question before us is neither, who ought to Baptize?—nor, who are to be Baptised?—nor, whether Baptism is to be administered once or frequently?—but, *what is it to be Baptized?* It is not asserted that Baptism occupies the same place, or retains the same relation to a religious profession as of old; but simply that it was a rite observed, according to an expression of the divine will, by the covenant people of God, before the incarnation of the Son of the Highest.

If this can be proved, there appears a most satisfactory reason why, when Baptism is spoken of in the New Testament, there should be no special explanation of its nature or the mode of its administration—why the hearer or reader should be addressed as one acquainted with the rite—why the naked denomination should be introduced in the same manner with *sacrifice, circumcision, or the pass-over*. Every reader of the New Testament, who

is in any measure acquainted with the Old, would at once perceive that there would have been a needless superfluity of detail, had the inspired writers, who often allude to sacrifices, circumcision and the passover, the altar, the tabernacle and the temple, furnished us with an account of the nature and intention of these ordinances, or the mode of their administration, and supplied a description of the structures mentioned, or the purposes to which they were applied; unless, haply, the idea should present itself, that the latter revelation was intended for such as were ignorant of the former, or that the purpose to be served by the Old Testament had been accomplished, and that its perusal and application had been superseded. At the same time, the strict propriety and consistency with the Divine plan, in bringing positive ordinances before the Church, of a minute account of the design of the Lord's Supper, and the mode of its celebration, are discovered in a more distinct light. The supposition that Baptism was an ordinance, instituted, explained, understood, and observed, before God was manifest in the flesh, removes the appearance of an anomaly, that, as such, must otherwise press itself upon the attention of the observant student of the Bible, when he finds Baptism, viewed as an ordinance peculiar to this economy, stand forth, without any specification of its object or mode, or this to be gleaned from a critical an-

alysis of the name appropriated to it, in the midst of a cluster of ordinances, not more of a positive nature—not more important—not more peremptorily enjoined—of which such a minutely faithful account has been furnished, that controversy, if it exist at all, obtains only on the outworks.

That this supposition is founded in fact, is to be proved. Here we step to a conclusion at once, by a process the most simple, the most easily apprehended, and the best adapted, to say the least, to an overwhelming majority of religious enquirers. The conclusion is founded on testimony—*Divine testimony*. Scriptural statement, where such statement is fully admitted to be decisive evidence, sets the matter at rest. It has been already noticed, that, from the beginning of the New Testament, Baptism is always introduced to view as a subject with which those addressed are fully acquainted. Paul shows us the good reason the Jews had, nay, all who were acquainted with the Old Testament had, perfectly to understand what Baptism meant.

Writing to the Corinthians,* he says, “Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” They were Gentiles to whom he addressed these words, for he says in a subsequent part of the same chapter, “Behold Israel

* 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

after the flesh," and presses upon them the necessity of separating themselves from all participation in services of the idols' temples, which, in respect to Jews, in the most corrupt times subsequent to the Babylonish captivity, would have been quite superfluous. Observe the propriety of his address, "I would not that ye should be ignorant." With the fact, of which he makes mention, the Jews were well acquainted. At present it would be out of place to enquire how the Baptism was or was not administered. This shall form a subject of future examination. It is to the fact that the reader's attention is invited, that, "in the cloud and in the sea," the whole body of the Israelites were *Baptized*. "All our fathers were *Baptized*." We might not have been able to discover a *Baptism* of the Israelites in their march through the Red Sea, or in the allusions to it in other parts of the Old Testament. Ignorance or prejudice may have produced dulness of apprehension on the subject of Baptism. Were it otherwise, the doctrine of Baptisms, one "of the *principles* of the doctrine of Christ,"* would not furnish the materials for so keenly contested a discussion. But it would be very illogical to infer that the enlightened Israelite did not recognise the Baptism of his fathers. Christians of the last days, (of the nineteenth century!) are accustomed, with great complacency, to take

* Heb. vi. 1, 2.

credit to themselves for clearer, and more correct, and more extensive apprehensions of divine things than the despised sons of Abraham of the olden time. Did our attainments bear proportion to our privileges, our knowledge of spiritual things would be more exact and extensive ; but it is a melancholy fact, that the light in men is sometimes darkness, and some are “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

But the following passage admits of no evasive explanation. The man who asserts that Baptism is exclusively an ordinance of the last days, does so in opposition to a very plain scriptural proposition, and *contradicts the testimony of the Holy Ghost*. “Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” * Observe,

1. The apostle is here treating of the religious services of the Israelites, and informs us that they consisted in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances.

2. He is not treating of traditional rites, and the superstitious forms of will-worship, but the divinely appointed services of the tabernacle and temple—of the Mosaic dispensation.

3. The “divers washings,” as we read, are divers BAPTISMS. This fact is hidden from the mere English reader by the introduction of the word

* Heb. ix. 10.

washings to translate the original, instead of employing, as usual, when the ordinance of Baptism is spoken of, the derivative *Baptisms*.

From this it appears that *divers Baptisms* constituted a part of the divinely-appointed services of God's people of old. A clue is now furnished that shall conduct us to a discovery of both the nature of Baptism, as a divine ordinance, and the mode of its administration—a clue that at once introduces us for instruction into the sphere of Mosaic institutions. It may appear annoying to self-righteousness and self-sufficiency to be turned back so far for information; but an apostle has taken us by the hand, and we have, consistently with due submission to the Divine will, no alternative.

Still, it may be asked, how are we to distinguish, in the multitude of Mosaic rites, those to which the appellation of BAPTISMS is given? Baptisms will not readily be confounded with *meats* and *drinks*. But how shall we distinguish a *Baptism* from a *carnal ordinance*? If we were to adopt the emendation of Griesbach, the knot would be cut at once. In his edition, the connective that is found in the authorized text of the English version, between *baptisms* and *carnal ordinances*, is dropped, and the verse reads thus:—"Meats and drinks, and divers baptisms, carnal ordinances imposed on them," &c. Thus the *carnal ordinances* are made to stand in apposition to *meats*, *drinks*, and *baptisms*, furnish-

ing an exposition of their nature. We have no desire, however, to take advantage of the proposed emendation. The classification of the Old Testament ordinances would not seem to be complete, without viewing *carnal ordinances* as a distinct class; and the omission of the conjunction, placing them in apposition, enforces an improper conception of the character of *meats, drinks, and baptisms*. They are not carnal ordinances.*

* *Carnality* is that which springs from natural descent, and does not *necessarily* express sinfulness. It can never be properly applied with reference to contracted moral impurity or actual sin, and expresses the depravity of man, inasmuch as that depravity exists by nature. "That which is *born of the flesh is flesh*," says Christ to Nicodemus. And Paul says to the Corinthians, "Are ye not *carnal and walk as men*?" Accordingly, that precept, the obligation and application of which depends upon *birth*, is denominated a *carnal* precept. The Son of God, therefore, is made a Priest, "not after the law of a *carnal* commandment," as He "sprang out of Judah: of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." Priests under the law, *were* made "after the law of a carnal commandment," as their right to the priesthood was founded on their natural connection with Aaron, and their induction into office supposes that the evidence of this is valid. In the days of Nehemiah "the children of Habaiah, as polluted, were put from the priesthood," because they "sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found." Whoever, I am persuaded, duly appreciates the force and bearing of the preceding quotations, will be satisfied that no one of the ordinances of purification was a carnal ordinance, as not depending immediately upon birth. Circumcision, the whole Levitical economy, the obligations and privileges of the first-

We might expect to find *Baptisms* in the diversified application and use of liquids, which were introduced, according to the appointment of God, in His service. There is no need to look for Baptism in connection with *wine*, which constituted the *drink* offering; nor with *oil*, with which flour was mixed, cakes prepared, and wafers anointed, to be presented before the Lord, as it constituted a part of the *meat* offering. Besides these, blood and water were extensively used. We shall take and give the benefit of the various applications of water, blood, with the exception, already specified, oil, and (under the direction of John the Baptist, who teaches us to connect Baptism with its use, we shall add it to the elements already specified) fire, or any one of them, in ascertaining the nature of Baptism, and the mode of its administration; and shall not pronounce a severe sentence upon any mode of administration which is supported by the Old Testament use of oil, blood, water, or fire, as it is limited and directed by the law of symbols.

O I L

was used to *anoint* Aaron and his sons, the tabernacle, the ark, the table and his vessels, the candlestick and his vessels, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt-offering and his vessels, the laver and his

born, as of kinsmanship in general, and the laws of inheritance, were "carnal ordinances."

foot, to *sanctify* -them,* that they might be employed in the service of God.

Aaron and his sons were anointed by *pouring* oil upon their heads,† and the altar by *sprinkling* oil upon it seven times. ‡

Oil was *put on* the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot, and *poured* or *put on* the head of the leper to be *cleansed*, that he might present his offering unto the Lord.§ Oil was *sprinkled* before the Lord seven times, in the ceremonial of cleansing the leper,|| and, mingled with blood, on Aaron and his sons, and on their garments, to *hallow* and *sanctify* them.¶

B L O O D

was SPRINKLED upon all the *people*, on the day when, at Horeb, they *entered into covenant* with God by sacrifice. This blood is called the blood of the covenant, and was sprinkled for the purpose of *purging* away sin.** Blood was sprinkled upon the leper on the day of his cleansing ††—probably mixed with oil, on *Aaron* and *his sons* and on *their garments*, to SANCTIFY them ‡‡—*before the veil*, when the sin offering of the priest or the people

* Ex. xxx. 26—30, xl. 9—15.

† Ex. xxix. 7—40.

‡ Lev. viii. 11.

§ Lev. xiv. 17—19, 28—30.

|| Lev. xiv. 16.

¶ Ex. xxix. 21—Lev. viii. 30.

** Ex. xxiv. 8, Heb. ix. 19, 22.

†† Lev. xiv. 7.

‡‡ Ex. xxix. 21.

was presented.* The blood of the red heifer was SPRINKLED before the tabernacle of the congregation, † and that of the sacrifices generally upon the altar. ‡ Blood is PUT ON the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and on the great toe of the right foot of Aaron and his sons, when being consecrated to the office of the priesthood, to SANCTIFY them§—upon the same parts of the leper to be *cleansed*, in connection with other ceremonies of purification, ||—and upon the horns of the altar—and is POURED OUT at the bottom of the altar, to SANCTIFY it to make reconciliation upon it. ¶

WATER

was used to WASH Moses and Aaron, and Aaron's sons, at their consecration, before entering the holy place, and before approaching the altar to offer sacrifice; and to WASH the high priest, before putting on the holy garments, that he might enter into the most holy place**—to WASH or BATHE the leper to be *cleansed*, or any other person, really or ceremonially unclean, or both, for his *purification* ††—to WASH the inwards and legs of the burnt-sacrifice ‡‡—to WASH garments, skins, or any work made of skin, in which there was real or ceremonial

* Lev. iv. 6, 17.

‡ Ex. xxiv. 6, Lev. v. 9.

|| Lev. xiv. 14.

** Ex. xxix. 4, xl. 31, 32.

‡‡ Ex. xxix. 17, Lev. i. 9.

† Num. xix. 4.

§ Ex. xxix. 1, 21.

¶ Lev. viii. 15, xvi. 18.

†† Lev. xiv. 8, 15, *passim* xvi.

26, 28, Num. xix. 8, 19, 20.

uncleanness, the garments of persons really or ceremonially unclean, and of the Levites, on the day of their *purification*.*

Water was SPRINKLED seven times upon a leprous person, and on a leprous house, to CLEANSE them; † on the Levites, and on unclean persons for their PURIFICATION, and on tents and vessels for the same purpose. ‡ The brazen pot, in which the sin-offering had been sodden, and the vessel of wood, touched by him who had an issue, were RINSED in water; § and a vessel of wood, raiment, skin, or sack—any vessel in which work was done, upon which an unclean reptile, when dead, had fallen, was PUT INTO WATER, that it might be clean. ||

FIRE

was used by the divine commandment to CLEANSE *gold, silver, brass, iron, tin, and lead*—every thing that *might abide* the fire, that it might be brought into the *camp*, or into the *tabernacle* of the congregation, when specially devoted to the Lord. ¶

In reviewing the preceding statements, derived immediately from the inspired record, there are three particulars brought under our notice, perfectly distinct from one another; and as they are common

* Lev. xi. 25, xiii. 6, 34, 54, xv. *p.* Num. viii. 7, 8, xix. 7, 8, 10, 19, 21.

† Lev. xiv. 7, 51.

‡ Num. viii. 7, xix. 18, 19.

§ Lev. vi. 28, xv. 12.

|| Lev. xi. 32.

¶ Num. xxxi. 22—24, 54.

to every case of the instituted application of oil, blood, water, and fire, they are unquestionably to be viewed as entering into the complex idea of the ordinance in which the application is made. These are,

I. The thing commanded, or the substance of the ordinance.

II. The ultimate object contemplated, and for the sake of which the ordinance is enjoined and observed.

III. The mode in which the administrator is, in each case, to proceed in observing the ordinance and seeking the object.

I. The substance of the ordinances, in which blood, oil, water, or fire is used—the thing enjoined in every case, is *purification* or *cleansing*, or *sanctification*, or *hallowing*. For this purpose is blood sprinkled or poured out—for this purpose is oil applied in the same forms—for this purpose is water used in washing, bathing, rinsing, and sprinkling, and for this purpose is fire used.

The identity, in this particular, of the baptism, enjoined and observed under this dispensation, with the ordinances, which required the application of these several elements, is obvious, from the allusions to it in the New Testament. Paul represents baptism by “washing,”*—“the washing of regeneration,”†—“having the body washed with pure water,”‡—and “the washing of water.”§

* 1 Cor. vi. 11. † Tit. iii. 5. ‡ Heb. x. 22. § Eph. v. 26.

The distinct specification, in the epistle to the Corinthians, of both sanctification and justification, constrains us to associate "washing" with baptism,—the purifying ordinance of the former and latter dispensation. "But ye are *washed*, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

In the Epistle to Titus, the allusion to baptism, in the "washing of regeneration," is ascertained by being discriminated, in the sentence, from "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration *and* renewing of the Holy Ghost." Should any one ask, "is baptism, then, a saving ordinance?" such a one is referred for an answer to the apostle of the circumcision, who teaches us to say that "baptism *doth* save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," not however as a "putting away of the filth of the flesh," not from any virtue in the water—not from any efficacy that is lodged in the administrator; but as being "the answer of a good conscience toward God." And a comparison of the apostle's statement with the declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," serves to confirm this application of "the washing of regeneration," and to show with what propriety the baptismal washing is associated with the new birth, being symbolical of that

gracious effect of the exceeding greatness of divine power toward them that believe. What the Lord calls, being *born of water*, the disciple calls, the *washing of regeneration*; what the former calls, being *born of the Spirit*, the latter calls, the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*. And as the Saviour exhibits the one birth from on high, as of water and of the Spirit, so the apostle represents salvation as imparted not by the washing *or* renewing, but by the complex provision of divine mercy—the washing of regeneration *and* renewing of the Holy Ghost. By bringing before us, at one view, the divine ordinance and the divine operation, we are taught how closely we should have combined, in our conceptions, the uniform attention to positive institutions of divine origin, and the gracious exercise of divine power, of which these are symbolical; the exercise of faith taking hold of God's covenant, and the demonstration of profound respect and submission to the covenant Head, to the praise of the glory of his grace. “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.”

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the spiritual application of the blood of the everlasting covenant for the real putting away of sin, expressed by “the heart being sprinkled from an evil conscience,” and the direct and distinct allusion to the body, determine the reference of the *washing with pure water* to the ordinance of Baptism. Here also is brought

before the mind the imperative duty of an explicit and formal dedication of the whole man—of presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God; and the invariable connection between the faith of the operation of God, and an acknowledgment of Jesus, according to his own, the only proper order—“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.”

In the epistle to the Ephesians, which says, “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,” we recognize the ordinance of baptism in the *washing of water*, which is the accompaniment of the word, and the emblem of the influences of the divine Spirit, who gives effect to the word by which men are born again and cleansed, as it is written, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth;”* and again, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you;”† and again, “Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, *through the Spirit*;—being born again—by the word of God.”‡

Such were the divers baptisms of ancient times, and such is baptism to us—ordinances of purification—washings.

II.—The object contemplated in those divers washings was, uniformly, union and fellowship with

* John xvii. 17. † John xv. 3. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 22.

a covenant God and with His people. *Without purification*, in the cases contemplated in the law, in all cases in which access to God is sought, *persons* may not draw near to God, in the performance of instituted service, the enjoyment of desired privilege, or the participation of the fellowship of God's covenant with a covenant people:—*things* cannot be employed in the divine service, although prepared in all other respects according to a divine prescription and pattern; nor used, for their proper purposes, by a people devoted to the glory and service of a reconciled God and Father.

Aaron and his sons are specially designed of God himself to the office of the Priesthood, yet do they not appear to execute the duties of that office, before their actual investiture, or consecration according to the law of purification. Before they enter, and that they may enter upon their proper functions, they are washed at the door of the Tabernacle; the blood of the ram of consecration is put upon their right ears, hands, and feet, and their garments are sprinkled with oil and blood. The High Priest is anointed by pouring oil upon his head; and that he may enter into the most holy place and approach the altar of burnt-offering, to offer for himself or for the people, he must wash in water.* The Levites are purified that they may do the service of the tabernacle. Taken from among

*Ex. xxix.—Lev. viii. 16.

the children of Israel, to represent the people instead of the first-born, they are not accepted till they have observed the whole appointed process of sanctification.* The tabernacle and all its furniture are sanctified, that they may be used in the divine service,—the sole purpose for which they were prepared. The altar and its vessels are sanctified, that reconciliation may be made on it; the laver and his foot, that the water it contained might be used for necessary ablutions on sacred occasions.

That persons, affected with any uncleanness, may draw near to God's sanctuary, present their offering, or sit down to eat of sacrificial and social feasts, they must be cleansed. If they are not forbidden to enter the camp at all, they may not touch any person who is clean, or any clean thing, inasmuch as such person or thing is rendered unclean by the contact. Tents, beds, seats, saddles, clothes, which have been occupied by unclean persons, cannot be used by clean persons, till they have been purified, without producing contamination in the sight of God. By the approach of an unclean person, whether unclean in himself, or by having come in contact with an unclean person or unclean things, and who has not been washed; or who hath touched a dead body, one slain, the bone of a man, or a grave, and the water of separation has not been

* Num. viii. 6—15.

sprinkled upon him, the sanctuary of God is defiled, and such person is threatened with excision from the Church.

In this also, we recognize the ordinance of Baptism. The same is the object of Baptism, as appears from the allusions to its design in the New Testament. Union with Christ and his people, and access to God in this relation, constitute its exalted end—the object contemplated, according to the character of the ordinance of Christ.*

“Our fathers,” says Paul, “were all baptized unto (*into*) Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.” By *Baptism* they are brought into union with Moses, and with him, into a state of fellowship one with another. He is their common Head and centre of union. Moses is their *mediator*, and is so denominated in the epistle to the Galatians. “It (the law) was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” By him God communicates his will to the people, and their words are returned to God. By him they obtain deliverance, and he stands between God and them, to turn away his wrath from them. By him they obtain divine blessings, “all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink,” and are led in the way they should go ;

* It may serve to prevent misapprehension to state, once for all, that I unhesitatingly copy the current example of the inspired writers, and ascribe the same thing to the symbol, which is true only of that which is symbolized.

and at his death placed at their head a Captain, who introduced them into the actual possession of the inheritance which was by promise.

Moses is presented before them and us, in the exalted character of a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant; exhibiting in his person, the office and work of Christ manifest in the flesh. In eating the same spiritual meat, and drinking the same spiritual drink, the people whom he led are brought to view, in possession of the fellowship of those, who "are one bread and one body (as being) all partakers of one bread." The spiritual bread of which they ate, was Christ; and the spiritual Rock of which they drank, was Christ. And under this dispensation we are taught to say,—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” * “My flesh (says Jesus) is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” They have been, and still are, to the covenant people of God, and to them as such, meat and drink.

The object of the baptism of the Israelites, and of believers now, is the same,—union to a mediator, in whom we have fellowship with God, and with one another. The former are baptized into Moses, the latter into Christ. The one, into the type as

* 1 Cor. x. 1—17.

such, the other into the antitype. “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?”* Their knowledge of the subject is presumed; and the union contemplated in baptism, is expressed still by the same phrase,—*Baptized into*. Accordingly, being *in Christ*, is a common description of the state of that man who is accepted before God through Christ, embracing a condition of freedom from all evil, and of the possession of all blessedness, or complete assurance of both. “There is no condemnation to them that are *in Christ Jesus*.—*In the Lord* shall all the seed of Israel be justified.—We have hope *in Christ*.—*In Christ* shall all be made alive.—If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature.—God causeth us to triumph *in Christ*.—He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in Christ*.—Fallen asleep *in Christ*.—Dead *in Christ*.” All these spiritual blessings are the result of that union of which baptism is the sign and instrument,—an interest in his office, work, and glory, unto whom we are baptized.

The text says, that being baptized into Christ, we are baptized *into his death*; and in the subsequent part of the chapter, we are assured that being united to him, “sin shall not have the dominion over” us, and are taught to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, inasmuch as Christ, in dying, died unto sin, and we are crucified *with him*.

*Rom. vi. 3.

The consequence that follows from this, according to the spirit, is that we are buried *with him*. “*Therefore we are buried.*” If it follows from our union with Christ, that we have fellowship with him in his death, it must also follow that we are partakers with him in his burial. The order of the words is carefully to be noted. It is not said, we are buried into death, which would convey the preposterous idea of a burying alive;—that the burial not only precedes death, but is the cause of it. We are buried by baptism into the death of Christ before mentioned. The burial is just another blessed fruit of that baptism by which we are dead with him. It is not said that baptism is a burial, nor that, being buried, we are baptized, nor that we are buried *after the example* of Christ; but that baptism is the instrument or means of burial;—“Buried *by* baptism:”—that our burial is *with* Christ. Being baptized into him, we are crucified with him—dead with him; and being baptized into him, we are buried with him; and we know that *if he WASH us not, we have no part with him.* *

Nor is our baptism into Christ merely productive of death with him and burial with him. It is of a thorough and permanent character, and carries us with Christ, in his progress to perfection. Being baptized into Christ, we are partners also in his

* Jno. xiii. 8.

resurrection. Our resurrection is involved in his, and to this are the death and burial subservient. The first and second are not, but as leading to the third. Wherefore it is added, “*That* like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.” “If we be dead *with Christ*, we believe that we shall also live *with him*.” Because he lives, we shall live also. *

In the passage upon which we have been commenting, the Apostle exhibits fellowship in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, simply as the result of baptism into him. In another place this privilege appears not only as the object of union by baptism, but an object immediately secured; and the sameness of the relation that burial and resurrection bear to baptism is more directly expressed. “Buried with him *in Baptism, wherein* also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God.” † If baptism in the order of nature precedes burial, in order of time they are simultaneous:—“buried *in baptism*.” The same may be said of our resurrection: risen with him *in Baptism*. (“Wherein also, &c.”) Death in or with Christ is set forth in the verse immediately preceding, under the notion of circumcision. “In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.” Christ “was *cut off*” out of

* Rom. vi. 8; John xiv. 19.

† Col. ii. 12.

the land of the living," and we are *cut off* with him. As natural death is described by a putting off this tabernacle, (the natural body,) so spiritual death—death to sin, death with Christ, by "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." And this is by baptism, designated, as some suppose, in the conclusion of the verse, "the circumcision of Christ," or Christian circumcision. Who will not exclaim with Paul, "Ye are complete in him?" In him dwelleth all fulness, and believers have an interest in it all. Are we dead? our life is hid with Christ in God: and, "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Yes! in virtue of *the union*, we shall be glorified together with him. Nothing less than all this is contemplated in baptism. We seek not in baptism a momentary fellowship with Christ in his burial and resurrection, shadowed forth to carnal eyes, and a perverted imagination, and directed by the spirit of a laborious superstition; but in faith's surrender of us and ours to him, who is able to save, and faith's obedience to him, who is our Lord and our God, an eternal death to sin, an eternal separation from a dead world, and eternal life and glory in the bosom of our Father, and the Father of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The whole matter is brought before us in one short and nervous sentence: * "As many of you as

* Gal. iii. 27.

have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Christ is here represented as the believer's raiment, armour, or whatever is put on. In him he appears. On the christian is exhibited all that Christ is made of God unto us—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. By baptism, he proclaims his apprehension of Christ for all these, that before God he may stand justified, before the adversary, safe, before Angels and men, glorifying his Father who is in heaven. And this is the privilege of all the saints, as it is added, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

This view of the nature and design of baptism illustrates the propriety of Peter's address to the assembly on the day of Pentecost : "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,"—of Ananias to Paul : "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins :"—and explains the connection between "being baptized," and "added to the church." Ignorance of the nature of baptism, and its place in the economy of divine grace, as an ordinance of divine appointment, produces the hesitancy that too often appears to introduce it to notice, in addressing inquirers after the way to Zion, and in showing forth to professors the design and application of the work of Christ. Belief,

repentance, are often viewed as superseding the necessity of an ordinance to which they are adapted to lead: men are recognized as members of Christ, who are unbaptized, hold it to be superfluous, at most a ceremony of decent respect for its author, or refuse to submit to it; and in Christ, who have never been united to his body, the Church.

Having now shown the nature and object of the ordinances of purification under the law—that the thing enjoined and effected in all was cleansing, and the end contemplated, union and fellowship with God and his people—and that baptism under this dispensation is fully identified with them, in these respects, we feel the utmost confidence in seeking a definite determination of the mode in which baptism should be administered, in

III. The mode in which the baptismal ordinances of the former dispensation were administered. The baptisms of the legal economy were, the apostle tells us, *divers*. It has been shown that their nature was *one*—they were ordinances of purification: that their object was *one*—they contemplated access to God, acceptable employment in his service, and fellowship with him and his people. They were *divers*, in respect to the subjects of them. Persons, houses, tents, furniture, garments, metals, were purified. They were *divers*, in respect of the elements of purification. These were oil, blood, water

and fire. They were *divers*, with respect to the administrator. He was sometimes a priest; sometimes any indifferent clean person; sometimes the subject of the rite. They were *divers*, with respect to the mode of applying the cleansing element. It is, however, to be carefully observed that this diversity was regulated by determinate rules. When purification is to be effected in a particular instance, it is not by any means indifferent, whether oil, or blood, or water, or fire, or whether any one or more of these are to be used; who is to be the administrator of the rite or rites; or how the application is to be made. The case known, the law determines the mode of procedure, in most instances, with a precision that anticipates every doubtful inquiry; in all cases, with so much minuteness of specification, as to leave the servant of God free from all embarrassment, in regard to the propriety of a given process. The case of baptism under this dispensation is defined in the following particulars. The *subject* is PERSONS; the *element* is PURE WATER; and the *administrator* is DIFFERENT FROM THE SUBJECT.

1.—The *subject* of baptism is *Persons*. Nothing, therefore, that is peculiar, in the mode of applying the element of purification, for the purpose of cleansing houses, tents, furniture, garments, or metals, can be introduced in proof of the mode in which baptism is now to be administered. This follows

so much as a matter of course, that it is quite unnecessary to enlarge either in defence or explanation. It is so obvious, that no amplification could make it clearer.

2.—The *element* is *pure water*. As oil and blood are always *poured out*, or *on*, *sprinkled before*, *towards*, or *upon*, *put on* with the finger, Antipedobaptists do not appeal to the mode of their application in justification of their distinguishing practice. But if there were anything peculiar, that might seem to strengthen their cause, the appeal could not be sustained, as these are not used in Christian Baptism, strictly so called. For the same reason, no inference can be drawn from the application of *Fire*: as also because it never was used in the purification of persons. The necessity of using *pure water*, either for literal or symbolical purification, obviously suggested from a general view of the subject, is affirmed by divine testimony, in the case of Baptism in this age:—“Having our bodies washed with *pure water*.” Under the law, the water of separation, most extensively used for cleansing, and without which things made to pass through the fire are not fully purified, was prepared with the *ashes* of the red heifer; and the water used in the cleansing of the leper, was mingled with the *blood* of a slain bird. Yet neither in preparing the water of separation, nor that by which the leper was cleansed, is the original quality of the water disre-

garded. It must be *running* (margin, *living*) water, or that which issues from a spring. The apostle's direction makes the purity of the water imperative, to the exclusion of the addition of blood, or ashes. But it goes farther, and rebukes the traditional and superstitious practices of modern will-worship. It involves the condemnation of salt and oil, with which the baptismal water is polluted in the Church of Rome. And amongst Antipedobaptists, who reprobate Popish practices in no measured terms, and desire to be considered as removed to a holier distance, and separated by a higher wall of partition, the same error in principle is the regulator of their customs, to a great extent, with reference to the ordinance of Baptism. They disregard the obligation to use nothing but *pure* water. Papists render the water impure—Antipedobaptists, without scruple, use water, in the observance of a symbolical ordinance, in a symbolical point of view, utterly impure. Constrained in argument to admit that Baptism is, in its nature, an ordinance of purification, their minds are so completely engrossed with the supposed representation of a burial, in the form, that the apprehension of its nature is excluded, in all practical respects. And if they can only have the *immersion* and *emersion*, they are satisfied, whether it be in “the troubled sea, whose waters,” already impregnated with salt, “cast up mire and dirt,”—in a pond of standing water—or in a bap-

tistry, whose waters must always be to the second person who is plunged, polluted.

3.—The *administrator* is different from the *subject* of the ordinance. This fact would forbid the numerous cases of persons, by divine direction, washing or bathing themselves, to be adduced, in explanation of the practice obligatory upon us, in the solemnization of Baptism. Though it were proved that, in consequence of the command to *wash*, persons immersed themselves completely, no example could be drawn from such washings in favour of immersion under this dispensation, as Baptism is not administered but by another. The apostles are commanded to baptize *others*. The thousands who were converted on the day of Pentecost were directed to *be baptized*. And Saul himself, who had seen the Lord, must *be baptized* by Ananias. There is no case on record of one baptizing himself, since Christ ascended, nor is any provision made for any supposed emergency that might render such a practice necessary. Even granting then that the washings under the law, performed by men upon themselves, were of the divers Baptisms spoken of by Paul, and that they were immersions, the example comes not within the range of New Testament practice. This serves to bring the determination of the mode to be adopted by us within the narrowest compass; and, in connection with the preceding specifications, prepares the way to an

easy application of the law, regulating divine ordinances of purification, to the baptism of the New Testament dispensation.

With the exception of Aaron and his sons, whom Moses was commanded to *wash*, and whom he did *wash* with water at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *the purification of persons in water, by the instrumentality of another, was effected in every case, by SPRINKLING the water upon them.*

The tribe of Levi was purified by *sprinkling*. "Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: *Sprinkle* water of purifying upon them."* The leper was cleansed by *sprinkling*. "And he shall *sprinkle* upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean." † By *sprinkling*, was every one cleansed who had been contaminated by contact with any unclean object; and though other ceremonies were associated with this, the least apparently adapted to produce purification, yet to it is our attention specially directed, as that by which the desired effect is secured, and without which every other means is valueless. Nor do we ever find any associated ceremony to which prominence is given. Sprinkling is presented in bold relief, and shaving, bathing, and washing of clothes,

* Num. viii. 7, 8.

† Lev. xiv. 7.

are only exhibited as appendages of this leading ordinance. “The foolishness of God is wiser than men.” Who would not say, “Shaving, washing, and bathing, look like means of cleansing; but to what purpose sprinkle a little water, and that adulterated by a mixture of the ashes of a burnt heifer?” Hear what God says: “A clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and *sprinkle* it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave;—But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: *the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.*” *

The ordinances of divine appointment, under the Mosaic economy, among which the Spirit tells us there were “divers Baptisms,” furnish abundant examples in favour of the administration of baptism by *sprinkling*, and do not supply a single institute, warranting the introduction of any other mode, except it be deducible from the *washing* of Aaron and his sons by Moses, at their consecration. And we shall now proceed to show, as far as we may be enabled, what the Scripture teaches upon this sub-

* Num. xix. 18—20.

ject ; and for this purpose shall endeavour to improve what light may be derived from other cases of *washing*, to justify the supposition that Aaron and his sons were *immersed* in water, or that they were the subjects of its application in some other form. The following particulars seem to have a bearing on the object of this investigation.

1. The term *washing* denotes the process by which purification is accomplished. To *purify* is to *make clean*,—to *wash* is to *use effectively the means* of cleansing. The word leaves the mode, by which the purification is to be accomplished, undetermined. When God commands to wash the person, the flesh, the hands or feet, the clothes, the legs and inwards of sacrifices, the mode by which the operation is to proceed is left optional, except other terms are used to define the process. Disobedience is ascertained by the use of means not adapted to the end. Objects may be immersed in order to be washed, or water may be applied to them for that purpose ; but assuredly *washing* does not necessarily suppose immersion, in any case ;—much less when it is a symbolical act, than when the actual putting away of impurity is required. When immersion is requisite, it is expressed by other and more definite terms. I believe that a vessel of wood, raiment, skin, or sack, being unclean, should be immersed, not because they are to be washed and purified, but because the lawgiver enjoins that they be “put

into water.” * And this is not enjoined for the sake of the mode, as the same thing is expressed by making “to go through the water.” †

2. *Dipping is never enjoined for the purpose of cleansing or washing the thing dipped.* The priest is to *dip* his finger in oil or blood, not to wash or purify his finger, but that he may *sprinkle or put it upon* some other object for that purpose.‡ And even in such cases, it is extremely improbable that, in prescribing the dipping of the finger, the *mode* is contemplated at all, or that the insertion of the finger into oil or blood is imperative, but simply the taking up the one or the other for the purpose of applying it. The same action is expressed by *taking* of the blood with the finger, in several places: besides, the priest is instructed to pour oil into his left hand, and to sprinkle with his right finger, or put of the oil, without any direction respecting the mode in which he is to lift the blood or oil. For anything prescribed, instead of inserting his finger into the blood or oil in the palm of his left hand, holding his right finger beneath, he might pour from his left hand upon it, and still have fulfilled all the conditions of dipping. A living bird, cedar-wood, scarlet and hyssop, are *dipped* by the priest into blood and water, that he may *sprinkle* of the mixture upon him who is to be cleansed of his leprosy; and by a clean person,

* Lev. xi. 32. † Num. xxxi. 23. ‡ Lev. iv. 6; ix. 9; xiv. 16.

hyssop is *dipped* into the water of separation, that it may be *sprinkled* on an unclean person for his purification.* Even admitting the extravagant idea that the bird, the cedar, the scarlet and the hyssop were to be baptized, and not the person to be cleansed, "the totality of immersion," upon which Antipedobaptists insist, is utterly unknown. No one case of *dipping* supports their hypothesis. As there is no command to that effect, there is no case discoverable of one person immersing another for the purpose of cleansing.

3. *Immersion* is no more adapted to cleanse than *sprinkling*. The one has no more affinity to *washing* than the other. As a symbol, immersion is not more significant of washing than sprinkling is, inasmuch as an object of any kind is as much cleansed by sprinkling water upon it, as by dipping it into water. And it is to be recollected that the mode is the grand object for which the opponents of sprinkling contend. Dip a person into water, dip a vessel or garment, and when brought out they are just as filthy as they were before. It may, in some cases, be very convenient to put an object into water with a view to its being cleansed, but the process of real purification must follow upon the immersion, or the end is never accomplished. The nicer adaptation of the symbol will depend upon the greater effectiveness of the mode of the

* Lev. xiv. 6; Num. xix. 18.

application of the water; and since the absolute weakness of immersion, to be followed by an immediate emersion, without any intermediate operation, must be confessed, it is really marvellous that our brethren, who insist upon a more exact type, have never suggested the propriety of introducing soap and a flesh brush.

4. Complete purification is ascribed to *sprinkling*. By sprinkling the purifying element upon them, men are washed. David says,—“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow.” The thing for which he prays is complete cleansing,—a thorough washing. The symbol of that washing is the sprinkling of “the water of separation.” To this agrees the divine prediction or promise,—“I will 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.—And I will put my Spirit within you.”* Here is, in fact, a prediction, only fulfilled in the New Testament use of Baptism. This is to “sanctify and cleanse with the washing of water by the word.” The promise is, that they shall be *cleansed* by the application of the cleansing element, and that application is by *sprinkling*.

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27,

The Apostle John exclaims, in triumphant gratitude, and teaches the seven churches to exclaim, —“Unto him that loved us and *washed us from our sins in his own blood*, be glory!” * Yet blood was never applied under the law, except by sprinkling. The application of the blood of Christ is accordingly represented by being sprinkled. “Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus.” † What serves to determine the exclusiveness of this mode of expressing, with propriety, its application, as a type, is, that Paul calls it the *blood of sprinkling*. ‡ From the preceding quotations we learn how closely holy men of God, under the teaching of the Spirit, had *sprinkling* and *washing* associated in their minds. With them, to be *sprinkled with* blood and *washed in* it were phrases of equal import: so that those who were *sprinkled with*, were viewed as *washed in* the cleansing element. All who are *sprinkled with* the precious blood of Christ, are *washed in* that blood, in consequence of its being so applied. The sprinkling of the blood is the mode of its application, that they may be washed. The inference is perfectly easy, that as washing in blood implies nothing more than sprinkling of blood upon the persons who are subjects of such washing, there is the most exact propriety, according to the

* Rev. i. 5, 6. † 1 Pet. i. 2. ‡ Heb. xii. 24.

law of the symbolical language of scripture, in representing one as washed in or with water, when water has been merely sprinkled upon him.

As it has been already shown that the proper idea of baptism is washing, it is worthy of particular observation, that the very same forms of expression are used, when baptism is spoken of. When the Spirit was "*poured out*" or "*fell on*" the household of Cornelius, Peter recognized the fulfilment of the promise,—“Ye shall be baptized with (or in) the Holy Ghost.”* The spiritual baptism is administered by the Spirit being *poured out*, and consequently *falling* upon the persons to be baptized. The resemblance between the language descriptive of the mode of washing and of baptizing is very exact. The element of washing and that of baptism are applied to the subject—another proof of the identity of washing and baptism.

5. There are circumstances connected with the washing of Aaron and his sons which show that they were not *immersed*, in whatever form the prescribed ablution may have been performed. The most extensive ablution specifically mentioned is of the hands and feet. This is once and again described by the general expression, “washing with water.” “When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water.—When they came near unto the altar, they washed ;

* Acts xi. 15, 16.

as the LORD commanded Moses." * The preceding verses show that, in form, this washing was confined to the hands and feet. "They shall wash, or they washed," and "they shall wash, or they washed their hands and feet," are statements made to denote the same process, the latter being explanatory of the former. Had the explanation not been furnished, we might have been disposed to think that the general proposition must necessarily express a more extensive application of water. As it is, we are taught the necessity of guarding against a hasty determination, respecting the mode in which a general direction must be followed. The injunction in certain cases to wash the flesh, might generally be understood to require the application of water to the whole surface of the body, but in meeting with another direction to "wash *all* the flesh," the unwarranted apprehension is corrected, and we learn to understand the former to be obeyed in cleansing a part of the body in a literal view, the part, for instance, which is the particular subject of impurity.

The laver, provided to contain water for the purpose of washing, and which stood at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,—the only vessel provided for that purpose in the service of the tabernacle,—was not adapted for the practice of immersion. Its dimensions are not pointed out, but

* Ex. xxx. 20, xl. 32.

we know that it rested upon one foot, and must have been either too small to receive the whole man, or too lofty to admit of an easy entrance, without a special accommodation, of which we read not, and an exposure, in a state of nudity, to the gaze of the worshippers, against which even partially, it is well known, God did, in a certain case, provide.

The laver was not *intended* for the purpose of immersion, as it was set up and supplied with water, that Aaron and his sons might wash their hands and their feet *thereat*. *

6. The remarkable declaration of our Lord to Peter, on the eve of his departure, must confound all reasonings in favour of immersion, founded on the command to wash, as though it must infer an obligation to immerse; and of the Antipedobaptist practice, from the nature of Baptism viewed as a cleansing ordinance. “He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” † Peter’s ideas of purification were more carnal, and more nearly allied to the notions of Antipedobaptists. In his mind, the idea of extensive or complete purification is associated with such an application of water as shall bear some apparent proportion to the effect to be produced. “Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” It is owing to the same earthly apprehensions, that the ritual or baptismal washing, which is performed by

* Ex. xxx. 19.

† Jno. xiii. 10.

sprinkling or pouring water upon the person to be cleansed, is now treated by the advocates of immersion with contempt and ridicule: and that a vast amount of laborious argument, not derived from such sources as are accessible to the overwhelming majority of those who are all equally interested in the decision, is profusely expended. Our Lord's definitive sentence, absolutely subversive of Antipedobaptist speculations, suggests to us a most important evidence of divine wisdom, in the appointment of rites of purification in particular, and in subsequent allusions to them. The necessity of entire purity must be taught, and, at the same time, the utter inefficiency of external observances to accomplish it, must be kept up before the eye of the mind. It is God alone who sanctifies wholly, in soul, in body, and in spirit. The blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer (the water of separation) cannot sanctify, even partially, nor contribute to the sanctification of the soul. Had a total immersion been requisite, or had the application of the cleansing element to the whole man been enjoined, the mind would have been led into the notion, too much in accordance with the views of the darkened understanding, that there must be some virtue in the symbol. On the other hand, the injunction of a partial application, in order to a total purification, is calculated to anticipate any leaning to a superstitious reliance

upon the outward ceremonial. The Saviour says, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Then would the disciple say, "I must be washed." Again the Saviour says, "He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Now the disciple would very naturally subjoin, "What is this that he saith? Water can cleanse no farther than it is applied, yet he has averred that a man is clean every whit, in consequence of having had his feet washed. Water is not the real means of the purification intended. Another means, and another than outward purification, are contemplated." The inquiry, forthwith arising, would have respect to the interpretation of the language of what, from its very form, must appear to be a symbol. The like reflections would be suggested to the mind of the child of God, under the former dispensation, in the observance of the rites of purification enjoined upon him.

Admitting with unfeigned satisfaction the total absence of all reliance upon a total immersion in the article of Baptism, contemplated as a cleansing ordinance, on the part of many who strenuously contend for it, I submit that the practice of total immersion, in Jew, or Christian, is superstitious,—that the addition of more water to that which is required and sufficient for sprinkling, that the whole man may be covered, is of the same character with the addition of one immersion to another, and

another still, or of oil and salt to the baptismal water, and is adapted to pervert the ideas of Christians, with reference to the intention of an external ordinance, and to leave false and unscriptural impressions, as it proceeds from perverted ideas and false principles. The Greek Christian is as fully entitled to three dips, and the Papist to a little salt and oil, as the Antipedobaptist to more water than is necessary for aspersion.

7. In purification, God discovers a solicitude that nothing, to be purified, be subjected to a process from which it is not naturally fitted to come forth uninjured. Nothing may be exposed to an ordeal which is calculated to destroy it. "The gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, *every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make go through the fire, and it shall be clean; and all that abideth not the fire, ye shall make go through the water.*" * Here is the evidence, and an exemplification of the principle—a principle strictly adhered to in every part of the Mosaic ritual—a principle diametrically opposed to the supposition that washing necessarily implies immersion, and utterly subversive of the practice of immersion for the purification of persons. Total immersion at once points to the destruction of persons, and is an apt emblem of destruction, not of safety. In a state of total immersion, the functions of life pre-

* Num. xxx. 22, 23.

sently experience a suspension, or at least a violent interruption to their exercise, which must soon put a period to temporal existence. The action of the lungs, upon which the movements of the whole animal machine depend, immediately ceases. It is to no purpose to adduce the fact that a man may be immersed, and sustain no permanent or even present injury, when every one knows that the safety entirely depends upon a speedy extrication from a state of submersion. Death is the issue involved in that state, simply considered; and as it is not insinuated that baptize signifies to *take out* of the water as well as to *put into* it; moreover, as the argument in favour of total immersion is made to turn upon the word *baptize*, and that is said to denote *mode*, and *nothing but mode*, it is plain that, according to the divine direction, no provision is made for emergence from the water. That Antipedobaptists have the ideas of immersion and destruction as closely united in their minds as others, is evident from this,—that whilst they pertinaciously contend that *baptize* signifies to *immerse*, and nothing but *immerse*, the administrator of the ceremony of immersion finds it expedient to supererogate, and is as careful to take the subjects out of the water as to put them into it.

The whole tenor of Scripture phraseology, respecting the ends fulfilled by coming in contact with water, agrees with the principle stated above,

and applied to the solution of the question between immersion in water, and sprinkling or pouring water in legal washings and baptisms of the former or latter dispensation. In every case in which water is described as *coming upon, from above, poured upon, or sprinkled*, it is expressive of a blessing; and, invariably, being immersed in water is expressive of a ruinous calamity to every thing destructible by immersion, and from which, as being destructive to persons, the child of God would humbly pray to be delivered. *Being covered with water, is never represented as a privilege, but a calamity; never a blessing, but a curse.* Take for proof and illustration the following passages of Scripture, in which

The SPRINKLING or POURING OUT or FALLING OF WATER *from above*, is spoken of. “Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: to *set up* on high those that be *low*; that those that *mourn* may be exalted to *safety*.* I will be as the *dew* unto Israel: he shall *grow as the lily*, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. †—I will *pour* water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.—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 watercourses. ‡ I will *sprinkle*

* Job. v. 10, 11.

† Hos. xiv. 5.

‡ Isa. xlv. 3, 4.

clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.*
 —As the *rain* cometh down, and the *snow* from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it *bring forth* and *bud*, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that proceedeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void. †
 —My doctrine shall *drop as the rain*, my speech shall *distil as the dew*, as the *small rain* upon the tender herb, and as the *showers* upon the grass. ‡
 —The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a *dew* from the Lord, as the *showers* upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. §—He shall *pour* the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.” || The blessing is the rain, the dew, or represented by the rain, the dew, which descend from on high in crystal drops, by a gentle distillation; or it is symbolized by water poured out. No blessing is ever exhibited under the emblem of overflowing floods, or submersion in the deep waters, as will appear from an examination of the following passages of Scripture, in which we have reference to

IMMERSION *in or* BEING COVERED *with water.*

“The Lord hath broken forth upon mine ene-

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25. † Isa. lv. 10, 11. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 2.
 § Micah v. 7. || Num. xxiv. 7.

mies before me, as the *breach of waters*.*—Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken: therefore snares are round about thee, and *abundance of waters covers thee*.†—The *waters covered* their enemies; there was not one of them left.‡—Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly;—now, therefore, behold, the Lord *bringeth up upon them the waters of the river*, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory; and he shall come over all his channels, and go over all his banks. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach *even to the neck*. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and *the waters shall overflow the hiding place*.§—It shall rise up wholly as a flood, and it shall *be drowned*, as by the *flood of Egypt*.||—*Waters flowed over mine head*; I said, I am cut off.¶—The serpent cast out of his mouth *water as a flood* after the woman; that he might cause her to be *carried away of the flood*.**—I am come into *deep waters* where the *floods overflow me*.—Let me be delivered out of the deep waters. Let not the *waterflood overflow me*, neither let the *deep swallow me up*.—If it

* 2 Sam. v. 20.

† Job xxii. 9—11. ‡ Ps. cvi. 11. § Isa. viii. 6—8; xxviii. 17.

|| Am. viii. 8; ix. 5. ¶ Lam. iii. 54. ** Rev. xii. 15.

had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then the *waters had overwhelmed us*, the *stream had gone over our soul*; then the *proud waters had gone over our soul*.^{*"}

But the general principle admits of direct reduction to the case of baptism. It would not be an exercise of little ingenuity to furnish even a plausible argument against the conclusion, drawn from this principle, that immersion is alien from both the nature and the object of the baptismal ordinance. Nothing but an impious ingenuity will attempt it, having the testimony of two inspired writers to the existence of a *contrast* between baptism and immersion. Their testimony shall now be laid before the reader.—“Our fathers were all *baptized* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” Compare this statement with the history of the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and the following facts, worth a thousand speculations, imaginings, and philological fancies, will present themselves to every reader; and it only remains to be seen whether unquestionable *facts* are to be admitted in evidence. If there be a man who refuses a known *fact* in opposition to the supposed accuracy of *verbal interpretation*, he may be entitled to esteem, but certainly not on account of the soundness of his judgment. The facts, bearing upon the baptism of the Israelites, are these:—

* Ps. lxix. 2, 14, 15; cxxiv. 2, 4, 5.

1. The Israelites were *baptized*, but not *immersed*.
2. The Egyptians were *immersed*, but not *baptized*.
3. The Israelites were *saved*, and the Egyptians *perished*.

Again, "The world that then was being *overflowed* with water, *perished*.—God spared not the old world, but *saved* Noah, the eighth person, bringing in the *flood* upon the world of the *ungodly*.* The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were *saved by water*. The like figure whereunto even *baptism* doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."† Now for a view of the facts necessarily involved.

1. The old world was *overflowed* and *perished*.
2. Noah and his family were *saved by water*, but not *overflowed*.
3. Salvation by baptism is a *figure*, and the salvation of the eight members of Noah's family is a *figure*.
4. These are *like* figures.

The water was to Noah what water in Baptism is to the believer, figurative of a divine and effective agent in giving salvation. The safety of Noah and his family answers to the salvation secured by baptism, both being figurative of spiritual deliverance. The ark is like the organized visible society

* 2 Pet. iii. 6; ii. 5.

† 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

—the body of Christ, into which the believer enters on earth. And as the ark, in being lifted up, lifts up them that are in it, so in the resurrection of Christ, they who are of his body are raised up with him to newness of life.

It follows, unless the Apostle has made some mistake in introducing the phrase,—“the like figure whereunto even *Baptism*,”—(the similitude is of figures,) that *the BAPTISM which saves is NOT IMMERSION*, total or partial; a conclusion which is strengthened by the consideration that, in baptism, “the putting away of the filth of the flesh” is not contemplated. Let it be, meanwhile, kept in mind that the preceding quotations from the inspired writers, Paul and Peter, have not been introduced for the purpose of ascertaining the propriety of any given form of baptism, but simply to show that *immersion* cannot be the form in which it is, in any case, to be administered to persons.

The result of the preceding investigation may be briefly summed up in the following particulars:—that the nature or form of any ordinance, and of course of Baptism, cannot be learned from the name appropriated to it;—that baptism is an ordinance of the Old Testament dispensation, and what is necessary to be known of its nature, intention, and mode of administration, must be learned from that portion of the Living Oracles;—that, as to its nature, baptism is an ordinance of purification;—

that the end of baptism is access to God in union to a Mediator;—that the mode of purification or baptism, in all cases agreeing with the case and conditions of New Testament baptism, was by *sprinkling* or *washing*;—that there is not *one* case in which, among all the varied and multiplied rites prescribed of old, any man is commanded either to immerse himself, or to be immersed;—that washing does not imply more than the sprinkling or scattering of water upon the person;—that total immersion, so far from representing the purification and safety of persons, is a symbol of irremediable destruction, and directly opposed to the spirit of the divine institutions;—and that the allusions to baptism in the New Testament, are, in no instance, at variance with these positions, and in several instances, forcibly sustain them.

Having, to the best of my recollection, pursued the examination of the subject of baptism thus far, it ministers no little satisfaction that the examination, without once thinking of them, fully justifies the description of the ordinance furnished by the Westminster Divines, and the propriety of the solemn profession of adherence, made many years since, to this article, in the works compiled by them, as being founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God. They represent Baptism to be “a washing with water,” “which, for the manner of doing it, is not only *lawful* but *sufficient*, and most *expedient* to be

by pouring or sprinkling water on the face," to "signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's."

Antipedobaptists may be surprised to find a conclusion brought, not merely against their exclusiveness, but against the very character of *their* ordinance; and, although the conclusion be neither new nor peculiar, may be almost disposed, in the fulness of their self-sufficiency, to make the alleged extravagance of it a substitute for a more reasonable examination of the grounds upon which it rests, or an exposition of its presumed want of firmness. Be it so, that a majority of Pedobaptists would divide the child with them. I have no doubt that a simple division with Moses and the Prophets, with Christ and the Apostles, will lead to the same conviction which rests with unfaltering firmness on my mind, that the doctrine of exclusive baptismal immersion is a fancy, founded in the mire of superstition and will-worship; that it is a substitution of a type of complete dissociation from God and his people, and of utter destruction, for the appointed figure of union to them, and of eternal salvation; and that it is connected with views of revelation which ought not to be lightly passed over. When the second branch of the investigation comes forward, there may appear reason to believe that immersion is, notwithstanding, an appropriate appendage

of the covenant-societies of Antipedobaptists, and that there must be some fatality in the union of infant-exclusion and total immersion, which so generally obtains, contrary to what might be expected in things that are obviously, to a great extent, independent of each other. The doctrine that total immersion alone is baptism, supplies no argument in favour of exclusive adult baptism, nor does the latter argue the propriety of total immersion, yet do we seldom find that the adoption of the one doctrine is not accompanied by a going into the advocacy of the other. We do not expect to find the ordinances of God administered but in the house of God. When Jeroboam abandoned, and caused the people to abandon the temple, he made calves, and ordained of the lowest of the people to be priests. And when ordinances are superseded, the place of God's feet will not long seem glorious, and be visited with the frequency of true devotion. We expect to hear of a total desertion. The conduct of Antipedobaptists exemplifies these statements. They have forsaken the ordinance, and substituted an ordinance after the vanity of self-wisdom; and we shall see presently that they have forsaken the House of God, and erected a tabernacle according to their own ideas of spirituality and purity, but wanting the evidence of that of which the Spirit of Christ is the author.

NOTES.



I.—BAPTIZE OR BAPTISM.

* It is well known that this is a Greek word, introduced into the English language through the Latin medium, modified by an English termination. The derivative has been adopted by the authors of the English version, in preference to any supposed equivalent of Saxon original. Before the authorized translation was executed, the question whether the initiatory ordinance of God's house should be administered by immersion of the subject in water, or by the application of water to the subject, by pouring or sprinkling, had been long agitated: and the translators had too humbling a sense of their own liability to err, and too correct an apprehension of their responsibility, to aim at deciding for Christendom a disputed point, in which sincere followers of the Lamb were deeply interested. A translation of the word *Baptize*, might cast a sinking weight into the scale of either party in the argument. It would have been well, if translators of the Scriptures into other tongues had followed their example, and with the introduction of christianity, had ingrafted into the languages of the nations for whom translations were made, a word or words, used to denote divine ordinances. However, the Antipedobaptist translators into the languages of the East, have been true to the assumption of their own perfection of knowledge, and, in the spirit of infallibility worthy of the Papacy, have put the British and Foreign Bible Society upon the painful necessity of denying to those for whom such translations have

been executed, any assistance from its funds, in consequence of translating *Baptize* and its derivatives, by terms in the native languages, equivalent to *immerse* or *dip*. A "Bible Translation Society" has been organized to support their arrogant and obstinate exclusiveness, the uselessness and injurious tendency of which, even with respect to the Antipedobaptists, have been ably and lucidly pointed out by one of their own number, in "Letters" addressed to W. B. Gurney, Esq. And, at its annual meeting in 1840, the Antipedobaptist Association of Nova Scotia passed the following resolution, equally extraordinary in itself and its terms, designed, as it evidently was, to come before and to persuade men, many of whom, in understanding and conscience, fully satisfied of the propriety of Baptism by effusion or sprinkling, have never entertained the idea of pressing or suggesting the translation of the word baptize in an exacter accordance with their own views and practice:—"Whereas it appears that for some years past, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society have refused to aid in the circulation of those versions of the Scriptures in foreign languages, which have been made by Baptist Missionaries, *solely because our brethren have faithfully translated the word baptize by words which signify to immerse.* Res.—That this Association do respectfully memorialize the Parent Society, through its agent, the Rev. J. Thompson, requesting that such restriction be removed, &c."

There never was a more feeble objection raised against the use of the word baptize than its Greek origin. The reason that exists for its exclusion would invalidate the standing of a thousand words that are familiarly used by the English nation, and the propriety of which is never challenged,—words that have been introduced with as little variation as the one in question. Nor can Antipedobaptists themselves find another word to express baptism, without having recourse to foreign aid. I quote with pleasure the shrewd remarks of the late Rev. D. Ross, a Presbyterian Minister of Nova Scotia, upon this subject. Having quoted the words of the writer to whom he is replying;—"Our translators have not translated it into the English—it is a Greek word; it means immersion;"—he

subjoins;—"I would remark here, that the terms baptism, baptize, Christian, were admitted into the language of England, when the Christian religion was introduced into the nation, and notwithstanding all the changes which the language has undergone, have kept their station; so that it would be very hard, if not impossible, to produce other three terms in the present English language, of so old a standing. Those terms may, therefore, be reckoned English terms, though, like many others, derived from the Greek. If you were to translate the New Testament, and render baptism *Immersion*, it might be objected, 'Immersion is a Latin term, and, compared with the term baptism, but lately adopted into the English language;' and were you to translate the word baptize, *dip*, it might be said, 'This is but the Greek word *dypto*, in an English dress.'"

The objection to the retention of the word, must, I apprehend, be traced to another source than its parentage. It is for the sake of a translation which would forestall discussion, and endorse the correctness of Antipedobaptist interpretation and application, that the word *baptize*, in the English version or other versions, would be repudiated. Upon the meaning of the word the whole controversy, respecting the mode of baptism, is made to turn by Antipedobaptists generally, and by Dr. Carson in particular. Every allusion must be explained in accommodation to this. By this must every difficulty be solved, or if it admit not of a solution, except by a deviation from Dr. C.'s mode of interpretation, this is a fixed point at which he rests. Let the difficulty remain undiscussed, or the Spirit of God speak nonsense, rather than that the word should signify anything but *immersion—total immersion*. "He (Mr. Ewing) may call on me to find a place sufficient to immerse a couch. But I will go on no such errand. If I have proved the meaning of the word, I will believe the Spirit of God, who tells me that the Pharisees baptized (immersed) their beds." p. 111. "It is strange to find the Pharisees, the superstitious Pharisees, immersing their couches for purification, or themselves, after market? For myself, it is perfectly sufficient that the Holy Spirit testifies that the Pharisees baptized themselves before eating after market; and that they

baptized their couches." p. 116. "The Jailer and his household were baptized, therefore they were immersed." p. 274. "I care not where the water is to be found, if they were baptized they were immersed." p. 272. Upon the faith of the premise that the meaning of the word precludes all inquiry upon different principles, he presents the following awful appeal in his preface:—"It behoves those who change the mode and subjects of baptism, to consider this awful example, (of the prophet who went from Judah to Bethel.) If Christ has commanded his disciples to be baptized, on their belief of the truth, who can change it into the baptism of infants? If he has commanded them to be immersed, who can change it into pouring or sprinkling?" And lest he should be compelled to admit a secondary and modified acceptation of the term, by the necessary bearing of the passage in which it is found, he forewarns us that he is prepared to sacrifice the meaning of the passage upon the altar of his critical accuracy, in the following sweeping sentence:—"Now, although I could make no sense of the passage at all, I would resolutely refuse to admit any meaning but one that the word confessedly has in some other place." p. 26. From the preceding quotations it is apparent that with Dr. C. the meaning of the word baptize is the all-important point in the controversy. Mr. Crawley, an Antipedobaptist minister of Nova Scotia, who, before *Mr. Tupper's* work appeared, was considered by the Churches here to have set the question at rest in a "Treatise" put forth against another minister of that denomination, who had apostatized from the faith, and published his reasons, proceeds upon the same principle, that the meaning of the word must determine the mode in which the ordinance denoted by it ought to be administered, the most cogent objections derived from other sources notwithstanding. "We are now to turn our attention to the meaning of the *word* baptizo: if this can be ascertained, and it be found to possess a single specific meaning, every one of course perceives that this must set the question forever at rest." p. 126. According to the spirit of benevolence usually displayed by Mr. Crawley, he not only discloses his identity of views with Carson, but his disposition

to save others the trouble of thinking for themselves, and expressing their own impressions:—"Every one of course perceives." As the subject of this note is simply to exhibit the single spot upon which the Antipedobaptist intrenches himself, and a general view of the strength of which has been disclosed in the text, I shall only here remark, that if it be found sufficient to support him, it becomes absolutely necessary that nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand be precluded from forming a judgment in the case, and leave the remaining individual to judge for them, suspending their faith upon his integrity and accuracy.

II.—JEWISH ANTICIPATION.

That the Jews, when John appeared, were familiar with the subject of Baptism, is evident from the interview between him and the priests and Levites, sent to ask him who he was. The rite which he came to administer does not strike them as a novelty, nor have they any question to put respecting its nature and design. All their anxiety was to know whether he was the *Christ*, or *Elias*, or *that Prophet* who should come into the world. And when he had answered undeviatingly in the negative, the final question is not,—“What means this new rite,—this baptism? but, “Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?” This question not only discovers an acquaintance with the rite, but an expectation that when Christ, or Elias, or that Prophet should appear, he would come baptizing. Whence could such an expectation have its origin? Is there any prediction to that effect in the Old Testament disclosures of the future appearance and work of those messengers of the Father? What are the predictions that might lead to the belief, that when appearing, they would *baptize*? Or was the question put, derived from a merely conjectural anticipation. The investigation of these matters would conduce more to the benefit of our opponents than the study of all that Elian, or Dio, or Hypocrites, or even the Seventy ever wrote. Even the Rev. Alexander Carson of Tobermore, and the learned champion of

Antipedobaptist principles, might have profited by it. We submit, for the consideration of Antipedobaptists, the following passages, as well adapted to lead the readers of the Old Testament to expect that the Messiah would, upon his manifestation, *baptize*. That the expectation existed cannot be doubted, and that the citations have reference to the times of the appearance of the great Deliverer, can as little be doubted. Under the leadership of Moses, the typical mediator of Israel, the people were all baptized on their separation from the land of Egypt. When he presided over their entrance into covenant with God at Horeb, after he had "read in the audience of the people, the book of the Covenant," and received their explicit assent to its terms,—“all that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient,”—Moses took the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it upon the people and said, “Behold the blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words,” (Ex. xxiv. 7, 8.) Also, when the Levites are taken for the first-born, to represent the people of Israel before the Lord, and are set apart to their solemn service, Moses is instructed to “sprinkle water of purifying upon them, (Num. viii. 7.) Now as God had promised by Moses to raise up a Prophet from among their brethren, who, like him, should stand as a Mediator between God and them, (Deut. xviii. 18,) and as God had promised that he would make a New Covenant with them in the days of that Prophet, it would have been passing strange if they had not anticipated an induction into that Covenant by some such ceremonial as that by which their fathers had been brought into a federal relation to God, and separated, in the persons of the Levites, to his service.

This anticipation would take a more definite form when they read the animating promise respecting the blessings of Messianic times:—“I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean,” &c., (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.)

Hitherto the Israelite had only known Abraham as the father of one nation, but he well knew that the promise had been, that he should be made of God the father of *many nations*; (Gen. xvii. 5), and he might confidently expect that as

the one nation had been separated to the special privileges of God's people, so should the *many nations* be, who would call Abraham, Father, which would have its realization in the fulfilment of the promise concerning the Hope of Israel, "So shall he *sprinkle many nations*," (Isa. lii. 15).

But it will be said that all this assumes that baptism is administered by *sprinkling*. Very true. And when the Antipedobaptist furnishes any passage from the Old Testament, that would originate an expectation, that when Messiah had come, he would *duck* the people, I will accept it, and retrace my steps. Pardon me, reader, if I speak disrespectfully of the act of dragging a heathen ceremonial into the temple of God, and making Him responsible for its introduction. It is quite consistent to make the appeal to heathen writers in support of a heathen rite. Let the Scriptures speak to Christians, and the advocates of the shameless ceremony of immersion shew us when God has ever commanded it, or his people practised it, or where they were taught to expect that Elias, or that Prophet, would either introduce or sustain it. If I were to say less or demand less, I should only be ministering to self-sufficiency and spiritual pride. The existence of the expectation of Messiah baptizing, the Antipedobaptist cannot deny. The demand of any statement in the Old Testament, that is adapted to excite or foster it, he cannot, in conformity with his own notions of baptism, meet and satisfy.

A

DISSERTATION

ON THE

NATURE AND ADMINISTRATION

OF THE

ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

PART II.

BY WM. SOMMERVILLE, A. M.



PAISLEY—PUBLISHED BY ALEX. GARDNER.

1866.

PREFATORY.

IT is now nearly twenty years since the author published the first part of this work,—on the Scriptural mode of baptism,—intending, at an early day, to publish his views of the scriptural evidence of Infant Baptism. The perusal of Wilson's reply to Carson, in which he was entirely anticipated in his contemplated method of stating the argument, led him to abandon, for a time, the idea of writing anything more on Baptism. Subsequent reflection on the learned and elaborate character of Wilson's work; the pertinacious repetition of the hundredth-time refuted arguments of Antipedobaptists, and the hundredth-time's exposed mis-statements of Pedobaptist views, and the general oversight of the extent to which the doctrine of baptism is incorporated with correct principles of biblical interpretation, and with leading doctrines of christianity, led to the conclusion, that a less learned, and really less valuable defence of our principles, would not, even yet, be useless to the generality of readers.

Had the "Remains" of the late Dr. M'Gregor of Pictou, Nova Scotia, been published before the

writer's argument on the Mode of Baptism,—there is so exact an identity in the form of the discussion,—he would hardly have been able to clear himself of the charge of plagiarism; and it is possible he may have here introduced, not only the same arguments, but the same method of putting them, which has been adopted by previous authors, dead or living. When arguments are drawn from the same source, when a great many works on the same subject have been read, some with so much interest and delight as to leave a very lively impression on the mind, it is almost a necessity that there should arise a great similarity in the mode of conducting the discussion of baptism, or any other given topic. Had the author of this Dissertation been conscious of simply reproducing the ideas of others, who were before him, it would have been acknowledged. As it is, he claims to have done what he could in favour of a cause intimately bound up with a consistent interpretation of the divine Word, and the privileges and prospects of the church of Christ in the world.

The author is not aware of having used terms more severe than what justice to the cause demanded. Antipedobaptists are the very last men who should be heard complaining of hard words; and it is not worth while for others to plead for Baal; if he be a God he can plead for himself, when one pulls down his altar. The deceased Dr.

Carson is nothing in the discussion. He is here treated as he lives in thousands who are prepared to indorse his gravest misrepresentations, his worst sophistries, and his fiercest denunciations, yet are strangers to his talents, his learning, and his moral worth.

The edition of Carson quoted in this work is of New York, 1832.

INTRODUCTION.

When the single object a man sets before him is the investigation or exposition of truth, it is of no importance to himself or others, to discover into how many devious paths “the unlearned and the unstable” may have wandered, or what may be the precise nature or extent of the errors in which they are involved. It is not obligatory upon him to acquire a knowledge of all the substitutes for truth which interest, corruption, or self-righteousness, has introduced, or of any one of them. The case is very different if truth is contemplated, as it stands opposed to its unnumbered contraries, and if it is professedly illustrated by its contrast with the evil nature and tendency of one or more of them. He who undertakes not only to vindicate and disseminate the truth which he has learned, and learned to prize, but to demonstrate the character of error, or of systems founded in error, is no less bound to know and to furnish a faithful exposition of the error he would refute, than to acquire and exhibit definite ideas of the truth itself. There can be no end of an argument so long as one, who professes to point out the errors of another, puts forth

his strength in the refutation of what is as strenuously denied by his opponent as by himself, or in the confirmation of what is fully admitted, detailing reasons that have no bearing upon questions at issue between the contending parties.

These remarks are suggested by an examination of the argument introduced and urged by Antipedobaptists, in opposition to the principle of infant baptism. I say the *principle* and not the *practice* of infant baptism, for two reasons:—1. When a man's practice is inconsistent with the principle upon which he professes to act, his practice can never lead an argument against the principle; it does not infer the justice of a sentence of condemnation against his creed, but against his character;—2. I have no more disposition to justify the practice of Pedobaptists, than of Antipedobaptists, in opposition to the principle of infant baptism. I have, for instance, no more sympathy with the indiscriminate administration of baptism to infants, than with their universal exclusion from the fellowship of the Church. The indiscriminate admission of infants to baptism seems as much at variance with scripture, and is certainly as much opposed to the recognized symbols of, at least, the Presbyterian Churches, as exclusive adult baptism. One leading reason of the prevalence of Antipedobaptist principles, may, very probably, be traced to the very extensive practical disregard of their own

principles by Pedobaptists, who say, "The infants of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized,"* who defend this position, and yet baptize the infants not only of members of the church, but of those who are without a name to live; often of those who are "abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." Of this circumstance, controversialists on the opposite side,—perhaps more frequently in the pulpit, or in colloquial conversation,—take advantage, and press the shameful and unblessed inconsistency into an argument, against the principle which it contradicts. It is very doubtful whether unscriptural views, and the practice founded on them, have been ever successfully advocated, in the conflict with truth combined with righteousness; and if we would withstand in the evil day, and stand, it is no less necessary to have "the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," than to have "the loins girt about with truth." The Head of the Church, to punish the unfaithfulness and profanity of Israel in the days of Eli, "forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he had placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand."† The Lord was not less displeased with the Philistines for placing the ark in Dagon's temple, because the Israelites had used it for superstitious purposes, and had put

* Shorter Catm. Qu. 95. † Ps. lxxviii. 69, 61.

it in God's place ; and Antipedobaptists may yet be convinced that they provoke the anger of a jealous God, while they improve the advantage, derived from unfaithfulness in the administration of a divine ordinance, for the purpose of placing it among the rites of an antichristian service. It may be, and I hope to be able to shew, in the sequel, through the word of the Spirit, that Antipedobaptist success is not, in any case, to be ascribed to their righteousness, but to our sin.

But it is not only in confounding the position, maintained by Pedobaptists, with practices inconsistent at once with their own symbols and the word of God, that their opponents have lost sight of the question at issue. The question does not stand, as their mode of dealing with it would lead the hearer or reader to suppose, between adult and infant baptism. Pedobaptists are not opposed to adult baptism. In principle, they hold the doctrine of adult baptism. In practice, they exemplify it. Notwithstanding the knowledge of this fact,—knowledge derived from the reiterated statements, and from the known practice of Pedobaptists, their opponents go on, as coolly and persistently, to reason in favour of adult baptism, as if it were impugned ; and, if they do not formally state the conclusions, leave inquirers to draw them, that Pedobaptists do not believe in adult baptism, and that because adults are to be baptized, infants are not. It is

difficult to believe that there are not many of them aware of the irrelevancy and disingenuousness of the argument, and the delusiveness of the inference, yet the known character of many constrains us to resolve the sophistry into that obliquity of intellectual vision, arising from education, passion, or prejudice, which frequently characterizes men distinguished, when free from such influences, by the clearest and most correct perceptions.

I.—Question Stated.

Although the question has been often and lucidly stated, it may not be useless to draw the attention of readers to it once more. So long as Antipedobaptists pursue the same line of argument, it is necessary to keep up, before the minds of those who are exposed to their influence, the means of detecting their sophistry; and of those, who have been taken in their snare, the means by which they may be extricated from their unhappy situation. How far, and on what points, the difference of opinion exists, shall appear more clearly by ascertaining how far, and on what points there is an agreement. The whole matter in dispute will be manifest in the answers to three questions, affecting three distinct classes, presenting claims to admission to the privileges of the church.

(1.)—Are Jews, professing faith in the Lord Jesus, to be baptized?

Antipedobaptists answer,	<i>Yes.</i>
Pedobaptists answer,	<i>Yes.</i>
The Scriptures answer,	<i>Yes.</i> Acts ii. 37–41.

(2.) Are Gentiles, professing faith in the Lord Jesus, to be baptized?

Antipedobaptists answer,	<i>Yes.</i>
Pedobaptists answer,	<i>Yes.</i>
The Scriptures answer,	<i>Yes.</i> Acts viii. 13, x. 47, 48, xvi. 14, 15.

In answering these two questions, Antipedobaptists and Pedobaptists are perfectly agreed. In the practical elucidation of the answers, they are perfectly agreed. In justification of their faith and practice, they appeal to the same passages of holy writ with the same freedom, confidence, and satisfaction. The verses which have been cited above, prove the correctness of the practice of Antipedobaptists, so far as it agrees with the practice of Pedobaptists, and no farther. The introduction, therefore, of these and other such statements, by the enemies of infant baptism, creates in us no uneasiness whatever. We say to them, “Between us and you there is no controversy upon the point which those passages determine. We baptize converted Jews. We baptize converted Gentiles. We hold that, upon their profession of faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ, they are to be admitted to the fellowship of the church by baptism, and not without, and not otherwise. We give to them the right hand of fellowship, being baptized, and not without, and not before." But it ought not to be forgotten that all the proofs derived from Scripture precedents, in favour of adult baptism, are exhausted in support of the harmonious answers of the friends and enemies of infant baptism, to the two questions which have been already put. The whole controversy turns upon the claims advanced in favour of a third class, entirely distinct from either adult Jews or Gentiles. This consideration introduces us to the third question.

(3.) Are children, whose father or mother was a member of the church when they were infants, upon making a profession, to be baptized,—to be treated as converted Jews or Gentiles, who had no previous connection with the church?

Antipedobaptists answer, *Yes.*

Pedobaptists answer, *No.*

The Scriptures answer, —?

Pedobaptism assumes that such have been baptized in their infancy. Antipedobaptism assumes that in infancy they were not proper subjects of the ordinance of baptism, and therefore, had never been baptized.

II. *No decisive example.*

What says the scripture in answer to the third question? How is the blank to be filled up? Of course the Antipedobaptist would insert, *yes*. To what book, chapter, verse, does he refer in justification of his act? To that which records the gracious and glorious result of Peter's pentecostal address? Those baptized were not born of parents, who had accepted Jesus as the Son of God, but *Jews*. To the narrative of the reception of Cornelius into the Church?—of Lydia?—of the Eunuch of Ethiopia? These were not the children of believers under this dispensation, but *Gentiles*, who had been proselytes to the service of the God of Abraham, according to the rites and spirit of the legal economy. We ask, we have a right to ask, in reasoning with an Antipedobaptist, an example, an explicit example (we ask but one) of the baptism of an adult, whose parents were members of the church, under the New Testament, when he or she was in a state of nonage,—the baptism administered by an Apostle, a Prophet, an Evangelist, an Elder or Bishop, whose act is recorded by the pen of inspiration. Our opponents are constantly ringing changes, in the ears of their flocks, in the ears of Pedobaptists, upon the absence of an explicit example in Scripture of the baptism of an infant. They reiterate the challenge,—“Produce an example of infant bap-

tism." To what purpose the demand? Are they not aware that their mode of reasoning bears as forcibly against their own cause, as against the cause of Pedobaptists? They are able to produce examples of adult baptism. True. And if Pedobaptists were opposed to adult baptism, if they asserted the propriety of infants, in opposition to adult baptism, their cause could not be sustained. But this is not the case. *We are the advocates of ADULT baptism to the full extent of every example in its support, which our opponents are able to produce from the New Testament.* Do they ask, demand, insist upon, an explicit example of the baptism of an infant? Let them produce an example in support of their own practice, in that one case, the only case, in which their practice differs from that which is in accordance with our principles;—let them produce an example of the baptism of an adult, whose father or mother was a member of the church under the present economy, when he was an infant, and I will pledge myself, in the name of every Pedobaptist in existence, that we will at once abandon our principles and our practice; and deliver over our little ones to the uncovenanted mercies of God. Let them show an example of their distinctive practice. They cannot. There is not one. Pedobaptists do not profess to be able to furnish a definitive example of the baptism, in infancy, of the child of a church member; and their

opponents cannot furnish an example of the baptism, in adult years, of the child of a church member. We ask for precept or example in support of their *distinctive* faith and *distinctive* practice; and with unblushing assurance they parade before us the proofs of our *common* faith and *common* practice. Nothing could be more disingenuous, yet this is the rule; and confidence and pertinacity supply the want of sound ratiocination with more than the illiterate.*

From the preceding statements, determining the main question between Pedobaptists and their opponents, it must be manifest that, as far as *example* in justification of the distinctive practice of either party is concerned, they occupy equal ground. Neither enjoys an advantage over the other.

In thorough parallelism with this, the command, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you,"† is addressed to the Jews;—"Arise and be baptized," ‡ to a Hebrew of the Hebrews;—"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" be baptized,§ is the declaration of Philip to the proselyte of Ethiopia;—and the challenge of Peter, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized," || has reference to converts to the doctrine of Christ, among the Gentiles. But, we find no command to be baptized, no declaration respecting baptism, having reference to persons born of church members.

* Note A.

† Acts ii. 38.

‡ Acts xxii. 16.

§ Acts viii. 37.

|| Acts x. 47.

III. *Appeal to the Old Testament.*

The absence, therefore, of a precept, or of an example, sufficiently precise to determine whether infants should, or should not be baptized, suggests the probability that the instruction imparted to a former age may have anticipated and superseded the necessity of more particular direction in this, and throws us back upon the *Constitution of the Church* for a resolution of the important question. When men are predisposed to think that the New Testament ought to supply the necessary information, they often hastily conclude that it does, forgetting that, in all cases, when a law has been definitely settled, if no particular allusion is subsequently made to its infraction, conformity to it is assumed; if no repeal or modification has proceeded from the source of legislation, it must be understood to continue in full force.*

When treating of the mode in which baptism ought to be administered, I proved, by evidence which cannot be refused, without contradicting the precise language of inspiration, that information respecting the ordinance must be sought in the old Testament, where it treats of the institutes of the legal economy. This justifies an appeal to the laws of the former dispensation when treating of infant baptism. This appeal sounds strange to some,

* Note B.

when they are told that the word *baptism* is not once named in the Old Testament. As the word *baptize* is derived from Greek, is in fact a Greek word, imported into our vocabulary, and the Old Testament is written in Hebrew, we have no more right to expect to meet the word *baptize* there, than to find the word *man*, *house*, or *horse*, in the works of Xenophon, who wrote in Greek, or of Cicero, who wrote in Latin. But it would be supremely ridiculous to assert that those authors never spake of the objects to which we give the names *man*, *house*, and *horse*; but not more ridiculous than to assert that baptism is not spoken of in the Old Testament, because the *word* is not found in the original or in our translation.

The appeal is not a choice but a necessity, unless the whole subject of baptism be left unexplained; as it is impossible to discover an unequivocal rule to determine *mode* or *subjects*, in connection with the exposition of that ecclesiastical revolution, which the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost inaugurated.*

*Note C.

A DISSERTATION, &c.

CHAP. I.

NEW TESTAMENT ALLUSIONS TO BAPTISM.

SECTION I.

Value of these Allusions.

Before we enter upon an examination of the constitution of the church, in its bearing upon the propriety of admitting infants, by baptism, into the fellowship of the saints, it may be proper to advert to certain allusions to the administration of the ordinance which occur in the New Testament. From our introductory view of the subject, nothing more than allusions is to be expected. Upon Pedobaptist principles, which assume infant baptism to be founded on the constitution of the church,—a constitution established anterior to the New Testament dispensation,—the indirect and incidental method of introducing the doctrine of baptism, is precisely what is anticipated. We do not expect to find an exposition of the nature, form, and design of sacrifices, in the prophecies of Jeremiah, nor of the number, time, and ceremonies of Jewish festivals, in the writings of Amos or Zechariah,

although we are not surprised to find references to them, which suppose the reader's previous knowledge of those institutions. On the other hand, the incidental introduction of the ordinance of baptism, whilst no one passage supplies distinct information of its origin, form, application, would seem to be entirely at variance with the supposition that it is connected with a new society, by which a corporation, existing from ancient times, is superseded.

If these allusions to baptism, in the New Testament, bear an unfavourable aspect to the reception of children with their parents, it becomes necessary to exercise double vigilance at every step leading to a conclusion at variance with Antipedobaptist principles; if they necessarily imply exclusive adult baptism, it is useless to pursue the subject further, as any conclusion, however plausibly drawn, which contradicts a necessary consequence of admitted premises cannot be entertained. But if they may very well consist with infant baptism; if they can hardly, or not at all, be explained upon any other supposition than that infants were baptized by the Apostles; and should it appear that the constitution of the church requires the reception of children of church members into fellowship; there remains no drawback to the confidence with which they are to be admitted. Arguments from *allusions* to the ordinance of baptism, and

from the *constitution of the church*, mutually check each other. An error, in reasoning from the constitution of the church, is detected in analysing the allusions. Should we take too much liberty with the allusions, the constitution of the church detects the inconsiderate or presumptuous tampering with the word of God.

We shall treat, more particularly, of those references which are often considered by Antipedobaptists themselves more favourable, decisively favourable, to their views.

SECTION II.

The Commission.

Matthew xxviii. 18-20 :—“ *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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.*”

Such is the commission given by the Lord to the apostles, when about to ascend to the Father; and it claims our attention in the outset, because it might be expected to involve the principles by which their official practice ought to be regulated. Unusual importance has been attached to it by the most distinguished and the boldest of Antipedobaptist writers. “The strongest argument of

all in favour of their opinion, they boast," says Calvin,* "is contained in the original institution of baptism, which they quote from the last chapter of Matthew." It has been represented as bearing so decidedly in favour of exclusive adult baptism, as to constitute a rule for the interpretation of every other scriptural statement having reference to the administration of the ordinance, and, in particular, of statements which might, if not shut up by the commission, be pressed into the service of infant baptism.

The late Dr. A. Carson expresses himself thus:—"I am willing to hang the whole controversy on this passage. If I had not another passage in the word of God, I will engage to refute my opponents from this commission alone. I will risk the credit of my understanding, on my success in showing that, *according to the commission, believers only are to be baptized.*"†

It is strange that, after engaging to *refute* his opponents from this passage, he admits that it is not inconsistent with the possibility of another commission to baptize infants. It appears to me that what would furnish a refutation of the doctrine of infant baptism, must also disprove the divine original of any alleged commission to baptize infants; and that the doctor would have expressed himself more consistently by taking the

* *Inst.* B. 4, Chap. 16, Sec. 27.

† Carson, p. 275.

position, that infant baptism cannot be established from the apostolic commission. In that case we should have acquiesced in his judgment. Probably this is all he intended. We would never think of placing the commission in opposition to a definitive exclusion of infants from the church; but in the absence of such sentence of exclusion, we say, with all confidence, that the terms in which it is expressed are not at all unfavourable to the claims put in on behalf of children. Let us look at them.

Much of the perplexity which the English reader feels, in consulting the commission, arises from the introduction of the word *teach*, in the nineteenth verse, which appears to him to convey the idea that actual and apprehended instruction must precede baptism in all cases. Accordingly, this is often and very vehemently pressed, and the whole statement is applied as if the command ran thus,—“Teach all nations, and baptize them.” “It is well known that the original word translated *teach*, in the first instance in which it occurs in the passage, signifies to disciple, or to make scholars.”* And it may serve to facilitate the application of this, as well as many other statements in the New Testament, to keep in mind that, in every case in which the word *disciple* occurs, it means neither more nor less than *scholar*.

To Christ belongs the office of *Master* or *Teacher*,

* Carson, p. 274.

and to Him, therefore, is given the title. His followers are called *disciples* or *scholars*. "The disciple (*scholar*) is not above his master (*teacher*)."*

The *law*, the instrument of the terrors of the Lord, by which men are persuaded, through which they become dead to itself, and which brings us to Christ, is our *schoolmaster*.† The original word,‡ however, does not at all convey the same idea with the English word by which it is rendered, and which more properly expresses the office of Christ to whom we are brought. It denotes the *servant*, who is charged with the business of conducting the children to school and placing them under the teacher's care.§

Paul instructs parents to bring up their children "in the nurture (*discipline*) and admonition (*instruction*) of the Lord."|| To the "order and restraints and chastisements," which the Lord prescribes, the children must be trained to submit, and the education he prescribes parents must impart. Fathers are to Christ, in their own houses, what elders, who rule and teach, are in the churches, which compose the household of faith. They are Christ's *ushers*.

Here, then, we have all the parts of a complete picture. The church of Christ is a *school*. Christ is the *Master*. Church members are *scholars*.

* Matt. x. 24.

† Gal. iii. 24.

‡ παιδαγωγος, *pedagogue*.

§ Parkhurst's Lex.

|| Eph. vi. 4. See Wesley and Macknight.

The law is the *servant* who brings the children to the school. The whole course of education is summed up in the *order* and *studies* which the Master prescribes.

Now a school consists of those who, having arrived at years of reflection and become aware of their need of instruction, choose a Master, and, in order to learn of him, place themselves under his direction; and of those in childhood, whose parents or guardians place them under the Master's hand, that they may grow up in subjection to his rule, and increase in wisdom by his counsels. Persons are not introduced into school, because they have been taught. There are found in a school those who do not know the alphabet, whose names are only enrolled; those who have learned the elements; and those who have made various degrees of proficiency and are still under training for their ultimate destination. All these, and such as have completed their course of training, and have entered into their contemplated sphere, are still denominated *scholars*. The phraseology employed by the Spirit is eminently calculated to deceive us, did we not find in the church literally *little children, young men, and fathers*. The members of all the apostolic churches, to which epistles are addressed, treating of relative duties, are indiscriminately styled *saints, husbands and wives, masters and servants, parents and children*. Moreover, the Apostle represents

all the children of a professing parent as *saints* : * the word which our translators render *holy* † being precisely the same word that answers to *saints*, wherever saints are introduced in the New Testament. So that, in whatever sense members of the church at large are saints, their children are saints. But of this more afterwards.

This is precisely what we would expect to find set forth, if the church is correctly represented as a school, and it is under that figure that it is introduced in the commission. Make all nations scholars ;—*adults* with their own consent, of course, apprehending and confessing Christ as their Master, and the only one able to reveal the Father and to make wise unto salvation ;—*little ones*, by the act of their parents, who know that there is but one Saviour for the parent and the child, and that there is but one body,—in obedience to the command of the Spirit to “bring them up in the discipline and doctrine of the Lord,”—in His school, being directed by His wisdom, and having their minds formed, enlarged, elevated, by His Spirit and lessons.

The structure of the sentence which contains our Lord’s final instructions to His apostles, confirms the preceding observations. The whole commission is manifestly expressed in these few words,—“Go and make scholars of all nations,”

* 1 Cor. vii. 14.

† Ἅγιος, *Hagios*.

rather, all *the* nations. What follows is explanatory of the command,—“Baptizing them into 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.” They are not known among the disciples before baptism. By it they are introduced into the fellowship of the church, and of all its privileges, as they are capable of appreciating and enjoying them. The scriptures never recognize the unbaptized as scholars. Among Antipedobaptists none are baptized, I mean *immersed* (they never *baptize*), who are not previously accepted as scholars. The commission gives the first place to baptism. The teaching follows.

Nobody thinks it an injustice or an absurdity to put children to school without their own consent, and before they are able to appreciate the advantages of an education. Their names may stand upon the teacher’s roll before they have *begun* to learn. The church is a school. The baptism precedes the teaching. So says the commission. It admits infants with the utmost facility.

SECTION III.

The Promise to Parents and Children.

Acts ii. 38, 39 :—“*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift*

of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call.

As the promise here introduced is obviously intended to stimulate the hearers to "repent and be baptized," it cannot admit of a doubt, that all who are comprehended in the promise are proper subjects of baptism. Indeed, the labour expended to exclude infants from the promise proceeds upon the tacit admission of this, even when it is not explicitly acknowledged.

The exposition of Dr. Carson represents the limiting clause,—“as many as the Lord our God shall call,”—to have equal reference to the persons addressed, their children, and “all that are afar off.” To this exegesis there are serious objections. Unless there were some foregone conclusion to be sustained, the reader would, without hesitation, refer the limiting clause to the general term “all,” which occurs only in the last branch of the promise. Besides, it is assumed, without a particle of proof, that the *call* spoken of in the text, is the *effectual* call, or the word, accompanied by the operation of the Spirit leading to the acceptance of it, and to the apprehension of the Lord Jesus by faith. That in our translation the term is sometimes used to denote the general or ministerial call, and sometimes the effectual call, is certain: and it is equally certain that, in the original language of the New

Testament, the simple verb * is generally, though not always, employed to express the *effectual* call, and that a compound verb †—the verb used in the present case—is seldom if ever so used, but is used to express the *general* call, which may or may not be accepted.

The persons addressed are, therefore, to be viewed as already without exception in the enjoyment of the Lord's call. Indeed, it would have afforded Peter's auditors very little encouragement or consolation, to be informed that the promise was to as many of them as the Lord might call, leaving them in utter uncertainty of his meaning, or of the Lord's gracious purpose to save.

We ought not to confound a promise, and the application of that promise, followed by the appropriation of faith, as the doctor's exposition assuredly does.

The preceding remarks are fully confirmed by the address of Peter on another occasion. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." ‡ As the children of the covenant,

* Καλεω.

† Προσκαλεω.

‡ Acts iii. 25, 26.

if there be any meaning in language, to them the promise of that covenant is given. To them God is said to have raised up his Son Jesus, and sent Him to bless them. And yet these are persons who are addressed in terms very similar to those upon which we are commenting:—"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" and, in point of fact, not *all*, but only "*many* of them which heard the word believed." Two things are manifest, that the call is ministerial, and that the promise is represented as theirs, with the same fulness as to them who heard Peter on the day of Pentecost.

If, then, the limiting clause, "as many as the Lord our God shall call," is not applicable to the persons to whom Peter speaks, neither can it, with any show of reason, be applied to the children; they are just the children of the hearers upon that occasion.

We are now prepared to specify particularly, the several classes covered by the promise. They are *three*:—1st, The persons addressed, "you;" 2d, Their children; 3d, As many of them who are "afar off" as the Lord shall call.

To begin with the *third* class. Those who are "afar off" are not to be confounded with the "remnant spoken of by Joel."* They are an entirely different class of persons. The incidental

* Joel ii. 32.

structural coincidence of the supplementary phrases, used by the apostle and the prophet respectively, “all that are afar off,—as many as the Lord our God shall call”—“the remnant whom the Lord shall call”—seems to have led many inconsiderately to view them as identical, and to confound the promise referred to in the text, with that recorded by Joel, and to overlook the ancient promise made to Abraham, and confirmed of God in Christ. “Remnant,” when mentioned in connection with the objects of God’s special care, is applied either to the *dispersed* of Israel, to be gathered from the lands in which they had been scattered,* or to the *residue*, who escape when the desolating judgments of God fall upon the body of the people,† and, thence, to the *elect* of God, who are safe when His wrath is poured out upon the impenitent workers of iniquity. ‡ The Apostle Paul removes all difficulty in the exclusive application of the phrase,—“all that are afar off,”—to the Gentiles, who have no present interest in God’s covenant of promise. § Those “afar off,” to whom Christ preached peace, or whom He called, out of whom the Ephesians and other converts from among the Gentiles, “were made nigh by His blood,” were the uncircumcised, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants

* Isaiah xi. 11.

† Jeremiah xlii. 2.

‡ Romans xi. 5.

§ Eph. ii. 11-17.

of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." The "remnant" belonging to Zion, and "all afar off" are heathen to whom the word of God has not come.

But who are the children? The Antipedobaptist answers, "Those children who, having come to years, hear, believe, and confess Christ." Let us suppose the answer scriptural and correct. It follows that, instead of belonging to the *second* class, they take their places in the *first*, among those who are addressed. An apostle saith to them, "The promise is to *you*." They are no more known as children than are their fathers, than is a Turk, a Hindu, a Hottentot, converted to the faith; nor has their acceptance any respect to the character and position of their parents. "There is not the smallest difference between the ground of receiving the child of a heathen, and the child of the most devoted saint."* In a state of nonage, according to the principles of Antipedobaptists, children are classed with them that are "afar off," whom the Lord may call. Our opponents have no place for children in the promise, no place, therefore, for them in the church. If the words, "and to your children," were blotted out, the promise would be as full, as valuable to them, as when it stands in all its divine integrity. The promise to "all that are

* Carson, p. 301.

afar off" covers their infants; the promise to the hearer covers their adult children; and what broader promise could they desire. I defy the most discriminating and ingenious Antipedobaptist to demonstrate, on his own principles, the value of these words to any professor of religion. But they would not dare to erase them, neither would the Spirit have them erased.

Children, in a dependent and subordinate state, in a father's house, *alone*, are contemplated in the promise, and such are to be baptized. The same promise made to the parent, hearing and believing, extends to his children, as children. Upon this promise is based his assurance of hope for himself and his infant offspring; upon this promise, his confidence of the blessing from the Lord, in training his little ones in subordination to the covenant. But it must ever be remembered that "to your children" is as direct an object of faith as "to you."

The union of parents and children in the same promise and the same privilege, sheds a full light on certain impressive declarations of the Old Testament, pointing to this dispensation.

"They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."* There is little difficulty in determining who are

* Isaiah lxxv. 23.

“the blessed of the Lord.” The language is used to designate the covenant people of God, and, eminently, Abraham whom God called alone, and blessed and increased,* and Isaac, and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. The people that should arise, after God had created a new thing in the earth, should still be the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring, not merely *after* them, according to a necessary law, but *with* them. In this is recognized the permanent interest of the children in the covenant privileges and blessings of their fathers. “*With them.*” The offspring of the seed of the blessed of the Lord, under this dispensation, are themselves the seed of the blessed of the Lord,—are Christ’s.†

To the same effect is the promise to the people, when the captivity of Jacob’s tents shall be restored, and when David, their king, shall be raised up to the recalled remnant. “Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me.”‡ It would be ridiculous to refer this to children, few or many, delicate or robust, male and female. The only rational and consistent application of which the promise admits, is to the possession, upon the part of children, of their former privileges in union to the church. If any thing were wanting to confirm this exposition,

* Isaiah li. 2.

† Galatians iii. 29.

‡ Jeremiah xxx. 20.

it is found in the latter part of the promise, which indicates the connection between the position of the children and the perpetuity of the church:—“their congregation shall be established before me.”—As the promise is to us and to our children for ever, the blessing,—subject to whatever limitations the sovereign Lord is pleased to fix,—flows in the line of descendants; and when others from abroad are added to the society of the saints, the law operates as “aforetime,” and the church is established. The children, and congregation established in them, are *before the Lord*.

The same blessed hope, founded on the promise, is held out to the heads of families, when individuals, sustaining that relation, are particularly brought before us. The Philippian jailer asks, “What shall I do to be saved?” and he obtains an answer beyond his hope or his apprehension: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*.”* The Jew, who had the living oracles, and to whom pertained the covenants, is simply reminded of a familiar promise; but to the Gentile, ignorant of that covenant, or limiting its provisions to the stock of Israel, the fulness of the blessing is exhibited in the important and gratifying addition to the answer of his question. His question, “What shall I do to be saved?” is answered by these words, “Believe in

* Acts xvi. 30, 31.

the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The gracious addition, in the full spirit of the promise made to Abraham, is, "and thy house." In like manner, when Cornelius, another Gentile, is instructed to send for Peter, it is to hear words whereby he and *all his house* should be saved.* The Antipedobaptist can, on his own theory, attach no definite idea to the expressions,—“thy house,” “all thy house,”—which would not be as correct in relation to the house of a man living and dying in heathenism or atheism.

Into the promise to which Peter refers, and the gracious intimation to the jailer and Cornelius, family baptisms naturally dovetail. And these are, in no case, introduced as extraordinary occurrences. After all that has been said, to invalidate the evidence which they supply, in favour of infant baptism, the expressive fact stands boldly out, that the Spirit, in every case of household baptism, declares the faith of the *head* of the family *alone*. When the jailer and “all his” were baptized, when Lydia and “her house” were admitted to the same privilege, we have very distinct intimation of the faith of the jailer and of Lydia, and of none else.† All that Antipedobaptists have done, to bring the families of the jailer and Lydia into conformity to their rule, is simply adding to the inspired narrative. The record of these two cases,

* Acts xi. 13, 14.

† Acts xvi. 14, 15, 31.

as presented by inspiration, without mutilation or addition, is the record of the faith of a Pedobaptist householder and of its fruits; but assuredly it does not supply a graphic representation of the baptism, so called, of an Antipedobaptist family. But why should there be so much solicitude, upon the part of our opponents to extort, from reluctant or silent witnesses, proof that all the members of those families were grown up and were believers? The most succinct explanation, and I verily believe the true one, is this:—Antipedobaptists are infallibly correct, and, therefore, the members of the families of Lydia, of the jailer, of Stephanas, *must* have been grown to the age of intelligence, and *must* have been believers.*

“The promise is to you and to your children.” In this we have an explanation of the relation which the children of professors, according to Christ’s ordinance, sustain to the church. They are members. I have already adverted to the term *saints*, as a distinguishing title of the members of the church. The members of the churches of Rome, of Colosse, of Philippi, of Ephesus, are addressed as *saints*. The Thessalonians, in both epistles, are addressed simply as a *church*. In the first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle writes “to the church of God,” whose members he sets forth as saints; and the second epistle is inscribed

* Note D.

to "the church of God which is at Corinth, *with all the saints* which are in all Achaia." The addresses prefixed to both epistles identifies saints and members of the churches of God. In no case are any recognized as saints who are not members of the church, and, of course, baptized. But children of a member of the church, without reference to age at all, have the title *saints* given to them. The Spirit calls them *saints*. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy" (saints).* There is no other word in the original, represented in the English translation by *saints*, than the one which is here rendered *holy*. Had the word been uniformly translated *saints* instead of *holy*, or uniformly *holy*, and had *saints* been discontinued, the English reader would have been able, at once, to apprehend the relation to the church indicated by it. It ought to be particularly marked, that the *holiness* (saintship) of the children is the fact from which the apostle deduces the sanctification of the unbelieving partner, and their holiness is not inferred from the sanctification of the parent. If the question were one of legitimacy, either in the sight of God or man, the legitimacy of the marriage or the reality of it, determines the legitimacy of the children. What is remarkable

* 1 Corinthians vii. 14.

in this matter is that "there is something peculiar in the case of the children which rendered their *holiness* more known and obvious than the holiness of the parents."* What that was appears from a consideration of the use of the term applied to them. If they are known as members of the church, then does God own the sanctification of the unbeliever, in the relation he or she sustains to the believing partner, and separation is not demanded of the Christian from an unbelieving husband or wife.

Paul treats, as church members, all the children of church members. Not only does he address them in common with their parents and others, who are called saints in the epistles, and press obedience to their parents by a motive which has no force, except upon the supposition of their being under the bond of the covenant, but he represents them as *in the Lord*. As the phrase, *in the Lord*, is of frequent occurrence, its import and force are more easily grasped. It supposes union to Christ in all to whom it is applied. Apostles had not learned, in contradiction to the fact that Christ and his people constitute one person, to distinguish between Christians in and out of the church. It is the same baptism by which we are baptized into Christ and into his body, the church. "As many of you as have been baptized *into Christ* have put

* Dr. J. W. D. Gray, p. 153.

on Christ. There is neither Jew, nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free.”* “By one Spirit we are all baptized *into one body*, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free.” † To be *in Christ* is to be a Christian and a member of the church. To salute *in the Lord*, is to address as a fellow confessor. To receive *in Christ*, or *in the Lord*, is to welcome as a confessor and as a brother or sister. And when children are required to obey their parents *in the Lord*, ‡ they are called upon at once to acknowledge the union of their parents to the Lord, and their own union to him, and their obligation, in the family, to walk worthy of their holy calling, in dutiful subordination to their fathers and mothers. When parents are required to bring up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” they are called upon not only to exhibit their own subjection to Christ, but to recognize the union of their children to the Lord.

Husbands, who may have unbelieving wives, are not commanded to love them *in the Lord*, but “as Christ loved the church.” § Christ’s object was to save the church, and according as those for whom he gave himself are still in sin, or renewed in the spirit of their minds, so is his dealing with them. So with a husband. He cohabits with an

* Galatians iii. 27, 28.

‡ Ephesians vi. 4.

† 1 Corinthians xii. 13.

§ Ephesians v. 25.

unbelieving wife, and hopes to save her. The believing wife is beloved “both in the flesh and in the Lord.” Wives, as they may have unbelieving husbands, are not commanded to submit themselves unto their husbands *in the Lord*, but “as unto the Lord.”* Christ assigns the place of authority to the husband, and submission to the husband is submission to Christ. And as marriage is an ordinance for man, the submission is irrespective of the husband’s character. “Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.”† But submission to Christ refuses that he can delegate a power to be exercised against himself. When the unbelieving husband is pleased to dwell with his Christian wife, he will be pleased that she should walk after the law of Christ; if otherwise, she is not bound to remain and submit to an unrighteous law. The wife’s subjection is not *servile*.‡ If the wife cannot recognize in a husband a character which he does not sustain, her submission ought to develope her own: “As it is fit *in the Lord*.”§ Masters are not commanded to rule their servants *in the Lord*, as some or all of them might be unbelievers, but to do them all justice, being themselves servants of a heavenly

* Ephesians v. 22.

‡ 1. Corinthians vii. 15.

† 1 Peter iii. 1.

§ Colossians iii. 18 (ΑΥΤΗΝΕΥ).

Master.* Servants are not commanded to be obedient to their masters *in the Lord*, but as wives, to their husbands, in *obedience* to the Lord,†—a rule equally binding, whether their masters are saints or sinners. If, in walking according to the law of the Lord, they incur the displeasure of their masters, as they may not be at liberty to depart, they must hold themselves prepared to take the consequences, for the Lord's sake, with all patience.‡ Whether the Spirit points out the duties of husband or wife, master or servant, they are severally addressed in terms that imply that their co-relatives may or may not be members of Christ; but when parents (and all who are addressed are members of the church), are instructed concerning their children, they are taught to treat them as church members; and the children are taught to treat their parents as church members. Bring up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” “Obey in the Lord.” §

But I may be asked, “Are there not often children in the church whose parents are walking without?” O yes. Every boy and girl, every man and woman, are children of somebody. *All* the members of the church are *children*. When, however, a young person, or any person, makes a profession, he is not accepted as a child, addressed

* Ephesians vi. 9.

† Ephesians vi. 5-8.

‡ 1 Peter ii. 18-24.

§ Note E.

as a child, treated as a child. In fact, the church does not know him as a child at all. Antipedobaptists have *no children* in their churches, have *no parents* in their churches, to be addressed in terms, used by an apostle under the direction of the Spirit.

The argument, by which both parents and children are urged to the discharge of their relative duties, is borrowed from their common relationship to the Head of the church. But to adduce arguments from a consideration of union to Christ, implying an acknowledgment of his authority, in dealing with those who are not of his kingdom, would be profoundly absurd. When Paul remonstrated with the idolaters of Lystra, who, supposing him and Barnabas to be gods, would have sacrificed to them, he appeals not to scripture, nor to the authority of Christ, but reasons with them upon principles recognized by themselves;—the claims of the Creator, and the evidence of those claims supplied by his providential superintendence, in that he gave them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.* In like manner, at Athens, he at once, without the remotest reference to a special revelation, takes hold of the circumstance that they were confessedly worshippers of a God unknown, and introduces the claims of Him who

* Acts xiv. 15-17.

made all things; and as one of their own poets had said, "We are all his offspring,"—he goes on to urge that, as gold and silver and the creations of human ingenuity, could not give existence to man, such things could not be gods and objects of worship.* We can no more press on parents not under the bond of God's covenant, nor upon children not under its bond, the duties devolving upon them severally, by appealing to the authority of the Mediator of that covenant, than derive an argument from scripture in dealing with Lystrians and Athenians. The *baptized* are to be taught to observe all the commandments of Christ. "Baptizing them ——; teaching them ——."

"The promise is to you and to your children." This is a blessing indissolubly bound up in the ordinance of marriage. Godliness has promise of the life that *now is*, no less than of that which *is to come*. † In the life that now is there are many blessings secured by God's covenant; but of all these blessings, there is not one to which the believer will attach so much importance as to his children,—“the heritage of the Lord,”—“his reward.” ‡ Lands, money, social position, honours, all will be cheerfully sacrificed for the safety and welfare of his children. If God has secured to me food, raiment, and personal safety in the hour

* Acts xvii. 22-29.

† 1 Timothy iv. 8.

‡ Psalm cxxvii. 3.

of temptation, and has left a cloud resting on the eternal prospects of my children, affording me no promise, no ground of hope and confidence, that does not as fully belong to ungodliness, I can hardly apprehend a promise blessing the present life. Just in that department of life, in which my superlative temporal blessedness centres, I am delivered over to the most distressing uncertainty. "Come into my house," saith God to the anxious inquirer after the way of life, "and you shall have all your wants supplied, food and raiment, protection and society, cleansing and comfort;" and, at the same time, he sets a flaming sword to guard the door against my little ones, equally in need, and safe and happy only in sharing a father's abundance. This presents such a picture of the administration of the covenant as cannot be reconciled with a "promise of the life that now is."

The family is as much a divine institution as the church is. God has ordained the relations of its members, and prescribed the duties severally belonging to them. If marriage, the basis of the family, contemplated no higher objects than are comprehended in temporal advantages, the matrimonial state is hardly to be sought by one whose highest aim is the glory of God; and the hermit and the priest, the monk and the nun, have chosen wisdom's ways. But this is not the case. The highest aims of the sanctified mind are contem-

plated in it. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled."* It was instituted of God. It belonged to a state of perfect sinlessness. It had special honour given to it by our Lord, when he attended a marriage, and wrought his first miracle in subserviency to the happiness of the bridal. The design of marriage, in its institution, was the increase of the human race,—a pure and happy race. To Adam and his wife, *unfallen*, is the command given, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." † The command is addressed to Noah and his sons in the same, and repeated in nearly the same terms, "Be fruitful and multiply: bring forth abundantly in the earth." ‡ In each case the command is preceded by a blessing. "God blessed them (Adam and Eve); and God said—." "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said—." It would be inexplicable certainly that a holy God should have no reference, in blessing them, to the character of the offspring. In the institution of marriage, the parties are limited to a single companion. The law, in the beginning and ever after,—however contrary may have been the practice even of some good men,—was that every man should have his own wife, and every wife her own husband. § "Did he not make one?" though the residue of the Spirit was with

* Hebrews xiii. 4.

† Genesis i. 28.

‡ Genesis ix. 1, 7.

§ Mark x. 2-9.

God. He might have formed for Adam many wives. "Wherefore one?" To this question we have a very precise answer:—"That he might seek a godly seed," or as the Septuagint reads, "To what other purpose than that God seeks a seed."* The children of marriage, according to God's law, are the children of God, and are so treated, till they cast off the God of their fathers. This in the initiation of the ordinance and onward. The faith of Noah alone is recognized, yet all the children are taken into the ark with him; though one of them afterwards, because of his personal profanity, incurred a horrible curse. And as Noah and his house were saved by water, so are we and ours saved by baptism. † Abraham, and with him his male children, receive the seal of God's covenant, and the children occupy a place in the family, till they develop a character inconsistent with the privilege. ‡ Esau and Jacob, in common, are numbered with the blessed of the Lord, till the former sold his birthright. Slow was Isaac to disinherit him, but, shut up by the Spirit, he must do it. § David has no tears to shed over the dead body of his infant son. || He

* Malachi ii. 15. אֶחָד one, *mas.*, with reference to the creation of *one man*, of whom woman was formed. (Genesis i. 27; ii. 22.)

† 1 Peter iii. 20, 21.

‡ Genesis xxi. 9, 10. Com. Galatians iv. 29, 30.

§ Genesis xxvii. 37. || 2 Samuel xii. 23.

knows he is saved. He is inconsolable for Absalom,* who had rebelliously forsaken his father's house and died in his rebellion. He had no ground of hope concerning his future state.

The house of a faithful man is a part of the household of faith, and is an ark of safety to them, who, being in it, are pleased to remain. The Israelite, in Egypt, sprinkles the blood of the paschal lamb, not upon himself nor on his household individually, but on the lintels and doorposts of his house, and all are safe who abide there, when the angel of destruction passes through the land. Wo to him who leaves the blood-fortified covert.† Inside the house of Rahab, the scarlet cord, which her faith bound in the window, is of as much value to her father and mother, her brothers and sisters, as to herself.‡ And in the house of a believer, baptism is of the same significance and value to all who are of the family as to the head of the family himself.

Upon his professed principles, the Antipedobaptist sees, and can see, no blessing in marriage, that he should look more hopefully upon his children than on "the seed of the adulterer and the whore." Marriage neither is nor can be to him more than a legalised union for convenience, for social gratification, for the propagation of

* 2 Samuel xviii. 33.

† Exodus xii. 22.

‡ Joshua ii. 18, 19.

depravity; and the holiness, ascribed by the Spirit to the children of a believing parent, he stoutly, pertinaciously refuses to own as having any higher character than legitimacy. Between marriage and the kingdom of God he knows no fellowship; and, when all else is under Christ as Head, for the church's sake, marriage is the exception, as its fruit has no more relation to the church than the children of fornication, and there is no promise to the children in common with the believing parent, living under God's ordinance, that elevates them to a more hopeful position than that which is occupied by the children of heathen, or of those that are living without God and in contempt of his ordinance. Family piety, family worship, family recognition of Christ the Lord, must be a rare accident. In fact, the family cannot exist. It is a conglomeration of individuals accidentally thrown together, in which there is neither father nor mother, son nor daughter.*

With the promise of the Abrahamic covenant before us, we can understand the force of the words of Peter, "to your children;" light is thrown upon certain cheering statements of the Old Testament respecting this dispensation; the answer of Paul to the Philippian jailer and the intimation of the angel to Cornelius, connecting their own hopes with the hopes of their households, have real and

* Note F.

cheering significance ; the baptism of families is natural and easy of application ; children, either spoken of or addressed, will be treated as members of the church ; marriage, as an institution of infinite wisdom and benignity, shines forth as a glory in the hand of the Mediator, and is made directly subservient to the interests of his kingdom, in raising up a seed to serve the Lord. Take the promise away and all these things become unintelligible. We must take the Antipedobaptist with us to explain or pervert. He becomes as necessary to us as the priest to the Romanist. The Bible does not help us to shut children out of the church. We must be strengthened by the infallible and authoritative utterance of the Antipedobaptist expositor.

SECTION IV.

Faith and Baptism.

Mark xvi. 16 :—“ *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”

While Dr. Carson views the commission, recorded by the evangelist Matthew, as the impregnable citadel of his system, and all arguments derived from any other source as so many detached forts rising up around it, I am persuaded that an overwhelming majority of those who fill the Antipedo-

baptist churches, are proselyted to their doctrines by these words reported by Mark. The argument is short, easily apprehended, easily recollected, plausible, and well adapted to minds little disposed to reflect, and not accustomed to analyse a logical statement. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Infants cannot believe. Therefore infants should not be baptized." This is the whole argument.

It would be hard to count how many changes have been rung, how many sneers have been uttered, how many reproaches have been bandied, how many exclamations of devout amazement have elevated hands and eyes, with reference to the absurdity and impiety of *unbeliever baptism*,—*baby-sprinkling*. Antipedobaptists dare not say that no man of sense, or education, or the fear of God, has ever sprinkled an unconscious babe, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet, in the fulness of their reliance upon their own judgment and simplicity, they find it hard to reconcile the practice of baby-sprinkling with intellect, and information, and honesty; and their language makes their perplexing difficulty manifest.

Unbeliever sprinkling! Who is ashamed of sprinkling that is not ashamed of the blood of Christ, ashamed of the Spirit of grace!—The blood of Christ is the blood of sprinkling,* and the pro-

* Hebrews xii. 24.

nise of the Spirit is the promise of the sprinkling of clean water.* Who ever advocated unbeliever baptism? Certainly, according to their own symbols, not Presbyterians. Unbelief has something positive about it; whereas the state of infants, in respect to the exercise of faith, simply implies a negation. That persons have not their senses exercised does not imply that they are destitute of senses. The child has all the bodily members of the full grown man, yet may be unable to use any one of them; hands, without being able to handle; feet, without being able to walk; eyes, without being able to see. A child possesses all the intellectual and moral powers of the perfect man, unless the soul is acquired by piecemeal, yet is not able to exercise one of them. And, if we allow the doctrine of original sin, and that children, dying in infancy, go to heaven at all, they must have been made partakers of the divine nature and of the principle of all heavenly graces, though it is impossible they should be unfolded. Mere infants, therefore, are capable of regeneration, and faith, and all that enters into the character of the adult who is made meet for glory. Antipedobaptists treat them all as children of the devil. Because they do not know the fact of their regeneration, they conclude the thing unknown does not exist, and act accordingly. Their practice

* Ezekiel xxxvi. 25.

assumes that whatever exists, in connection with the communication of the divine life, is within the sphere of their intelligence: but we cannot concede this. The child is excluded from the church, not because it is unregenerate, but because they do not know that it is born from above.

Now, do they know that those whom they immerse are believers? They do not. They cannot. We are taunted with unbeliever baptism, because we baptize those of whose renovation we have no assured evidence, and they of necessity do the same thing. It is the merest subterfuge to say, they use all diligence to ascertain the regeneration of the applicants for immersion. They are still obliged to say they do not know it; and, after all, the immersion of a believer is, with them, an accident.

But do Antipedobaptists believe their own doctrine that the faith of the subject is necessary to the scriptural administration of baptism? They do not. The boldest among them will not assert that where apostles failed they always succeed, and that they have never been deceived in the character of those whom they have immersed. If faith is necessary in those who are baptized, to give validity to the ordinance, then those who have been baptized, under a mistaken idea of their regeneration, have not been scripturally baptized at all. When they have discovered that they had

immersed one, who was in the bond of iniquity at the time, would they immerse him again on a renewal of his profession? They would not. Their defence is an evasion,—a credible profession. Their doctrine is, faith a pre-requisite to baptism; and their practice is, a credible profession a pre-requisite. But a profession of faith is not faith. The issue, after all their boastful parade, is this :—

We baptize infants, not knowing them to be renovated and not assuming that knowledge; they immerse adults, not knowing them to be renovated, and yet assuming that knowledge.

The ignorant and offensive charge of unbeliever baptism is self-condemnatory.

We turn to the parents. We, without entering into God's province of searching the heart, accept from them, what alone Antipedobaptists can have, a credible profession of faith in Christ, and of reliance on a promise to themselves and to their children, and we administer baptism to those children; which the parents have as good a warrant to ask for their children, as, being unbaptized, to claim for themselves. Faith in the promise, "to you," is the ground of the baptism of the adult. Faith in the promise, "to your children," is the ground of the baptism of the infants. The baptism of the infant proceeds as fully upon a profession as the baptism of the adult.

The charge of unbeliever baptism, often preferred, more frequently insinuated, against the advocates of infant baptism, is a libel upon the principles of Pedobaptists and the practice founded on them, and constitutes a wretched display of ignorance imposing upon ignorance, and issuing in impenetrable self-righteousness. "We are the men and wisdom will die with us."

Upon the ground of the promise, we as confidently anticipate the salvation of our infants as our own; and know that if the baptized infant is not of God's elect, it shall live to deny his covenant, and go forth or be cast out, from the covenant society, the church.

Shocking! The infant saved by faith!—the faith of the parent!!—one saved by the faith of another!!! Is this shocking? Then it would have shocked the *common* sense of the Antipedobaptist to see our Lord healing the servant of the Roman Centurion, in response to the transcendent faith of his master;*—granting to the faith of the Syrophenician woman, the deliverance of her daughter from the power of the devil;†—accepting the faith of Jairus to the restoration of his dead daughter to life;‡—and, stultifying all his self-righteous thoughts and theory, forgiving the sins of the paralytic, when he saw the faith, not of

* Luke vii. 2-10.

† Matthew xv. 21-28.

‡ Mark v. 22 42.

the invalid, but of the four men who brought him into the Saviour's presence. *

The scriptures exhibit an inseparable connection between faith and baptism, and this connection is not ignored in infant baptism, as I have just shown. But the argument founded on the declaration of our Lord, recorded by Mark, while it fails to prove that the subject of baptism must be the subject of faith, betrays its inconclusiveness by proving more than those who use it mean or desire. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Who shall be saved? The declaration supplies the answer. "He that believeth and is baptized." The argument derived from this text for the exclusion of infants from baptism would make this answer exclusive. Infants cannot believe and be baptized, they cannot, therefore, be saved. The last clause also supplies the means of detecting the defectiveness of the argument against the baptism of infants, which the former clause is supposed to furnish. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Infants cannot believe, therefore, infants shall be damned. The structure and force of the argument against the salvation of infants are precisely the same with the structure and force of that against their baptism. This has often been urged and its point and power have been painfully felt by the enemies of infant baptism; and they have

* Luke v. 18-25.

been driven to the most extravagant positions to reconcile the exclusion of infants from the church with their admission into heaven.

Dr. Carson seems to take for granted, without an attempt at proof of any kind, that infants are saved; while he asserts that "the gospel has nothing to do with infants." His statements are,— "Infants are saved by the death of Christ, but not by the gospel, not by faith.—Infants who enter heaven must be regenerated, but not by the gospel. Infants must be sanctified for heaven, but not through the truth as revealed to man. We know nothing of the means by which God receives sanctified infants; nor have we any business with it."* In reading such a deliverance as this, it naturally occurs to ask, Can we know any thing about the death of Christ, its design, its application, or its effects, but by the scriptures? As he tells us, "We know nothing of the means by which he receives sanctified infants," it would be desirable to learn something of the fact, that they are received. I am disposed to think that if, upon his own principles, he could have furnished satisfactory evidence of the important fact of their salvation, he would have set it forth. It might have excited strong feelings of indignation, and furnished a striking development of the tendency of his principles, to have expressed a doubt of the

* Carson, p. 279.

salvation of infants ; and yet the case of Gentiles, which he introduces as analogous, leaves it exceedingly doubtful whether he was prepared to assert and defend the doctrine that any infants are saved. With respect to the gospel, he represents infants and heathen as occupying the same ground. "The nations that have not heard the gospel cannot be saved by the gospel.—They are not condemned by the gospel; for it is condemnation only to those who do not believe it. To them it is neither a benefit nor an injury. They will be judged, as we are assured in the scriptures, according to the law written on the heart." He leaves this analogous case abruptly. Does he believe that infants will absolutely perish? or does he believe that heathen will be saved? He has, so far as argument or evidence is concerned, left his views entirely undefined, with room for strong suspicion that the scriptures supplied him with no precise evidence that any infant would be saved.

The claim of Dr. Carson's work to special consideration is that, among his professional brethren, it has been received and is appealed to, as a standard exposition and defence of their principles. And as the idea has been often propounded, since its appearance (I never heard it expressed before), that "the gospel has nothing to do with infants," in dealing with the doctor, we are dealing with a living, and acting class. His reasonings on the

passage from the evangelist, of which we are treating, are open to several grave objections.

1. He confounds the medium, by which God usually communicates with the creature, with the word itself. Whatever instrumentality or means, —scripture, or the living voice, or —, God may interpose, whatever method he may adopt for bringing men into communication with himself, by his word alone is any effect of a saving kind wrought in man. The utterance of man, setting forth the truth of God, when God is not apprehended as speaking by him, must be the savour of death unto death. The apostle very briefly but very lucidly presents the distinction adverted to. “When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe.”* The word of God always works effectually. “The word of God is quick and powerful,”† and “shall not return unto” him “void, but it shall accomplish that which” he “pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto” he “sent it.”‡ “By the *word of God* the heavens were of old, and the earth, consisting of land and water.”§ “Through faith, we understand that the worlds were made by the *word of God.*”|| But “if any man be in

* 1 Thessalonians ii. 13.

† Hebrews iv. 12.

‡ Isaiah lv. 11.

§ 2 Peter iii. 5.

|| Hebrews xi. 3.

Christ, there is a new creation.”* If we inquire into the source of spiritual illumination, we are taught that “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness” is the same who shines into the hearts of men, “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” † Regeneration, under whatever aspect it is presented unto us,—a new creation, a vivification, a resurrection,—is according to the will of God and by the living word of God, in every one, adult or infant, who enjoys the blessing. God gives testimony to the word of his grace, exhibited in the scriptures, in the ministry of reconciliation, in the covenant relation subsisting between parent and child, in the various significant ordinances which Christ has instituted.

The infant hears. “Christ loved the church” (comprehending all who are redeemed by him, for it is added), “and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it” (redeemed infants as well as others), “with the washing of water by *the word*; that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” ‡ If, then, children are to be saved at all, they must have been redeemed; if Christ gave himself for them, they must belong to the church;

* 2 Corinthians v. 17.

† 2 Corinthians iv. 6.

‡ Ephesians v. 25-27.

if they belong to the church, they must be sanctified and cleansed by *the word*; and if cleansed by *the word*, with the washing of water. Dr. Carson would seem to have got bewildered, and has written page after page well calculated to bewilder others, while he confounds the *word* with reading or hearing; and always carrying with him the idea, which implies the whole system of which he is the advocate, that children are outside the covenant and outside the church, he never admits a thought of any other means of communication than that by which God comes in contact with the *world*, with them who are without.

Naaman was cured of his leprosy by the *word of God* with the washing of water, and all who are sanctified, and cleansed of their spiritual leprosy, are made whole by *the word* with the washing of water. The word gives effect to the washing of water, and the waters of Abana and Pharpar would avail nothing without it. Infants must be excluded from heaven or they are sanctified by the word, and the denial of their right to the washing of water is the denial of their interest in Christ, and hope in his salvation, who gave himself for his church, that he might cleanse it "with the washing of water by *the word*."

There are here placed before us, *Christ*, the Saviour, whose power to bring into union with himself, to quicken, to purify, is to be traced to

his obedience unto death;—the *persons* to be saved, adults and infants, parents and children, males and females, all who constitute the church;—the *means* of sanctification and cleansing, the word, with the washing of water. Parents and their children are one, united in the covenant, united in the promise. The revelation is to the parent. He hears, believes, appropriates the promise, and receives the washing of water; not as an idle ceremony, but as a medium of blessing not less real than the revelation. Who will say that by the washing of water, the Lord is not brought into communication with the soul of the child? The blessing is not necessarily connected with the external form, in point of fact or in point of time. Although “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,” all who hear are not necessarily saved; and the good seed sown in the heart may lie dormant for an indefinite period, to spring up in due season, and produce an abundant harvest. The mere ritual, in any ordinance, is nothing. The mere application of water, in any form, is not baptism. When the Spirit is present to heal, then are we baptized with that baptism which is followed by a putting on of Christ.

The character of baptism, as a medium of divine communication, and of spiritual blessings, may be illustrated by another ordinance, of which, as it implies activity on the part of the recipient, adults

only are capable of participating,—the Lord's supper. This serves to show that the gospel message is not the only means of addressing men, and prepares the mind for the easy admission that, if one ordinance of a material form, of which adults alone are participators, is the medium of a blessing to them, so an ordinance, of which infants are capable of partaking, as that in which all the subjects are passive, may be a blessing to them. God utters his voice in that ordinance. Christ presents a direct address. The table is the Lord's. Those, who recognize the presence of Christ, who hear *his* voice, who accept *his* invitation, who receive at *his* hand what he alone can give, who eat *his* body broken, and drink *his* blood shed for the remission of sins, are indeed partakers of the Lord's supper. All others, in the feast, are receivers only, of what man can give, of bread and wine. In the ministry of reconciliation also, nothing is apprehended but the word of man, except the Lord give testimony to the word of his grace. Then is that voice heard which awakes the dead; which penetrates to the inner man, to the illumination of the understanding and the renovation of the heart; and without which, there are the sanctification and cleansing neither of the infant nor adult. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."*

* John vi. 63. Note G.

Imagine the Lord Jesus, standing by the grave of Lazarus, or Peter by the bed on which lies the corpse of Tabitha. There is Dr. Carson, attended by his very deferential disciples, his face expressive of utter amazement, anticipating an attempt to hold converse with the dead. With characteristic impatience of any one judging differently of possibilities from himself, he exclaims,—“What! the gospel of life has to do with those that hear it. It is good news; but to the dead it is no news at all. They know nothing of it. None ever can be saved by the good news of life who do not believe them. Consequently by these good news no dead person can be saved. It is expressly with respect to those that hear that the gospel is said to be salvation by faith; and the dead hear, believe, know nothing. He will bring the dead to life surely before he attempt to address him or her.” The Master and the servant alike disregard the impassioned remonstrance. The one calls,—“Lazarus, come forth.” The other says,—“Tabitha, arise.” Lazarus comes forth. Tabitha sits up. The confounded doctor turns to his followers and whispers,—“Who could have thought it?” If the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and hearing, live, is it incredible that infants should hear that voice and live also? I can hold communication neither with the dead nor the infant, therefore the Son of God —— cannot?

This is involved in the reasonings of Antipedobaptists.

It is too much to assume that infants are not saved by the word of God. I can as little understand how the adult hears to the salvation of the soul, as how the infant hears. Lazarus heard the voice of Christ, by the utterance of the lips of the incarnate God. Tabitha heard the voice of Christ, by the utterance of his servant. It is too much to assume that baptism cannot be the channel of a saving benefit. It is an ordinance of Christ. We might as well doubt whether clay was ever a medium of restoration to sight, or spittle the medium of the recovery of speech. One application for restoration to sight is answered by the application of clay, and not without.* A dumb person recovers speech by the application of saliva to his tongue, and not without.†

The Antipedobaptist, who repudiates any relation that baptism has to the salvation of the infant, and makes the words recorded by Mark his authority, shows what reverence he has for the words of Christ, in treating adult baptism as a fruitless form. The passage is very valuable to exclude infants from the church, but valueless to enforce the ordinance on the adult. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," says Christ. "If you believe you will be saved whether you are baptized or not,"

* John ix. 6, 7.

† Mark vii. 33-35.

says the Antipedobaptist; and the rejection of infant baptism leads men lightly to esteem the ordinance in any case. There are *two* things set forth as antecedents of salvation, *Faith* and *Baptism*. If the Antipedobaptist holds that one of these, *Baptism*, can be dispensed with, especially when it would be difficult, or dangerous, or impossible, how can he with justice blame the Pedobaptist, if he should hold that the other, *faith*, can be dispensed with, especially in infancy, when it is impossible. We may be told that baptism, being an external ordinance, and not a saving ordinance, is not of so much importance. But preaching is an external and not a saving ordinance. May we dispense with it? Prayer is an external, and not a saving ordinance. The Lord's supper is an external, and not a saving ordinance. All ordinances are external and not saving. Perhaps we might at once throw them all overboard. The tendency of the system we oppose is first to depreciate all ordinances, and then to cast them off. Baptism is as much a saving ordinance as any other. Every ordinance is valueless if unaccompanied by the Spirit. Every ordinance is saving when accompanied or followed by the Spirit. We do not, however, wish to dispense with either faith or baptism. The sinner hears, believes, and is baptized; but if he is a parent, it is only in that his children are baptized with him, that he is

baptized. God knows nothing of parents without children. Ostriches were to be had in abomination among the children of Israel. "The ostrich is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers."

2. That infants cannot understand, or hear the record God has given of his Son, is a pointless truism, which is iterated and reiterated as if it were an important discovery. "It is good news; but to infants it is no news at all." But when it is said that "the gospel has to do with those who hear it," and the reader or hearer is left to draw the inference that it has to do with none else, we are constrained to object. The gospel is addressed, and can be addressed, to those only who are capable of hearing it; yet it supplies much information respecting those who do not hear it. It informs us, for instance, that "as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."* Of those who sin in the enjoyment of revelation, some may be saved, some condemned; therefore the apostle tells us simply that they are judged. But among those without law, there is no distinction of classes. They all perish. This is according to the gospel which Paul preached. There could not be a more silly and transparent sophism than that which Dr. Carson has per-

* Romans ii. 12.

petrated, in giving a prominence to the incapacity of infants to hear the gospel, and helping or leaving us to infer that the gospel says nothing about them. This, however, is just the main question. If the scripture says any thing respecting infants, with reference to salvation, what is it? If the subject of infant salvation is not introduced, then are we unable to say whether all or any who die in infancy are saved or lost, "nor have we any business with it." It is among the secret things which belong to God, into which it would be at once vain and impertinent to inquire.

There is no doctrine more plainly taught of God than that, under a divine constitution, all are born guilty. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.—Death reigned over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."* We all "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."† "All in Adam die."‡ This proves that all, individually, are obnoxious to a final separation from God; and *justly*, otherwise the constitution under which they are born is unjust, and God its author, knowing what must be the consequences of it under all conditions, is unjust. To allege that justice demands, in behalf of those who die

* Romans v. 12, 14.

† Ephesians ii. 3.

‡ 1 Corinthians xv. 22.

free of actual sin, the interposition of redeeming love, is to represent redemption by the blood of Christ, not as a gracious arrangement flowing from the spontaneous love of God, but an ingenious contrivance to save the justice of God from reasonable question, the government of God from a well-grounded charge of imperfection, and God himself from doing iniquity. "They that be whole need not a physician." * If infants are guilty, in their death there is no injustice. If they are not guilty, they have no need of a crucified redeemer.

These considerations,—if the salvation of infants is asserted, particularly, their salvation by the blood and Spirit of Christ,—demand that some reason, founded on revelation, should be assigned for the assertion. But the attempt to show cause for believing in the salvation of infants would at once expose the unscriptural character of the system maintained by our opponents. The scripture does not furnish a fulcrum upon which faith in the salvation of infants can rest and act, that does not stand within the limits of the church of Christ.

3. Dr. Carson's rule for the interpretation of the passage under consideration is utterly subversive of the argument derived from it in opposition to infant baptism. In the discussion of the latter member of the sentence,—“He that believeth

* Matthew ix. 12.

not shall be damned,"—he proceeds upon the hypothesis that there is no reference to infants, and that, of course, the statement excludes from salvation only those who hear and refuse to submit to the Lord Jesus. This meets the argument derived from it, according to Antipedobaptist exegesis, against infant salvation; but involves the sacrifice of their argument from the former member of the sentence,—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,”—against infant baptism. If there is no reference to infants in the latter member of the sentence, neither is there in the former; and whilst, as is very generally admitted among Pedobaptists, an adult to be baptized must have made a profession of faith, the baptism of infants, as far as the whole passage is concerned, is still an open question. But so long as infants are debarred from baptism because they cannot believe, on the ground of our Lord’s solemn intimation that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” so certainly the want of faith, upon the same authority, excludes from the kingdom of glory: and the assumption that they shall be saved, on any principle or by any means, is contradicted by their whole argument, who deny an infant’s right to a place in the church, from this passage. If infants are to be saved by Christ, their exclusion from baptism and exclusion from glory stand or fall together; and our opponents

may as well brace themselves soon as late for the only alternative that the scripture sets before them, —*infant baptism* or *infant damnation*. If they shrink from such an alternative, let them show us the scripture evidence, consistently with their principles, of infant salvation. It will be a curiosity in dialectics.



CHAP. II.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.



SECTION I.

The Abrahamic Covenant.

Having shown that those passages of the New Testament, upon which Antipedobaptists lay much stress, are inconclusive against infant baptism, entirely consistent with it in all cases, and, in some cases, cannot be explained except upon principles that involve the doctrine, the argument derived from the *constitution of the church*, as a covenant society, remains to be investigated. Upon this point, in fact, the main question of infant baptism turns.

In the very outset, the fixed fact stands prominently out that, under the former dispensation, according to the terms of the Abrahamic covenant,

children were admitted into the fellowship of the church with their fathers, and received the initiatory seal of that covenant; and not children only, but all the permanent members of the believer's household, with the head of the family. Now if it can be shown that the church, a divine institution, on the basis of the covenant made with Abraham, is an indestructible society, still exists, and is perpetuated under this dispensation; under a different regimen and enjoying greater privileges, but still the same, the question of the church membership, and consequently the right of infants to baptism, is settled. Baptism is the initiatory ordinance of the present economy, for "as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."*

The attempt to neutralize the force of the argument, derived from the divinely-regulated practice of the former age, by appealing to the exclusive application of the seal of the covenant then to males, overlooks the fact that extension of privilege does not affect identity of person. Under this dispensation, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female, there is neither bond nor free."† If it had been added, "There is neither parent nor child," there would have been real reason for asserting that, now, children must enter the church independently of filial relationship. Gentiles now enjoy as full privilege in the

* Galatians iii. 27.

† Galatians iii. 28.

church as the descendants of Abraham. Servants do not claim or enjoy a place there in virtue of their relation to believing masters. Wives or maidens do not enter under the shadow of their husbands or fathers. But, so far as the apostle's declaration of the extension of privilege goes, children are brought under the bond of the covenant according to the original law.

The unity of the church under the former and present dispensations is exhibited by the pen of inspiration in a manner so lucid, that it might seem to allow no room for doubt, and to supersede all argumentation, while the form in which the fact is put forward implies an enlargement of privilege in these last days.

The church under the former economy is represented as a *minor*, and under the present dispensation, as of *full age*. The idea of supposing a person to have lost his identity, by passing the line ordained to separate the periods of minority and majority, would not be more absurd than to hold the church, before and after the advent of Christ, two distinct covenant societies. Hear the apostle of the Gentiles. "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father; even so we, *when we were children*, were in bondage under the elements of the world; but when the fulness

of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive *the adoption of sons.*”*

It is not uncommon to represent the Old Testament church as a *typical* society or people. So long as this idea has possession of the mind, it is no wonder that there should be perplexing difficulties in realizing the identity of Jew and Christian, or, to escape those difficulties, the adoption of unscriptural views of their relation to each other. There is no foundation for the assumption (it is nothing more) that the Israelites or Jews were a *typical* people. Their institutes, tabernacle and temple, sacrifices and offerings, inheritance and festivals, priests and prophets, were typical; but the *people* were not. They were *the* people of God. Let us attend to the terms in which God speaks of Israel, as a people in covenant with himself. “Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”† “If ye will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”‡ No stronger or

* Galatians iv. 1-5. † Deuteronomy vii. 6.

‡ Exodus xix. 5, 6.

more definite language could be employed. In fact, the terms used to describe the children of God under the present dispensation are nearly identical, if not borrowed from the passages already cited. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." * This idea shall be more fully developed in the progress of the discussion.

If the epithet *everlasting* † had never been applied to the covenant of circumcision, the object contemplated in it would establish its perpetuity. "Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of *many nations*.—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." ‡ Who will question the fidelity and accuracy of an apostolic and inspired interpretation of the promise, "A father of many nations have I made thee?" Paul represents this as Abraham's security for the inheritance of the world, and recognizes its fulfilment in the introduction of the Gentiles into the possession of the blessings of the covenant. "The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.—It is of faith, that it might be by

* 1 Peter ii. 9.

† Genesis xvii. 7, 13, 19.

‡ Genesis xvii. 4, 7.

grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to *all the seed* ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham ; who is the father of us all, as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations," &c.* The argument for the community of blessings of Jew and Gentile, and their common interest in the covenant is, therefore, appropriately introduced by the assertion of their fellowship in the God of the covenant. "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes; of the Gentiles also." †

Again ; the covenant made with Abraham was renewed unto Isaac, in nearly the original terms, with a recognition of the oath by which it was ratified. "I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." ‡ On Jacob the same blessing was conferred, in the words following:—"I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I

* Romans iv. 13, 16, 17.

† Romans iii. 29.

‡ Genesis xxvi. 3, 4.

gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land."*

At the same time that the promise is made, the name of *Israel* is given to Jacob, a name by which his seed should ever after be known. Under this dispensation, the heirs of promise are called, by the Spirit, the "Israel of God." †

After this, the covenant was not renewed with any one individual. With relation to the covenant, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are *the fathers*. No others. Our God is the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. Of no other in particular. The covenant, from the time of Jacob, by a divine disposition, takes the character of a *law* which was neither to be abrogated nor modified. That covenant, according to which the children are introduced into the church with faithful parents, is placed in the hands of every believer, that he may rest upon its provisions and plead its promises. "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations: which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a *law*, to *Israel* for an everlasting covenant." ‡ The *oath* is as good to us who believe, and shall be to all believers to the end of time, as it was to Abraham, or to Isaac. "When God

* Genesis xxxv. 11, 12.

† Galatians vi. 16.

‡ Psalm cv. 8-10.

made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself;—Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto *the heirs of promise* the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, *we might have a strong consolation*, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”* And when, in language borrowed from the existing economy, the more glorious privileges of this dispensation, arising out of the greater light shed on the provisions of the “everlasting covenant,” and the fuller development of its blessings, are exhibited by the pen of inspiration, and, in particular, the extension of those privileges to the Gentile nations, we are not allowed to forget that we are still to enjoy the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. The stranger shall inherit, in common with ancient Israel, the land of promise. “So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the *strangers* that sojourn among you, which *shall beget children* among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have *inheritance with you* among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger

* Hebrews -vi. 13, 17, 18.

sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord God.”* This is a very remarkable passage, and deserves a passing exposition. It shows that (1), under the present dispensation, the stranger enjoys the *same* inheritance secured by covenant to ancient Israel; that (2), no distinction is to be recognized between the stranger and the native Israelite; that (3), the *children* of the stranger occupy the same position with the children of the covenant people of God. The introduction of a reference to the children of the stranger would be very *unintelligible*, except upon the supposition that they come under the bond of the covenant, which secures the inheritance, with their parents; —and very *unnecessary*, except to anticipate an objection to the perpetuity of the connection, ordained of God, under the patriarchal and Mosaic regimen, between the fathers and their seed. The prophet may have known nothing about it, but the Spirit, by whom he was directed, knew that there should arise a class of men, who would very boldly and very pertinaciously claim the authority of God and the interests of godliness for delivering up their children to uncovenanted mercy.

SECTION II.

The Church is One Family.

In conformity at once with the spirit and letter of the covenant, the scripture represents the church,

* Ezekiel xlvii. 21-23.

after the day of Pentecost, as one *family* with the church of the Old Testament. Believers are still the seed of Abraham. "If ye be *Christ's*, then are ye Abraham's seed."* This is put in very definite and forcible language by the apostle when he says,—“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to *seeds*, as of many; but as of one, and to thy *seed*, which is Christ.”† So our personal interest in the promises depends upon our union to Him to whom primarily and principally the promises were made. “They which be *of faith* are blessed with faithful Abraham.” And again, “Christ hath redeemed us—that *the blessing of Abraham* might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the *Spirit* through faith.”‡ The blessing of Abraham is the *Spirit*.

The scripture recognizes no *covenant* seed in the *former* dispensation, that is not identical with the seed in the *present* dispensation. The error of the Antipedobaptists, and that which introduces endless confusion into all their reasonings on this subject, arises out of their virtual rejection of the inspired interpretation of the objects of the promise, and their assumption of a two-fold seed, contemplated in the covenant, a literal and a spiritual, or that there are two covenants, and

* Galatians iii. 29.

† Galatians iii. 16.

‡ Galatians iii. 9, 13, 14.

consequently two seeds. For the temporal covenant, or the temporal aspect of the covenant, and the literal or natural children of the covenant, they are wholly responsible. Of these the scripture knows nothing. The natural seed of Abraham, *as such*, are not *the* seed to whom the promises were made. No one descendant of Abraham is, by virtue of his natural relationship to him, entitled to claim upon the ground of the covenant. He must be *circumcised*. "The uncircumcised manchild, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."* The Jew was taught not to regard his distinguishing designation as expressive of descent, but of federal relationship. When the decree of Ahasuerus for the extermination of the Jews was checkmated, and the light of an unclouded sun broke forth on an afflicted people, we read that "many of the people of the land *became Jews*; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them."† This statement would be grossly absurd, if by Jew is meant a descendant of Abraham. In that sense, a man must be *born* a Jew, but cannot *become one*. But, if the term Jew is understood to be expressive of professional position, then a man may become a Jew as one may become a Christian. With this coincides the following testimony; "He is not a Jew which

* Genesis xvii. 14.

† Esther viii. 17.

is one outwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.”* And when God intimated to Abraham that his seed should be reckoned in the line of Isaac,† he taught him, and his descendants, and all others who read, that “they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” ‡

There is one passage which sets in the clearest light the fact, that the natural seed of Abraham were not a covenant seed at all; that believers, under this dispensation, sustain precisely the same relation to Abraham that the covenant seed of old did; and that the sign of the covenant secured nothing to the unbeliever, but is the seal of spiritual blessings. Antipedobaptists know well that if it can be shown, that the natural descendants of Abraham, by the mere circumstance of birth, were not heirs in any sense; that circumcision sealed no blessing to them as descendants; that they were, by it, introduced into that federal relation to God, and into the possession of those privileges through which God is pleased to impart saving benefits to the elect, according to his purpose; and that we, as Isaac was, are the children of promise; the argument for infant incorporation with the church is irresistible, and opposition to it

* Romans ii. 28, 29.

† Genesis xxi. 12.

‡ Romans ix. 8.

involves the condemnation of the circumcision of infants. For this reason, they labour to teach, contrary to all scripture testimony, that there were two covenant seeds, one carnal and another spiritual—possessing, by covenant, different blessings, carnal and spiritual; and that circumcision not only sealed temporal blessings, but secured them. Of whom was Abraham constituted the father? Of what was circumcision the seal? An apostle,—the *Spirit* shall answer. “He (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.”* From this we learn the following particulars. 1. Under the former dispensation, circumcision was imperative. “Not of the circumcision only.” 2. Circumcision does not constitute the descendants of Abraham *sons*, except they are *partakers of his faith*. 3. He is the father of *believers*, under this dispensation, who neither are nor ought to be circumcised. There is no difference. Circumcision does not make them children of Abraham

* Romans iv. 11, 12.

who are not subjects of his faith; and uncircumcision does not exclude them from his family who are of his faith. "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation ;*—but faith which worketh by love ; †—but keeping of the commandments of God." ‡ 4. Circumcision was a seal, not of *Abraham's* righteousness, but of *the righteousness of faith*. 5. The righteousness of which it was a seal was not the righteousness of *Abraham's personal* faith, but of *the faith* which was in him in his uncircumcision. The form of expression,— "the faith which he had being uncircumcised,"— is not accidental. The same construction is used in both of the verses cited.

The righteousness here brought before us is not the righteousness of Abraham, or of Paul, or of any one individual. This righteousness is common to all justified persons. As it was unto and upon Abraham through faith, so it is unto and upon *all* them that believe. It is "the righteousness of God." § The faith also, here introduced, is a principle common to Abraham and all who are accepted before God, producing in all like effects in heart and life. "It (faith) was imputed unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him ; but

* Galatians vi. 15.

† Galatians v. 6.

‡ 1 Corinthians vii. 19.

§ Romans iii. 22.

for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead." *

Circumcision is a seal, then, in testimony of the faith and righteousness neither of Abraham nor of any one else, but for the confirmation of the promise that, as Abraham believed God and his faith was imputed to him for righteousness, so it shall be with any other. *He that believeth shall be justified*, whether Jew or Gentile, whether bond or free. *The seal* derived none of its significance from Abraham's faith, nor does it lose its significance from the unbelief of the subject of it. Indeed the significance of any divine ordinance is independent of the character of the receiver or observer. It is *Anti-christian* to bind together the ordinance of God, as to its import, and the mental state of those who are parties to its observance.

As the church, under both dispensations, constitutes one *family*, so that family has one *inheritance*. Palestine, the inheritance secured by covenant to Abraham and his seed! Palestine, the hope and rest of the ancient saint!! If Joshua gave them rest, why does David, a long time after, speak of another day? † Palestine is no more the inheritance, secured to the ancient Israel, than was the sacrifice of a slain beast, offered on the altar,—of which it was said, that it

* Romans iv. 22-24.

† Hebrews iv. 8.

would be *accepted* for the transgressor, to *make atonement* for him, and that *his sin should be forgiven*,*—the object of the believer's reliance for acceptance before God. The latter was the type of a better sacrifice; the former was the type of a better inheritance. As the atonement made by Christ is set forth in language borrowed from the ritual sacrifice, so the ultimate blessedness of God's people is described in terms borrowed from the temporal possession of Canaan. The faith of the Old Testament saint contemplated, through the legal sacrifice, an atonement of substantial value which God would provide. His faith saw, in the land of Canaan, the shadow of a spiritual inheritance which God would bestow. With the means of far less clear and definite views than we have, the true servants of God of old relied upon the same sacrifice, and anticipated the same inheritance that we do.

“If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise.*” † What promise? The same made to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob. There is no other. The *letter* of that promise never lifts the aspirations of hope above the land reaching from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates. Did Abraham inherit the land of Canaan? God had said, “I will give it unto *thee.*” ‡ “He gave him none

* Leviticus i. 4; iv. 20, 26, 31.

† Galatians iii. 29.

‡ Genesis xiii. 17.

inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on." * Yet the promise, ratified by the oath of him who cannot lie, must stand. If Abraham had had no more enlarged and accurate views of the covenant and its promises than Antipedobaptists, he must have been grievously disappointed, after having left his country, his kindred, and his father's house, to find himself a houseless wanderer in the very land that God had promised to *him*, without inheriting as much as to set his foot on, and under a necessity of purchasing a place of sepulture for the wife of his youth, and mother of his son Isaac. He must have concluded, either that he had been under some ruinous delusion in supposing that God had spoken to him, or that he had entirely misapprehended the import of the promises, or that God's faithfulness had failed. But he was satisfied; and eventually, with Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Sarah, died, his faith unwavering. "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." † Abraham, then, dying in *faith*, expected still to have the promise fulfilled, "I will give it unto *thee*." Of course he expected "a better country, that is an heavenly,"—the only object of his desire,—and a city prepared of God. His faith,

* Acts vii. 5.

† Hebrews xi. 13.

like the faith of those of the last days, grasped “an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven” * for him,—a city which was “to come,” having “foundations, whose builder and maker is God,—the heavenly Jerusalem.” † David also, a king reigning in Jerusalem, the capital of the land of promise, was taught by the Spirit to say,—“I am a stranger with thee, a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” ‡

Such is the *seed* contemplated, such is the *inheritance* promised, in the covenant, in which we, as of the same family, have the same interest as the descendants of Abraham had in former days; and under the bond of which, by the express command of God, children are brought with their fathers. The seal of the covenant was impressed on fathers and sons with them, in faith and hope rising above things seen and temporal, as faith and hope ever must do, to things unseen and eternal.

SECTION III.

The Church is one Commonwealth.

The church is presented to us in scripture under another emblem, according to which we are taught its identity in both dispensations. Israel is described as a *state* or *commonwealth*. This

* 1 Peter i. 4.

† Hebrews xi. 10, 16.

‡ Psalm xxxix. 12.

designation is sufficiently perspicuous. A commonwealth is a corporate body existing from age to age. The individuals who compose it, at any particular time, may all pass away, and their immediate descendants, and very remote posterity, yet the commonwealth remains. In Britain, since the reign of King John, in the thirteenth century, the houses of Plantagenet, of Tudor, of Stuart, have passed away, and given place to the house of Brunswick; the revolutionary wars of the Roses and of the Republic, the Restoration, and the Revolution, have introduced important and permanent changes in the structure and aspect of society; serfs have been elevated to the dignity of freemen, and commoners take position among nobles; Ireland and Scotland have been incorporated with England, and are subject to the same sovereign and the same legislature; yet Britain remains the same state; *magna charta* is appealed to, as the basis of British freedom, with the same confidence as if it were an enactment of yesterday, by all, thus showing the identity of the present British empire with the England of six hundred years ago. The recognition of a nation as a moral agent, possessing identity from one generation to another, is no novel or doubtful doctrine. Amalek, in the reign of Saul, the first king of Israel, is treated as the same Amalek that "laid wait for Israel in the way when he came up from Egypt."*

* 1 Samuel xv. 2, 3.

Israel, in the days of Josiah and of his sons, the last kings of Judah, is addressed as the same people, who traversed the wilderness under the direction of Moses ;” * all the changes through which the nation had passed notwithstanding.

The children, from their earliest days, are integral parts of every commonwealth, are under the protection of the same laws, of which they can, in their infantile state, know nothing ; are heirs of all corporate privileges and immunities with their fathers, which, in the mean time, they can neither understand nor appreciate ; and retain, in all its integrity, their legal position, unless they forfeit their franchises by rebellion, or renounce them by expatriation. Whatever changes may be made in the laws which regulate the social state, whatever revolutions may take place, enlarging or limiting the privileges of the people, the members of the body politic are the same.

To the commonwealth of Israel belonged “the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.” † In their heathen state, the Ephesians were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” ‡ The reception of the gospel introduced

* Jeremiah ii. 2.

† Romans ix. 4.

‡ Ephesians ii. 12.

them into the covenant privileges of God's ancient people, by their incorporation with *the commonwealth*, existing before under a divine constitution. They "are no more strangers and foreigners, but *fellow-citizens* with the saints, and of the household of God." *

This great revolution is brought about, not by a dissolution of the existing covenant society, but by the removal of *a middle wall of partition*, that before had formed an impassable barrier to the admission of the Gentiles to an equal place with ancient Israel. This middle wall was the ceremonial law, which is designated "the law of commandments contained in *ordinances*," inasmuch as its enactments were not, like *moral* precepts, founded in the *nature* of God, and the relation of the Creator to the creature, and, of course, admitting of no change; but having its origin in the will of the Lawgiver, admitting of modification or abrogation at pleasure, according to its original intention. The ceremonial institute, having one tabernacle or temple, one altar and a hereditary priesthood, and requiring the people from all parts of the land, to attend at one place, three times every year, to keep their solemn feasts, was obviously incompatible with the universal expansion of the service of Jehovah. The cumbersome services of the Mosaic ritual are superseded

* Ephesians ii. 19.

by the appearance of Christ, and that one sacrifice by which he has for ever perfected them that are sanctified. There is a change of the priesthood, and, consequently, there is a change of the law. * This insuperable obstacle to the union of Jew and Gentile, this occasion of alienation, being removed, the latter enters in and becomes, in Jesus who abolished the enmity, one with the Jew. †

Here, indeed, is a new thing in the earth, Gentiles and Jews under the bond of the same covenant, members of one body, and, by one Spirit, approaching one Father. One may say, *Abba*, the other, *Father*. Both recognize the same relation, and give expression to the same confidence. This is the glorious consummation foretold by the prophet. ‡ Sarah,—that Sarah whose Maker is her husband, her Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel,—is directed, not to pull down her tent that another may be erected; not to scatter abroad her household that another family may be constituted, excluding many who had lived peaceably under her supervision; but to prepare for an addition to her family, from all the nations of the earth. “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation; 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,

* Hebrews vii. 12.

† Ephesians ii. 15.

‡ Isaiah liv.

and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." And again: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." Those who now constitute the church *inherit* the Gentiles. Our attention is fixed upon her children, not as those who are instructed, but whom the Lord *promises* to teach. According to Antipedobaptist principles, the seed of Sarah *inherit* nothing. They have a common origin with the nations, and have no antecedent existence. There are no children to be taught, as their place in the church presupposes their previous instruction of the Lord.

As the apostle, writing to the churches of Galatia, informs us that the history of Abraham's family is treated by Isaiah as an allegory, the enemies of infant baptism, well aware that the identity of the church, under all changes of administration, is fatal to their plea, would have Christians believe that the Jews were Hagar and her children, that Christians are Sarah and her children;—that the former were cast out to give place to the latter. Facts, plain and obvious facts, are disregarded for the sake of a theory. The Jews, as such, were not cast out. Hear the word of inspiration. "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." "If *some* branches were broken off" (and these were not infants, but active

enemies of the righteous One), the tree still stood. When Gentiles are brought to God, it is by being grafted into that tree, from which some natural branches were broken off. When Israel shall return, they are grafted into the same stock,—their own olive-tree, which has neither been cut down nor has fallen by decay.* Antipedobaptists would cast out, and professionally do cast out, Sarah herself. Sarah was in Abraham's family before Hagar; was mistress there, while Hagar was there. It is Sarah that demands the expulsion of Hagar. Her voice is not the voice of the irritated and jealous woman, but the voice of God.† It is true Hagar was in Abraham's household and bare Ishmael, but Hagar and Ishmael did not constitute the household; and their place there depended upon their subordination to the laws of the establishment, in which Sarah ruled, whose child was as much a *child of promise*, being an infant, as ever he was afterward.‡ During the whole of the former dispensation, the children of the bondwoman were in the house, and the allegory seems to indicate that they would be most numerous. But the children of the bondwoman are not the only unregenerate persons. There sprang from Isaac a profane Esau, who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright. Before the

* Romans xi. 1, 2, 17, 24.

† Galatians iv. 30.

‡ Galatians iv. 21-31.

apostles left the world, they had to reprove, in the New Testament churches, a disposition to “turn back to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage,”* and taught the churches to take good heed, “Lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau.” †

Antipedobaptists charge us with corrupting the church of Christ, by bringing infants into it, all of whom they assume to be unregenerate. Are they able to keep unregenerate persons out of *their* churches? They dare not say so. The self-righteous and self-sufficient may applaud the declaration that “of all evangelical denominations, they are the most evangelical, and of all protestant denominations, they are the most protestant;” yet it may be presumed, that the most intelligent and worthy among them would hesitate to affirm, that there are fewer unregenerate in their churches than in our congregations, children and all.

SECTION IV.

The New Covenant.

Antipedobaptists take the new covenant, introduced by Jeremiah, and quoted by Paul, to be the charter of a new society, entirely independent of

* Galatians iv. 9.

† Hebrews xii. 16.

the church founded on the Abrahamic covenant ; and hold that this society is composed of regenerate persons alone to the exclusion of all infants, infants of professors as well as of others. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that (when) I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that (when) I took them by the hand to bring (lead) them out of the land of Egypt ; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them (because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not), saith the Lord. But (for) this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts (laws into their mind), and write it (them) in their hearts ; and (I) will be their (to them a) God, and they shall be my (to me a) people. And they shall no more (not) teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord ; for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them : for I will forgive their iniquity (be merciful to their unrighteousness), and I will remember their sin (sins and iniquities) no more.”* Upon this passage Dr. Carson remarks :—“ Here we see that all who are included in this covenant, have the laws

* Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34. Compare Hebrews viii. 8-12.

of God put into their mind, and written on their heart, by himself. Can this be said of infants? The subjects of this covenant know the Lord—all of them—even the least of them. This surely cannot include infants, who know nothing. Is there not a necessity to teach children, as soon as they are capable of instruction, to know the Lord? Are any children found who need not this instruction? If not, there are no infants in this covenant.”*

There is the appearance of disingenuousness in the introduction of the word “*least*” in such a manner, as to leave the impression that the reference is to age and stature. This application would quadrate with the exigencies of the system for which the Doctor, in language so absolute and strong, contends. It happens, however, to be well known that, in the scriptures, the relative terms *least* and *greatest* are *never* used to denote *stature* but position in society,—*rank*. The *least* and *greatest* are the *lowest* and *highest* in social station. Let that pass.

In Dr. Carson’s reasoning, the very terms of the covenant are overlooked. Those who are under its bond are not those who have been taught, but who are looking for instruction, or whose instruction we expect, according to the promise. That no one needs to say to another, “Know the Lord,” is the realized result of this instruction. If there

* Carson, p. 347.

are no infants in the covenant because they require to be taught, then there is not an individual in the world in the covenant, because there is not one who does not need instruction. The members of the church need it, and none more than the members of Antipedobaptist churches. When you have the topic of baptism, upon which "the *least* of them" can talk very glibly, all that any of them know, you have arrived very generally at the end of their theology. The most intelligent among them are such as they have seduced from Pedobaptist churches; and they know it.

But the strangest thing of all is that, instead of recognizing the instruction imparted by parents and others as the means by which God fulfils his promise, the covenant is treated as a pledge of an inspiration that entirely supersedes the use of all means. "All who are included in this covenant have the laws of God put into their mind, and written on their heart, *by himself*." When all who need instruction are excluded, then, by unavoidable consequence, all whose province it is to impart instruction as a class are excluded, and a ministry, under this dispensation, is at an end.

The leading fact, and one which is entirely blinked by Dr. Carson and his brethren, in all their discussions of the new covenant, is that, whatever is its import, it is made with the same people that trace their interest in the promises to their federal

relation to Abraham;—the same people, with whose fathers God made a covenant when he brought them out of Egypt, and to whom all antecedent covenants belonged,—“the house of Israel.” Put what interpretation we may upon the promises of the covenant, they are not given to another people, but to that people which was composed, by divine prescription, not exclusively of individuals, but of families, and stood before the altar of God,—“the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.” Neither Pedobaptist nor Antipedobaptist, therefore, have any share in the promised blessings of the covenant, but in union to that spiritual commonwealth, which is as old as Abraham, and designated the *seed*, the *elect*, *Israel*, the *Jews*, the *people* of God.

The God of Israel imperatively requires that all who take hold of his covenant be identified with his people, and treats all who refuse connection with them, as refusing union with himself. The law is universal, that all who believe are added to the church. The baptism by which we are baptized into *Christ* brings us into union with his *body*. Members of *Christ*, we are members one of another. Look at the Samaritans. They had learned the law of Moses, they had their temple, professed to worship the same God with the Jews, called Jacob their father, were living in expectation of the coming of the Messiah,—the *Christ* ;

yet our Lord denounces their worship, declaring to the woman of Samaria, with whom he talked at Jacob's well, "Ye worship ye know not what."* This is a very remarkable assertion, yet most precise and absolute. What was wanting to a people worshipping the same God, recognizing the same law, observing the same rites, and cherishing the same blessed hope with the Israelite? We would be ready to say, "Nothing." Modern liberality would say, "All wherein they differed was of minor consequence," and, it is to be feared, would pronounce the Christ, on account of his severe judgment, a *bigot*. What does the Saviour find wanting in the Samaritan? A recognition of God in his covenant character, and identification with that ancient society, which God had ordained and organized to comprehend, cultivate, and prepare for glory, his accepted worshippers. He furnishes a very brief but definite explanation of his strong condemnatory sentence. The church is no mere abstraction, but a substantial, palpable, limited fact. "We know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews."

Surely Dr. Carson must have forgotten that the Lord uttered these words, when he indulges in the following tirade:—"Was the church into which its members were born, the same with the church whose members must be born from above? Was

* Ezra iv. 2; John iv. 6-25.

the church that admitted any stranger to its pass-over, without any condition of faith or character, merely on complying with a certain regulation that gave circumcision to their males, the same with the church that requires faith and true holiness in all who enjoy its ordinances? Was the church that contained the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Sadducees,—the most cruel, determined, open and malignant enemies of Christ,—the same with that church into which such persons could not enter without a spiritual birth? The church of Israel was the nation of Israel, and as a whole could no more be called the church of Christ, in the sense of that phrase in the New Testament, than the nation of England can be called the church of Christ.—The very constitution of the Jewish church recognized the membership of carnal persons.*—It did not make the distinction between those born after the flesh, and those born after the Spirit.—On the other hand, the constitution of the churches of Christ rejects such persons, and provides for their expulsion.—The distinction between the two cases is as wide as the distance between earth and heaven.—The one, by its constitution, included carnal members; the other, by its constitution, admits spiritual members only.” †

This quotation is long, but no part of it could be well omitted. It makes one shudder to contemplate

* Note H.

† Carson, pp. 273, 274.

the picture here presented of the Jewish church. The very worst features of an inconsistent and a corrupt age are unequivocally referred to a constitution of which God was the framer. But the representation is most unjust,—unjust to the Holy One. Not to dwell on every expression,—

It is not true that members were *born* into the Jewish church. The children of an Israelite were covered by the covenant, and, being *circumcised*, not otherwise, are members of the church. Such is the Presbyterian doctrine of infant baptism. “Infants descended from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within *the covenant*, and to be baptized.”*

It is not true that any stranger was admitted to the passover, without any condition of faith and character. If the Jewish church cannot be the same with the christian church, because some found admittance by making a hypocritical profession,—because it contained Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, then there is not an Antipedobaptist church in the world that is, even by the doctor’s criterion, a christian church. Then there never was a christian church planted by the apostles. In the view of the state of the membership of the primitive churches presented in the New Testament, the most self-glorifying minister, among

* Larger Catechism, Question 166.

those who preach infant exclusion, will not pretend to say, that there is one of their churches which does not contain hypocrites,—enemies of Christ; and who are believed to be enemies; but who furnish no such evidence of carnality as admits of their being judicially excluded.

It is not true that the nation of Israel, as a whole, could no more be called the church of Christ, than the nation of England. What mystic idea Dr. Carson attached to the denomination, *Church of Christ*, covered by the modifying clause, “in the sense of that phrase in the New Testament,” behind which he might escape the weapon of an adversary, I know not. To me the phrase conveys the idea of a people, whether few or many, called of God out of the world, brought under a covenant bond, whom He has taken to himself for a people, and to whom he is a God. Now when God had taken the nation of Israel from the midst of another nation, very formally did he enter into covenant with them. Moses “laid before their (the elders’) faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, ‘All that the Lord hath spoken will we do.’ And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.” Upon the footing of this federal transaction, they are to God “an holy nation.”* Moses and Carson

* Exodus xix. 6–8.

differ widely in their estimate of Israel “*as a whole.*” “Consider that this *nation* is thy people,” are the words of Moses.* David differs from Carson on the same point. “What one *nation* in the earth is like thy people, like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself?—Thou hast *confirmed* to thyself thy people Israel, to be a people unto thee *for ever*: and thou, Lord, art become *their God.*” † The Spirit teaches us to pray, “Remember me, O Lord, with the favour of thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of *thy nation*, that I may glory with *thine inheritance.*” ‡ Which are we to follow? The judgment of *Dr. Carson*, or of the *Spirit of God*, speaking in Moses and in David? The Antipedobaptist system demands that the nation of Israel, though *chosen* of God, *called* of God, *constituted* of God, the *people* of God, should yet be a “kingdom of this world.” And it is so denominated in the sentence immediately following the admission that “both (Old and New Testament churches) are called the kingdom of God,” with the saving clause, “but in a different sense.” §

As the Spirit of God has not told us that the denomination, *kingdom of God*, is used in different senses, when applied to the church before and

* Exodus xxxiii, 13.

‡ Psalm cvi. 4, 5.

† 2 Samuel vii. 23, 24.

§ Carson, 375.

after the appearance of Christ, it may be safely added, *it is not true* that the constitutions of the Israelitish and Christian churches are as widely different as heaven and earth are distant.

It is not true that the church under the former economy made no distinction between those born after the flesh, and those born after the Spirit; and made no provision for the expulsion of carnal men. Their rule of judgment was not that adopted by Antipedobaptists. They might not invade the province of Him who claims to be exclusively the Searcher of hearts. They were contented to follow a rule within their sphere; accept them as righteous before God who walk “in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless;” and recognize the criterion so explicitly enunciated by the Saviour, —“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”* The distinction between the carnal and the spiritual was introduced to their notice, in the very commencement of their federal existence. In Abraham’s family the distinction was recognized and acted upon; in the family of Isaac, it was recognized and acted upon; and, throughout their whole history, there is a broad and black line marking off the sons of Belial from the sons of God.

When the people approach the Lord according to his ordinance; when the stranger is circumcised,

* John xv. 14.

and so takes hold of God's covenant of promise, this token of faith in the God of Israel is joyfully accepted, as baptism is by the apostles, the pledge of the faith and repentance of them who receive it. When one sins, whether the ruler, the priest, or one of the common people, his sacrifice is the expression of his conviction, of his repentance, of his apprehension of the atonement provided by a covenant-God,—an expression not less full and satisfactory than the verbal confession of the erring christian with a corresponding change of conduct;—*more* satisfactory, for the confession of the latter *costs* him nothing but the utterance of so many words.

No provision for the expulsion of those who give no evidence of faith in God! "I would they were even *cut off*' which trouble you,"* says Paul to the churches of Galatia. This is the New Testament remedy against offenders, and for their reformation. Was there no cutting off in Israel? This is the remedy against manifest contempt of God in Israel. "The uncircumcised man-child—shall be *cut off*' from his people; he hath broken my covenant."† This is a specimen of the *foolishness* of God. He considers a child of over eight days old might belong to his people, might break a covenant, might be cut off as an offender. Antipedobaptists know better than to countenance

* Galatians v. 12.

† Genesis xvii. 14.

principles so absurd and ridiculous. “Whosoever eateth that which is leavened” (during the seven days of unleavened bread), “even that soul shall be *cut off*” from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.”* This is to be the memorial of their notable deliverance in and from Egypt, which cannot be neglected with impunity. As they are a holy people, and the obligation to be holy is enforced by the highest of all considerations,—the same consideration brought before the church now, †—the holiness of God,—no man can be recognized as a member of the congregation of Israel, and enjoy the fellowship of the sanctuary, who comes before God’s altar, regardless of purity from all pollution. God “will be sanctified in them that come nigh” him; ‡ therefore must the people sanctify themselves. § That relative and external holiness was required is without doubt; but the man must have taken leave of common sense or common honesty, who affirms that no more was required than ceremonial purity, as the holiness of God is to be the model of theirs. The obligation of Israel was as broad as ours is,—in fact the same. *We* are not warranted to overlook external holiness. Our bodies are His as well as our spirits. “I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your *bodies* a

* Exodus xii. 19.

‡ Leviticus x. 3.

† 1 Peter i. 15, 16.

§ Leviticus xi. 44.

living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,—your reasonable service.”* “The soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, that pertain unto the Lord, *having his uncleanness upon him*, even that soul shall be *cut off* from his people. Moreover, the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, the uncleanness of man, or an unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, which pertain unto the Lord, even that soul shall be *cut off* from his people.”†

So far is it from being true that provision for the expulsion of the “abominable and disobedient,” is peculiar to this dispensation, various other sins are to be visited by deprivation of privilege, or *cutting off*. In almost all these cases, the way is open for return to the altar and to the communion of the saints. But there is one case in which no door is left open, by which the transgressor may again enter the sanctuary. “The soul that doeth ought presumptuously, born in the land or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be *cut off* from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken the commandment, that soul shall be *utterly cut off*; his iniquity shall be upon him.”‡ What a striking parallel to this fearful sentence,

* Romans xii. 1.

† Leviticus vii. 20, 21.

‡ Numbers xv. 30, 31.

have we in the New Testament! "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."* Crimes that are calculated to disturb the peace of society, to produce insubordination, to destroy social security and confidence, are not merely visited by deprivation of privilege, but punished by the magistrate. There are transgressors who are not forbidden to remain in the land, but there are others who must be taken away for the sake of the community. Idolaters,† blasphemers, ‡ Sabbath-breakers, § disobedient and abusive children, || murderers, ¶ adulterers,* * and several others are, according to the judgment of God, enemies of religious prosperity and of the safety of the state, and are condemned to die.

There may have been much impiety in Israel. But after all, *our moral and religious superiority is not self-evident*. "Infidels affect to be horrified, in reading the Old Testament, to find little else than a charge of crime reiterated against the people who are called the chosen of the Lord.

* Hebrews x. 26, 27.

† Leviticus xx. 1 ; Deuteronomy xvii. 2-5.

‡ Leviticus xxiv. 16. § Exodus xxxv. 2.

|| Exodus xxi. 17 ; Deuteronomy xxi. 18, &c.

¶ Numbers xxxv. 31. * * Deuteronomy xxii. 22.

But who sifts the Jewish character?—who subjects him to the fiery ordeal of more than philosophical scrutiny? Why, the Searcher of hearts himself. Now, had the republics of Greece and Rome undergone, in ancient times, the same investigating process, would posterity have talked so rapturously, or bestowed so much idolatrous praise on the laws, institutions, heroes and philosophers, of these renowned lands as they have done heretofore? The national manners and tastes which men praise the most, are oftentimes abomination in the sight of God; and the Jews of old had therefore a harder lot, in reference to their historian, than any other nation on earth. The wonder is that on any occasion they ever, as a nation, received a moderate share of praise. The very circumstance of this having sometimes occurred ought to convince us of the sublime height to which their national virtue must have been occasionally carried; but on no account are we to infer, from the severe language at other times in use, that they were sinners above others. On the contrary, they are often fearfully and justly stigmatized for departing from God, and doing evil in his sight, for what would appear to *lenient* human historians the simple excess of national amiability.”* This is good sense, well put. It is painful to think that the same reasonings are necessary to meet the

* Arnott's *Theocracy of the Bible*, p. 104.

Antipedobaptist and the infidel,—Carson and Howdon.

However, let the impiety and immorality of Israel be as great as they may, neither the constitution of the church nor of the state is responsible for them. When the rod of discipline is not faithfully applied by the priest, or the elders suffer the criminal to go unpunished, famine or pestilence, war and subjugation or captivity, proclaim the displeasure of the God of Israel with a people unfaithful in his covenant. Would to God that the purest church in christendom, Antipedobaptist or other, exhibited a purity commensurate with the provisions of the constitution of the Israelitish or Jewish church!

Our Lord lived among perhaps the most corrupt generation of the Jews,—so corrupt that the prophet despaired of finding one who could adequately describe it.* He knew all their corruption, what they did, what they were doing, what they were capable of doing, what they intended or desired to do, and what they would do, infinitely better than Dr. Carson or any other defamer of God's ancient people, and their divinely originated constitution; yet he says to the Samaritans who, on one occasion, received him with much respect, and never proceeded farther against him than, at another time, to refuse to receive

* Isaiah liii. 8.

him, "because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem,"—"Ye worship ye know not what;" and of the Jews, who furnished his persecutors, betrayers, and murderers, "We know what we worship; for *salvation is of the Jews.*"

Was Dr. Carson the learned, the theologian, a reader of the Old Testament? Doubtful.

Antipedobaptists incur a fearful responsibility, in claiming to belong to a different church from that of ancient Israel, and in refusing federal identification with it. It is a small matter that they should proclaim themselves the only churches of Christ, as distinguished from all Pedobaptist churches, which, individually, have never claimed to be *the church*, and appear before the world as *sections*,—more or less perfectly disclosing the characteristics of the body,—of the church, resting, as a corporate society, upon the basis of the everlasting covenant made with the Father of all believers, and established to be the people of God *for ever*. But when they roundly publish their isolation from that people whom God formed for himself to show forth his praise, whose constitution he fixed, whose ordinances he instituted, and whom he calls his kingdom of priests and holy nation; into union with whom he invites the Gentiles, having taken away the middle wall of separation, that they may enjoy the privileges and blessings of Abraham his friend,—the position

assumed is alarming, and must be followed by alarming consequences.

As all the promises are made to Christ, all who enjoy the blessings promised must be members of his body; and as the New Covenant is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, and with them *only*, federal union with them is implied in all who are partakers of the blessings of the covenant. Separated from the house of Israel, we have no interest in the covenant and its blessings. Antipedobaptists, therefore, are *professionally* cut off from all interest in that very covenant by which they claim exclusively to hold. Their churches, constituted avowedly, and publicly, and ostentatiously, on the ground of separation from the Jewish church, can, as corporate bodies, form no part of that church, which the Mediator recognizes as his own. I assign to them the place they claim for themselves, unintentionally but unequivocally, outside the pale of the church of Christ, outside the sphere of covenanted mercies. Turning their backs upon the church of Rome, and travelling on the circumference of a circle, they find themselves standing face to face with her on anti-christian ground, whilst they profess in common to be the only true churches, and virtually or openly excommunicate all the children of the household of faith.

I do not question the piety of many in the Anti-

pedobaptist churches. There are many *in* the church of Christ who are not *of* it, and who cannot be excluded by any law that man is capable of applying, yet it is not less the church of Christ notwithstanding. There have been many of the excellent of the earth, living and dying in the church of Rome, yet is she not less the antichrist. And the presence of the children of God in the Antipedobaptist churches does not make the character of those churches a whit better. The personal views, and personal character of the saints in their midst, are antagonistic to the professional position and character of their churches.

This is the explanation of the closing sentence of the discussion of the mode of baptism. The rite,—immersion,—which is substituted for baptism, and which is called the *only* external baptism,—is an emblem of death, not of salvation; of a curse, not of a blessing; introduces into churches that glory in their separation from the commonwealth of Israel: and is the pledge of a faith which looks for salvation to the world, *out of the ark*, when the desolating deluge submerges the earth,—safety to the descendants of Israel *out of the blood-fortified dwelling*, when the angel of destruction passes through the land of Egypt,—deliverance to Rahab and her friends *outside the house signalized by the scarlet cord* in the window, when the armies of God enter Jericho over its prostrated walls.

SECTION V.

Identity of the Church on earth and in heaven.

“There is one body.” Not only is the church of God ONE *under all dispensations*, but also *on earth and in heaven*, it is ONE. When discussing the character and privileges of the church on earth, we are accustomed to speak of the Old and New Testament *churches*; and this phraseology has been the occasion of introducing loose and inaccurate views of the unity of the body. The existence of the church in different states, subject to different institutes, and in the enjoyment of different degrees of privilege, does not suppose different societies. The church of Israel is not *done away*, to make room for another church; but “the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones,” *is done away*, to give place to “the ministration of the Spirit.”* The Israelite and his vail are not taken away, to make room for the Antipedobaptist and his illumination; but the vail alone is taken away, that we may “all, with uncovered face,” behold, “as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.”† The Abrahamic covenant is not abrogated, and the new covenant substituted in its place; but “the law, which was four hundred and thirty (430) years after,” and which could disturb neither its validity nor its promises, ‡

* 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8. † 2 Cor. iii. 16, 18. ‡ Gal. iii. 17.

vanishes away, that “a better covenant, founded upon better promises,” might be introduced.* These changes are predicated of the children of Abraham’s covenant.

In like manner, for the sake of illustration, and to bring the details of a broad subject before the mind, we speak of the church *militant* and the church *triumphant*, or the church on earth and the church in heaven, when we should rather speak of the church in its militant and triumphant state. As the former mode of expression, contrary to the views and intentions of most of those who use it, leaves the unhappy because unscriptural impression that the church of old and the church now are different societies, so this form of speech would lead the inconsiderate to conclude, that the church on earth and the church in heaven are not one and the same church.

The unity of the church on earth and in heaven has an important bearing on more than one doctrine of the gospel; and the animating hopes of the believer are bound up with it. Let the fact of that unity be settled, and it follows that, being (not *in* but) *of* the church on earth, we are also of the church in heaven; that the believer now has as good a title to heaven,—to blessedness, as ever he will have; and is as certain of his eternal inheritance as if he were in possession of it. On

* Hebrews viii. 6.

the other hand, if a person has no title to a place in the church here, he does not belong to the glorified company. If infants are proved incapable of union to the church on earth, it is proved that dying, being still infants, they cannot have a place in heaven. We are thus brought once more to look the fact already examined in the face, that every argument, employed to prove that infants ought not to be baptized and enter the church, is equally well adapted to lead to the conclusion that no infant, dying in infancy, can be saved. The gospel does more, in this aspect of the inquiry, upon the principles we oppose, than leave us in ignorance of their future state. In proving that they are not proper subjects of baptism, it proves that they are not subjects of eternal salvation. In maintaining that infants cannot be church members, yet that dying infants are saved or may be saved, the Antipedobaptist must not only deny the identity of the Old and New Testament churches, but, also, the identity of the church in its militant and triumphant state. But this identity is as fully demonstrable as the other, and having established it, we have proved that all assurance we have, or can have of the eternal welfare of dying infants, involves the conviction that they are entitled to a place among God's sanctified ones on earth, and are to be baptized into the one body of which the saints are members.*

* Note I.

The tabernacle and temple were erected after the same model, had the same kinds of furniture, and contemplated the same ends. The differences were circumstantial, and did not interfere with their general construction and garniture. The tabernacle is once and again called the temple.* They are figurative representations of the church of the living God, and, as types, they are *one*. The proof of this is found in the terms by which the church is designated. The church is called the *temple of God*. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost in you, which ye have of God.”† And again; “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them.”‡ The tabernacle and temple are the *house of God*.§ So also is the church called. “That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.”|| The incarnate Saviour *tabernacled*, dwelt among men, and speaks of his body as a *temple*.¶ But we know that the church is also spoken of as his body. “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ,—gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body.”**

* 1 Samuel iii. 3.

† 1 Corinthians vi. 19.

‡ 2 Corinthians vi. 16.

§ Judges xviii. 31; 2 Chronicles xxii. 12.

|| 1 Timothy iii. 15.

¶ John i. 14; ii. 19.

** Ephesians i. 22, 23.

A clear light radiates from the tabernacle or temple, which enables us to examine this subject,—the identity of the church on earth and in heaven. There was *one* tabernacle. There was *one* temple. That all the parts should be fitted, so as to form one structure, was a leading object in the erection of the tabernacle. The directions given for the completion of the work have an express reference to this end. “It shall be *one* tabernacle.”* When the directions are executed, it is said, “So it became *one* tabernacle.”† Internally, it was divided into two apartments by a veil; a circumstance to which the apostle invites special attention. “There was *a* tabernacle made: the first—which is called the *holy* place. But behind the second veil, a tabernacle which is called the *most* holy place.”‡ The furniture of the outer tabernacle,—the candlestick, the table, the shew-bread, and altar of incense,—lead us unhesitatingly to the recognition of the terrestrial state of the church; while the absence of all light, except the effulgence of glory from above the mercy-seat, and the ark of the covenant, and the golden pot of manna, and Aaron’s blooming rod, suggest to the mind the celestial state of the redeemed of the Lord, the existence of which was fully known, but the way into which was not yet made manifest. But the

* Exodus xxvi. 6.

† Exodus xxxvi. 13.

‡ Hebrews ix. 2, 3.

apostle has lifted us above the region of uncertainty, or even probability. Into the *holy* place, "the priests went always accomplishing the service: but into the second, the High Priest alone, once every year, not without blood."* Now of this "holy of holies," what was the antitype? The Spirit, guiding the mind and pen of the apostle, will inform us. "Christ hath not entered into the holy places made with hands, the figures of the true; but into *heaven itself*, now to appear in the presence of God for us."† The "holy of holies" is heaven itself, into which our glorious High Priest entered for us with his own blood. But he entered into the most holy place by the altar of burnt-offering,—*his sacrifice*; by the laver,—*his sacrificial baptism*; by the candlestick,—*the unlimited influence of the Spirit*; by the table,—*the everlasting covenant*; by the shewbread,—*his body*; by the altar of incense,—his intercession; for there was no way of access into the holiest of all but through the *sanctuary*: thus teaching us that all who enter heaven *with Christ*, must pass with him through the first tabernacle; and whether he is adult or infant, that is excluded, by a divine interdict, from the *holy* place,—the church on earth,—never can find an entrance into the *holiest* of all,—the presence of the glory of God. Those who exclude infants from the fellow-

* Hebrews ix. 6, 7.

† Hebrews ix. 24.

ship of the saints here are *guilty of excluding them from heaven*. It does not save them from this condemnation, that such as are thus excluded, contrary to the divine ordinance, cannot forfeit the right derived from God, by the impiety of man, and may, by the sovereign election, grace, and power of God, be brought near either as infants or adults,—more than apostates are vindicated from the guilt of “crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh,” because the literal act of crucifixion is physically impossible. The Antipedobaptists of the former dispensation, “whose carcasses fell in the wilderness,” left their children uncircumcised, having as little faith of their children’s inheritance as of their own. But the purpose, the covenant, the promise of God, secured an entrance to the children into the land of promise. Still before they can obtain possession, they must be laid on the pure table before God in the sanctuary. They are all, adults and infants, that had been born in the wilderness, circumcised at Gilgal by special command of God.*

This exposition is intended to show that the idea of identity of the church, militant and triumphant, was not kept back from Israel, although exhibited, in common with all the lessons of the former economy, in a figurative and shadowy manner. However obscure might be the ideas of the

* Joshua v. 2-9.

Israelite, with respect to details, one fact was obvious, that no one could come where God alone is the light of the people, who is not antecedently in the light of the candlestick, and with those who are one bread and one body before God, under the protection of frankincense, and only removed to be appropriated by the priest.

The doctrine as set forth in the New Testament, not exhibited in an abstract form, cold and cheerless, but introduced in connection with the faith and hopes, the present privilege and prospects, the growth and blessedness of God's children, is now to be explained.

“I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.”* Of course, this family, named after the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is that of which God is the *Father*, and Sarah, from whom every child of promise springs, is the *mother*—the church of the living God. The members of this family are the brethren of Christ; for “he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one (Father): for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren;” † and are all predestinated to be assimilated to him, as it is written, “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many

* Ephesians iii. 14, 15.

† Hebrews ii. 11.

brethren.”* These constitute the household of faith ; who belong to no country, no age, no dispensation; being “built upon the foundation” (not of prophets as distinguished from apostles, nor of apostles as distinguished from prophets, but) “of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” †

This family is not on earth. It is not in heaven. It is at the same time in heaven and on earth. Some of the members have passed into glory, and some remain on earth, and exposed to all its vicissitudes ; yet are they one household. Those on earth are the brethren of the glorified ones, and sustain as near and as perfect a relation to God as they do. Glorified spirits before the throne of God recognize the relationship of their *brethren*, who are still in the earthly house of this tabernacle, and rest in anticipation of their entrance among them, through much tribulation. One messenger sent to John, to show or interpret the revelation of the Son of God, repelling the idolatrous homage which the astonished apostle would give, says, “I am thy *fellow-servant*, and of thy *brethren* that have the testimony of Jesus.” ‡ Another refuses like homage in very similar terms,—“I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy *brethren the prophets*, and of them which keep the sayings of this book.”§

* Romans viii. 29.

† Ephesians ii. 20.

‡ Revelation xix. 10.

§ Revelation xxii. 9.

Whether the church is contemplated as a separated society, or the body of Christ, or a temple, or a kingdom, the redeemed of the Lord, brought near by his word and Spirit, are but the supplement of such as have already entered into their rest.

To whom are believers united? Let us hear the animated and stimulating representation of the position into which the believer is introduced, and of the fellowship of the church of the redeemed, as an inspired apostle has furnished it. "Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant."* Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. "Ye are come to the heavenly Jerusalem." Who constitute the church of the first-born? We look to Christ the first-born of every creature, and learn that it comprehends all the members of his body, not only those who have been and are, but also those who shall be. They are all *written in heaven*, whose names are in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world. This one circumstance is common to those

* Hebrews xiii. 22-25.

who are and shall be in the church,—they are written before God. This communion implies that which has been already discussed,—the identity of christians with the ancient Israel, God's kingdom of priests,—and also the union of all believers on earth and in heaven, which claims our special present attention. “Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

It will not be questioned that these are the saints of God, who being “absent from the body are present with the Lord.” We come, in this aspect of our privilege, not to just men simply, but to the spirits of just men; not to such as are compassed about with infirmities, but to such as have fought a good fight, have finished their course, and are “without spot before the throne of God.” These have not been separated, by their decease, from the church. They are still of it, still in it, as all who come to the new Jerusalem,—to the church of the first-born,—to Jesus, come to them. They have still a deep interest in all that affects the people of God,—their brethren,—and are awaiting the final victory over the enemy with whom his people are in conflict. And as their connection with the church has not ceased, all who are members of the church here are of the same body with them, and none can be of the same body who are denied, according to the will of Christ, a place in the church on earth. If God

excludes infants from the fellowship of his people in the world, he excludes them from heaven, else the scriptures of the New Testament, as well as the Old, exhibit a delusive portraiture of the communion of saints, in the present state, with saints in glory.

The supplementary character of those who are gathered into the church on earth is beautifully developed, in connection with the declaration of the design of the ministerial office. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, are ordained to organize the church, and assign to the several members their proper departments, for the double purpose of promoting the spiritual improvement of those who have been already introduced, and of gathering in from the world the travail of the Redeemer's soul,* "till we *all* come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." † "*A perfect man.*" This phrase has not reference to the perfection of any one individual, otherwise than this necessarily follows from the completeness of "the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," and the consequent healthy action and invigoration of every member. We are led

* Note K.

† Ephesians iv. 11-13.

by the apostle to contemplate, not perfect men, but a *perfect man*, even the body of Christ, complete in all its members, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Thus all who are interested in the great salvation and are brought into union with “the spirits of just men made perfect,” become partakers of the blessing through their connection, as superadded members of the body, with those who, by the instrumentality of Christ’s servants, the Lord giving testimony to the word of his grace, compose the membership of the church in the world.

These considerations cast a full light on a very remarkable statement in the epistle to the Hebrews. After the apostle had set forth, in detail, the facts illustrative of the faith of several ancient saints, and referred to the triumphant operation of the same principle in others, who “having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise,” he adds, “God having provided some better thing for us, that they *without us should not be made perfect.*” * This is a very startling declaration as it seems, at the first blush, that those who have died *in faith*, entered into their rest, and more especially, are elsewhere denominated “the spirits of just men made perfect,” are after all *not perfect yet*, not perfect *without us*. The whole is transparent, when we refer the declaration to the

* Hebrews xi. 1—ult.

body of Christ as possessing perfect oneness. The saints who are in glory are of the body, and were in Christ before us, but they are not *the* body. We also, who have the earnest of the Spirit, are members of Christ, are of the body, but we are not *the* body. They and we are members one of another. The perfection of the body consists in the union and fit adjustment of all the members, that their working may be at once easy and efficient. The least, the least honourable may not be wanting. The body of Christ is not complete, till all the members, written in God's book, and the objects of redeeming grace and love, are in continuance fashioned, according to his purpose, wisdom, and power; and all things are reconciled by the Son, unto himself, "whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." All, who are blessed, are blessed in the body of Christ, and, if infants are saved, and Christ is the head of *the body*, with reference to either earth or heaven, he has a place for them in his body on earth as well as in heaven. They belong to *us*, without whom the glorified spirits are not *perfect*, without whom we, who are saved by hope, are, by inevitable consequence, not *made perfect*.*

It is not necessary to dwell upon the fact, that that temple, which is the habitation of God through the Spirit, and which is, in glory, identified with

* Note L.

the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb,* in whom the saints are perfectly united, † groweth by the *living stones* builded into its walls, ‡ and fitly framed together in the present state, and by *none other*; § nor yet upon the fact, that the Saviour is still occupied, as he was from the martyrdom of Abel, in delivering up the kingdom (nothing but the *kingdom*, and if infants are not of it, they are not delivered up at all) to the Father, and that the end shall be when that work shall have been accomplished. ||



CHAP. III.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.



SECTION I.

Meaning of the Phrase.

The amplitude and variety of the evidence, in favour of the right of infants to a place in the church on earth, appears yet more impressively from the scriptural use of a phrase with reference to them, which is commonly introduced in the discussion of the question of their church-membership, and which combines easily with this stage of

* Revelation xxi. 22.

† John xvii. 21.

‡ 1 Peter ii. 5.

§ Ephesians ii. 21.

|| 1 Corinthians xv. 24.

the investigation. The phrase is the *kingdom of God*, or *the kingdom of heaven*. The latter form of expression is used by Matthew alone; the former, sometimes by Matthew, and always by the other evangelists. The former is sometimes introduced in other parts of the New Testament; the latter never. Both are obviously of the same import.

The common interpretation, that *kingdom of God* sometimes signifies the visible church, and sometimes the state of glory, seems objectionable. If this interpretation be adopted, there is no end to ambiguity. The *same* object is often contemplated under different aspects, and assertions made concerning it which are true of it under one aspect only, whilst its identity is never lost sight of. We say man is *mortal* and man is *immortal*. We have the same object before us in both cases. To those who know how man is constituted, there is no ambiguity in the language. In the one case, we speak of man with reference to the body; in the other, with reference to the spirit. But we could not, therefore, say with propriety, *man* sometimes means the *body*, and sometimes the *spirit*. Neither could we say that the Saviour is sometimes represented as a *human*, and again as a *divine* person, which would imply a palpable contradiction. Yet we read that "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us,"* and "The Son of Man is in

* John i. 14.

heaven.”* The identity of the blessed Redeemer is never lost sight of, in the use of such expressions, as is manifest from this, that what belongs to his *human* nature is ascribed to the *Son of God*; and what is true only of his *divine* nature is predicated of the *Son of Man*. We do not the less believe that the Godhead is incapable of suffering, because we say, “they crucify to themselves the Son of God,” † nor do we less believe in the impossibility of a human body being at once on earth and in heaven, because the Lord says as above, when conversing with Nicodemus, “The Son of Man is in heaven.”

As the one Mediator was, at the same instant, in heaven and on earth;—with respect to human nature, on earth; with respect to his divine nature, in heaven;—so the unity of the kingdom of God is not ignored by representing it, in one of its departments, on earth, and in another, in heaven. We look on the faithful followers of the Lamb, and recognize the visible church. “So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground.” ‡ “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” § We turn our eyes to the saints in glory, and recognize the church triumphant. “I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day

* John iii. 13.

‡ Mark iv. 26.

† Hebrews vi. 6.

§ John iii. 5.

that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”*
 “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” † These, however, are not two kingdoms. They are one, and every individual of the human race, in or out of the body, is, or is not, of *the* kingdom. To say a man belongs to the one, and not to the other, would just be as absurd as for a Scotchman to say, when he had passed into England, that he had forfeited the privilege of a British subject; or a Nova-Scotian, that, by removing to Ireland, he is no longer entitled to claim his rights of citizenship. A recognized citizen, in one part of the empire, is a recognized citizen in any other section to which, in providence, he may be removed. On the other hand, an alien in one part of the British dominions is an alien everywhere. Mere residence gives no title to claim the rights of a citizen. Various classes may have different degrees of privilege, but that no more affects the question of citizenship than that the position of the foot proves that it is not of the body, because it cannot fulfil the functions of the hand. So is the kingdom of God. Subjects of that kingdom on earth, we are, upon that *ground*, owned in heaven. Aliens on earth, although residents within its limits, we have no title which the Sovereign will allow on the other side of Jordan. For selfish, or sinister, or deceptive

* Mark xiv. 25.

† 1 Corinthians xv. 50.

objects, we may have sworn allegiance to the king, and may have attained position and honours in the kingdom on earth, but when brought for judgment before Him whose eyes are like a flame of fire, we are rejected, if our hearts are not right before God. In vain may some plead, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." * In vain, others, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" † There is but one answer. "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." "The Father—hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:" ‡ and in doing this hath made us to "sit down *with* Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." § But with "the children of the kingdom," who have cast off their allegiance, or have still cherished a spirit of hostility to the Sovereign, as with "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," who "shall be cast into outer darkness,—there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," when "they shall *see* Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God." ||

Our former conclusion thrusts itself forward

* Luke xiii. 26.

† Matthew vii. 22.

‡ Colossians i. 13.

§ Matthew viii. 11.

|| Luke xiii. 28.

irresistibly, that if children, *being infants*, are by the constitution of the kingdom of God, excluded from citizenship on earth, they shall be excluded from the kingdom, when removed in infancy, from the earth into another sphere. This conclusion,—unavoidable, look at the church under what similitude you will, by which the Spirit depicts it,—is well adapted to lead the advocates of infant exclusion to abandon their opposition to the premises by which the conclusion is so fully sustained.

The propriety and piety of this step is confirmed by the declaration of the Lord. Children, little children, belong to the kingdom, according to *his* judgment.

SECTION II.

Infants belong to the Kingdom.

“They brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as *a little child*, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed

them.” * The same incident in our Lord’s ministry is narrated by both Matthew, † and Luke, ‡ with more brevity, but with no variation in the terms employed, except that Luke calls them *infants* § that were brought, although, with the other evangelists, he uses the term *young children* or *little children*, || when reporting our Lord’s words. In its literal application, the expression *young children* is used for any age short of maturity; the term *infant* is applied to the unborn child, ¶ the child lately born, ** any age short of that at which instruction can be imparted. †† The term used by Luke, *infants*, fixes the age of the children brought to Christ to that in which they derive nourishment from the mother. Peter’s “new-born babes” (infants) seek *milk* for their food. ‡‡ Other circumstances corroborate this application of *infant* to determine the age of the little children whom our Lord received.

The breadth, to which the discussion of this text has been spread, and the appeal to it, in almost all discourses on the question of infant baptism, show the importance attached to it.

* Mark x. 13–16.

† Matthew xix. 13–15.

‡ Luke xviii. 15–17.

§ βρεφην, *brephe*.

|| παιδια, *paidia*. There is but *one* word in the Greek for *young* or *little children*.

¶ Luke i. 41.

** Luke ii. 16.

†† 2 Timothy iii. 15.

‡‡ 1 Peter ii. 2.

And, certainly, its value in the controversy cannot be overrated. Its force, in support of the right of infants to a place in the kingdom, has reduced the opponents of that right to strange shifts, in seeking to neutralize or evade the argument which it supplies.

“There is no mention of baptism in the text.”—Very true. Neither is the word *dead*, nor *resurrection*, nor any *kindred* word, used in the text to which our Lord appeals, to prove the resurrection of the dead.* Neither the word *righteousness*, nor *works*, nor any *kindred* term, is to be found in the passage, in which Paul represents David as describing the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works.† It appears both Christ and his apostle did find the *thing* where the *word* was not. Besides, the text is not introduced as a direct proof of any thing but union with the church. That infants are to be baptized, is determined by an appeal to the law, that, under this dispensation, all members are introduced by baptism.

“Why did not Christ baptize those children?”—They were not brought for that purpose, but that he should put his hands on them and pray. He never personally baptized any. They are church-members by circumcision, and the Old Testament dispensation had not yet been superseded.

* Mark xii. 26.

† Romans iv. 6, 7, 8.

“If the disciples were familiar with infant baptism, why did they offer any obstruction to those who brought the children?”—Certainly if the Lord did not baptize at all, they could not be familiar with his baptism of infants, and we do not know that it was customary to bring children under our Lord’s notice to obtain his blessing. Those who have remarked the profound reverence in which the old prophets were held, and the respectful distance at which the people stood, will not be surprised that the disciples were disposed to look upon the introduction of the children as an unseasonable intrusion. When the multitude rebuked the blind man, near Jericho, who called after the Lord, it was not from want of familiarity with the restoration of sight to the blind. When one came from the house of Jairus, to ask him to desist from any further application, as the daughter for whom he interceded was dead, it was that the Master might not be *troubled* unnecessarily. The disciples wished our Lord to send away the Syrophenician woman, evidently to be free of her annoying importunity, although they must have been familiar with similar applications and their success.

From what appears on the face of the record, irrespective of every other consideration, the object of the disciples seems to have been, to free our Lord from trouble. Still if the appearance of the

children was *so* novel, *so* unprecedented, why should our Lord have been *so* greatly displeased with the disciples for discouraging an unexampled application ?

“The kingdom of God, in the text, means the state of glory.”—Be it so. Then infants are acknowledged as belonging to the kingdom of glory, and yet are destitute of meet qualifications for membership in the Antipedobaptist churches ! They belong to heaven but not to them. If the matter stands thus, Antipedobaptist churches can have no fellowship with the kingdom of glory. In view of such a monstrous, and monstrously arrogant assertion, as that infants, to whom will be conceded a place in heaven, if on earth could not be admitted into *their* churches (their churches are for new creatures), one can hardly be surprised at, though it is impossible to justify, the rabid statement of Cartwright, that ‘there is no place so like hell as a baptist church, where there are no infants.’

But as it is not pretended that these children were yet *in glory*, as the declaration of the Saviour makes them heirs of glory, they belong now to the household of faith : and it devolves upon the enemies of infant baptism to show, by one scriptural statement, the recognition of one heir of glory whose place among the saved on earth is not recognized. The assumption with respect to infants cannot, of course, prove its own truth.

That they were little children in age and helplessness is manifest. Not only are they called *infants*, but they are passive in coming to Christ,—they are “brought.” This circumstance is mentioned by all the evangelists who report the transaction. The meek and lowly and loving Saviour takes them in his arms, when he would put his hands upon them and bless them. Extravagance, and an antecedent determination that “we must be right,” never disclosed their daring more unblushingly than in the attempt to prove that these children, these *infants in arms*, were really believers,—capable of faith and exercising it. The evidence of this is sought in the report of an entirely different transaction in which a child figures.* What is the gist of the argument. The child whom Christ called, (in reporting the transaction, Mark says *took*, Luke, *took hold on*,† and *set* in the midst of the disciples, was a believer, therefore the infants in the text were believers. We might just as rationally conclude that every little child spoken of in the Bible was a believer. But we have no evidence that the child spoken of was more capable of the exercise of faith than were the infants brought to the Saviour to be blessed. He *called* him and *set* him in the midst of them. Very different is the form of speech when adults are introduced. They

* Matthew xviii. 2-6.

† *Λαβων*, Mark ix. 36; *Επιλαβόμενος*; Luke ix. 47.

take their own position under his direction. "He commanded the multitude to *sit down*."* "He said to the man that had the withered had, *Rise up, and stand forth in the midst*."† In the passage, having given the disciples a solemn warning against the aspirations of carnal ambition, by the example of the little child, our Lord takes occasion to say, "Whoso shall offend one of *these little ones which believe in me*, it were better for him that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." From this the conclusion is drawn very boldly and complacently that the little child sitting in the midst of them was a *little* BELIEVER. The verse immediately preceding,—"*Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me*,"—and which leads the mind, beyond the solitary child before them, to the contemplation of all, whether old or young, who are assimilated to it in unaffected humility, is quietly overlooked, or hurriedly disposed of. The import of this transitional statement of the Saviour will appear more fully from the following paragraphs.

"Those who constitute the membership of the church are not little children, but such as are like them."—To this the greatest stress seems to be attached. To pass over the unwarrantable assumption, that Pedobaptists hold that the church is *wholly made up* of infants, and which is implied in

* Matthew xv. 35.

† Luke vi. 8.

the reasonings of the ablest writers on the opposite side,—this is one of the most extraordinary modes of arguing for the exclusion of infants from the church. I would suppose it constituted a strong argument in their favour, that resemblance to them establishes a title to a place in the kingdom of God. If likeness to infancy is a recommendation, surely it is a stronger recommendation to be an infant; unless we suppose that the infant does not possess its own qualities,—is not like itself. When things of the same kind are compared, either absolutely or with reference to some particular qualities, the closer the resemblance of one of them to another which is admired, the more it is approved. But no one thinks of preferring the resemblance to the reality, or a copy to the original. If a very exact imitation of Chalmers or of Spurgeon as an orator, would attract admiration, of course, Chalmers or Spurgeon would be entitled to greater admiration: and the man who would refuse to hear either, because he preferred the imitator, except for reasons entirely independent of his oratorical powers, would hardly obtain credit for a sound intellect. We would feel a greater disposition to laugh at him than to reason with him.—A ring of my door bell attracts my attention at an unusual hour, and I hasten myself to answer the call. A stranger stands before and asks to participate in my hospitality for the night. I look at him with deep interest and increasing

attraction, discovering a close resemblance to my father. The voice, the features, the movements, all recall that object of reverence and affection. He receives a most hearty welcome. The claims of the stranger are utterly forgotten in the captivating power of a father's image. A few days after, my father calls. Misfortune has overtaken him ; and he needs accommodation, protection, and support. I absolutely refuse to receive him into my house at all. 'You acknowledge me to be your father?' 'Certainly. But the fathers are to lay up for the children, and not the children for the fathers.' 'Strange! I promised myself a wide door, a heart full of filial affection, and that my presence would give joy to you and your family. Did you not lately receive a stranger with open arms, because he had a striking resemblance to me?' 'Very true, very true. But I would be like God, and lay the holiest of my affections upon his altar. He bids enter his house the copy, and casts aside, as vile, the original. All who become *like* little children are the objects of his complacential affection and care, are admitted to fellowship with him, and to eat at his table, but little children themselves are excluded from his courts, and are sent abroad to herd with devils, and every unclean and hateful bird. In shutting you out, father, I am endeavouring, with great humility and self-denial, to exemplify the lesson of wisdom

and tender mercy, which I have learned from my Father in heaven.'

Who would tolerate argumentation so absurd, unnatural, and blasphemous, or the conduct sustained by it? Yet the Antipedobaptists' treatment of our Lord's words, and their ecclesiastical rule derived from it, are not a whit less absurd, unnatural, and blasphemous. They found, not on the words of wisdom, but a grossly perverse interpretation of them.

But their interpretation of the passage under examination is as incorrect, in exegesis, as it is opposed to nature and common sense. If the proposition, "Of such is the kingdom of God," *must* bear the interpretation, that those only who resemble infants are proper subjects of that kingdom, to the exclusion of the infants themselves, we are bound to accept it with respect and submission, without being deterred by its difficulties and repulsiveness. However, we are not bound by the terms to accept the interpretation. In fact, they are inconsistent with it. When we read, as in Matthew, "Except ye be converted, and become as" (not, as in our translation, *little children*, but) "*the* little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,"* the necessity of conformity, on the part of those addressed, to the children, is the leading idea; but whether conformity in

* Matthew xviii. 3.

character simply, or in position, is not apparent. The words recorded by Mark, and which are before us, are more definite. "Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." The prominent idea here is not the necessity of resemblance to the child in disposition, but in the relation which it sustains to the kingdom, and of a character leading to the assumption of the same relation. "Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a child *receiveth it.*" The assimilation to the children consists in receiving the kingdom on the same principle on which they receive it. The proper supplement dispels the illusion which perplexes the thoughts in dealing with this subject. An example or two will make all this plain. "I will come on thee as a thief."* "Behold, I come as a thief." † Nobody supposes that our blessed Lord has any moral resemblance to a *thief*. His *coming* is as the *coming* of the thief. "I will come on thee as a thief (cometh)." "Behold, I come as a thief (cometh)." "As a snare shall it (that day) come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." ‡ The day of the Lord has no characteristic likeness to a *snare*, but that day *cometh* upon the inhabitants of the earth, as the snare *cometh* on beast or bird. "As a snare (cometh) shall it come on all —." This construc-

* Rev. iii. 3.

† Rev. xvi. 15.

‡ Luke xxi. 35.

tion with *as* is perfectly transparent, except that when the verb *be* or *become* is used, the expression is equivocal, as the terms employed do not show whether the resemblance is *substantial* or *predicable*, if it be not identical. "Be ye *as* I (am), for I am as ye (are)." *

When we read, "Of such is the kingdom of God," the terms bind us to the recognition of the position of infants in the church in common with those who have been converted and become as they.

The word *such* directs the mind to an object possessing a defined and understood character; and it is sometimes applied with exclusive reference to the object itself, and often with reference to other objects also, distinguished by the same or similar qualities. We do not say that the language of our Lord, according to the false assumption already mentioned, applies to infants alone (although the terms do not forbid such an application), but that it comprehends them. A few examples will confirm and illustrate this statement.

"Jabal was the father of *such* as dwell in tents." † This example is introduced to show the current sense of the English word *such*, independent of the original. Common sense would understand this to mean that Jabal was the father of dwellers in tents, but Antipedobaptist exegesis rises above the region of common sense, and teaches that the

* Galatians iv. 12.

† Genesis iv. 20.

dwellers in tents are not intended, but those that are *like* them. In the following citations, the same remarks that are made respecting the word *such* apply to the original word translated by it. "The jailer, having received *such* a charge, thrust them into the inner prison." * Simplicity would say, that his severity was the result of the identical charge he had received. But not so. It is not intended to teach us that "he thrust them into the inner prison," because of *that* charge but of some charge *like* it. "They that are *such*" (cause unscriptural divisions) "serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly." † Now it is manifest that *such*, here, comprehends the very persons spoken of, as well as all having the same principles and pursuing the same course. "Receive him" (Epaphroditus) "in the Lord with all gladness; and hold *such* in reputation." ‡ To whom does *such* apply? *Antipedobaptist*. "They are not commanded to hold Epaphroditus in reputation, but persons that are *like* him." *Pedobaptist*. "The Philippians are enjoined to hold Epaphroditus in reputation and all possessing the same qualities and claims." There is no difficulty in deciding between them as interpreters in this case. "Ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps *such* a one should be swallowed up with

* Acts xvi. 24.

† Romans xvi. 18.

‡ Philippians ii. 29.

overmuch sorrow.”* Concerning whom does the apostle give this counsel? The incestuous person, now distinguished by godly sorrow. For whom does he fear, lest he should be overwhelmed with grief? Why, the same person. It would be profound nonsense to say, the guilty but now penitent person is to be comforted, lest some other person *like* him should be swallowed up with excess of sorrow. For this nonsense the Antipedobaptist interpreter of the word *such* is alone responsible. “I beseech thee, being *such* a one as Paul the aged.”† Who is the speaker? Paul himself.

When mere likeness is to be expressed, and our views are confined to the objects in which the likeness exists, to the exclusion of the things with which they are compared, an entirely different word is employed. Happily a passage is producible which introduces both *likeness*, and the idea expressed by *such*. “The works of the flesh are—envyings, murders, drunkenness, and *such like*” (literally, *things like* these ‡); “of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do *such* § things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”|| Here we have an

* 2 Corinthians ii. 7.

† Philem, 9.

‡ τα ὅμοια τέτοις (*homoia*).

§ τὰ τοιαῦτα (*toiouta*). This is the same word used in the text which we are attempting to expound, “Of such (των τοιούτων, *toioutōn*) is the kingdom of God.”

|| Galatians v. 19, 21.

enumeration of sins, flowing from the corruption of our nature, followed by a reference to *such like*, as we translate, but expressed by a word indicating resemblance. These *such like* things are in addition to the works of the flesh enumerated before. The verse closes with the strong asseveration that "they which do *such* things shall not inherit the kingdom of God:" these *such things* obviously comprehending, at the same time, the *specified vices*, and other *vices like them*. To express identity of character, and sensible resemblance, we find the two terms combined, as in the following:—"Ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other *such like* things ye do."*

It is manifest from the preceding induction, that the term *such* points to certain qualities, in an object or in objects which are tacitly introduced as a standard of comparison; and, in its application, is sometimes used with exclusive reference to the objects specified, sometimes to them and others conformed to them, but *never* to objects conformed to the assumed standard, to the exclusion of the standard itself. It follows that the phrase *of such*, in the proposition, "of such is the kingdom of God," covers both *the infants* and those who are converted, and become *like them*. The Lord's declaration gives the same place in the kingdom of God to the *little children*, and to those who "receive the kingdom of God *as a little child*."

* Mark vii. 8.

SECTION III.

Children an example.

Little children are an important element in the kingdom of heaven, and ought to occupy an elevated position, that they may be contemplated with interest and constancy. Their presence in the assemblies of the saints is necessary to the completeness of the congregation, and is at once animating and instructive. Under the direction of the Spirit, we meet them constantly in connection with God's people, whether in the actual enjoyment of privilege, or looking forward to greater. When the tribes of Israel, under the direction of Moses, stood before God at Horeb, and subsequently in the land of Moab, the *little children* composed a part of the congregation, who entered into a covenant with the Lord their God and into his oath.* When Joshua assembled the congregation of Israel at Mount Ebal, to hear the law read to them, the *little ones* were with them. † When Jehoshaphat made supplication in the temple against the enemies of his people, "all Judah stood before the Lord, with their *little ones*, their wives, and their children." ‡ When Joel, by the Spirit, summons the people to sanctify a fast, to call a solemn assembly, "the children,

* Deuteronomy xxix. 10-12. † Joshua viii. 35.

‡ 2 Chronicles xx. 13.

and *those that suck the breasts*,"* have a place there in common with the elders and the priests. When Jesus feeds the people in the wilderness, the children are there to share in the miraculous provision.†

In all these cases, it may be said, if all adults must attend, the children must be brought for safety. Very true. But why are they introduced to our particular notice at all? Are we to be taught that Israelitish mothers were not so unnatural as to abandon their children to almost certain death, while they themselves attended on God's ordinance? Mothers are not required to come, though their children must be brought along, or to bring the children that servants should not be deprived of their privilege or debarred from their duty. Joel expressly commands to "gather the children and those that suck the breasts." The presence of the children is imperative. They are an integral part of a covenanting, a listening, or a praying congregation. The assemblies of the saints are not full without them.‡

Having a corrupt nature, prone to evil, compassed about with infirmities, and constantly exposed to temptation, we need to have an approved model ever before us. Our stability, our progress in the divine life, are connected with a stedfast

* Joel ii. 15-17.

† Matthew xiv. 21 ; xv. 38.

‡ Note M.

contemplation of it. The command of God to Abraham was, "Walk *before me*, and be thou perfect."* The connection between walking before God and perfection is indissoluble, and it is a subject of important examination. Those who are established have the Lord always before them: He is our supreme standard. We are required to purify ourselves, *as he is pure*: to be perfect, as *our Father* in heaven is *perfect*. It is only when we behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, that we are transformed into the same image. All who will walk according to the course of this world, must put the Lord far from them. The fool says in his heart, "No God," and of course God is not in all his ways. The Gentiles are characterized as knowing not God. The sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord. The Ephesians are exhorted to be *followers of God*, and the Thessalonians are commended because they became *followers* of Him. In both these cases, the literal meaning of the original word, translated *followers*, is *imitators*. God revealed in Christ is, not only our teacher, but our *example*.

The medium, through which this glorious and perfect example is brought down to the level of our limited apprehensions, is the characters of those who, renewed after the image of God, are

* Genesis xvii. 1.

led by the Spirit. Paul *imitated* Christ, and the Corinthians are required, accordingly, to *imitate* Paul.* The evidence of piety, stability, and progress, is found in copying the churches of God, whose members, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. † Whenever we overlook the condescension of God to our infirmities, in neglecting to follow these examples, we wander into crooked ways, and we lose the simplicity of Christ and the consistency of a holy life. Only in turning away from Paul, are the Galatians entangled in errors subversive of the first principles of Christianity: and, when we meet with Diotrophes who loves pre-eminence, we find him not only refusing to receive the apostle, but prating against him with malicious words; refusing the brethren, and casting out those who received them. ‡ It is fraught with danger to the church, her integrity, purity, simplicity, to disregard, much more, to despise the patterns which are set before us, in gracious adaptation to our state.

That little children are patterns is upon the face of the record. *First*, “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 (the) little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” *Second*, and more particularly, “Whosoever shall humble

* 1 Cor. xi. 1. † Hebrews vi. 10-12. ‡ 3 John 9, 10.

himself as *this* little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

It would be strange to find our Lord drawing from the world an example which his people are to imitate; and especially such an example, that upon conformity to it depends the very being of the christian character. The blessedness of the believer is this, that Christ has chosen him out of the world. The testimony of Jesus to the state of his disciples is, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." * Of John, "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." † Accordingly, we are exhorted, not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. ‡ And are we to allow, insist, that this very transformation consists in conformity to a child of this world, to a child of the devil? This, upon the Antipedobaptist theory,—according to the Antipedobaptist treatment of little children, is the character of every infant. No, no. For we have shown that our pattern is not taken from the world. It is *in the church*. "Of *such* is the kingdom of God."

If the refusal of a place in the church to the model, which the Lord has indicated, and after which the character of all true christians is formed, is strange, the reason which Antipedobaptists assign for their exclusion is passing strange,—the assump-

* John xvii. 16. † 1 John v. 19. ‡ Romans xii. 2.

tion of their own personal superiority. The little ones want all the requisite qualifications of church-members; we have them all. Little children (mark the profound contempt with which they speak of them), "*Babies,*" "*unconscious babies,*" have neither regeneration, nor faith, nor repentance, nor —, but we possess all these. Is there not some mistake in our Lord's declaration,— "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven?" or in our translation of it? Not any. Antipedobaptists allow it. They would be horrified, or angry at least, if we questioned their belief of it, although they might well blush to read it, or to hear it read. Their whole theory contradicts it. Their terms of admission into their churches contradict it. They are received, and receive one another into fellowship, because they are *not like* little children, and little children are excluded because they are *not like* them. Let them follow their rule, but let them not make the Lord answerable for it. Let them pour what contempt they may upon *babies*, *baby-sprinkling*, and *baby-sprinklers*, there the babies stand, in the midst of the church, by the Lord's ordinance, the pattern of *his* people.*

The advantage, however, all the advantage of the presence of children, in subordination to the formation of christian character, is connected with

* Note N.

the occupation of a place among the people of God. That "of such is the kingdom of God," is the reason why they are to be brought to Christ to obtain his blessing, and why no obstruction is to be laid in the way of their approach. He that is greatest in the kingdom of heaven, humbling himself as a little child, is one who receives the little child *in the name of the Lord*,—as an infant church-member. Not that the presence of children ensures the spirituality and growth of the church, but that their exclusion is, and must be followed, immediately or ultimately, by the prostration of all that constitutes the glorious distinction of christianity and its faithful sons.

We shall now, in confirmation of this, as of several preceding statements upon the consequences of infant exclusion, take a view of infants *in the church*, boys and girls playing *in the streets of Jerusalem*, in full enjoyment of the same blessings with old men and old women leaning on their staves for very age.* Out of the church, and without reference to a federal relation to its Head, we see nature, nothing but nature, and its melancholy manifestations.

1. To personal merit, or spiritual qualifications, children can lay no claim.

When we find them among the covenant people of God, it is natural to ask how they came to

* Zechariah viii. 4, 5.

occupy this position. The Antipedobaptist cannot tell. He denies their right to the place. However, we will not consult his oracle, but the living oracles of God.

That they are destitute of merit is self-evident. They have done no work at all, and, therefore, they have done no good work. It has been already shown that, in justification of the refusal to infants of a place in the church, there is a most unwarrantable assumption that no saving change has been wrought in them; yet this change is not in evidence, it has not been made manifest, it does not appear. The will of God, therefore, is the sole ground of their appearance in the assembly of the saints. The foundation of confidence concerning them is in the provisions of the everlasting covenant. Respect, not to what the Lord Jesus has wrought *in them*, but what he has done *for them*, regulates their introduction into the church. And this is the only object of confidence in application for their reception, and a recognition of this is the only warrant for admission upon the part of the adult. All hope concerning any one individual is expressed by two words,—*Christ crucified*. If the infant is brought, it is *as a sinner*. If the adult comes, it is *as a sinner* also, looking for acceptance, in utter ignorance of any qualification that the infant does not possess as fully as himself. The adult, drawing near on the

footing of any spiritual attainment, is rejected of Christ and ought to be rejected by his church. The very faith which apprehends Christ ignores the possession of any good thing, or the performance of any good deed. Christ is received at once for "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,"—possessing all fulness requisite to furnish a supply of *all* our wants. The right to come, to take hold of Christ, our hope and confidence is not, in the least measure, any one good disposition, any one good action, but the call, the command of God. Every thing needed is in Christ for the adult, as it is intuitively for the infant. When years in Christ shall have passed away, still what *He is*, not what *we are even by Him*, sustains the christian's confidence.

Antipedobaptists err at the very threshold. The ground of admission into the church, they say, is not a professed confidence in what Christ has done *for us*, but what he has wrought *in us*. The first question is not, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" but "Art thou regenerated?" and the judgment of the church, that this change has taken place, constitutes the formal ground of the call to put on Christ. This is a rule that is as certain to exclude those who come as little children as to exclude the little children themselves. Union to Christ and union to his church are thus made two independent things, forgetting that by the same Spirit by which

we are baptized into Christ, we are baptized into his body. And, strange spirit of self-righteousness! the church demands higher terms of admission, than the Saviour does of acceptance.

In view of this aspect of their theory, there is no cause for surprise that those who refuse infants claim superiority to the professed followers of the Lamb, who are out of their pale, and who know no hope in which infants have not an interest.

2. The child knows nothing but as he is taught.

This supplies a very humiliating lesson to the members of Christ. Here we need line upon line. To keep the lesson ever before us, we need to have the little ones among us. It is just as true of any age as of childhood that all we need to know or can know of the kingdom of God is by revelation. No man, without a special communication, would even guess at any one of those things, which, known, constitute wisdom unto salvation. That there is forgiveness with God, by what means we obtain forgiveness, upon what principle we are accepted before God as righteous, the origin of a reformed character, the security for a happy issue of our heavenward course, and such like matters, intimately bound up with a saving relation to God, are points of doctrine that man cannot find out. They must be communicated to him. Talents, high intellectual cultivation, an acquaintance with all science and arts, bring a man no nearer to the

knowledge of spiritual things. The wisest in respect to what pertains to the world, must begin where the little child begins. "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." *

The philosopher has no means of attaining to divine wisdom but that which is employed with the child,—instruction. He must sit down and take diligent heed to the lessons of childhood. The original source of education is God, and human instrumentality the divinely appointed medium of communication. It may be a prophet or a pastor, an apostle or a teacher, an evangelist or a child, the wise man must obtain his wisdom from without; and every accession to his knowledge comes from the same source and through the same medium with the first lesson. He never rises above the position of the child. He is still a learner. "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." † The moment a man rises above the need of being taught, he has put off the distinctive livery of saints.

Hearing comes by the word of God, but *faith* comes by hearing; and the preacher is God's ordinance. Personal investigation takes no cognizance of the truth or falsehood of the divine communication, but is limited to the import of the

* 1 Corinthians iii. 18.

† 1 Corinthians viii. 2.

terms employed. Whatever may be the fulness and conclusiveness of the external evidence, by which the claims of scripture to inspiration of God, are sustained, it is the internal evidence, the Spirit and power pervading the word, which brings the conviction that leads captive every thought; and this is as fully adapted to the child as to the sage. It is an effulgence from the source of light which illuminates the understanding and impresses the heart of both alike.

There are no considerations better adapted to make and keep us humble than attention to the law, which places the child and the philosopher on the same form at the feet of Jesus, to receive the instruction of wisdom from him, through the same medium. That man who thinks he ought to occupy a higher place than the unconscious babes ("what can they know?") and refuses to sit down with them in the kingdom of God, never professionally enters into it. Far more hopeful the state of the child presented before God's altar in "the faith of the operation of God" to be baptized than the professor, whose claims to advanced knowledge do not consist with counting the little child a partner.

3. When personal consent is impossible, children are brought under solemn covenant bonds to be the Lord's and to serve him.

This is suggestive of a fundamental fact both

to parents and witnesses, as well as to the children themselves who survive to learn their position.

To Antipedobaptists the incapacity to know the nature of the bond under which they come and to consent to it, appears to make the reception of children at once unreasonable and unjust. There is a great amount of impiety in their exclusion on such ground; and their exclusion is adapted to foster an impression leading to blank and cheerless atheism. It implies a denial of an obligation to serve God, antecedent to our profession and independent of the consent upon which the profession is based. Yet this antecedent and independent obligation is recognized by every one, of every age, who draws near to God by the Spirit. His profession does not originate his obligation, but supposes that which existed before he made any profession, gave any consent, and would have rested upon him, in all its entirety, if he had never assented, never vowed. The baptism of the child, and formal subjection to the covenant, is simply acknowledging and honouring the Lord's claim, bound up as it is, under a dispensation of grace, with associations most hopeful and animating. The refusal of baptism, in the absence of consent, elevates the will of man to the throne (a doctrine very well adapted to natural depravity, and increasingly popular in all departments), and holds the authority of God in abeyance. The usual

consequences are that the unbaptized hold themselves free from all spiritual bonds, and when it is otherwise, sound doctrine triumphs over the influences of a false theory.

This doctrine of divine supremacy, in its relation to the kingdom of God, is illustrated very emphatically by the following consideration. All power is given unto the Mediator, in heaven and in earth,*—“over all flesh.”† This gift is irrespective of the character, the position, or the pre-eminence of the creature. The Father has “set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet; and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body.”‡ Thus all, high and low, bond and free, male and female, adult and infant, are placed in the hands of the Son, by the eternal Father. The consent of the parties thus subjected has nothing to do with his right of supremacy. Nothing can give greater validity to his right to rule, nor strengthen the cords, by which those who are placed under him are bound to subjection. His right and their obligation are absolute and indefeasible. The authority conferred on the Son

* Matthew xxviii. 18.

† John xvii. 2.

‡ Ephesians i. 20-23.

of Man is not *through* the consent of those placed under him, but contemplates the recognition of his royal state as an *end*. “The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son; *that all should honour the Son* even as they honour the Father.”* And again: “God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should *confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.” †

The baptismal covenant reduplicates on the Father’s deed of gift to Christ,—a gift in reward of his obedience unto death, and subservient to his communication of eternal life. Baptism is “the *answer* of a good conscience toward God,” ‡—a symbolical act by which is expressed an apprehension of God’s covenant proposed for acceptance,—the appropriation by faith and reliance on the promise of salvation to the believer. The consent of the adult, who is baptized on his profession, has no more to do with Christ’s claim and his own obligation than the consent of the infant. The consent, which is expressed, adds nothing to the mediatorial rights of Christ; and the absence of consent on the part of the infant detracts nothing from them. The adult’s consent constitutes no

* John v. 22, 23. † Phil. ii. 9–11. ‡ 1 Peter iii. 21.

element of strength in his obligation; and the infant's incapacity does not neutralize his obligation nor dilute it. There are some who consider themselves entitled to laugh at the idea of infants among the servants of God. They forget that the subjection that he demands is sometimes *immediate* and sometimes *mediate*. God does not command children to yield direct subjection to *Him*, but through the instrumentality of their parents. The child enters into the covenant of the Lord *mediately*. The parent pledges his child to the divine service; not *himself* for the child, but *the child*, in conformity with the comprehensive terms of the covenant. All to which the parent is pledged is to give the child an education adapted to his gracious position and prospects. The parent recognizes Christ's claim upon his child, and has him baptized; the adult recognizes Christ's claim upon himself, and he is baptized. In each case alike, the regal rights of Christ are the foundation-fact upon which the baptism rests, and into which the covenant and its promises merge.*

The theory, which represents the infant, unconscious and unconsenting, as therefore unjustly and absurdly brought under the obligation of a vow, is at variance with the accepted principles which regulate social life; condemns as unreasonable, absurd, foolish, the covenant of circumcision, by

* Note O.

which the infant became a debtor to keep the whole law ; the baptism, by the command of God, of the Levites who were a month old or over, by which they were sanctified to the service of the holy place ; impugns the comprehensive character of the covenants at Horeb and in the land of Moab, which assigned a common place to old and young ; would have forbidden the apostles to go into the lands of the Gentiles, without consent had of rulers supreme and subordinate, to call upon all men everywhere to repent, unless they had previously obtained an expression of their readiness to hear ; would make the duty to show forth the death of Christ, in the Lord's supper, to depend upon the apprehension of inherent qualifications ; would make the obligation to pray to turn upon a praying frame ; would forbid parents to press unwelcome lessons on the attention of reluctant children ; would interdict the Spirit of truth to sanctify and save them, "without begging permission of ignorant and graceless sinners ;" and would endorse the existence of a renovated character, where there is a perfect indifference to a profession or to baptism, perhaps an expressed intention not to make a profession or accept baptism.

The result of Antipedobaptist teaching, on the point under consideration, is to resolve the argument addressed to men into an appeal to their

selfishness. The voice of the Mediator, speaking from his throne and commanding men to repent, is powerless or despised; while his work, sufferings, glory, and intercession are resolved into a merely convenient and useful instrument of our deliverance from the wrath to come. The idea of our living *to Christ* is absorbed in that of Christ living *for us*; and the life of faith is only another form of living to ourselves, as decided as when we avowedly walked according to the course of this world. The glorious declaration, "This people have I formed for myself, that they should show forth my praise," is resolved into the perversion, "This people have I formed for themselves, that they may enjoy eternal blessedness." The *Christ* is rejected by men, who accept *Jesus*, and ignore the *Lord*.

4. Children in the church teach us the humbling lesson that, in Christ, all are equal. The race of ambitious aspirations is thus arrested at the point of starting.

In the world, how different the state, privileges, and prospects of infants! Some are born in abject poverty, to labour, depression, and contempt. Some, in affluence, to indulgence, honour, and perhaps a throne. All enter the church upon the same principle, are introduced to the possession of, or right to, the same privileges, and are prospectively heirs of the same inheritance. Neither

riches, nor social position give any title to a place in the house of God. All occupy the same platform.

So is it with every individual who enters. How needful the lesson is, the whole history of the church demonstrates; and the exclusion of the infants, whom the Lord would set in the midst of the disciples to illustrate and enforce it, only throws down the barriers to the encroachments of domineering spirits. The church of Rome, which receives the little ones into her bosom, has blotted out the lesson of humility, by refusing to admit them as children of the covenant, objects of promise and of hope; and, in common with Antipedobaptists, owning none as members but those whose regeneration is recognized; thus guaranteeing the salvation of all her children. *Her baptism regenerates.*

Early did the seeds of ambition spring. While the Saviour was on earth, the disciples were contending who should be greatest; and the sons of Zebedee were eager to obtain a promise, that one should sit on his right hand and the other on his left, in his glory. Diotrefes, who loved supremacy, exercised the faith and patience, and called for the disciplinary zeal of the apostle John. Other painful examples of the same spirit furnish large materials for history to the present hour. It is not necessary to turn to the great apostacy. We find examples even where the domination of Rome

is most loudly condemned. So difficult is it for the rich to take a place beside the poor, and the noble to demean themselves to sit with the lowly, that if Christ were in our midst, he must appear in a better garment, to be welcome to the same table with many of his professed followers, and the negro eunuch, whom Philip baptized, would not be allowed, by thousands who are looked upon as eminent for piety, to eat the Lord's supper with them.

The most powerful influences are required to be brought into constant operation to counteract this tendency to claim superiority, in some form, in the church. These are associated with our relation to Christ. The rich brother has to be taught to rejoice "in that he is made low."* Union to Christ is the only invincible conqueror of "every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God," and the consideration of this, the irresistible argument that persuades to humility. There is no earthly distinction that can be compared with the glorious place, so full of promise, occupied in common by all the saints. Is the rich man, is the sovereign, a child of God? So is the poorest, the lowest subject who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. Is he a partaker of the Spirit of Christ? So is the poorest believer. Is he an heir of an eternal inheritance? So is the beggar, a Lazarus,

* James i. 10.

that may be lying at his gate, and of whom the dogs alone seem to take any notice. Is the cultivated European or American a possessor of all these privileges or prospects? So is the Caffre, the negro, the Patagonian, to whom Christ is precious. The rich man brings his wealth into the church, but it is no longer *his*. It belongs to the Master. Power, erudition, money, are only talents committed to the christian, to be appropriated to the advancement of the kingdom of heaven, under the solemn warning, that he who is "not faithful in that which is another man's," cannot expect to be put in possession of what he may call his own.*

On the other hand, "the brother of low degree" is taught to have respect to the honourable position, which the Head of the church has assigned to him, and "rejoice in that he is exalted."† Self-abasement is every man's duty. Self-debasement is a sin. To be ashamed of mere poverty, is to be ashamed of Him who had not where to lay his head. To be ashamed of a low place in the world, is to undervalue "spiritual blessings in heavenly places." To mourn over the reproach of men, which is endured without cause, is to under-rate fellowship with God. It is a mistaken compliment to riches and rank, to put the members of the church under their feet. The highest honour that

* Luke xvi. 12.

† James i. 9.

can be conferred upon a king is to own and treat him as a child of God and an heir of an incorruptible crown. Have not the rich and elevated temptations and snares enough to contend with, arising out of their social position, without their humble brethren setting snares for them. "Render fear to whom fear is due; honour to whom honour." But that fear, that honour must not be beyond the rule. The creature cannot have the fear which is due to God only; the honour which is due to God only. Very justly, but very rudely, according to modern christianity, did Andrew Melville address the king of Scotland. "There is king James, the head of the commonwealth; and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member." *

Still as human nature is what it is, and there is a tendency to assumption on the one hand, and to subserviency on the other, it is not enough that we should be told that all who are members of Christ, are members one of another; that the foot is not less a member of the body, because it is not the hand or the eye. We must have the doctrine presented before us in a form that is visible and tangible, and is constantly before us: and this is done in the persons of children in the church,

* Hetherington.

brought into close contact, and alike free from assumption or subserviency, till the pride or meanness of parents teach them to soar or to cringe. In the world they are never brought into that juxtaposition which implies common privilege; and if all the little ones on earth, as infants, were brought before us they would not supply the example wanted. Children, as children, would warrant all the gradations of power and prerogative, of subjection and servility, that worldlings desire to introduce. It is a mere imagination that we contemplate the naked infant. We never think of adult or infant but in connection with their surroundings, unless we wander into the shadowy region where the metaphysician delights to dwell.

5. Children obviously need constant care and support, prayer and watchfulness, instruction and restraint.

Out of the church, parents are pledged to nothing and are left to the impulses of the natural affection, that impels the beasts or birds to feed and protect their young; but in the church, are pledged to bring their children up "in the discipline and doctrine of the Lord." Having a corrupt nature, prone to evil, subject, as soon as they are capable of going forth, to various and hurtful influences,—to counteract the evil, children require unceasing and anxious attention.

Now this is precisely the state of members of

the church without exception. “Of *such* is the kingdom.” There is not one who does not need the watchful, and constant, and prayerful attention of the whole membership, individually and collectively. “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” Every member is, or ought to be, an object of his brother’s care. We are, accordingly, commanded to *teach* and *admonish* one another,*—to *exhort* one another,†—to *pray* one for another.‡ Not to *rebuke* an erring brother is to hate him and suffer sin upon him.§ We are also relatively required to “*confess our faults* one to another,” and all of us to “be subject one to another,” with the significant addition, to be “clothed with humility.” ||

It is not found more distasteful, felt to be more humiliating to the elevated and cultivated, to condescend to men of low estate, to fraternize with mean men in Christ, than to acknowledge the need of the sympathetic care of the brethren, even of the least, and their right or duty to teach or reprove, as the case may require. Pride revolts against this watching, admonishing, or, as it is called, intrusive meddling. Those who are subjected to this really christian kindness, often think themselves more qualified to teach than needing to be taught; to direct, than needing to be re-

* Colossians iii. 16.

† Hebrews iii. 13.

‡ James v. 16.

§ Leviticus xix. 17.

|| 1 Peter v. 5.

strained and corrected. Not unfrequently,—and Antipedobaptists are familiar with this without apprehending the cause,—the character and discipline of whole churches are laid prostrate at the feet of the superciliousness, that refuses to submit to the law of Christ's house, the provision which the Master has made for promoting the confidence, consistency, improvement, and prosperity of his servants. One abandons the place of worship, because the minister has said something which applies to him, and he thinks it must have been intended for him. Another has been reprov'd by his brother, considers himself injured, and withdraws from the Lord's table. A third thinks himself too good to fraternize with some one who has been received into the church, and he forsakes her fellowship.

Now all this supposes great ignorance, and is traceable to a want of humility. The most advanced in spiritual gifts, and in the divine life, are not above the need of the counsels, oral or exemplary, furnished by the least in the kingdom of God. Those who walk most consistently in the Spirit, are the most ready to confess this, and to receive with all humility and gratitude the fraternal attention, and loving carefulness of such as fall far short of their gifts, and who would cheerfully sit at their footstool to learn. When Paul publicly reprov'd Peter, because he was to

be blamed, Peter is silent,* and subsequently bears testimony to the epistles of that “beloved brother,” although one of these epistles publishes his own inconsistency, and the severe rebuke he had received. † When Barnabas, influenced more by natural attachment, than respect for the interests of religion, refused the remonstrance of Paul and left him, we read no more of that “Son of consolation” in the inspired records of the church. ‡ So dangerous is it, and displeasing to God, to refuse the admonitions of brethren, from private and personal considerations. “The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee : nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary : and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour ;—that there should be no schism in the body ; but the members should have the same care one for another.” §

The remedy against the pride that hinders us to be subject one to another is clearly, intuitively exhibited in the children. We direct the eye of the jealous and insubordinate brother to the little ones, and say, “Brother, you know if you do not receive the kingdom of God, as this little child in

* Galatians ii. 11–14.

† 2 Peter iii. 15, 16.

‡ Acts xv. 37–39.

§ 1 Corinthians xii. 21–25.

the midst of us, you cannot enter therein. Your own profession binds you to humble yourself as this little one. Does it not need to be taught? to be watched? to be reproved? to be restrained? to be ruled? Are you like it? Would you not wish to be like it? When you see the little children insubordinate, stubborn, rebellious, do you not lament this painful evidence of natural depravity? Do you not recommend the application of the rod?"

The ministry and other ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper, are not more essential elements of a scriptural ecclesiastical organization than are the little children. They are Christ's demonstrative lesson of the christian's position and obligations:—of our need of the righteousness of God;—of our need of primary and progressive instruction;—of our absolute (not originally self-imposed) obligation to be the Lord's and serve him;—of our equal place in Christ;—and our dependance for safety, integrity, comfort, and growth, upon the instrumental care, fidelity, and affection of our brethren.

Received into the fellowship of the saints with us, the presence of the children, as accepted members of the church, examples of self-denial and humility, to be seen, observed, is necessary in all places, in which we are looking for spiritual blessings, and approach to do homage to the King of Sion. In the place where prayer is wont to be made, their presence is indispensable to a complete assembly.

In the private fellowship meeting for praise, prayer, and conversation, we ought to find them. It is an outrage upon all christian propriety, consistency, intelligence, to speak of family worship, when the children are sporting around and out of doors, or to have so little respect to domestic order that they are first disposed in bed. In assemblies where professing parents cannot consistently appear, the children ought not to be seen; and if evening meetings for religious purposes, whether public or private, are inconsistent with the presence of children, the sooner they are discharged, as a rule, the better.

“The living, the living he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.” *

* Isaiah xxxviii. 19.

NOTES.



NOTE A.—PAGE 117.

No example of Infant Baptism.

The extension and prolongation of the baptismal controversy is due to the discussion of the irrelevant question, "Are adults to be baptized, or infants?" A precise statement of the real question between Pedobaptists and Antipedobaptists, and the keeping of it constantly before the mind, would go far to settle the point in dispute. The rambling and irrelevant reasonings of the opponents of infant baptism are treated with too much respect. Their great strength lies in the following particulars. 1. They keep out of view the fact that Pedobaptists hold the doctrine of adult baptism. It is with reluctance that we would bring the charge of design in this matter. Yet it is certain that "the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," (Ephesians iv. 14), are means which the advocates of error have employed, to embarrass and captivate such as are at once ignorant and unsuspecting. That the Spirit has placed those sinister means of success before the churches, is evidence that, in any age, those who desire to know the truth, to profess it, and to grow in conformity with Christ, should be upon their guard against "deceitful workers:" and it would be a very liberal concession that Antipedobaptists are the *only* honest men and honest controversialists in the world. Whether from design or self-deception, the suppression of the truth that we are not the enemies of the baptism of adults,

has all the effect of deceit and craft. 2. The cases of adult baptism recorded in scripture are prominently brought forward as opposed to the doctrine of Pedobaptists. This is also deceptive. 3. Antipedobaptists produce the want of a definite example of the baptism of an infant, as decisive evidence against it. They shrink from the examination of their own position in relation to infants. They are very unwilling to deal with the want of an example of the baptism of grown children, whose parents were church-members, when the children were infants. It is amusing to mark the irritation of Dr. Carson, when, in reasoning with Dr. Wardlaw, he is constrained to look the fact in the face. Dr. Wardlaw had said, as quoted by Dr. Carson himself,—“Let it be further considered that we have no recorded instance of the baptism of any grown person, that had been born of Jewish converts, or of Gentile proselytes to the faith of Christ.” His reply opens with the ludicrous exclamation,—“This would try the patience of Job.” It was too much for Dr. Carson’s evidently, and would be trying to the patience of any of his brethren. After the thousand times uttered or printed banter, “Show us an example of infant baptism. You cannot. There is not one,” it is very inconvenient to find that they can be twitted with the same defect in their own argument. The matter is disposed of by the doctor very briefly, and, I suppose, very satisfactorily to himself and all who wish to be satisfied. His own exposition of the commission furnishes the reply. “Is there any need of such an example in order to show that the children of such persons should be baptized when they believe?—Is not the law of the commission sufficient to reach them? Is it not sufficiently clear, He that believeth and is baptized?—There is not the smallest difference between receiving the children of a heathen, and the children of the most devoted saint.” (Page 301.) We also can say, “What need?” and appeal to the law regulating the reception of children from the days of Abraham. The commission will be examined in the text.

According to Dr. Carson, the children of believers occupy

no higher ground than the children of Pagans. All his brethren will hardly be willing to go with him ; and his phrasology tempts one to think he would rather have been spared the necessity of making the declaration. But he had encountered a hard squall, and he must put his craft before the wind. It perplexes Antipedobaptists to know what to do with children excluded from the church ; and what place to assign them. They are not all willing, with Dr. Carson, to deliver them over to the tender mercies of the devil. Some have, some would have, some kind of dedication, by which the little ones would be brought before the church. Sanctified affection is too strong for the cold logic of the theorist.

John Bunyan was an Antipedobaptist, and has given us a wonderful, and wonderfully instructive narrative of a pilgrimage from the city of Destruction to Zion. He intended to set before us an Antipedobaptist pilgrimage ; but his sound common sense and piety made him happily inconsistent. *Christian* is an Antipedobaptist, and, setting out, leaves not only wife but children behind him. But, subsequently to her husband's death, *Christiana* also sets out on pilgrimage with a young girl, named *Mercy*. Happy for her that her husband was dead, or he might have compelled her to leave the children in the city of Destruction. Dr. Carson would certainly. True : the children were capable of walking, and very naturally are disposed to go with the mother. Their remarks and conduct show that they could not be very *big*. All come to the wicket-gate. They are agreed that *Christiana*, being oldest, should knock for all. "She knocked and knocked again," but there is no present response. "They" (whether all or only *Christiana*, as their representative, we are not told), "thought of knocking again, and knocked more vehemently than they did at first." Now the keeper of the gate opens. *Christiana* is the only speaker and intercedes generally for all and in particular for her sweet babes. Her the keeper "took by the hand and led her in," and with her (for the children made no personal application), her little ones, making the instructive remark,—“Suffer little children

to come unto me,"—omitting, however, the very significant addition furnished by authority,—“and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;” but *Mercy is shut out*. *Christiana* had spoken for her before, and after her own admission interceded for her. There is, however, no admission for *Mercy*, as for the children under the hand of *Christiana*. *Mercy* must knock for herself, and on her own knocking is admitted. All this does not look Antipedobaptist-like at all. Any Pedobaptist would accept the narrative as that of a friend. But Antipedobaptists are so good at supplementing scripture history, to make it consist with their views, that I have no doubt they will be able to eke out honest John’s story, and give it a thorough Antipedobaptist face. However, I hope they will allow the children to pass the gate on the footing of our Lord’s words respecting those that are *brought* to him.

Antipedobaptists are often far better than their principles. Once I heard one of their ministers, and a very excellent man, affectionate and loveable, at the bedside of a dying infant, pray, “O Lord, give the parents of this child faith to lay” (or take) “hold of thy holy covenant for the salvation of its soul.” A private member of one of their churches, intelligent and a scholar, wrote me, on the death of one of his children to this effect, if not in these words, “I early dedicated my child to God. May I not hope that its early removal is a sign that that dedication has been accepted?” Put these two things together, and the Pedobaptist has nothing more to ask, than the instituted rite, the pledge of God’s faithfulness, and the expression of faith in the applicant for a place among the saints. They make up the whole of the Pedobaptist creed.

NOTE B.—PAGE 118.

Permanence of Law.

Dr. Carson makes merry, commenting on the words of Luke,—“When they believed Philip, preaching the things

concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts viii. 12.) He says, "It is remarkable that the account specifies *women*. Is it not remarkable that the Holy Spirit should be so precise as to women, yet not say a word of infants? This is unaccountable, if they were baptized. How many volumes of controversy would the addition of a word have prevented? How liberal was the Spirit of inspiration as to the information about the baptism of women! But, on the supposition that infants were baptized, how parsimonious with respect to the baptism of infants!" (Pages 289, 290.) Not one page of controversy would have been prevented: for the doctor would have appealed to the commission, upon the authority of which he would have baptized women, if there had been no specification, which he gives us to understand he did not need, and proceeded to prove that infants did not mean unconscious babes, but children of age and intelligence. We should have had a triumphant appeal to 2 Timothy iii. 15, to prove (a very trifling perversion of the text would have served) that an infant (*βρεφος*, *brepfos*) may be one who is capable of knowing the scriptures.

"It is remarkable that the account specifies *women*," and omits children, but it is not "unaccountable," even "on the supposition that infants were baptized." The Spirit of inspiration is not *parsimonious*, but only *economical*. The pages of inspiration are not to be encumbered with needless information. Women, under the former dispensation, were not recipients of the initiatory rite of God's covenant, and the omission of specific reference to them would have left the impression, that they were still to occupy the same subordinate position; but the admission of children was the *law*, had been the law from the beginning, and the introduction of reference to them would have produced confusion of thought, or the impression that they are admitted under a new law, or upon a new principle;—suppose Dr. Carson's special commission which, he tells us, he would have accepted over the head of the general commission, which he is positive excludes infants.

It is not necessary that we should be told, every now and again, that a law is still binding, when it has not been repealed either wholly or partially. When no reference is made to it, we take for granted its continued obligation. It is not necessary that we should be told that a law once promulgated is observed. We assume its observance, unless we have been made acquainted with its general or partial, its constant or occasional, infraction.—Thorne's "Infant Baptism" may be consulted (pages 133-137) with advantage, on this subject. He says (page 135), "As an illustration, we observe, that circumcision, which must have been of daily occurrence among the Jews, is mentioned only at long intervals in their records. From Genesis xvii. 11, to xxxiv. 15, a period of 158 years, it is not mentioned. From Genesis xxxiv. 15, to Exodus iv. 26, a period of 340 years, it is not mentioned. From Joshua v. 8, to Jeremiah iv. 4, a period of 839 years, it is not mentioned; and from Jeremiah ix. 25, to Luke i. 5-9, a period of 614 years, it is equally unnoticed in God's word."

The following considerations, to which Thorne only alludes, will lead to a similar inference. The weekly Sabbath was a divine institution to man from the day of his creation. The recognition of its obligation by the Israelites, before the promulgation of the law from Sinai; the reason assigned for its observance in the fourth commandment; the terms in which Paul alludes to it in the epistle to the Hebrews; the emphatic designation, the *Lord's rest*, by which it is distinguished from other sabbatical institutions; and our Lord's word's, "The Sabbath was made for *man*;" go to establish this: and it would be a very unwarrantable conclusion from the almost total suppression of any reference to it in scripture, that the sons of God, during the patriarchal age, did not observe the weekly Sabbath. From the days of Moses till the end of the Babylonish captivity, the only historical evidence, of the social observance of the Sabbath among the Israelites, we have, is derived from the question, which the husband of the Shunamite put to his wife, surprised at her

sudden purpose to visit the prophet Elisha, although there can be no doubt of its permanent obligation,—“Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” (2 Kings iv. 23.)

The silence of scripture does not imply the abrogation of a law, but rather its permanent obligation. We baptize children according to a standing law, under the obligation of which the silence of scripture leaves us; and, according to an existing law, we would have left women unbaptized, if the lawgiver had not shown us that the law, by which women were exempted from the initiatory rite of the covenant, had been superseded.

NOTE C.—PAGE 119.

Claims of the Old Testament.

The refusal or reluctance of Antipedobaptists to allow a reference of the dispute between them and Pedobaptists to the Old Testament is singularly unreasonable. They hold that baptism is a New Testament ordinance, and that we must look to the New Testament *alone* for information on the subject. But if the Old Testament knows nothing of baptism, says nothing about it, if it affords to Pedobaptists a childish gratification to turn over the leaves, they might well afford to concede it. It will do them no harm. Where there is nothing, nothing can be found. If the Old Testament is silent, Pedobaptists can get no help from it.

But although the word *baptism* is not found in the Old Testament, nor, as they suppose, does the ordinance indicated by it belong to the former dispensation, yet a little, it may be a perverse ingenuity draws certain troublesome inferences from facts and principles furnished by the Old Testament, and Antipedobaptists are afraid of them. These facts and principles point so directly to infant baptism, that it is manifest they would be gratified, not to be brought into contact with them at all. Why shrink from an inference? A legitimate conclusion from acknowledged premises is as

good as a direct and transparent enunciation. I may make a statement, from which a conclusion may be fairly drawn, for which I am not prepared, and, therefore, not prepared to admit. But the Spirit of God not only knows what he has said, but also all valid conclusions involved in his statement : and a legitimate conclusion from an inspired proposition, has all the force of inspiration. To refuse the conclusion fairly drawn, is to refuse the premises. This will hardly be denied.

Recourse is had to a distinction between moral and positive institutions. That there is an important difference between *moral* precepts, which have their origin in the nature of God, and are, therefore, permanent, and *positive* laws, which depend upon the will of God, and are abrogated at his pleasure, is easily admitted. Still I am at a loss to understand why an inference may not be drawn from a positive as well as from a moral precept ; and if there be laws of the Old Testament that have been abolished, the deductions from them fall with them, unless they rest upon some other foundation. When I offer a sacrifice according to the law, I conclude that I am to be saved by substitution, and by the death of the substitute ; and if God had simply abolished sacrifices, I would conclude that, henceforward, I am to be accepted through some other medium. I believe in salvation by the death of a substitute, not because sacrifices were instituted, but because I find the real substitute in Christ, to whom every sacrifice pointed. I do not baptize my children, because the Jews circumcised theirs, but I baptize them *for the same reason* that the Jews circumcised theirs. I have no great objection to the assertion that baptism has come in the room of circumcision, as those who make it intend nothing but what I approve. But there is a want of precision in it. Circumcision takes hold of the promise of him who was to come, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Baptism takes hold of the promise of the Spirit to apply the benefits of redemption. The sacrifice is followed by a baptism with blood, or with blood and water, or with water to which is added the ashes of a burnt heifer. The consummation of

every sacrifice is the sacrifice of Christ. No more blood is to be shed. The sacrifice falls to the ground, and with it the sprinkling of blood, of blood and water, and of ashes. There remains the washing with pure water. The sacrifice is past. The application is still an object of hope. Baptism sustains the same relation to a profession now, that circumcision did of old. The two ordinances contemplate the same object from different stand-points. One contemplates Christ to come. The other, Christ already come. They are not, therefore, strictly speaking, the one a substitute for the other.

But why all this wriggling on the part of our opponents? "The Old Testament has nothing to do with baptism, which is a christian ordinance." "An inference cannot be admitted, as baptism is a positive institution." Do they want to get rid of the Old Testament altogether? I fear they do. Every member of the Antipedobaptist churches does not, I am heartily and joyfully satisfied. But Antipedobaptist allegiance to the God of the Old Testament is very equivocal. I am unable to find definite information of the place assigned by them to the Old Testament. A statement made by an Antipedobaptist minister, on a very public occasion,—the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Acadia College, in Nova Scotia, a denominational institution,—in the presence of professors, alumni, and friends,—published in "The Messenger," a denominational organ,—and uncontradicted, so far as I have learned, by professors, editor, or readers,—introduces it as a glorious distinction of their churches, that they "hold" the New Testament to be a sufficient rule of faith and practice. When we turn to Wayland's "Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches" (pages 85, 86), we read, "The fundamental principle on which our difference from other evangelical denominations depends is this: we profess to take for our guide, in all matters of religious belief and practice, the *New Testament*, the *whole* New Testament, and *nothing but* the New Testament. Whatever we find there, we esteem binding upon the conscience. What is not there commanded, is not binding." The italics are the author's.

It is no wonder that he should have occasion to remark as he does in a note (page 92), that "several writers in commenting on these remarks, have thought it their duty to state that the author denies the inspiration of the Old Testament. To this imputation he does not think himself called upon to reply. He, however, believes the New Testament to be the standard by which the preachings and teachings of the former revelation are to be judged, and that, thus, it is our only *rule* of faith and practice." Of course, then, the "preachings and teachings of the former revelation" are no *rule* to us, and it is of little moment to settle the question of inspiration. There is one word in the last quotation which perplexes me. That word is *judged*. If he had used *interpreted*, all would have been plain. But this cannot be an oversight. The note seems written with studied care and precision, with "an intention to discuss this subject at large as soon as previous engagements will permit."—*Judged*. The honest interpretation of Wayland's language can assign no higher place to the Old Testament, inspiration notwithstanding, than to Wesley, to Chalmers, to Candlish, or to Wayland himself. The works of none of these are a *rule*. They are to be *judged* by the New Testament, say, and, as far as they agree with it, are to be accepted, and, as far as they do not agree with it, are to be refused. The passage has a doubtful and evasive aspect. "Doctrines and commandments of men" (same note), are *darkness*, the "Old Testament" is *twilight*, and the "New Testament" is the *meridian sun*. What are his ideas of inspiration? All that he has said is perfectly consistent with the opinion that there are errors in the Old Testament to be corrected by the New Testament; that the writers may, in some cases, have been mistaken, and that the New Testament writers, instead of being interpreters of the mind of the Spirit, speaking in the Old Testament, have rather quoted his words by way of accommodation, and exhibited doctrines which the Old Testament was never intended to teach, and which the legitimate interpretation of its language would not sustain.—"Does not think himself

called upon to reply" to the imputation! Postpones the discussion of the subject at large till an indefinite period! His dark hints are well calculated to leave the impression that he does not like to place his ideas on the subject before the public in their naked simplicity. His ideas of inspiration might not be accepted as agreeing to the doctrine of inspiration at all.

When the imputation of the denial of the inspiration of the Old Testament, which Wayland's words almost forced his readers to bring, was published in Nova Scotia, it was indignantly repelled by Antipedobaptists, and an appeal was lodged to their doctrinal articles. I have before me the "Articles of the Faith and Practice of the Churches of Christ, composing the Nova Scotia Baptist Associations," and I do not find any thing more definite than the words of Wayland. Article 3. "The holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, are the word of God, in which he has given us our only rule of faith and practice." "*In which.*" It is not said that these scriptures, being the word of God, are our *rule* of faith and practice, but our *rule* is *in them*. For any thing here stated, they may hold that the Old Testament, *as a rule*, is entirely superseded, and this is exactly Dr. Wayland's doctrine. Men of talent, learned, and logicians, as Dr. Wayland is, must know that if the Old Testament is a rule, not to be *judged* but *interpreted* by the New Testament, their system must fall to the ground.

It is full time that the Antipedobaptist churches should be obliged to speak out their views of inspiration, and in what sense they accept the Old Testament as the word of God. They pervade the Pedobaptist churches. The general declaration, that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, satisfies unsuspecting hearers, and the suppression of the doctrine that the Old Testament is not a *rule*, is not binding on the conscience, has all the effect of a deliberate and ruinous deception. Let them publish it abroad that the Old Testament is not *a rule*, with whatever honours they may commit it to the tomb and erect its monument, and

their influence would be much crippled, the heart and house of every real christian would be closed against them, *as professors*; and all that are worth retaining, all who give life and power to their churches, would flee from them as from an earthquake.

In the meantime, I offer some suggestions upon the claims of the Old Testament, under this dispensation.

1. If the Old Testament is not a *rule*, neither is the New. All who refuse the one, refuse the other. The words of an apostle are decisive of this. "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Peter iii. 1, 2.) Observe (1), These things were written after the day of Pentecost, after the introduction of the christian dispensation, to the churches of the last days, to *us*. (2.) The apostle manifests great solicitude to keep us in remembrance of our obligation, and of the *rule* by which it is determined and ordered. (3.) He ascribes no higher place to the commandments of the apostles than to the words of the prophets. (4.) He limits not the obligation to observe either the words of the prophets or the commandment of the apostles. Every word, every commandment, is to be had in remembrance. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans xv. 3, 4.) "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." (Luke x. 16.) It is evident, from these considerations, that Dr. Wayland, and, if he rightly interprets their principles, the Antipedobaptists, in refusing the Old Testament as a *rule*, differ from the apostle, who enjoins it as a rule to christians, as authoritative as the New Testament.

2. So far is the New Testament from being a standard, by which the Old Testament is to be judged, it is not an original and independent revelation at all. It is simply an *inspired*

and *authoritative* exposition of the Old Testament scriptures, with relation to Jesus of Nazareth, as the Christ. It brings before us no new doctrine, no new moral code, no new ground of acceptance before God, no new way of access to God, no new principle of divine life, no new bond of union among the children of God, no new object of hope. A new face is not given to Moses, but the veil is taken away, and those things, exhibited in a mystery, are unfolded to us as having their realization in Jesus, the expected Messiah, seen of old through a veil, but now beheld with uncovered face. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) The Jews enjoyed, to use Dr. Wayland's illustration, the *twilight*, and we enjoy the *meridian sun*, but we have the same landscape to contemplate. When the Lord, by the prophet, proclaims, "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth;" and by the apostle, "Behold, I create all things new;" the comparison is not suggested between the old and new dispensations, but between the past and future state of the world with relation to the church. The consummation is yet future, as is manifest from the language of John, and a result flowing from the administration of an exalted Saviour, but not realized in the change of dispensation. Of all vain-glorious dreams, it is the most vainglorious, that we are to find the New Jerusalem in the Antipedobaptist churches.

Paul refers to a time when not much of the New Testament had been written, and, therefore, refers chiefly to the Old Testament, when he says, "The holy scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy iii. 15-17.) This testimony to the character, and claims, and object of the Old Testament was given many years after the introduction of this dispensation, and immediately addressed to an approved teacher in the church. The Lord himself informs the Jews that the Old Testament testified of him and was therefore to be searched; and the reason of their dis-

belief of him was their disbelief of Moses. (John v. 39, 46, 47.) No man could adopt a more effectual method of leading others to neglect the Old Testament than to deny that it is a *rule*.

Except in the prophetic parts of the New Testament, no one of the writers professes to be the bearer of an original and independent communication from God; nor do we find the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord," in the whole of the New Testament, except in quotations of the scriptures of the prophets. Upon what authority does an apostle claim attention, and the reception of his message?—His inspiration? Not once.—His miracles? Not once. His appeal is to the already confessed word of God; and every appeal is made in a manner evidently intended to produce the conviction that, if his teachings are not sustained by the Old Testament, his claim to inspiration is forfeited.

Does not our Lord appeal, in vindication of his doctrine and practice, to the Old Testament? From the manner in which our Lord and his apostles deal with it, it is manifest to every unprejudiced understanding that they would give a direct contradiction to Dr. Wayland. He would say, "The Old Testament is to be *judged* by the New." They would say, "Nay. The New Testament is to be judged by the Old;" and if the character and doctrine of Jesus, set forth by evangelists and apostles, do not quadrature with the things "which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning" him (Luke xxiv. 44), then is Jesus an impostor, and the New Testament a cunningly-devised fable. The blessed Jesus would say so; and when he had occasion to set forth his person, character, and work, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded, in *all the scriptures*" of the Old Testament, "the things concerning himself." (Luke xxiv. 27.)

3. The New Testament, as a whole, is unintelligible without the Old. This hardly needs an illustrative remark. There is so constant reference to persons, things, places, events, respecting which the details are found only in the Old

Testament, that we must have it or a living expositor to whom it is known, to enable us to read the New Testament intelligently. To take one example. "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise." (Galatians iv. 28.) Who was Isaac? Whose son? where was he born? Where did he live? What was his character? What is meant by being a child of promise? What is the promise? For answers to all these questions we must come to the Old Testament, unless we have recourse to inference.

Men are often, unconsciously, under a delusion with reference to this matter. They suppose they are capable of reading the New Testament intelligently and profitably without the Old. They forget how much they have learned from parents, preachers, conversation, of which no account is taken: and unhappily there are many who are satisfied with very inexact knowledge of any thing, and especially of things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

I add to this note a few lines from the "American Theological Review" (Vol. III., No. 2, page 290). "What now shall we think of a faith or of ordinances, which find the whole word of God troublesome, and so much so, that it is easier to reject that wholeness of the word than the favourite opinion? What shall we think of a piety that boasts of its rejection of Moses and the prophets, or finds in the gospel that which makes the law useless? Can any man truly love one part of the divine word, while rejecting or even dishonouring any other part? 'The song of Moses and of the Lamb,' is the song of the law and the gospel."

Colenso, Bishop of Natal, has pronounced much of the Old Testament, a *fiction—not from God*; of course refuses to submit to it as a *rule*. We call him an *infidel*. Dr. Wayland and his brethren *acknowledge* all the Old Testament to be the *word of God*, and refuse to submit to it as a *rule*. We call them —. You are safe beside the man, whose leprosy covers all his skin, from head to foot. *He is clean*. (Lev. xiii. 12, 13.)

NOTE D.—PAGE 139.

Baptism of Infants involved in Family-baptisms.

The resolute appeal of Pedobaptists to the baptism of households is almost as annoying to Dr. Carson, as their urgent demand of an example of the baptism, upon personal profession, of one born of professors. He says (page 307), "The pertinacity with which our opponents continue to rest on the households, is a discredit to their good sense, as well as their candour. There is no axiom in mathematics more clear, than that the households are nothing to the purpose of infant baptism —It is useless to reason with any who are so perverse as to deny what is self-evident. Their disease cannot be cured by argument." This is very alarming. If we continue to press the baptism of households, we must forfeit our claim to *good sense* and *candour*. Our pertinacity is an incurable disease. Like any other disease, *argument* will have no effect upon it. However, we are in very respectable company; and if Antipedobaptist preachers and writers had not succeeded in impressing their dupes with the idea that there is neither common sense nor common honesty against them, they have few arguments that would avail them much. The seven locks of an Antipedobaptist's head are the depreciation of the talents, the literature, the integrity, or the piety of those who do not bow down before his idol. I shall make as large concessions as I can with honesty, to save my head, or my good name, but I fear it will be of little use, unless I grant that there is neither much sense, nor much piety and fear of God beyond his pale.

We cannot press collective terms very closely. There may be infants in families, yet the baptism of families would not incontrovertibly prove the baptism of the infants. Nations certainly include infants, yet we could no more infer from the baptism of nations that the infants were baptized, than from the command, "Preach the gospel to every creature," that we must join St. Anthony on the sea-shore, in preaching to the fishes, and then turn round and deliver a homily to the

rocks : although both fishes and rocks are *creatures*. Indeed, if we were to urge general terms rigidly, we might be compelled to grant to the Philippian jailer, in the baptism of "*all his*," the baptism of his domestic animals, if he had any. Besides, we are not sure that there were infants in the households said to have been baptized. Still if it were necessary to prove it, we could do it as easily as Dr. Carson proves that in two of the families, mentioned in scripture, there were none but adults,—by a round and defiant assertion. "Two of them are expressly represented as believing families." (Page 309.) As this is stated in opposition to the allegation that there may have been infants, his believer and adult are the same. He forgot that, according to the rule to which we are rigorously bound, his *believing family* may have included infants.

But it is not necessary to prove nor suppose that there were infants in any of the families. Dr. Carson thinks otherwise. He is not bound to prove that all the members of the baptized households were adults and believers, but we are bound to prove the presence of infants, and, specifically, that they were baptized. Hard measure! He binds heavy burdens and lays them on our shoulders, but he will not put a finger to them. Instead of allowing him to make the commission a stalking-horse behind which he is to conquer every difficulty, we shall take the liberty of testing his interpretation of the commission, by other scriptures.

There is one fact patent to all. The faith of Lydia and of the jailer is declared in connection with the baptism of their families. By special pleading Dr. Carson endeavours to establish the faith of all the members. We know the jailer believed. We know the word was preached *to all in his house*. We do not know that any one of them believed. We know that "*all his*" were baptized. This "*all his*" is a notable expression coming after a reference "to all that were in his house,"—Paul's auditors. That "all that were in his house," and "*all his*," are identical, remains to be proved by some future Carson. In the circumstances, it is morally

certain that there were many in his house on that eventful night, who were not "*his*." We know that Lydia believed. We do not know that any of her household believed. We know that her "*house*" were baptized. Here is a singular reticence. What can it mean? An authority, which all the admirers of Dr. Carson's logical acumen will respect, states,— "It is the duty of a christian to learn every thing that the scriptures record; and it is equally his duty to remain in the most obstinate ignorance of every thing that they do not reveal. ("History of Providence," by Alexander Carson, A.M., page 9.) Take the rule. It is a good one. We are, in duty, bound to admit the faith of Lydia and of the jailer. It is revealed. We are, in duty, bound to be *obstinately ignorant* of the faith of any one of Lydia's house,—to be *obstinately ignorant* of the faith of any one of the jailer's. It is not revealed. More than this. We are bound to take for granted that it did not exist, because it is not recorded, and that, consequently, all the jailer's, all of Lydia's house, whatever was their age or character, were baptized *with him* or *with her*. I leave it to our opponents to settle the *age*. The rule of Alexander Carson, A.M., Tobermore, settles the *conclusion*.

This ought to satisfy the Antipedobaptist, as Dr. Carson must have had Dr. Wayland's Old Testament inspiration, to be *judged* by the New Testament. Still, much as I respect Dr. Carson's character and abilities, many of whose writings I have read with great delight, I look to a higher inspiration than his, and a more trustworthy rule than his.

There are few persons who do not believe that Melchisedec was a man, and must have had both a father and a mother, must have been born and must have died, and may have had descendants. He was a great man, a king and a priest, but still a *man*. The record, however, makes no mention of either father, or mother, or child. No reference is made to their existence, and, accordingly, he is treated as "without father, without mother, without descent." (Hebrews vii. 3.) His birth and death are not recorded, and Paul is "*obstinately*

ignorant" of either. His interpretation of the suppression of all allusion to his birth or youth, his age or death, is that he had "neither beginning of days nor end of life." Christ is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Verse 17) The whole argument of Paul, in support of the perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ, is founded on the assumption that Melchisedec had neither father nor mother nor descent, had neither beginning of days nor end of life; and that assumption is founded on the total silence of scripture record of his filiation or paternity, his birth or death. Does the apostle reason correctly? He speaks as he is moved by the Holy Ghost. Does the Spirit reason correctly? I, in deep reverence, adopt his logic. The Spirit has suppressed all historical reference to the faith of any member of Lydia's house, to the faith of any one of "all" the jailer's. To me it has no existence, and can have no connection with their admission to baptism. Say all were infants, if you please. Say all were adults, if you please. Say they were mixed; some, infants; some, adults; if you please. Solve real or factitious difficulties, as you please. The facts stand thus:—Lydia believed, and "she was baptized, and her *household*." The jailer believed, and "was baptized, he and *all his* straightway." (Acts xvi. 15, 32.) It is just as impious to conjure up reluctant witnesses to the faith of the members of those families, to sustain a theory, and set aside infant baptism, as to assign plausible reasons for dragging in the filiation or paternity of Melchisedec, to prove that the apostle reasons falsely. The perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ, as supported by an appeal to the priesthood of Melchisedec, could be controverted upon evidence as plausible, as valid, as that employed to set aside the doctrine of infant baptism, incorporated in the record of the baptism of the families of Lydia and of the jailer of Philippi.

NOTE E.—PAGE 144.

Apostolic addresses to Parents and Children.

In replying to Dr. Wardlaw's discussion of the passages

introduced in the text, Dr. Carson states (page 302),—"When he (the apostle) addresses the children, he addresses all the members of the church who had fathers; but not one of these fathers might be in the church. When he addresses fathers, he addresses all the members of the church who had children; but not one of those children might be in the church.—The fathers addressed may not be the fathers of the children addressed; and the children addressed may not be the children of the fathers addressed." All this is perfectly obvious if Antipedobaptist churches are christian churches. This assumes that his theory of baptism and of the composition of the church is right: and the attentive reader will not fail to remark that this assumption tacitly underlies his apparently most decisive answers to arguments in favour of infant baptism. But his supposition is utterly inconsistent with fact or possibility upon Pedobaptist principles. Let it be first proved that his theory is right, and his positions will be unhesitatingly admitted, although we must still hold the terms of the apostolic addresses to be very inappropriate; but the positions cannot be admitted in support of what they assume.

Again (page 303): "No man who speaks correctly can say, that Ephesians vi. 1, and Colossians iii. 20, are expressly directed to any but believers (church-members)? But we can teach the most disobedient" (he obviously means unconnected with the church), "their duty from these passages." He overlooks, or failed to note, that our success implies submission to the authority of Christ, and *obedience is in the church*. "Could he (Dr. Wardlaw) not apply the injunctions, so as to make them bear upon unbelieving (unbaptized) fathers? Could he not urge on unbelieving (unbaptized) fathers, their guilt, in not training up their children in the nurture of the Lord?"—True. But this is to urge on them their obligation to put on Christ by baptism and to baptize their children. The terms of the address involve this, and a definite exclusion of children from the church would not interpret those terms, but *correct* them. Instead of showing what might be done,

if Antipedobaptist principles are scriptural, and what he and his brethren teach, it would have been far more to his purpose to show the consistency of apostolic addresses to parents and children with his professed principles. In using the terms of the apostle's exhortation, as it appears to me, Antipedobaptists act very inconsistently. In their application of these injunctions to outsiders, there is implied a ministerial call to the unconverted, and Gentiles, whether parents or children, to take the yoke of Christ upon them, *and* to do whatsoever he commands them. They usurp Pedobaptist ground.

NOTE F.—PAGE 151.

Marriage and Faith.

The remarks introduced in the text derive a singularly pointed illustration from the reference to the faith of Abraham and Sarah in the New Testament. The Spirit shows a connection between Abraham's faith—the strength of his faith,—and the procreation of Isaac. “Being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” (Romans iv. 19, 20.) The same Spirit ascribes Sarah's conception to her faith.—“Through faith Sarah received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful that had promised.” (Heb. xi. 11.) These representations connecting faith with conjugal blessings,—“blessings of the breasts and of the womb,” can never find a place in the Antipedobaptist system. It admits no idea of which the terms used by the apostle are symbols. A fictitious modern delicacy,—the index of the corruption of the heart, which it is intended to conceal,—keeps these inspired statements, and other kindred ones which lead us to the contemplation of marriage, incorporated with the institutions of Christ,—of husband and wife living by faith,—of the hope of offspring according to a promise,—entirely out of view.

Isaac, the child of promise, is the child of marriage and the child of faith.

In the case of Abraham and Sarah, the temporary suspension of faith, and departure from the divine ordinance, is severely visited by tokens of the displeasure of God, in the birth of a mocking Ishmael,—“born after the flesh,”—(Galatians iv. 29)—in his eventual expulsion from the family, in the heart-burnings and domestic quarrels that intervened, and in the jealousies that sprung up between the sons. The child of the *wife*, and that wife a *believer*, alone remains in faithful Abraham’s family.

But not in Abraham’s family only. According to the apostle (Ephesians v. 22–33), every family constituted according to God’s ordinance is a miniature representation of the church of the Redeemer, in which we have the husband and wife and children. Some of these children, like Ishmael, being the children of unbelief, may be cast out, but in the first instance all are treated as children and receive the token of the covenant. The character of children is very unwarrantably assumed to have no connection with the faith of parents. If it be so, the inspired writer would not have told us that the union of husband and wife is a great mystery, symbolical of the union of Christ and the church.

Marriage is commonly viewed, spoken of, with great levity, entered into without much consideration, with little regard to the religious character of the chosen partner; vanity, interest, ambition, exercising a large influence in the issue. It is to be viewed, on the contrary, with great interest, and seriousness, and elevation. It is, shall I say, the only relic we have of Edenic purity, confidence, and blessedness, operating most mysteriously in forming the character and regulating the feelings of individuals, and in moulding society. The full or defective adjustment of the parties in a matrimonial union never fails to appear in the children. If, among christians, there be no regard to the faith and piety of the object of choice, instead of being surprised at the impiety of the children, we might be surprised if they were other than

ungodly. And not only are we to have due respect to the object of choice, but that the parties should, in their intercourse with one another and with their children, study to exemplify the character of heirs of the grace of life. It is in respecting the origin and objects of the divine ordinance, and in a consistent deportment, that we look for the blessing of a covenant God. Not those who, being enlightened, have chosen benighted partners, but those who have been enlightened subsequently to having entered into the marriage relation, have the consolation of being told that the unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified to the believing wife or husband.

“Christianity transforms and sanctifies the entire FAMILY life. It abolishes polygamy, and makes monogamy the proper form of marriage; presents the mutual duties of husband and wife, and of parents and children, in their true light, and exhibits marriage as a copy of the mystical union of Christ with his bride, the church; thus imparting to it a holy character and a heavenly end. Henceforth the family, though still rooted, as before, in the soil of nature, in the mystery of sexual love, is spiritualized, and becomes a nursery of the purest and noblest virtues, a miniature church, where the father, as priest, daily leads his household into the pastures of the divine word, and offers to the Lord the sacrifice of their common petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise.” (Schaff’s “History of the Christian Church,” pp. 111, 112.)

NOTE G.—PAGE 166.

Ordinances, means of instruction.

It affords me much gratification to quote, from a work which I have read with deep interest and delight, the following remarks on baptism and the Lord’s supper, by a classmate at college, whose present position is not more elevated than might have been anticipated from his acknowledged and unostentatious superiority among his fellow-students. “Baptism and the Lord’s supper may be regarded as a typical or

pictorial summary of the great salvation. In baptism the gospel is exhibited subjectively—renewing the heart and cleansing from all iniquity: in the Lord's supper it is exhibited objectively,—providing a mighty Mediator, and a perfect atonement. Regeneration and propitiation are central truths toward which all the other doctrines of christianity converge, and, in marking them out by corresponding symbols, the Head of the church has been graciously pleased to signalize their importance.

“The scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation and thoroughly furnished unto all good works; but we are not at liberty to adulterate these records either by addition or subtraction. If they should be preserved exactly as they issued from the pen of inspiration, it is clear that the visible ordinances in which they are epitomized should also be maintained in their integrity. He who tampers with a divinely-instituted symbol is obviously to some extent obnoxious to the malediction (Rev. xxii. 18, 19) pronounced upon the man who adds to, or takes away from, the words of the book of God's prophecy.” (Killen's “Ancient Church,” page 483.)

NOTE H.—PAGE 203.

Law of admission into the Church.

“The very constitution of the Jewish church recognizes the membership of carnal persons.—The one by its constitution, included carnal members.”—(Carson.) “By a divine constitution, the church of the Jews included some unregenerate men.”—(M'Leod.)

The language both of Dr. Carson and of the distinguished Pedobaptist would seem to imply that the constitution of the church of Israel was responsible for the presence of unregenerate members. This is not correct. We must distinguish between the *fact* and the *principle*. The *fact* is, that *under* (not *by*), a divine constitution unregenerate persons were received into, and retained in, the Jewish church, but to say

that the constitution was framed with the intention of comprehending unregenerate persons is not supported by scripture. When Jehovah gave that notable expression of his displeasure against Nadab and Abihu, for want of respect for his ordinance, he assigns as his reason for his severity,—“I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified.” (Leviticus x. 1-3.) “Let us have grace,” says the apostle, “whereby we may serve God acceptably; for our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews xii. 28, 29.) There is no doubt there were many unregenerate persons among the Jews, and, if the constitution had been administered with the most faultless integrity, unholy persons must have found their way into the society of that “*holy nation*.” I ask pardon of Antipedobaptists, for accepting God’s testimony to the character of the nation of Israel, in opposition to theirs. But there are unregenerate persons in the christian church, and our Saviour has taught us to expect this. I do not mean Antipedobaptist churches, which contain not one who is not, like Jonah, born of the floods into which his rebellion had brought him. The church is a vine which has unfruitful branches. (John xv. 1-6.) The kingdom of God is a net cast into the sea, which gathers “every kind,” and the good and bad are found in that net, till the end of the world. (Matthew xiii. 47-50.) Under the eyes of the apostles, false brethren crept in unawares, and there is not any attempt to cast them out, contrary to an established order. Paul tells the elders of Ephesus that, after his departure, grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock. As far as the *fact* of the presence of ungodly persons among the saints is concerned, there is no difference between the Old and New Testament church. Under a divine constitution the church included of old, and now includes, and till the last day will include, unsanctified persons.

Our God requires a “reasonable service.” Under the former dispensation, the law of Moses suffered a plurality of wives, the dismissal of one for insufficient causes and the

marriage of another, and supplies enactments to regulate such cases. Yet we know that both practices were inconsistent with the original institution of marriage, and that the will of God, from the beginning, was the same with the rule published by the apostle, that every man should have his own wife, and every woman, her own husband. (1 Corinthians vii. 2) This doctrine our Lord teaches the Jews, and states the rationale of the law. "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives." (Mark x. 5-9.) This is the more perplexing, since Moses was a faithful servant in all the house of God. Our Lord's declaration is equivalent to this :—"God, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives."

It sounds strange, when we contemplate the unspotted holiness, the uncompromising justice, and the burning jealousy of God, and that he cannot look upon sin, to hear of him apparently conniving at a great moral and social evil. But the case admits of an easy and a natural explanation. It is one thing to look at the law which determines the limits of right and wrong, and prohibits every appearance of evil, and a law which is to be administered by man. Evils may be so incorporated with the very frame of society that the immediate eradication of them by the magistrate would involve the destruction of the community. To charge the administrator of the law with the removal of them, would be to send him forth to wage a war of extermination in the land, or to demand a work, which he could not find instruments to accomplish. God never demands the performance of a physical impossibility, and, accordingly, in the case contemplated, our attention is not directed to God, the *Judge*, but to Moses the *legislator*.

This strange case is introduced to show that a principle of divine legislation is to limit the responsibility of man to matters that are practicable, and to teach us that, while God will ultimately punish all evil, there are evils with which human authorities are not competent to deal.

If it be the will of God that man, in governmental admin-

istration, confine himself to his proper sphere, so is he instructed to proceed according to rules that lead to a definite and just issue. He is not left to pursue an arbitrary course. In the application of law to his fellows, he must proceed upon evidence,—evidence the character and amount of which are specified. “One witness shall not rise against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth : at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established.” (Deuteronomy xix. 15.)

Whatever may be the constitution of the church, whatever its supposed spirituality as contrasted with the former dispensation,—whatever the character which its members are required to sustain, the whole government of the body is to be administered by men,—weak and fallible men,—who are not capable of acting beyond certain limits. The law of procedure in the church under this dispensation is precisely the law of the commonwealth of Israel, into union with which we are introduced in Christ. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, forewarns offenders among them, that when he came, he would “not spare;” and yet the whole extent of his severity is that, against “them which have sinned,” “in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” (2 Corinthians xiii. 1, 2.) The most certain knowledge of one individual, the most suspicious or conclusive circumstances, will not warrant exclusion or expulsion from the church. Against an elder, whose position may expose him to envy or opposition, whose very fidelity may excite resentment and stimulate revenge, an accusation is not to be entertained, except upon the evidence of two witnesses. (1 Timothy v. 19.) From all this it is manifest that man is not permitted to deal but with outward actings, such as admit of being precisely handled.

Every person is able to judge that, according to this rule of procedure, many unregenerate individuals must have been admitted to full privileges, and retained in possession of them, both under the former dispensation, and in the apostolic churches:—many whose regeneration was more than doubtful,

whose conduct was more than equivocal, but against whom there was not forthcoming the evidence which the Head of the church demands, must have been received and treated as members of the church, both by priests and evangelists, with divine approbation. Long before the English aphorism was known, the Lord had determined that it is better that nine hypocrites should be received and retained, than that one of his little ones should be refused admission to the church, or cast out.

It may seem to our opponents a doctrine likely to bring utter corruption into the church, to admit all against whom there is not definite evidence, not to allow certain knowledge to exclude without the production of a specific amount and kind of evidence. No matter what they think. We have a rule divinely wise, common to the church under both economies. We have more. We have an infallible example illustrative of the rule in its most suspicious aspect. When the Lord in person regulated the affairs of his own disciples, he adopts no other rule than the one which his people can apply. If he had made his knowledge of *what is in man* the rule, no one could have imitated him. His course had been useless as an example. But *to the law of his own kingdom he bows*, and facts determine his administrative dealings with his people. He knows the character of Judas from the beginning, yet not one word excites suspicion of Judas in the breasts of his brethren ; not one look makes Judas afraid. At the end of our Saviour's earthly course, any one of the disciples was as ready to suspect himself of being the traitor as to suspect Judas. (Matthew xxvi. 22.) Judas is called to be a disciple, selected to be an apostle, sent out with his brethren to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to work miracles, according to the rule that is to direct the disciples ever after ; and he holds his place, undisturbed, unchallenged, till he, by transgression fell. Had our Lord been an Antipedobaptist, knowing Judas to be unregenerate, he would certainly have cast him out, or never have admitted him into the number of the disciples.

When an infant is presented to me, by members of my congregation, for baptism, I should like to find the two Antipedobaptists, who [are prepared to testify that it is not entitled to a place among the saints, and swear that it is not regenerated. If a Carson and a Booth come forward and testify that it is not born from above, I'll not baptize it. They'll swear that they do not know that it is. Pooh! They could not testify that any one of them whom they immerse is regenerated. They might swear far more safely that the majority of those whom they immerse are not.

The Antipedobaptists have adopted a rule of admission to their churches, which it is *impossible* for man to apply. It is a *presumptuous* rule. They attempt to form a purer society than Christ contemplated in the earthly state of the church. It is an *impious* rule. They assume the prerogative of God, the alone searcher of hearts.

I close this note by a summary of the evils, flowing from making regeneration a criterion of membership in the church, in its earthly state, exhibited in an "Ecclesiastical Catechism," by Alexander M'Leod, D.D., pages 114, 115.

"1. It encourages ignorance in ministers. Why should they labour to understand the constitution, laws, and history, of the visible church, seeing they have only to judge whether such a man have grace or not, in forming a church?—2. It is an engine of tyranny. There is no rule to be prescribed to him who erects his metaphysical apparatus to judge of my heart.—3. It encourages spiritual pride. 'Stand by,' says this discerner of spirits, 'I am holier than thou.'—4. It is destructive of piety. The church, upon my admission, has pronounced me regenerate. I have no need of self-examination. My joy, without any thirst for holiness, will hereafter be fed by repetitions of imaginary experience.—5. It encourages licentiousness. If a saint is not to be excommunicated, he may indulge in scandals, even in murder and adultery, with impunity (?).—6. It is a certain method of banishing saints from the church, and of receiving hypocrites. The sincere christian is more inclined to *do* what he *ought*, than

to *proclaim* what he *feels*. The libertine, who lived without God, having, somehow, believed the *doctrines* of grace, and immediately conceived himself a remarkable *monument* of divine grace, while he is in heart a libertine still, is the most suitable member for such a communion. Under pretence of being strict, such terms of communion are in fact the most latitudinarian."

NOTE I.—PAGE 219.

Importance of Baptism.

Some may say, "You attach too much importance to baptism." I certainly attach great importance to it; as much as the Israelite was taught to attach to circumcision. Circumcision was a sign for the confirmation of faith in the promise of Messiah, who was to come to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and of all consequent blessings. Baptism is a sign for the confirmation of faith in the promise of the Spirit, now that Messiah has come, to apply the benefits of redemption. He that believes in his heart that God has raised the Lord Jesus, will confess him with his mouth. He that believeth with his heart unto righteousness, will make "confession with his mouth unto salvation." (Romans x. 9, 10.) The observance of the sign is the commanded expression of faith, and the neglect of it is a very significant sign of the want of faith in the promise. I attach no value to water, apply it as you may, by sprinkling or ducking, but to the apprehension, by faith, of the covenant, expressed by the observance of the instituted rite.

Christ has said, "He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved." The apostolic command is, "Repent *and be baptized.*" The Ethiopian eunuch, though, after his separation from Philip, he might never set his eyes upon a solitary member of the church which he leaves behind, will be united, by baptism in the name of Christ, to the body. How many ministers would dare to give to baptism, in calling sinners to the kingdom of God, or in enforcing the obligation to live to

Christ, the same prominence which apostles did? Few; very few. When faith is separated from its instituted sign, baptism ceases to be regarded as anything more than a decent ceremony.

It is reasoning on false grounds to say, "We cannot admit that a man's salvation or damnation may turn on the observance or neglect of a mere outward form, and such a *trifle*." Jehovah says to the Jews, "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice." (Jeremiah vii. 22, 23.) Strange language this! and we would be ready to say inconsistent with fact; for he gave them very many commands concerning offerings and sacrifices. But he would teach them that it is not the act of sacrifice but the spirit in which it is performed, to which he has respect. Water may be nothing; but if the Lord has commanded the application of it, the omission is an act of rebellion. He would say, "I gave you no commandment concerning baptism; but this thing commanded I you, *Obey my voice*."

The trifling nature of the rite affects not the obligation. The Antipedobaptists think they can afford to laugh at the sprinkling of a few drops of water on the face. They desire something of a more imposing form, attractive, impressive. Do they not know that this was the offence of Naaman? He would do "some great thing" to obtain a cure of his leprosy; but to wash seven times in Jordan,—pooh! what nonsense! What can the waters of Jordan, that paltry stream, do for me? Now this is precisely the test of faith, and prostration of spirit, which our God demands on great occasions. The more trifling the act to be performed, the clearer the indication of faith in God. The performance of some great work would commend itself: but the trifle demands attention, only from reverence for him who requires it. The trifle, in the performance of it, anticipates the risings of pride, promotes humility, and transports the thoughts beyond itself.

Sin is in the world, and all the diseases, famines, wars, death, and eternal woes, which man feels or fears, are the fruits of it. How did it enter? By one man. What enormous transgression did he commit? He took and ate of the fruit of a tree he was forbidden to eat or to touch. *That was all.* He did nothing but what boys are doing every year, and nobody thinks much of it. What was circumcision? A foolish operation: yet upon its observance of old turned the title to all the blessings of the covenant in Israel. The people of Jericho may have been very much alarmed, when first they saw the Israelites issuing from the camp at Gilgal. But it would afford them a rich fund of amusement, to see them day after day march round the city at a respectful distance, blowing trumpets and carrying a small box with them; without shooting an arrow or hurling a javelin, and in profound silence. Yet by this mode—this ridiculous mode of making war only can Jericho be taken. A red rope, stretched across Rahab's window, saves her and her friends. Forgotten or neglected, they had perished in time and eternity. What a childish farce was that which was enacted by the dying bed of Elisha, and the departing saint directing the whole scene. Joash, the king of Israel, visited the dying prophet. Elisha, to the king,—“Take bow and arrows: and he took unto him bow and arrows.—Put thine hand upon the bow: and he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.—Open the window eastward: and he opened it.—Shoot: and he shot—And Elisha said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria.—Take the arrows: and he took them.—Smite upon the ground: and he smote thrice, and stayed.” (2 Kings xiii. 14–19.) What means all this? The King of Israel shall smite the Syrians thrice and only thrice. But if he had smitten on the ground five or six times, he would have gained five or six victories. Is this God's way of dealing with man?—with a nation? So it seems. The death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the most important of all historical events, is shown forth, and to be shown forth, till his second coming, by eating

a morsel of bread and sipping a little wine, from time to time; and the souls of his people are nourished.

It is only in conformity with a general law, that the test of our apprehension of God's eternal covenant, and faith in its Mediator, consists in the sprinkling of a little water upon the person. The progress and prosperity of the cause of Christ in the world, and in the souls of individuals, will be found to be bound up with the trifles,—“the foolishness of God.” It affords no comfortable prospect, at the present moment, that the professed followers of the Lord have resolved, almost with one consent, to wave attention to *minor* matters, and hold by, what they are pleased to call, the great *essentials* of religion; and the simplicity of prayer and praise, and of ordinances generally, must give place to the pompous and imposing liturgical ceremonial that commends itself to the carnal and worldly taste. Yet while they claim a more expanded mind and broader views, and dismiss with contempt those who stand upon trifles, infidelity and popery are advancing with rapid strides, and instead of leavening society with their comprehensive views of christianity, the world is ripening for war and revolution. I ask pardon of the great, and learned, and magnanimous. Men talk with common sense when they speak of their own affairs:—“Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves.” Infidelity and popery will grow in Dr. Norman Macleod's carefully cultivated garden, in the midst of his “good words,” and would perish in the most neglected pastures of Dr. Begg.

NOTE K.—PAGE 228.

Ephesians iv. 11, 12.

“He (Christ) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” The authorized version of the twelfth verse is not very intelligible. It seems to represent the duties of teachers, extraordinary and ordinary,

as consisting in three things ;—perfecting of the saints,—work of the ministry,—edifying of the body of Christ. The original does not sustain this idea. The same preposition (εἰς) stands before *work* and *edifying*, and a different one (προς) before *perfecting*. The meaning of the verse, about the interpretation of which critics differ, may perhaps be unfolded by the following remarks. There is a certain work to be accomplished, with which the whole church,—the saints, are charged. Every individual does not possess the same gifts, nor is fitted for the performance of the same duties. It is necessary, therefore, that each should be designated to that province, for which his peculiar powers and gifts qualify him, that there may be a full co-operation of all the members, without interference or opposition. The word translated *perfecting* (καταρτισμος), properly signifies the *adjustment* of parts, that the whole may work, or be worked easily ; as the *reduction* of a dislocated limb, or the *fitting together* of the machinery of a watch. Paul entreats the Corinthians, who were very much divided, and acting in opposition to one another, to be “perfectly joined together.” (κατηρτισμενοί,—1 Corinthians i. 10.) “The disciple is not above his master ; but every one that is *perfect*” (same Greek word), occupying his own place, as opposed to the affectation of superiority, “shall be as his master.” (Luke vi. 40.) “He saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother,—*mending* (καταρτιζοντας) their nets.” (Matthew iv. 21.) The word does not signify *mending*, but arranging their nets, which would be more or less entangled, in being hauled into the boats and cleared of fish formerly caught, that they might be ready to cast into the sea again, when the fishermen resumed their occupation. I am not aware of any application of the word or its derivatives, in which the idea of adjustment, by whatever means effected, is not involved.

The sense of the verse seems to be this. Apostles, prophets, pastors, are given for the purpose of bringing the members of the church into a state of complete organization, putting every one into his or her proper place, that they may all be brought

into communication with one another, and with their respective labours. The work to be performed, the great business of the members of the church, is resolved into two departments:—(1.) The growth in grace and meetness for glory of those who are Christ's, by mutual labours of love,—“the edifying of the body of Christ:” (2.) The gathering in of the travail of the Redeemer's soul from without,—“the work of the ministry.”

NOTE L. —PAGE 230.

Intermediate blessedness.

That saints in heaven are partakers of all the blessedness of which they are capable, perfect after their measure; that they have all the blessedness of which they can form a conception, may not be questioned; but that there is a growth in blessedness with the growth of the body, can as little be doubted. Allow them the clearest conceptions, the liveliest apprehension and appropriation of the blessings of the kingdom, brought within the sphere of their knowledge; it may reasonably be doubted whether their attainments are in advance of those of which we are supplied with the means. “There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” (Luke xv. 7.) If this is not a new source of joy, additional joy, the declaration is pointless. Angels are perfectly happy, yet there are subjects into which they desire to look; and these are the very subjects that constitute the matter of apostolic ministrations and of our investigations, and form the object of our faith. (1 Peter i. 12, 13.) What we are taught by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, they do not fully understand, or why look into or investigate it? They apply their powers earnestly in the inquiry. It is surely no rash assumption that “the spirits of just men made perfect” are not in advance of angels, and yet most blessed. When Moses and Elias stood upon the holy mount with our Lord, the subject of their conversation was his decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem. (Luke ix. 31.) Who will say

that the glorified prophets had nothing to learn from their Master upon that occasion? While the primary idea of perfection *by us*, must be the supplying of what is wanting to the fulness of Christ, there is bound up with this all the advantage to the several members which arises out of the completeness of parts, living combination, and reciprocal action. There is reserved for the second coming of our Lord *salvation* in a glorious fulness that was never known before. "To them that look for him shall he appear without sin unto *salvation*." (Hebrews ix. 28.)

NOTE M.—PAGE 252.

Presence of Children in the Churches.

In all assemblies of the saints for worship, the children should be present. That is their right. The whole of the narratives to which we have referred in the text, furnish an emphatic reproof to the inconsistency and impiety of keeping mothers half their time at home, or depriving nurses of their share in the service of the sanctuary, lest the preacher, who more affects the orator than the ambassador of Christ, who, it may be, trusts more to his eloquence than the demonstration of the Spirit, should have an elegantly turned period spoiled, or a fine burst of impassioned declamation interrupted; lest the sensibilities of nervousness should be disturbed, or the formalism of hypocrisy invaded by the occasional fretfulness or scream of a baby in its mother's arms. What is that irritable, unsympathising being in the pulpit, uttering his peevish remonstrance, but a grown baby in unison with that in the pew, with which he is so much annoyed? If a man's ministry demands the exclusion of mothers and their babes from the assemblies of God's people, let him cede his place to some one who desires to minister to the churches of the saints, rather than to an assembly of exquisites and formalists. Did a minister possess a particle of spirituality, a reasonable regard for the glory of Christ in the advancement of his cause, or desire for the salvation of

sinner and growth of saints, the scream of a child would not annoy him at all, compared with the sight of man or woman, who has come into the presence of God, sleeping during half the time of service, the inattention of the young, when matters of eternal interest are brought before them, the contemptuous indifference of the infidel or the profligate, or the ill concealed impatience to be gone, of those who are very much disposed to say of every religious observance, "What a weariness is it?" The sound as of a rushing mighty wind might produce more agitation and more interruption than a child's cry, and is much to be desired. The life and enthusiasm might pass to the children themselves; and if their shouts, proclaiming "Hosanna to the Son of David," should be heard above the sound of the rushing host, who dare say that the Lord would not acknowledge the accomplishment of the inspired word, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." Priests, scribes, hypocrites would, of course, be sore displeased. The flow of life in children is an offence against their crystalized immobility. The example, and therefore the presence of children is a reproach to them.

The secret of the impatience of the presence of children in the place of worship is the negation of their right to a place there. It is the Antipedobaptist spirit which denies their title to be numbered with the people of God. We baptize our children, and whatever attention may be given to their instruction, we fail to treat them and make them feel that they are considered as church-members, who are being trained for the enjoyment of privileges to which they have as good a title as their parents. There is a form of speech which betrays our ignorance or inconsideration of their true position. When the baptized children of church-members make a personal profession, we say, "They have joined the church." Pedobaptists ask Pedobaptists, "Are any of your children members of the church?"—"Have they joined the church?" when they ought to inquire, "Have they sought or obtained their privileges?" Such questions discover their melancholy

misapprehension of the nature and intention of baptism, and of the relation of their children to the church. All baptized children are under the bond of God's covenant and are all *in the church*; and the question with respect to them is, whether they value their place, seek the participation of the privileges of saints, or cast off the God of their fathers and *leave* the church. No use is made of their baptism, in giving them instruction. They are not taught their obligation and privilege arising from their baptism, from which the apostle draws a powerful argument, to enforce the extent of the obligation to consistent holiness. A second evil is that their value in the church, as an example, is entirely overlooked. We would shut them out of the assemblies of the saints, as an annoyance, because we do not apprehend our need of them, and their instrumentality in the hands of Christ, in forming and perfecting his professed disciples. No man could be more glad to be able to contradict these broad statements, than I would be to find that they can be denied.

I love children. I love to see them in the mother's or the nurse's arms in the place of worship. I should be sorry to tell either that God by giving them children or the charge of them has excluded them from the house of prayer. I will say, "Come with your children. They are my little brothers and sisters." I realize a stronger, a peculiar attachment, to those whom, by baptism, I have introduced into the church. I trust I love them for the Lord's sake, and for his people's sake.

NOTE N.—PAGE 256.

Effects of the exclusion of Children.

When Mr. Hallet suggests the idea that the children brought to Christ had received the seal of God's covenant, and, as such, are set forth for an example, Dr. Carson enters the lists against him with roar of trumpet equal to John Knox's blast against the "Monstrous regiment of Women;" and did he wield weapons as trenchant as his trumpet is

sonorous the victory is his. "No, Mr. Hallet, this is a forgery. This is a vile and wicked forgery. Many have been hanged for forgery, who have not made such alterations on writings as this makes on the book of God." (Page 322.) Still there is no part of his book in which he flounders more miserably than in his reply to Mr. Hallet in this and the following page, and in endeavouring to show that the reference is to children in general. I am well aware of Dr. Carson's strong opinion on the subject of natural depravity, and am not surprised to find him embarrassed in attempting to find, in unsanctified childhood, a pattern to which the Lord's people are to be assimilated. We have a string of questions, which the reader is left to answer; then an effort at the enumeration of the good qualities of *all* children,— "teachableness and humility, &c.;" next the assertion that "the dispositions of children are not considered here in reference to God, but in reference to men;" and, as if he had gone too far, he allows that,—all the excellent, &c. qualifications of children notwithstanding,— "They are no more ready to believe God than adults are," and that "The approbation of infants contained in our Lord's words does not imply that they are teachable and humble in the things of God." Now this is just the example that is needed. According to his own showing, where an example was desirable, children fail to supply it. Had Dr. Carson, or any other person who is conversant with infancy and childhood, spoken frankly, he would have confessed that the "teachableness and humility," as well as all the *&c.*'s, are exhibited in no very imposing measure. He winds up by saying,— "Our Lord may approve of children here, just as he loved the rich young man in unbelief." Through the whole paragaaph, it is very manifest that the sanctified heart of the real christian sadly embarrassed the Antipedobaptist logician.

When Dr. Carson says, "It is not, suffer *these little baptized or circumcised children* to come, but suffer *little children*, any little children, to come to me," he does injustice to the text. The article is not omitted by any one of the evangelists, and

he takes an unworthy advantage of the English translation in Matthew and Luke, "Suffer little children to come," when it should read, as in Mark, "Suffer *the* little children to come." In all cases, when the children are represented as in position, the article is used, "Except ye be converted and become as *the* little children." (Matthew xviii. 3.) "Suffer *the* little children to come unto me." (Luke xviii. 16.) When they are represented as taking position with relation to the kingdom, the article is omitted. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as *a* little child, shall not enter therein." (Mark x. 15; Luke xviii. 17.)

NOTE O.—PAGE 266.

Obligation of a Profession.

It may be said, if the authority of Christ is absolute and universal, if our obligation to submit to him can neither be increased by our assent, nor diminished by the absence or refusal of assent, to what purpose is a profession? To this we answer,—

1. We honour the Head of the church by confessing the righteousness of his claim, and submitting to him. We honour the Father who has given power over all flesh to the Son.

2. Consent and profession bring us under a new and *independent* bond. By our personal engagement we are bound, where there existed *no previous* obligation. Ananias and Sapphira were not obliged to sell their land, nor, when it was sold, to devote the price: but they brought upon themselves the displeasure of the Lord, by keeping back part of the price, after they had consecrated the whole to the service of the church. (Acts v. 1-5.) "It is not pleaded that the original obligation (a person) was under from the precept—is increased, much less dissolved (by his promise); for every obligation arising necessarily from the law is absolutely perfect. But what we assert is, that he brings himself under additional obligations to the same duty, upon new grounds,

by his promise and oath ; and these obligations are strictly moral, since recognized by the divine law. Formerly, he was necessarily bound by the precept which defined the duty to observe it ; now, having made the same duty the matter of a promise and oath, the law also requires him on these grounds to observe it, since it recognizes the obligation of his oath and promise. Promises and oaths bind the soul, not by adding to the obligation of God's law, but by bringing us into a new relation to the law with reference to the same duty."— (Stevenson's "Plea," page 38.)

3. By profession, we are brought into a state of separation from the world, and assume the character of God's servants. Our vow constitutes a loud call to those who are living in sin to come to Christ, and seek the salvation of his people. It is as professors that christians are the light of the world.

4. By a profession, our own obligation is brought more impressively home to us. The obligation of a solemn engagement is immediately felt.

5. The obligation to serve the Lord can be pressed with special force upon the professor. Unfaithfulness to Christ in the professor is not only a violation of the *first* commandment, in common with the world lying in wickedness, but of the *third* by taking the name of God in vain, and of the *ninth* in that we have falsified our testimony to Jesus as our Lord and our God. If the breach of a promise to man is shameful and degrading, how much more the violation of a promise made to God. In circumstances of great trial, one of the worthies to whose faith Paul has given great prominence, Jephthah, uttered these memorable words, "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." (Judges xi. 35.) When a man cannot keep faith with God, he ought not to be surprised if he fail to secure the confidence of his fellows.

