

METHODIST

Pamphlets for the People.

VOLUME FOURTH.

EDITED BY THOMAS O. SUMMERS, D.D.

Nashville, Tenn.:

PUBLISHED BY E. STEVENSON & F. A. OWEN, AGENTS,

FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

1857.

BX
8332
585
1851
434337
v. 1

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by
E. STEVENSON & F. A. OWEN, AGENTS,
In the Office of the Clerk of the District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee.



STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY A. A. STITT,
SOUTHERN METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE, NASHVILLE, TENN.

FACT AND MODE OF PURIFICATION.

BY THE REV. J. L. WILSON, D. D.

“There are *three* that bear *witness* in earth, the SPIRIT, and the WATER, and the BLOOD, and these *three* agree in ONE.” 1 John v. 8

THE constitution and circumstances of man are such that each individual is greatly indebted to others for the knowledge he acquires of men and things. Some are blessed with more original genius, more native enterprise, more favorable opportunities for personal inspection, than others. They occupy a larger space, and take a wider range, than their neighbors; but the most exalted, profound, or excursive genius stands isolated in ignorance without a reliance upon testimony. No absurdity can be greater than that of a rational creature attempting to exclude from his mind all information except that which he acquires by his own sensations and reflections. Indeed, we all rely so much upon the testimony of others, that on it we mutually agree to rest our property, character, liberty, and life. Now, “if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.” In the law of evidence it is a settled principle, that two or three competent and credible witnesses are fully sufficient to prove any matter of fact. Accordance among witnesses gives great weight to testimony; while contradiction induces suspicion, weakens confidence, and sometimes destroys credibility. But God’s three witnesses in earth are in perfect harmony. They *agree* in ONE. They are not ONE as the THREE that bear record in heaven are ONE; but they *agree* in ONE—one fact, and one mode of testifying to that fact. The *fact* is PURIFICATION—the *mode* SPRINKLING. This will fully appear, if we examine their evidence detailed

to us in the history of redemption. But where can we find the history of redemption?

The books of the Old Testament, written in the Hebrew language, had been collected and translated into Greek, long before the coming of Christ. These were called by competent judges, "Holy Scriptures—Oracles of God." Of them it is affirmed that they were "given by inspiration of God;" and such was the force of evidence attending them, that incredulity, unsubdued by its power, could not be overcome by the testimony of one rising from the dead. To these writings Jesus and his apostles constantly appealed, in support of their claims, and confirmation of their doctrines. These writings were "given by inspiration of God, and were profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God might be perfect." It seems, therefore, indubitable, that these made a part of the history of redemption.

The books of the New Testament were written subsequent to our Saviour's ascension into heaven. These were written by men who were all taught of God, endowed with power from on high, and led into all truth by the Holy Spirit—men who proved their claims to inspiration by the most incontestable miracles. We therefore feel confident that these also make a part of the history of redemption. Into these books of the Old and New Testaments we therefore look for infallible rules both of faith and practice. We cannot safely rely on the crude, absurd, contradictory statements found in the Apocrypha, tradition, or ecclesiastical history. We must not trifle with matters of so much moment as our present duty and future destiny. We have a sure word of prophecy—a light that shineth in a dark place. Holding in our hand the history of redemption, let us examine, with true docility, the testimony of THREE that bear witness in earth on the *fact* and *mode* of *purification*.

The Spirit is first named in our text, and is one of the THREE who bear record in heaven. He is the guide and comforter of God's people, and he is THE SPIRIT OF PROMISE.

"Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you." Prov. i. 23. Observe the manner, "pour out." Again, "I will *pour upon* the house of David the Spirit of grace." Zech. xii. 10. In Psalm lxxii., where the reign of grace is celebrated in

celestial strains, it is said, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth." The language of Jehovah also is, "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 water courses." Isa. xlv. 3, 4. It is proper to remark that the saving influences of the Spirit are gentle, cleansing, refreshing, and fruitful, like showers poured out upon the dry ground; and the offspring are not plunged into the flood—nor do they grow like seaweed, in the bosom of the deep, but they spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. Now, to gain a correct idea of this *pouring out* of the Spirit like showers that water the earth, take the following passage: "He maketh small the drops of water; they pour down rain, according to the vapor thereof, which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly." Job xxxvi. 27, 28.

We might adduce other promises and illustrations, but we hasten to remark that the Witness whose testimony we are attempting to exhibit, is also THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.

Prophecy is history out of the usual order of time. It is no more difficult for the Spirit of truth to guide the pen of the prophet in prediction, than the pen of the apostle in narrative. Taking this view of prophecy, let us look at a few facts. "So shall He SPRINKLE many nations." Isa. lii. 15. "Then will I SPRINKLE clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. "And it shall come to pass, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy: also upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days, will I *pour out* my Spirit." Joel ii. 28, 29. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea vi. 3. The most careless hearer cannot but notice the modes of expression used by the inspired writers in these promises and predictions; yet their beauty and importance afford them a claim to repetition. Pour out my Spirit unto you; pour the Spirit of grace upon the house of David; come unto us as the rain; SPRINKLE

many nations; **SPRINKLE** clean water upon you and cleanse you from all your idols. Nothing can be more beautiful, nothing more impressive, than these representations of the descent of the Spirit of truth and holiness. The devouring fire, the horrible tempest, the deep and desolating flood, or the awful throes of a convulsed world, may drive or sink men to madness and desperation; but it is "the still small voice" that cheers and saves. 1 Kings xix. 9-18. What is so noiseless, gentle, benign, and powerful, as the refreshing showers and distilling dews of heaven? And these are selected by infinite Wisdom, as emblems of that Spirit of holiness who bears his testimony on earth in unison with the water and the blood, on the interesting subject of purification from idols and defilements of every description.

Let us now learn how the histories of the New Testament coincide with the predictions of the Old. "Jesus showed himself alive, after his passion, by many infallible proofs, and commanded his disciples that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father; for John truly baptized *with* water; but ye shall be baptized *with* the Holy Ghost. The Father hath put the times and the seasons in his own power; but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is COME UPON you." Acts i. 4-8. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like unto fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts ii. 1-4. And this was that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, verses 16, 17: "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out* my Spirit upon all flesh." And, "Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath SHED FORTH THIS, which ye now see and hear." Verse 38.

Let us seriously, candidly, and carefully review this history. We select the parts only which belong to our present subject. The apostles were commanded to wait for the promise of the Father. This promise specified two things, baptism *with* the Holy Ghost and *with* fire. Luke iii. 16. Christ was the

administrator of these baptisms. The phrase "He hath *shed* forth this," corresponds with the expression, "the Holy Ghost is *come upon you*." The history states, 1st, the sound; 2d, the fire; 3d, the baptism with the Holy Ghost. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Mark the similarity between the promise, the prophecy, and the fulfilment. I will pour out; ye shall be baptized with; he hath shed forth this. The rushing wind and forked lightning not unfrequently precede, and, sometimes, are commingled with the shower. Thus the sound fills the house; the fiery tongues sat upon them; and they are all filled with the Holy Ghost, as thirsty lands are filled or saturated with a copious shower. As the wind and lightning are not the rain, neither are the sound and fire the Holy Ghost. That this is sound interpretation will appear from other facts. When the gospel was preached in Samaria many believed and were baptized, yet "the Holy Ghost was **FALLEN** upon none of them." Acts viii. 16. And when Peter preached to the Gentiles, "while he yet spake, the Holy Ghost **FELL** on all them that heard the word." Acts x. 44. In rehearsing this matter, Peter said, "the Holy Ghost **FELL ON THEM** as *on us* at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized *with water*, but ye shall be baptized *with the Holy Ghost*." Acts xi. 15, 16. Here, at the house of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost *fell* on the people as he *fell* on the apostles, but without the sound and fire. These might or might not accompany baptism with the Holy Ghost. Is there not, then, an established and inflexible analogy between baptism *with water* and baptism *with the Spirit*? And is not the baptism of the Spirit, beyond all controversy, by sprinkling, after the manner of dews and showers? Is not the fact testified that of purification, according to the declaration, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and cleanse you from all your idols?"

Having thus ascertained the witness of the Spirit, let us now examine the testimony of the water. Water is a common fluid, one of the most cleansing, fertilizing, powerful agents in nature. The term water is often used in a figurative sense, and signifies the pure doctrines of the gospel. In this sense we understand Moses: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass, because I will publish

the name of the Lord." Deut. xxxii. 2, 3. Paul speaks in the same style: "I have planted; Apollos watered." 1 Cor. iii. 6. Moses and Paul were taught by the same Master, who said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5. Water here means the doctrines of the gospel, or word of God, which is the instrumental cause of regeneration. Hence men are said to be born again by the word of God; (1 Peter i. 23;) and to have purified their souls in obeying the truth. Verse 22. Christ is also said to have given himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; (Eph. v. 25, 26;) and to save us according to his mercy by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Tit. iii. 5. And that we may be at no loss about the mode of operation, we are exhorted to draw near with a true heart, and full assurance of faith, having our hearts **SPRINKLED** from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed *with* pure water. Heb. x. 22. Now how are our bodies to be washed with pure water, as an external emblem of the **SPRINKLING** of the heart from an evil conscience? Remember Christ gave himself for the church that he might cleanse it with the washing of water. Is it not reasonable to suppose that this cleansing would be commenced on the ministry, and that the external sign would resemble the thing signified? So we read, "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." Num. viii. 6, 7. Other persons and things were also cleansed by **SPRINKLING**: "A clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it into the water, and **SPRINKLE** it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons." Num. xix. 17, 18. And this leads us to understand the practice of the Jews as related by Mark: "And when they come from the market, except they wash, (Greek, baptize,) they eat not." And many other things they have received to hold, as the washing (Gr. baptisms) of cups and pots, brazen vessels and of tables, (Gr. couches or beds.) Mark vii. 4. Also at the marriage in Cana of Galilee there were six water-pots set, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews. John ii. 6. It is evident that the manner or mode of purifying with water was not immersion, for the water-pots of stone were small vessels, and the manner

of purifying was by a clean person sprinkling the water upon the unclean, and then the person sprinkled washed himself, and, sometimes, his clothes, with water. Num. xix. 19, 20. What was done to him was by *sprinkling*, the emblem of a renewed heart : what he did afterward to himself was by *washing*, the emblem of a holy life. The question that arose between some of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying, (John iii. 25,) was not at all about the mode or manner of purifying ; for this had been settled from the time of Moses ; but simply, whether persons ought to go to John or to Christ to be baptized, for it seems they were both baptizing in the same neighborhood. John iii. 23-25. John gave Christ the preference, (verse 30,) but to prevent any difficulty, Christ left Judea, the theatre of contention, and went into Galilee. John iv. 1-3. Now if John had introduced a new mode of purifying, or baptizing, (for they used the terms interchangeably, or by way of synonymy,) it must have excited some discussion, as all innovations excite surprise if not alarm. If baptism had been unknown, or if a new mode had been attempted, John's conduct would have been contemplated with that astonishment which novelty always excites ; but the Jews were so far from being surprised that they spoke of baptism as a familiar rite, and said to him, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not Christ nor Elias?" John i. 25. "Why baptizest thou then?" is a question which clearly implies that baptism was not a new nor unexpected thing among them. But to recur again to the manner of purifying : Wherever we find an administrator and a subject, whether the term water be taken in a figurative or literal sense, the mode was sprinkling. Take another example. In the operation of cleansing leprous persons or houses, "the priest shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed : the priest shall sprinkle the house." Lev. xiv. 6, 7, 51, 52. As the Spirit and water thus agree in *one*, let us attend now to the witness of the blood. And,

1. The blood of the passover : "Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two sideposts with the blood." Ex. xii. 22. This, Paul says, was *sprinkling*. "Through faith Moses kept the passover and the SPRINKLING of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them." Heb. xi. 28.

2. The blood of atonement. Because of the uncleanness of

the children of Israel, Aaron was commanded to make an atonement for the holy place. How? by **SPRINKLING** of the blood of the bullock of the sin-offering with his finger before the mercy-seat. Lev. xvi. 11-14. Moses also **SPRINKLED** with blood the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry, the book and all the people. Heb. ix. 19-22. On this fact Paul grounds an argument respecting,

8. The blood of Christ: "For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer **SPRINKLING** the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. ix. 13, 14. How was the conscience purged from dead works? By **SPRINKLING**. Heb. x. 22. And Paul says again, "Ye are come unto Mount Zion—and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of **SPRINKLING** that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. xii. 22-24. Peter uses similar language respecting the blood of Jesus. He calls the scattered brethren to whom he wrote, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit and **SPRINKLING** of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 2. Thus you see the Spirit, the water, and the blood agree in **ONE** fact, *purification*—**ONE** mode, **SPRINKLING**.

This subject reproves, 1st. Those who seem all for the Spirit. The light that is in them and the spirit that moves them are considered superior to the written word. They hold the blood in little estimation, and reject the water altogether. With them it seems a light matter to cast out from the church of God one of his witnesses in earth. At this we are surprised and grieved; for none can reject the testimony of God, without incurring guilt, and exposing themselves to danger. Christ has commanded his ministers to teach all nations, baptizing them. This baptizing was to be with water, for it was the prerogative of Christ himself to baptize with the Holy Ghost; and at the house of Cornelius, Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?" Acts x. 47.

2d. Our subject also reproves those who are all for the blood. Many of these will neither deny the water nor the Spirit, yet their great stress is laid on the blood. The blood, in their estimation, was shed before the world began. They

themselves were justified from eternity by the blood, and being justified, can never perish. The sanctification of the Spirit, the belief of the truth, obedience, and baptizing *with water*, are matters of no moment! Alas! Have they yet to learn that God who quickeneth the dead calleth those things that be not as though they were? Rom. iv. 17. Are they able to make no distinction between the eternal purpose of God, and his execution of that purpose in time? As well might they say that this sermon was preached before the foundation of the world, as to talk of eternal justification.

3. Our subject also reproves those who are all for the water. They would not be thought to undervalue the Spirit and blood, yet their most incessant theme is water! A man may be born again of water and the Spirit: he may by the blood of Christ have his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and his body washed with pure water, in a manner conformable to the witness of the blood and Spirit; and yet if he cannot go down into the water, and then go under the water, he must be exiled from the communion of saints.

Can they remain insensible to our plea, when we seriously inquire "what right have they to adopt a mode which contradicts God's witnesses in earth, and excludes the pious from the Lord's table?" In looking at the testimony of the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, I could never imagine how they first invented the idea of immersion.

1. Could they derive it from the baptism of the eight souls saved by water? 1 Peter iii. 20, 21. No, for it was the ungodly who were plunged in the flood while the eight were saved by water instrumentally: "the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us." The figure, then, or mode of baptism which now saves us, be it what it may, must exclude the idea of immersion. Than this, nothing can be more palpable.

2. Could they derive the idea of immersion from the baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea? 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. No, Pharaoh and his host were overwhelmed in the flood, but Israel passed on dry ground and were baptized with a shower. Psalm lxxvii. 15-20: "Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people—the waters saw thee, O God—the clouds poured out water—thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

3. Did they derive immersion from the Jewish baptisms? No, for they were performed by sprinkling, when an administrator put water of purification upon a person or thing: by washing with water when a person purified himself: by dipping (not immersing) instruments used in purification. When blood and water were both used in purification, (Lev. xiv. 6, 7,) the cedar wood, scarlet, hyssop, and living bird were all dipped (they could not all be immersed) in the blood of the bird that was killed. But take notice, the persons to be cleansed were not dipped—they were sprinkled. When our great High Priest was pierced for our sins, there came out blood and water, not in quantity sufficient for immersion, but in quantity abundantly sufficient to sprinkle many nations, and to cleanse them from all their idols, and all their pollutions.

4. Do they find immersion in the meaning of the term baptism? No, for we read in the Septuagint, that the BODY of Nebuchadnezzar was *baptized* with the DEW of heaven. Dan. iv. 33. And in the Greek Testament we read, “when they come from the market except they baptize they eat not,” and “the baptisms of beds or couches.” “Baptized unto Moses in the cloud.” “He shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost and *with* fire.”

5. Do they discover immersion in John’s baptism? No, for John baptized *with* water, analagous to baptizing *with* the Holy Ghost. John baptized Christ to fulfil “all righteousness.” What did righteousness require? A priest was to be set apart to his office, by washing with water. Exod. xxix. 4. What was the mode of washing? By sprinkling the water upon the subjects. Num. viii. 7. If John immersed Christ, he was so far from fulfilling “all righteousness,” that he was evidently a transgressor of the law of God, by making the testimony of the water differ from the testimony of the blood and Spirit. From this conclusion, there is no possible escape. John either baptized with water in the mode of aspersion, or he contradicted the THREE that bear witness in earth. But this is not all. If John immersed Christ, or any one else, and thereby established an exclusive mode of baptism which we are bound to adopt, then baptism in many places where the gospel must be preached, is perfectly impracticable. But the Lord Jesus could never approve of such absurdity; for wherever men can

live, the gospel can be preached; and wherever the gospel is preached and believed, its ordinances can be administered. In the wilderness. Mark i. 4. In Jerusalem, where Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. Acts ii. 41. On the way which goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. Acts viii. 26. In the house of Cornelius. Acts x. 47. By the river-side, where prayer was wont to be made. Acts xvi. 13-15. In the prison. Acts xvi. 33. And we may add, in the frigid zone; in the desert of Sahara; and on the bed of sickness and death. In all places and all seasons; winter or summer, night or day. When and wherever men are brought to repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, baptism is practicable; but not so with immersion.

We have frequently seen cases precisely in point. But enough has been said. We come to the conclusion of this matter. There is "one Lord, and one faith, and one baptism;" and the THREE that bear witness in earth agree in ONE MODE of administration—SPRINKLING.

We shall conclude by giving an answer to a very natural and seasonable inquiry. To whom are we, under the present dispensation, to apply the water of purification?

It probably has occurred to you, in reading the history of redemption, that, during a period of nearly four thousand years, a community has existed, distinct from the world. This community has been called the "congregation of the Lord;" "the kingdom of heaven;" "the church of God." When the apostles commenced their ministerial labors, they found the church in existence, and they themselves forming a part of it. The church had been composed of the devout, who "waited for the Consolation of Israel"—of the faithful, who adhered to the Messiah in his humiliation; and was perpetuated by additions, after his ascension into heaven: "They that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were ADDED about three thousand souls." Acts ii. 41. "And the Lord ADDED TO THE CHURCH daily such as should be saved." Verse 47. The apostles never pretended that the church of God originated with them; but they showed that, while the blessings vouchsafed in the promise made to Abraham were perpetuated and diffused, the external forms were so changed as to give a new and more pleasing aspect to the visible kingdom

of Christ than it had ever before assumed. To satisfy all concerned, they held open the original charter of all their privileges, to which they constantly appealed, in unequivocal language, "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." Acts iii. 25. Again, "The COVENANT which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the *promise* of none effect." Gal. iii. 17. Once more, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs, according to THE PROMISE." Verse 29. Moreover, "THE PROMISE is unto you and to your children." Acts ii. 39. Hence it is evident that the apostles, whether addressing Jews or Gentiles, directed them to the promise made to Abraham; and this included their children.

God had made to Abraham two promises—one of great personal renown and a numerous progeny, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will make thy name great;" (Gen. xii. 2;) another, of spiritual blessings, that "in him all the families of the earth should be blessed." Verse 3. The first contained a grant of the land of Canaan and all the external privileges of the Jewish nation, and was ratified as a covenant by "a burning lamp" passing between the pieces of several slain animals; for *in that same day the Lord made a COVENANT* with Abraham, saying, "Unto thy seed have I given this land." Gen. xv. 17, 18. About fourteen years afterward, God changed the other promise into a covenant, by affixing to it the seal of the righteousness of faith: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." Gen. xvii. 7. "And 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." Rom. iv. 11. "For *the promise* that he should be the *heir of the world*, was—through the righteousness of faith." Verse 13. The blessings granted in this promise were, evidently, not Canaan, nor mere national peculiarities and privileges, but spiritual blessings, to be diffused among all nations. The Jew and the

Gentile were referred to the same covenant as the charter of all their privileges in the church of God. This covenant included children. Of this we have the most satisfactory evidence.

1. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations." Gen. xvii. 7.

2. "Suffer little children (infants, Luke xviii. 15) to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xix. 14.

3. Peter exhorted the Jews to connect their destinies with the church, under the new order of things; and assured them that "the promise" was to them and to their children. And is it not remarkable that, in the time of the apostles, no Jew ever objected to Christianity on the ground of children being excluded from the promise? From the time of Abraham till the day of Pentecost, the pious Israelites and devout Gentiles who embraced the faith of Abraham held in their hands that covenant which embosomed with themselves their children in the church of God. If, then, the apostles, under the new order of things, had excluded the children of believers from the church, would no one have objected?

4. The apostles and elders were convened at Jerusalem long after the day of Pentecost to decide a controversy. What was it? Whether the Gentiles should be circumcised after the manner of Moses. If it had been the practice of the apostles to exclude children from the church, this dispute could never have taken place; for to have talked about circumcising adults only, and excluding children, after the manner of Moses, would have been, in the opinion of all men, the most palpable absurdity.

5. The Apostle Paul places the church of God before us under the emblem of a good olive tree, which had been growing and flourishing long before his day. Some of the branches (the Jews) were broken off, and other branches, from a wild olive tree, (the Gentiles,) were grafted in among those that were not broken off, and, with them, partook of the root and fatness of this good olive tree. Rom. xi. Did the children of the broken-off branches suffer no loss by the excision? Were there no benefits conferred upon the children of those that were grafted into the good tree? How did Paul decide in a Gentile church? A husband believed, and was thereby

grafted into the good olive tree, but his wife remained a pagan : to which were the children to be reckoned ? Most unquestionably they were to be numbered with the believing parent, being brought under the operations of the covenant ; for, says the apostle, " now they are HOLY." 1 Cor. vii. 14.

" If the root be holy, so are the branches." Rom. xi. 16. But the broken-off branches, namely the unbelieving Jews, are to be again grafted into their own olive tree. Rom. xi. 24. When they shall believe in Messiah and be restored to the blessings of the church, which the apostle calls their OWN olive tree, will their children be excluded ? Let us hear the Prophet Isaiah on the subject of their restoration : " As the days of a tree, are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble ; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord and their OFFSPRING with them." Lxv. 22, 23.

We have shown that the covenant, confirmed of God in Christ before the giving of the law, was made with Abraham and his seed in their generations ; that it was ratified at a different time, and was sealed with a different seal from that which chartered to the Jews the land of Canaan ; that by it Abraham was made the father of many nations, or in other words, the father of all them that believe in every nation ; that it included the believer and his seed in the visible church, and that the seal of the righteousness of faith was applied to children from the time of Abraham down to the days of the apostles ; that Christ recognized the children of those that trusted in him, as members of the kingdom of heaven ; that the apostles urged upon Jews and Gentiles the same fact, asserting again and again the existence and full operations of the covenant, and that the original mode of sealing this covenant was dispensed with by an apostolic decree. It follows, then, that the covenant exists without a seal, (which is absurd,) or that there is some other mode of sealing it. What then is this mode ? Great changes took place. All that was ceremonial vanished away. All that was essential to the covenant and its blessings remained, and continues in successful operation.

A living ministry is continued, not in the character of priests, but of teachers. The passover is superseded by the Lord's Supper. The first day of the week becomes the Sabbath,

instead of the seventh. And what has come instead of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith? Why, baptism or nothing. Peter urged his hearers to be baptized, because the promise was to them and their children. Most certainly, then, baptism is connected with the promise. But, if the apostles in the new state of things intended to use baptism as a seal of the covenant, often called the promise, we must expect to see them apply it accordingly. And so we do. When Lydia believed and was baptized, all her household was baptized also. Acts xvi. 15. When the jailer believed and was baptized, all his were baptized straightway. Verse 33. Likewise the household of Stephanas. 1 Cor. i. 16. This coincides with the first operations of the covenant, (Gen. xvii. 23,) with only a more extensive application of the seal under the new order of things. For this the apostle assigns a reason. As the blessings of the covenant were so extended as to obliterate distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, the distinction of sex, in point of privilege, should also be obliterated; for says he, "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 6-18, 27, 28. Permit me for a moment to recapitulate. Every Jew who believed Jesus of Nazareth to be the true Messiah continued a Jew. He remained a branch of the good olive tree, for it was only those who would not obey that Prophet that were cut off from among the people, or broken off from the good tree. Acts iii. 23. Every Gentile who believed in Jesus became in fact a Jew, for he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart. Rom. ii. 29. When the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, that is, when the blessing of Abraham shall come upon all the Gentile nations, those that are Jews outwardly, the literal descendants of Abraham, shall be converted, and when they believe in Jesus they shall be grafted into their own olive tree, and, says the prophet, their offspring with them. It must be, then, that the church in all ages has been, is now, and will be composed of believers and their children, and the seal of the covenant ought to be applied to them. The minister of the gospel, then, who baptizes, that is, sprinkles the water of purification upon the believer and his household, has for his warrant the nature of God's covenant with his church and the example of the inspired apostles.

How then are we to account for the fact that the blessing of God attends the ministry of those whose practice tends to subvert the order of his church, and contradict the testimony of the Spirit, the water, and the blood? Here is a Christian phenomenon. God does evidently bless those who strive against the established order of his visible kingdom, and set at naught the testimony of his witnesses! This phenomenon is easily solved. These men preach Christ and him crucified as God's grand ordinance for the conversion of the world. It is not the errors they preach and practice that God blesses, but the truth. And this remark is equally applicable to many denominations. Men may preach ignorantly and absurdly, and from base motives, and yet if they preach Christ and him crucified, God will convert sinners. "Some, indeed, preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, but the other of love. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST.

BY C. WESLEY.

God of all power, and truth, and grace,
Which shall from age to age endure,
Whose word, when heaven and earth shall pass,
Remains, and stands for ever pure—

From all remaining filth within,
Let me in Thee salvation have,
From actual and from inbred sin
My ransom'd soul persist to save.

Wash out my deep original stain—
Tell me no more, it cannot be,
Demons or men! The Lamb was slain,
His blood was all poured out for me.

Sprinkle it, Jesus, on my heart!
Thy precious, thy all-cleansing blood
Shall make my sinfulness depart,
And fill me with the life of God.