

INFANT BAPTISM,

A

GOSPEL ORDINANCE:

CONSIDERED

IN TWO DISCOURSES, ON 1 COR. VII. 14.

DELIVERED

IN THE INDEPENDENT CHURCH, BEAUFORT, (S. C.)

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN M. PALMER, A. M.
Pastor of said Church.

PUBLISHED BY PARTICULAR REQUEST.

Search the Scriptures. *John v. 39.*

CHARLESTON (S. C.)

PRINTED BY J. HOFF, NO. 6, BROAD-STREET.

1809.

INFANT BAPTISM,

A

GOSPEL ORDINANCE.

DISCOURSE I.

“But now are they holy.” 1 Cor. vii. 14. last clause.

YOU have already seen, that the passage of scripture most strenuously insisted on by the opposers of infant baptism, and under which all other passages to the same purpose may be comprehended, when brought to the test, interpreted scripturally, and weighed in the balance with others, uttered by the same God of truth, has been found wanting in aid of their cause. You have also seen, that interpreted in the Baptist manner through the whole verse, it consigns the whole infant world to perdition. You have further seen, that other passages interpreted in the same way, and by the same rule, will prove any doctrine, and establish any system, however erroneous.

It is now to be proved, that Infant Baptism is a Gospel Ordinance. I therefore ask your candid and critical attention, while I make good by scriptural reasoning and just inference (for I acknowledge at once, nor do I wish to deny, that I can do it in no other way) this position. I have chosen the words of the text, because to my mind they appear, if not as express, yet as conclusive, as if they had been “but now are they baptized.” The subjects spoken of are the children of parents, one of whom at least has embraced the Christian faith, as will be seen from the context, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” This decision was made in a case of conscience that arose among the Corinthians, on which they asked the apostle’s opinion, whether on supposition, that a person already married became a convert to Christianity, while his or her partner remained still in an unchristianized state, it was or was not the duty of the believer to separate from the unbeliever. The origin of this scruple must have been the practice of the Jewish church, which required such a separation in such a case. (See the 9th and 10th chapters of Ezra.) The apostle denies the necessity or propriety of such a separation, and assigns as his reason, that in that case their children would be unclean, whereas they were holy. Our enquiry is, what we are to understand by *unclean*, and what by *holy* children.

C

I will *first* shew what these expressions do not mean. Now *legitimate* and *illegitimate* are not meant; or children born in lawful wedlock or otherwise. The interpretation given of this text by the Baptists is absurd and incredible in the extreme. It is not a scriptural one. The term *holy* occurs hundreds of times in the scriptures, but I have never yet met with the single passage, in which it signifies *legally holy*, or one *born in lawful wedlock*. It is contrary to common sense. Who ever heard, that every child was illegitimate, unless his parent were a Christian? When the Baptists give this sense to the word, do they mean, that the child's parent must be a *real* or a *nominal Christian*? If they mean the *former*, then far the greater part of the inhabitants even of a Christian land are unlawfully begotten. If they mean, the parent must be a *nominal Christian*, then all the *heathens*, all the *Turks*, and all the *Jews* now on earth, are *illegitimately born*. Who is prepared to believe this? It would be much more becoming in them to acknowledge, they do not understand the passage, than to fall into such absurdities. We need not say more on such sophistry. We return to our text: "but now are they holy." Holiness, as applied to a creature, means in scripture one of these three things—a *natural or positive holiness*, an *acquired holiness*, or a *relative holiness*.

Have *children any positive holiness*? *No*, says the word of God, "Can a clean thing come out of an unclean?" "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." "We go astray, as soon as we be born"—children have no natural or positive holiness.

Have *children an acquired holiness*, acquired by regenerating grace? *No*, for they do not know what regenerating grace means: Infants know not their right hand from their left. We do not say, they *cannot* have *acquired*, or to speak more properly, *imparted* holiness: for "nothing is impossible with God." But until they arrive at such an age as to give evidence of it, we have no grounds to ascertain that they possess it. But children are holy in some sense; for an apostle has asserted it. They are not holy in a *legal* sense; for that is both absurd and unscriptural:—they are not holy in a *positive* sense; for that too is unscriptural;—and they have no *imparted* holiness, in our view, till they arrive at an age to evidence it.

Are they then *relatively holy*? Yes, my brethren, they are *relatively* or *federally holy*. This is a scriptural sense, and the only scriptural sense, in which the term can be applied to an infant. And I will produce you some of the passages, in which it is necessarily used in this *relative sense*. Ezra ix. 2. speaking of the conduct of the Jews in intermarrying with the heathens, Ezra says, "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the *holy seed* have mingled themselves with the people of those lands." The Jews are here called without any exception the *holy seed*, when a very small portion were Israelites indeed, or the spiritual Israel. Yet they were all holy by external profession, by their outward relation to God, by their circumcision which they received, and by which they were dedicated to God. At different times, when the nation had almost wholly relapsed into idolatry, they never lost *the name of the holy seed or people*. The term *holy*, indeed, except when it is applied to beings who have never sinned, in which case it implies positive holiness—or to those who have sinned, but are recovered by grace,

when it signifies imparted or acquired holiness, always means relative holiness, or that holiness which any person or thing has, by being devoted to God. In this sense the Jews were a holy people, even in the time of their greatest backsliding: the temple was holy, though in itself an inanimate or unintelligent building. And accordingly when *unclean* is placed in opposition to *holy* in the sense of our text, the term signifies what is not in covenant relation to God, and has not been dedicated to him. Peter objected to going to Cornelius, when sent for by him, considering it unlawful for a Jew to keep company with one of another nation, because unclean. Cornelius was a devout man, a fearer of God, a worshiper of him, and a liberal almsgiver. Yet because he was a Gentile, and did not belong to the church, by having its rite administered to him, Peter considered him unclean, that is to say, out of covenant relation. *Children are then holy, when one or both parents being believers, they may be dedicated to God.*

But does any one ask, whether, because *children are holy, they are therefore to be baptiz'd?* We answer,—yes. If there is any appointed initiating rite, by which human beings can be dedicated to God, that rite must be employed.

These observations shew very fully and satisfactorily the meaning of our text: but I desire to give you a more complete view of the subject both from the Old and New Testament, that you “may give to every man a reason of the hope that is in you,” when you dedicate a child to God in the ordinance of baptism. In doing this, I shall employ much *reasoning and inference*, and although I may be censured for this, by those who oppose our opinions and practices, all the reply I shall make to them is this, “First cast the beam out of thine own eye.” For I well know, that *they are obliged to reason and infer* continually respecting many of their own opinions and practices; and particularly concerning the *mode of baptism*, they are so destitute of any thing like *proof*, that they must *reason very sophistically to seem to establish it*; and yet after all fail, as shall be hereafter shewn.

That you may see the subject in its plainest and simplest form, it shall be presented to you in the following views:—

- I. A view of the covenant of grace and of the first Christian church founded upon it.
- II. A view of the Jewish church, or second form of the Christian church.
- III. A view of the Christian church in its most perfect state under the gospel dispensation.

Allow me, however, here to call your attention to one or two preliminary remarks. At man's first creation God entered into a covenant of works with him, promising him eternal life upon his perfect obedience. But man failed in this obedience, and thus cut himself off from all hope of life, on this condition. Immediately after his fall, God entered into a covenant of grace with him, and gave him the first distant intimation of a Redeemer, in that promise, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.” On the ground of this promise, sincere believers were received into favor with God in their individual capacity, till the time of Abraham. Let us now,

1. Take a view of the covenant of grace made with Abraham, and of the first Christian church established upon it. I call it a *Christian church*, because the apostle Paul does as much, in Gal. iii. 8. where

he asserts, "the gospel was preached unto Abraham," and of course, unto the church, which was constituted in his family; and a church, regularly formed as this was, to which the gospel was preached, is in strict propriety of speech a *Christian church*. Abraham was called to enter publicly into covenant with God;—the tenor of the covenant was, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect," and in the 17th verse of chapter 17th. God says, "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 thy seed after thee." God's part of the covenant is, "to be a God to him and to his seed." Abraham's part is, "to walk before God and be perfect." This is precisely the same covenant of grace, which we are now placed under, and Abraham was saved just in the same way, in which any have been saved since the coming of Christ, viz. by faith producing holiness. Let it not be supposed from the expression, "be thou perfect," that this holy man was saved by his works; for many traits in his character shew him to have been a very imperfect man in himself, and only perfect through the righteousness of his Redeemer. Christ says to his disciples, "Be ye perfect." But what Christian is so in himself? All of this character are "complete in him," but not otherwise. But we shall learn more of Abraham's religious character and opinions from Paul in the New Testament, than from Moses in the Old. Examine carefully at your leisure the 4th chapter to the Romans, and 3rd to the Galatians, and then say, whether a greater Christian than this "father of the faithful," as he is called, ever existed; whether he does not surpass Paul himself. The brevity which I study obliges me to introduce but few passages. The 9th verse says, "That faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." The same thing is repeated in Galatians iii. 6. Christ says to the Jews, "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." He saw it as a believer. Faith was a distinguishing feature of Abraham's character, on which account it is said, in the 7th verse, that "they which are of faith," under the Gospel, "the same are the children of Abraham." See also Acts iii. 25. God's covenant with Abraham was confirmed in Christ as a mediator; and his covenant with us is no more than thus confirmed. Gal. iii. 17. It is altogether needless to multiply words to prove *Abraham a gospel believer*. If then God's covenant with Abraham was the covenant of grace, if it was confirmed in Christ, and if Abraham was justified by faith, then the church to which Abraham belonged, and which was formed of his family, was a *Christian church*. But there is no church without ordinances. Let us then ask, if there was any religious ordinance in the *Abrahamic church*, or *Christian church under its first form*. Yes, the moment Abraham believed God's promise, there was a seal of this promise given him to be applied. And as some persons are particularly fond of proofs from the New Testament, and as I have proved Abraham's faith from this source, so I will also prove his circumcision. In Romans iv. 11. Paul says, "and he received the sign of *circumcision*, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised"—He had faith while uncircumcised—He then received circumcision as the seal. Now my friends, as the gospel order now is, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." So the gospel order in Abraham's day was, "he

that believeth and is circumcised shall be saved." Abraham believed, Abraham was circumcised, and so Abraham was saved. It is altogether trifling to say, "Produce the words which say, 'he that believeth and is circumcised shall be saved'." We have produced the thing, which is far better, and from the New-Testament too. we have produced an example of *believer's circumcision*, as both the Baptists and ourselves can produce examples of *believer's baptism*. Thus Abraham, we see, was initiated a member of the first church of Christ by circumcision—Adults then were members of the first Christian church.

But, my brethren, there is another enquiry to be instituted—Were adults the *only* members of this Church? Was adult circumcision *only*, or believer's circumcision *only* the doctrine and practice of this church? To get an answer to this question, we must go back to the first formation of this church, and the first institution of this ordinance. Examine well the first 14 verses of the 7th Genesis, and then from 23rd verse to the end. In the first collection, you will see the permanent rule and order for the administration of circumcision, which continued unaltered till the Redeemer's advent: In other words, you will see the express precept for circumcision. Then survey the last five verses of the chapter, and you will behold the first example of circumcision. In these passages you will find these three things, adult, or as Paul calls it, *believer's circumcision*, *infant circumcision*, and *family circumcision*. So far is plain. Now Paul tells us, "Abraham received circumcision, as *the seal of the righteousness of the faith* which he had, being yet uncircumcised." But, how comes it to pass, that Abraham's household too was circumcised, including Ishmael, who was then his only son at 13 years of age, and Isaac afterwards, as you will see in the 21st chapter, 4th verse, at 8 days old? Was it because of *their belief*? No, say the Baptists, and so say we:—for whatever Ishmael and the rest of the household might have done, the babe Isaac, at eight days old, could hardly have been such a prodigy of an infant, as to be capable of believing any thing at that tender age. Circumcision was to Abraham a seal of faith, and of God's everlasting covenant too—Circumcision was to Isaac at the time he received it, not a seal of faith, but of God's covenant, and could not be a seal of faith to him, till he arrived at an age, when he could exercise faith; then he would see that God had made a covenant of grace and mercy with him, and given him the token of it, before he could distinguish between good and evil; and could ever reflect on his infant circumcision and the blessing it signified and sealed, with unspeakable pleasure and satisfaction. If this was not the reason of his circumcision, it becomes those who think so to tell us, and that out of the word of God, and not from their own fancies. what was the reason. It is a slander upon God himself to say, that circumcision was a merely carnal ordinance, a token only of temporal blessings, a national rite: for the Old and New Testament declare again and again, that it was a spiritual rite, and signified spiritual things. I can only refer you to the Bible. See Deut. x. 16.—xxx. 6. Jerem. iv. 4. Col. ii. 11. Rom. ii. 25. 28.—iii. 1. Phil. iii. 3. Here then was a spiritual church, founded on the covenant of grace, an everlasting covenant—here was an eminent believer, so much so, that he is called by an apostle "*the father of all them that believe*"—so much so, that it is said of Christians, un-

der the more complete dispensation of the gospel (Gal. iii. 29. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye *Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*") This pattern of faith joins himself to the Lord in what is expressly called an *everlasting covenant*—this he does by circumcision; not only so, but *he joins a new-born infant to the Lord in the same covenant, and by the same rite.* Here are *Adult and Infant members of a church*, to which St. Paul affirms "the gospel was preached." Here is adult and infant circumcision in *a church in which faith is required.* God sees no contradiction between them—the obedient Patriarch sees none; he knows believer's circumcision to be a divine ordinance, yet he is not afraid of making it void by infant circumcision. Neither does the babe Isaac, when he comes to years, quarrel with his parents, or with his church, because they undertook to administer a divine ordinance to him, when he did not even know the meaning of the word ordinance. Though he knows, his father believed, before he was circumcised, and was circumcised in token of his belief, he thinks his *own infant circumcision just as good to the full, just as valid and acceptable to God, as his father's adult or believer's circumcision.* But whenever a heathen became a child of Abraham by faith, he having not been circumcised, either in infancy or manhood, becomes circumcised, and his children, if he has any, along with him.

The Baptists however argue, that this covenant with Abraham related to temporal blessings, because in the 8th verse God promises to give to him and his seed the land of Canaan for a possession. But this promise of temporal good was made after, and only annexed to that more interesting engagement on God's part, contained in the 7th verse. And in this respect it corresponds exactly with the covenant of grace under which Christians now are: for that also contains "a promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. Mat. vi. 33. Besides, if this be understood as the principal engagement of the covenant, the promise has not been fulfilled. It has failed to be an everlasting covenant, as the Jews were repeatedly expelled from Canaan, and have now for many hundreds of years been scattered into all lands. But on supposition of its being a spiritual covenant, as it unquestionably is, God has been the God of Abraham and his *spiritual seed among the Jews and among the Gentiles* without a moment's intermission, and will be through time and through eternity. The covenant in this sense is *literally everlasting.* Such was the Abrahamic church.

2. Let us now take a view of the *Jewish church, or Christian church under its second form.* But first let us correct an error. It is the perpetual practice of our opponents, to speak of circumcision as a mere *Jewish rite*, as if it originated with the ceremonial laws of Moses, and was done away in its intention and in its use with them. This is wholly a mistake. *Circumcision is not a Jewish rite in its origin:* so that could they prove the whole of the Jewish ceremonies carnal in their nature and in their end, circumcision would stand its ground. The covenant of grace, and circumcision its seal, are 430 years older than the Passover, or any Jewish ordinance. Hear what Paul says respecting it—"The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was 430 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Gal. iii. 17. Thus we have Abraham to our father, not Moses. Moses did not institute, but adopted circumci-

sion, and incorporated it among the rites peculiar to his dispensation. "Moses gave you circumcision," says Christ to the Jews, "not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers." Its subjects, its mode, and its spiritual intension remained the same as before. It had a spiritual and evangelical meaning, as we will see by consulting both prophets and apostles. Jeremiah says to the Jews, "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away *the foreskin of your hearts.*" Paul says to the Colossians, "In whom also, (i. e. Christ) ye are circumcised." Both Jeremiah and Paul alike believed and taught, that *circumcision was a spiritual rite.*

The Jewish church was both national and spiritual. Every individual of the nation was required under temporal penalties to be a member of the church; to be circumcised; to partake of the passover; to make an outward profession of religion. But God required along with these, inward grace, and holiness of life. The body of the nation were merely nominal professors: but there was also always a spiritual seed to serve God. That true and heart-felt religion was required, as much before as after Christ, to acceptance with God, will appear to all who read the Prophets.

3. The *Christian church in its third or completest form under the gospel dispensation* now comes under view. This was *wholly spiritual.* From Abraham to Christ, we find there has been a spiritual church, spiritual ordinances, and *Adult and Infant members.* Abraham and Moses retire, to make way for Christ the great head of the church. The enquiry is, what alterations or amendments does he make? what does he abolish, what does he change, and what retain? He entirely abolishes *all* the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish church, *except two, circumcision and the passover.* The latter was the most exact representation of his atonement: the sprinkled blood of the Paschal Lamb saved the Jews from the destroying Angel—the sprinkled blood of the Lamb of God saves the believer from a destroying God. When Jesus ate the last Passover with his disciples, this ordinance was done with forever, and we behold in the *Lord's Supper* "*Christ our Passover, who is sacrificed for us.*" The Abrahamic and Jewish rite of *circumcision is also changed,* and now (Col. ii. 11, 12.) in Christ "we are circumcised with the *circumcision made without hands,* in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in *baptism.*" Here are too ordinances changed—the ancient initiating rite of circumcision retires, and the present initiating rite of baptism comes in its room—the passover yields to the supper.

Some of our opponents allow the succession in the latter case, but deny it in the former;—others deny it in both. We might make no reply to either, till they could agree among themselves: but for your satisfaction we shall make a few remarks on the subject. As to the one, we shall only refer you to what Paul says, 1 Cor. v. 7. In proof of the *substitution of baptism for circumcision,* weigh well the passage but just introduced from Coloss. ii. 11, 12. The "*circumcision made without hands,*" evidently means and can mean nothing else but regeneration, which is wrought by God's spirit, and not by manual operation. These Colossians were Gentiles, not Jews, and therefore had not received bodily circumcision, but a "*circumcision made without hands,*" which can be no other than regeneration; inward circumcision; heart circumcision; that circumcision which Moses promised the Is-

raelites, when he said, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine *heart* and the *heart* of thy seed," &c. Deut. xxx. 6. This is farther explained by "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," another phrase for regeneration, and exactly according with that Scripture (Eph. iv. 23.) "That ye *put off* concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt." &c. Coloss. iii. 9. "Ye have *put off* the old man with his deeds." But besides this "circumcision made without hands," the apostle mentions another, which these Colossians had received "by the circumcision of Christ." What does this expression mean? Not the "circumcision made without hands" or regeneration, spoken of just before; for this would be a needless and unaccountable repetition. Besides, this circumcision was not peculiar to the gospel dispensation, but was as much required and as much enjoyed under the Jewish economy as under the Christian. David felt his need of a "clean heart" and a "right spirit," as much as the Colossians. Neither can it mean Christ's *personal* circumcision, received in infancy, in obedience to the Jewish law. To say, that the Colossians were circumcised by that, is absurdity and nonsense. There is therefore no other possible explanation to be given of this phrase, but that which we have in the next verse. "Buried with him in baptism." They had received two kinds of circumcision, one *inward*, "not made with hands," viz. regeneration—the other *outward*, viz. baptism, in which they had been "buried with Christ." Baptism then, is the "circumcision of Christ," the ordinance instituted by him in the room and answering the purposes of circumcision, to the gospel church;—the Christian circumcision, as the Lord's Supper is the Christian Passover. The Jewish circumcision is done away, and baptism, the circumcision instituted by Christ, appears in its stead. This truth will receive farther evidence, by considering the apostle's particular aim and object in this chapter, viz. to guard them against the seductions of the Judaizing teachers, who labored to impress the necessity of circumcision on the Gentile converts. Paul combats this error, and tells them, they had received an ordinance, fully as valuable, and answering its purposes as well: for they were "buried with Christ in baptism," the seal of the covenant of grace now, and therefore stood in no need of circumcision, the former seal of the same covenant.

Thus we see what Christ did with the forms of the church; he abolished all but two, similar in their extent, which he changed for others. Let us now enquire what he did with the *substance* of the church. By this I mean *the doctrines and members*. We may be sure, an unchanging God would never destroy or essentially alter these, without informing us of it. But *the doctrines are the same*—Abraham believed and Paul did no more—David repented, and Peter did no more—Holiness was required then, and no more is needful now. But what became of *the members*? Till Christ came, *these consisted of adults and infants*: what do they consist of now? "Of adults only, or persons capable of believing," say the Baptists. Infants then are cast out. By what law? "By the law of faith," say the Baptists; "he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." But this law would cast them out of the church in heaven, just as certainly and as completely, as out of the church on earth; for "he that believeth not, shall be damned." And why did not the law of faith cast them out former-

ly, as well as now? for faith was as much required of adults then before circumcision, and before church-membership, as now. It is strange, that they are not able to bring a single precept or example to prove their assertion. *And if nothing has been said or done by Christ to dispossess infants of their right and privilege, they must enjoy it still.* If a person has been admitted into any society, and has done nothing to forfeit his standing, he certainly continues a member, till he voluntarily withdraws, or is forcibly excluded from it. But what have infants done to forfeit their church-standing? or what has God done to deprive them of it. Speak, ye who wish them thrust out!—

But though *they* cannot prove them thrust out, *we* can prove them kept in. The text proves it; “now are they holy,” as holy as ever the children of Jewish parents were, as worthy (if there is any worthiness in the case) and as capable of receiving a religious rite. They are holy, and therefore proper subjects for a holy society, such as the church professes to be—relatively holy, and therefore ought to have this relative holiness externally exhibited.

Another passage I will just introduce, on which I will not found a separate argument, but which undoubtedly has a favorable aspect towards our subject. Matt. xix. 14. “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” When our brethren are pressed with this passage, they rid themselves of the difficulties it throws in their way, by saying, and that without a shadow of proof from the context, that *of such* in the latter clause relates to adults, resembling children in disposition; as if Christ had said, “suffer one description of persons to come unto me, because of another description of persons is the kingdom of heaven.” What *loose reasoning and remote inference* they can sometimes use!

That *infants are still church-members*, and therefore to be initiated into the church by baptism, appears again from Acts ii. 38, 39. where Peter says to his Jewish hearers, “Repent and be baptized, &c. for *the promise is to you and to your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” What promise can this be? none other, than that made to Abraham, of which circumcision was the seal; “I will be a God *to thee and to thy seed*,” &c. There is a similitude and correspondence in the phrases denoting the subjects of this promise: here it is, *to you and to your children*, &c. In Acts iii. 25. he tells the Jews again, “ye are *the children of the promise* and of the covenant,” &c. The apostle tells these convinced Jews, that “*the promise is to them and to their children*,” and uses it as an argument, to persuade them to baptism. From his mentioning *their children too as included in the promise*, they must see at once, that if *they* were to be baptized, because the promise was to them; *their children* too should be baptized, because the *same promise was to them also*. But the promise is also “to them that are afar off.” These can be none other than the Gentiles, who are often spoken of in Scripture by the term *those afar off*, and who are “fellow heirs of the same promise” with the Jews. Will any one ask, why it is not said “Repent and be baptized, ye and your children”? I answer, because it was unnecessary. Only prove that baptism was proper for *them*, because *they* were interested in the promise, and they would know at once, without being expressly told, that baptism was proper for their children also, because *they* were interested in the same promise; otherwise it was wholly fo-

reign to the purpose to mention children at all. Had the ordinance of the church still been circumcision, and had the apostle said ‘ Repent and be circumcised, for the promise is to you and your children.’ they would have known at once, that their children were to be circumcised too. But the ordinance of the church being baptism instead of circumcision, the same thing was equally manifest. If this be not the case, the mentioning of their children had no other effect but to confound the subject on which he was speaking.

Let us now see, whether there be any examples of infant baptism. Yes, there are examples too. It is no where said indeed, that such and such a particular infant was baptized. But what amounts to the same thing, that such and such families, were baptized after the baptism of their heads. And if our brethren will only practise family baptism, whenever the adult has a family, we shall not insist on infant baptism any more, and will keep the offensive expression wholly out of view. For it would be ridiculous to dispute about a word, when we were agreed in the thing. We shall review the family baptisms of the New Testament.

The Jailer and his family shall be first noticed: For fuller information on the subject, we shall consider several circumstances besides their baptism, and from the Greek Testament the fountain head. In the 31st verse Paul and Silas tell him, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.” Observe, it is not said, believe *and let thy house believe*, and thou and thy house shall be saved. *The exhortation to believe is to the Jailer only—but upon his believing, not himself only, but his house also are to be saved.* Upon the Baptist way of interpreting scripture, this text would prove even more than infant baptism from parental faith; it would prove infant salvation, nay, a whole family’s salvation from the faith of the head. But we would not adopt such reasoning. We cannot think then, that a family can be saved, because its head believes, though the text expressly asserts it; but knowing that something important must be meant, we must have recourse to our old custom of *reasoning upon the word of God*; comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and scripture with scripture, we suppose the passage to mean, that *his family shall be in the way of salvation, and be furnished with important helps for that purpose.* So when Zaccheus obtained an interest in Jesus, Jesus said, “ This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch, as he also is a son of Abraham.” And what was it to be a son of Abraham? It was to be an heir of the promise made to him, and of course to have a right to the seal of that promise. “ For if ye be Christ’s, said Paul, then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” How then was the Jailer’s house saved by his faith? Why, by being brought within the enclosure of the church, through its initiating ordinance, and thus put in the way of obtaining those farther blessings, which should issue in salvation. And this we see was in fact the case; “ For *he was baptized and all his* straightway;” but only *himself* believed. My brethren, here is a positive, a marked, and undeniable *example of infant baptism, or, if you prefer it of family baptism without infant or family faith.* I will give these querulous people their choice; as they are so inveterate against infants, let it be allowed, that there was not one in this family, but who was able to believe. The question recurs, did they believe? we know *they were baptized*, for that is expressly said:

but it is not said they believed, and it is impossible to prove they believed. They think, however, it is proveable from the next verse, "And when he, viz. the Jailer, had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." My brethren, if I had not the original to consult, this text might favor the supposition, that in the Jailer's family all were believers. I will give you however the passage as it is in the original, "And he rejoiced with or in all his house, he having believed God." The believing is spoken only of himself; his house had no share in it.

There is another circumstance which is worthy of our attention. When the Jailer's family is spoken of in the 31st verse as saved by his faith, the expression is, "thou shalt be saved *and thy house*." In the next verse, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all *that were in his house*." Mark the change of expression. Does not this assert, that there were others in his house besides his family, who perhaps had gone there at that moment? Let us pass to the 33rd verse: "He was baptized, he and *all his* straightway." Here we have again the same expression or one perfectly similar with *thy house*. When it is said, "thy house," we know evidently, that the Jailer's family was meant and nobody else—when it is said "all that were in his house," it applies to every body, to strangers, to enemies, to any one who might come there for any purpose—when it is said "*all his*," here is a definite expression again, meaning the Jailer's family and that only. We may preach to every body, to *all that are in the house*, that is, the building—but we must only tell the believer, that *he and his house* will be saved if he believes. We may preach to *every body*, but we can only say of a believer and his family, "*he and all his* were baptized straightway."

Let us next review the example of Lydia and her household, occurring in the same chapter, 14th and 15th verses. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things, which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized *and her household*, she brought us saying, if ye have judged *me* to be faithful, come *into my house*," &c. We here find a person and her household baptized. Our enquiry is, whether all the persons here said to be baptized, did believe. Lydia's heart is said to be opened, and she enquired of Paul and his companions, "if they judged her faithful to the Lord," &c. From these expressions, we infer, *she* was a believer. Allowing *her* to be a believer, where is the proof of *her household* being believers? There is none. Our brethren, however, think they find it in the 40th verse, where it is said of Paul and Silas, "And they went out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed." The Baptists discover from this passage, that Lydia had a dwelling house—that the apostles found brethren there, whom they comforted, whence they infer (for *even they can infer*) that these brethren were identically the same persons with Lydia's household and were believers. The inference is not conclusive. In the first place, because nothing is more common than for religious brethren and sisters too to assemble at each other's houses, and yet not be a part of the family; and secondly, even if they were, it remains to be proved, whether they were baptized on Lydia's faith, or their own; for

children, come to years of understanding, may be baptized on a parent's faith.

In 1 Cor. i. 16. Paul tells us, he baptized the household of Stephanas. Here I can find *a household baptized*, and I will thank any one who will shew me the place, where it is said the household, be they infants or be they adults, believed.

He that can believe, that among the several families mentioned in Scripture, as baptized, there were no infants, let him believe it. We practise, according to our judgment, exactly as the apostles practised. They had to bring over persons, from false religion to Christianity. When they have done so, they baptize them, *and if they had households, their households also.* We do just the same. The apostles, however, baptized no adults, as we can find, that were descended of Christian parents: How can this be accounted for on any other supposition than that they were already baptized in infancy? I will shew you wherein the apostles and Baptists, and Pædobaptists or infant baptizers all agree. The apostles baptized adults that were formerly of another religion; the Baptists do the same; the Pædobaptists do the same. When the infants of those whom the Apostles baptized, grew up and believed, the Apostles did not baptize them, according to any account we have in Scripture. Neither do we, because they have been baptized in infancy. But the Baptists differ both from the Apostles and us, in that they baptize the adult offspring of a believer, equally with the adult offspring of a heathen. Attend to the following remark. It is agreed on every hand, that the Acts of the Apostles are a history of the proceedings of the Christian church, for about 30 years from the ascension of Christ. Every one must see, that during this period, there must have been a multitude of baptisms and baptized persons. During these thirty years, those persons who had been baptized in the first years, must have had an immense number of adult children. None of these children, according to the baptist opinion, were baptized in infancy. Now they will confer a distinguished favor, if they will shew, from the Acts of the Apostles, a history of thirty years, an instance of one adult baptized, who was the child of a believer. Not an example can be produced. Let them cease then to ask for an example of infant baptism. All the adults we baptize, are of the same description with those mentioned in Acts, as baptized by the Apostles. Some of the Adults they baptize, are of the same kind with those the Apostles baptized; and some, viz. the adult children of Christian parents, are examples of a kind of believers, which the Apostles are not said to have baptized. And now, my brethren, who are the persons that depart from Apostolic practice, they or we?

INFANT BAPTISM,

A

G O S P E L O R D I N A N C E .

DISCOURSE II.

“ But now are they holy.” 1 Cor. vii. 14. iast clause.

HAVING proved very fully from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the church membership of Infants, as having been acknowledged and universally known ever since God had a church on earth, till the time of Christ, we enquired, whether *he* had said or done any thing to cast them out of their inheritance, and to deprive them of their right. The result of this enquiry was, that the Scripture was totally silent on this head; nay, that in opposition to such an idea, infants were still acknowledged as subjects of the kingdom of heaven;—that the promise is still to believers and their children, as it was to Abraham and his seed; that the children of believers are holy; and that in consequence of this, whenever the Apostles baptized the head of a family, they baptized the rest of the household upon his faith.

In what remains to be said on this subject, we shall combat still further that very erroneous and unscriptural idea, that the ancient church of God was merely civil, political or national, and that evangelical holiness was not required for membership.

My brethren, we greatly err, when we shew the least disrespect to the Old Testament, or the Old Testament dispensation. In so doing, we differ very widely from Christ, and from all his Apostles, who regarded the ancient scriptures with a most profound veneration, and proved every thing they said upon the substance of religion from them. From this source the Head of the Church proved himself the Messiah—“ Search the Scriptures,” said he to the Jews, “ for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.” But what Scriptures could the Jews search? No part of the New Testament was then in being; but they were referred to the writings of Moses and the prophets; these were the volumes of eternal life. What is our Lord’s reply to the rich man’s request, that Lazarus might be sent ~~from his place of torment~~ to warn his brethren? It is, “ They have Moses and the prophets; and if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” Had not the New Testament been added to the Old, the Old would have

been just as sufficient for the purposes of our salvation, as for that of the Jews. What says Paul to Timothy? "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, &c. (2 Tim. iii. 16.) Now what scripture does Paul mean? The Old Testament; for the New was not then completed. To the disciples journeying to Emmaus, Christ "beginning at Moses and all the prophets expounded in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning himself." And how much is it to be lamented, that what happened to these disciples, could not take place in our day on many who think themselves master builders in Israel, viz. "Then opened he their understandings that they might understand the scriptures:" (verse 45.) then would they cease to undervalue any part of the word of God, and infant baptism, the ordinance of his church. I wot that through ignorance many of them do it; and therefore they ought to be prayed for; "for they know not what they do." It is one thing to take a piece of a text here, and another piece there, to answer a particular purpose; but it is another and very different thing to understand the Scriptures throughout consistently, and to "let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom." The Bereans were commended of Paul for not taking even his word as the ground of their faith, till they had themselves "searched the Scriptures daily," whether the things he told them, were so or not. Go ye and do likewise. But by the Scriptures, Paul did not mean texts and half-texts picked out here and there, without considering their connection with what goes before and what follows after, as the Baptists do with their half-text, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." &c. but he meant an examination of them throughout, a comparison of one with another, and such an interpretation of them, as would shew them all to speak the same language and be consistent with each other. This is not the case with the Baptists: the piece of a text which they bring, speaks full as much at least *for* infant damnation, as it does *against* infant baptism. We believe it has nothing to do with infants at all; and it is very absurdly, that they bring it to disprove infant baptism; for as was said before, it has no more relation to the subject, than thou "shalt not steal." And it is just as foolish, to *disprove* infant baptism by *proving* adult baptism, as it would be to *disprove* the existence of an infant by *proving* the existence of an adult. There is not an atom more of contradiction between adult and infant baptism, than between adult and infant existence. We must therefore say to our brethren, "These things ought ye to have done, and at the same time not to have left the other undone." We contend for both adult and infant baptism.

Timothy is commended by Paul (2 Tim. iii. 15.) for having, from his youth, known the Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith in Christ. But what Scriptures did Timothy know? The Old Testament; for he had no other; these were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith in Christ. And why are they not able to make us so too?

My brethren, the purport and tendency of these observations is this,—to shew you in what light to view, and in what manner to treat the scriptures of the Old Testament. The ~~Mosaic dispensation~~ *Mosaic dispensation*; as to its rites, ceremonies, and external forms, I acknowledge, is done away. The New Testament clearly and repeatedly tell us so. But my brethren, infants are neither rites, ceremonies, nor forms: they

are heirs of immortality—the word of God never yet considered them as trifles; all the tender feelings of a parent's heart testify, “they are not trifles.” God considered them as beings of such importance, as to enter into a covenant with them, as we find in Deut. xxix. 10, 11. “Ye stand this day, all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers, with all the men of Israel; *your little ones*, &c. that thou shouldst *enter into covenant* with the Lord thy God.” And we are expressly told, that “the things which are revealed, belong unto us and *our children forever*.” And is it not clearly revealed, that infants entered once into covenant with God? We have also seen in the former discourse, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that infants were admitted into the church of God, by the rite of circumcision, though faith was required of an adult in order to that privilege, and though it was a rite of such spiritual meaning, that no one was considered as partaking of its benefits, who was not a holy person. For this we have further the authority of Paul, Rom. ii. 23, 29. “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and circumcision is *that of the heart in the spirit* and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.” Hear Stephen's language to the Jews (Acts vii. 51.) “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” Now why would he call them *uncircumcised in heart and ears*, unless he knew, and was conscious they knew also, that their circumcision bound them to have a new and holy heart, and to give an attentive ear to God's word. I will say nothing more to prove *circumcision a religious rite in itself and spiritual in its meaning*. Those who pay any regard at all to the voice of God, speaking in the Old Testament and in the New, will not need farther proof; if they do however, we are ready at any time to produce it; and as for those who do not, they set aside the scripture, and are therefore not to be reasoned with from it. It is then manifest, beyond all possibility of reasonable contradiction, that *infants were once members of the Christian church*, to which an apostle says, the gospel was preached, and *introduced into it by a religious and holy rite*. That rite is now changed for another, viz. baptism. The Passover is changed for another ordinance, viz. the Lord's Supper—but where, where in the whole compass of the word of God, is the single solitary passage to be found, which even intimates, much less positively asserts, that infants are no longer to be admitted into the church, are no longer fit subjects of a holy rite? We defy all the Baptists in the universe to produce the text or even half-text, which does it. Now my brethren, what God once did in his church, and Christ who came to complete and finish all things, has never undone, remains unaltered. What God once enjoined and commanded, and Christ has never forbidden, is still our bounden and indispensable duty. “*All scripture*,” says Paul, “is profitable for direction and instruction in righteousness”—the Old Testament directs and instructs us to devote our children to God in his ordinance—Christ has given no direction, no instruction, no precept, no example to the contrary—What is the consequence? The inevitable, the scriptural consequence is, that *we are still directed and instructed to bring our children into the church, by its initiating ordinance*—Infant church-membership is an indisputable fact; the question is, how are they to be made members?

how are they to be admitted? I see no other possible answer but this—*by baptism*. If the Baptists have any other method, right in itself, and ordained and approved by God, they ought to let us know what it is, that we may be benefited by it, and that there may be but one baptism. But while we know that infants are members of the church, and must be received, or a divine command be broken; and while we know of no ordinance but baptism, by which this can be done, we must necessarily (for we cannot do otherwise at all according to the scriptures) we *must* baptize them. And our brethren must “pardon their servants in this thing.” “For whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto them more than unto God,” we leave even them to judge.

While we are upon this subject, we shall take occasion to enlarge more fully upon the scriptural doctrine, vindicated in the former discourse, that the church of God from the beginning to the end of time, has been, is, and will be *one and the same* church; and therefore members of the same description must constitute it, under all its various forms and outward changes: for membership is not a circumstance, but the essence of the church. Here our brethren do most egregiously “err, not knowing the scriptures.” They will tell you (and it is a deplorable tale too) that the Christian church is entirely and essentially different from the Jewish; and it is the only possible way, in which they can get rid of that abhorred thing, “Infant Baptism.” So that in order to slay the monster, they thrust their sword with indignation into the very vitals of the church of God. But we shall shew you as we proceed, how very widely they differ, when they assert this, from both Christ and his Apostles. The Baptists say, the Christian church is different from the Jewish: and it must be so indeed, if infants are cast out; for members are of the essence of a church. But let us hear Christ’s decision respecting the Jewish church and his own. In Matt. xxi. 43. after delivering two parables in the hearing of the chief priests and elders of the people, who asked him by what authority he was acting, he declares to them, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” Our first enquiry is, what is here meant by the kingdom of God. It has but *two* possible meanings in Scripture—the church on earth and the church in heaven: the latter cannot be meant for two reasons; the people Christ addressed were not in heaven but on earth, and the kingdom of glory will never be taken from any who have the happiness to reach it. The *church on earth* along with its privileges, and that *only, can be here meant*—this, Christ tells the priests and elders, shall be taken from them: but it could not be taken from them hereafter, if it did not belong to them now. They then had the kingdom of heaven, or were members of the church, when Christ addressed them. Now who were these elders and priests? Not Christians; for they were the incessant persecutors of Christ. Yet they belonged to the acknowledged church of God, and Christ threatens them with taking the kingdom from them, Jews, and giving it to a nation, viz. Gentiles, that should bring forth the fruits of it. Now a person cannot take away from one what he has not, and give it to another. Christ says, he will give the Gentiles precisely the same kingdom which he takes from the Jews. He does not promise to give them more nor less. But according to the Baptists, Christ has

given less to the Gentiles than he gave to the Jews. "The kingdom of God," was an expression, which conveyed to a Jewish ear at once, the idea of *infant church-membership*, a privilege highly valued and *always enjoyed*. But if this is taken away from the Christian church, then Christ is far less generous to Christians than he was to Jews. The Jews had then a vast advantage over us. "What advantage hath the Jew, and what profit is there in circumcision?" Says the Apostle, "much every way." Then, if circumcision is taken from us, and nothing given in its place; if infant-membership is no longer allowed, we certainly have *lost* much every way; and an ancient Jew may reasonably be envied by a modern Christian. If Christ was once the receiver, but now the rejector of infants, we may reasonably exclaim, "O! that we had lived in the days of our Father Abraham." But Abraham's church, Moses' church, and Christ's church are the same, Christ himself being judge.

From Christ's testimony respecting the sameness of the Jewish and Christian churches, we pass to the consideration of Paul's opinion on the same point. Read at your leisure the 11th chapter to the Romans, and from the 17th to the 26th verse particularly, you will find the church of God spoken of under the figure of an olive tree. The same representation of the church occurs in the Old Testament. In Jeremiah xi. 16. we meet with her thus addressed, "The Lord called thy name a green olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit." The Apostle in this chapter is discoursing of the rejection of the Jews; the calling of the Gentiles, and the future call of the Jews again. As the church is figured by an olive tree, the members too are very fitly spoken of as the branches. "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear, &c. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest he also spare not thee (23). And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in again. And if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature in a good olive tree; how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree."

The Apostle is here discoursing to Gentiles, of what God had done for them, and what he had done to the Jews. The Jews are said to belong to the good olive tree; the Gentiles to the wild olive tree—the Jews are called the natural branches, because they belonged to the good olive tree, ever since it was first planted in the family of Abraham—the Gentiles are said to be cut out of the wild olive tree, and grafted into the good olive tree. Some of the natural branches, the Jews, are said to be broken off by unbelief, and some are said to remain. The grafted branches or Gentiles are exhorted not to be high-minded, but fear.

My brethren, here are two trees, a good olive and a wild olive—the good olive is God's favorite. He has nothing more to do with the wild one, but to take branches from it and graft them into the good. He does not own it as his—his whole concern is about the

good olive tree. A great many alterations are made in this tree, but the tree itself under them all remains the same. Some branches are lopped off, and some are left to stand—some branches are brought from a wild olive, and ingrafted into this good one; and a promise is given, that even those branches, which are lopped off, shall in due time be grafted in again. The olive tree is one; so the church which it represents, is one. Abraham is the root; for in him the first Christian church was founded;—The Jews are the natural branches; at the coming of Christ, alterations are made; the believing Jews as natural branches are still retained in the same church to which they ever did belong; the unbelieving Jews are cast out, as having forfeited their birth-right and their former privileges; the Gentiles are received, not into a church instituted expressly for them, but into that same church, from which some Jews were thrust out, and in which some remained, and God promises, that hereafter the Jews shall be received again into the church from which for unbelief they were cast out, “And then all Israel shall be saved.”

My brethren, what do we need more to prove *the sameness of Christ's church under every outward change of form and dispensation?* The Apostle tells the Gentiles, not to boast over the Jews; for that they did not bear the root, but the root them; they were merely engrafted branches—the Jews were natural branches and Abraham is the root of both, as respects a church-state. He tells the Gentiles that they partake of the “root and fatness of the olive tree”—what can this mean, but the benefits and privileges of the church? But *a most important privilege of the Jewish church; a most important ingredient of the fatness of the olive tree, was infant church-membership.* If then the Baptist-doctrine be true, that infants are cast out, the Apostle must be mistaken in saying, that the Gentiles enjoy the fatness of the olive tree; for on this supposition they do not. Let those who please, side with the Baptists; we will side with Paul the Apostle.

The sameness of the two churches is farther proved from Christ's being the source of blessings to both, and the sins committed in both were committed against him. In Cor. x. 3, 4. the Apostle affirms “they did all eat the *same spiritual meat*; and did all drink the *same spiritual drink* (for they drank of *that spiritual rock* that followed them) and *that rock was Christ.*” This is indeed curious language, to be used of a political, ceremonial, carnal, or merely national church. In the 9th verse, “neither let us tempt *Christ*, as some of them also tempted,” &c. It may be laid down as a safe and useful rule, in understanding the Old Testament with application to ourselves, to consider them as speaking to us, in every particular, where the New Testament has not informed us the Old is done away. We practise none of the ancient ceremonies, because the New Testament assures us of their abolishment, as we will find, as in other places, so particularly in the epistle to the Hebrews. But *not a hint of infant church-membership being done away, is once given*; on the contrary, as was seen in a former discourse, it is expressly asserted to remain in the same state it always was in. Infants must be entered somehow, and there is no other way prescribed, but baptism; accordingly the Apostles baptized believers' families, as well as believers themselves. Thus are we “built upon the foundation of the *apostles and prophets*; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” Eph. ii. 20.

Before we proceed to answer some plausible objections, we shall take notice of a popular artifice (for it is not an argument) whereby the Baptists assail well-meaning, but weak minds. They know that the name of a Redeemer is music to every sincere Christian's ear, and that every follower of him will do his will, and observe his commands. Their artifice is, to persuade the unreflecting to follow, what *they call*, the *example* of the Redeemer. "How can they be Christians, except they follow Christ's example?" What a pity that any sincere mind should be so weak, as to be led astray into gross errors, merely by this groundless cant. Yet many of weak nerves or weak understandings have been thus seduced. The Redeemer's example we sacredly venerate, we labor conscientiously to imitate and follow. But we do it *in those things*, in which "*he came to set us an example that we should follow his steps.*" We defy any Baptist living to shew, wherein we fail to observe any institution of Christ, observed by him with a *particular view* to be our example. And we also defy any Baptist living to shew us, where it is said that in *baptism particularly*, Christ came to be our example, either as to its mode or subject. Nay, we insist upon it, and fear no contradiction, that in infant baptism we follow his example more closely than we would do in adult baptism. Neither faith nor repentance were needed or required from Christ in order to baptism. Adults need and profess repentance and faith before they are baptized, and therefore are baptized on grounds totally different from those, on which Christ's baptism was founded. *They follow his example no further than in observing the ordinance: Infants*, besides doing as much as this, observing the ordinance, follow his example further, in being baptized, as he was, without faith and without repentance. So that the Redeemer's example, much as the Baptists boast of it, may be fairly turned against them. The very instance of Christ's baptism shews, that the rule in Mark xvi. 16. admits of exceptions, and that baptism may be administered on other grounds, than those said to be contained in that passage.

If however the Baptists pretend, that they follow the Saviour's pattern, in being baptized when adults, as he was an adult, then why do they not wait till they are thirty years of age? for he would not be baptized sooner; and surely they will not pretend to be qualified at an earlier age than he; or why are others of them baptized at a later period of life? How often have we to charge our brethren with doing only *a part* of their duty!

And why is not every Baptist circumcised, upon the principle that what Christ does, his followers must do? How can he be a Christian, when he does not follow Christ's example? We fear they can give no other reason upon their own principle, than the *fear of the cross*: they think, this would be a greater cross, than that terrible one, of going into the water, and being immersed *once* in their whole lives.

Christ came to be our example in baptism no farther, than to sanction the ordinance as divine; as worthy our obedient observation—and in this view *infant baptism is at least as much a following of Christ's example, as adult baptism, nay more so than believer's baptism*; for Christ was no believer in the sense sinners are.

The chief reason for, and ground on which, Christ was baptized, is assigned in his reply to John, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Christ was born under the *ceremonial*, as well as

moral law, "he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." As our high priest, he must be consecrated to his office by the washing of water, as the priests were consecrated in this way, among the Jews, to their office. This was the reason why he waited, till he "began to be about thirty years of age," before he was baptized: for at that age the priests among the Jews entered on their office. And I no more believe, that Christ was baptized as our example, except (as was said above) to sanction the ordinance as divine, than that he was circumcised for the same purpose. If on that account I practised the one, I should for the same reason, submit to the other.

Besides, the baptism of John appears not to have been the Christian baptism: this was not instituted till after the resurrection of Christ, and was administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which John's baptism was not. Some that had received John's baptism, were baptized again with Christ's Baptism (Acts xix. 2. 5.) Paul said to certain disciples at Ephesus, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized: And they said unto him, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the Jews, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*"

Their cant about the Redeemer's example in baptism then, is nothing but a pitiful artifice, calculated to seduce only those who are guided by impulses and empty words, and not by Scripture. How melancholy to think, that some persons follow so closely where there is no example, and pay no attention where there is! If they had more of the mind of Christ in them, and would follow his example in deed and not in pretence, and love the brethren, "as he gave us commandment," we should hear no more of their narrow-hearted bigotry towards all who refuse to renounce their own conscience, and to worship their idol. Their practical unchurching all but themselves would cease forever.

We shall now reply to an objection urged against Infant Baptism, from their being no *express* precept nor example of it in the New Testament. This objection has been sufficiently answered already in what has been said. We only take further notice of it here, to pursue it to its consequences. A truth, made out by correct reasoning and just inference, is as much a truth, as if proposed in express terms. The Baptists deny us the right of reasoning upon and inferring from positive institutions. Baptism, say they, being an ordinance of this description, none are legally entitled to it, who are not specified by the institutor, or known to have been admitted to it in fact, by him, or those acting under his authority. Let us see, where this position will lead us. If inference on a positive institution is wrong, then it is wrong in every degree; in the least as well as in the greatest. For who shall assign the limit to which in the business of inferring we may go, and beyond which we must not proceed? Now if inference on a positive institution is inadmissible, then by what authority do we, do the Baptists act in receiving females to the Lord's Supper? Where

Is the precept for it? Where is the example of it? Neither the one nor the other can be found throughout the New Testament. And yet is not this as positive an institution as baptism? They are received, it is true, because they are baptized; because they can repent and believe: from these qualifications we draw the conclusion, that they ought to commune: but *express* precept or example for it we have none. How, except by Inference, can we maintain the change of the Sabbath, or even its existence under the gospel? This is a *positive institution*. But its continuance under the gospel, and the change of the day for its observance must be *inferred*. And if we are allowed, nay, *obliged to reason and infer on one positive institution*, what deprives us of *the same liberty on another*? Our duty is to infer justly and scripturally. And when the Baptists can prove that we fail in these particulars on Infant Baptism, we engage to renounce it. But they can bring no argument against us, which cannot be turned with equal or greater force against themselves.

We shall here solve some difficulties that arise, and answer an objection that may be started against the scriptural representation that has been made.

1. The Baptism of Infants under the new dispensation, it may be said, is not to be argued from their circumcision under the old, because the ordinance of circumcision was limited in its administration to males, whereas that of baptism also embraces females. In answering this objection, we set out with observing, that it could not be from any incapacity of females to answer the ends of circumcision, that they were excluded from this ordinance. But do we not find a reason in the mercy of God? Circumcision was a bloody and a painful rite: it argued therefore great compassion in the Most High, that this seal of the covenant of grace was limited to the males. Females, however, were considered as included with them, and entitled to the other ordinance. For no uncircumcised person could eat the passover; women, however, did eat the passover; whence it is manifest, that God regarded them as circumcised; otherwise the divine prohibition would not have been attended to.

But when the milder dispensation of Jesus commenced, whose ordinances were to be *only privileges*, and *not yokes nor crosses*, except as they were made so by a *legal and self-righteous spirit* in man, the milder rite of baptism was extended to females. Does not this exactly accord with the spirit and temper of the gospel dispensation? Christ's "yoke" of service is easy, and his "burden" of ceremonies "light," when compared with those which galled a Jewish neck.

Here, by the way, we may take notice of that strange perversion of language, and misrepresentation of truth so common among the Baptists, when they call baptism a cross, and the reception of this ordinance "a taking up the cross." My brethren, does it not argue the basest ingratitude, and the most shameful insensibility to the goodness of God, to call *that* a cross, which he has given us as a *most invaluable privilege*. Baptism is a seal of the covenant of grace, a pledge of God's love to us, a token of our interest in his favor, and in the merits of his Son. And yet some call this most precious privilege a cross: and for what reason? Sure I am, it is a most unscriptural phrase, and implies a most ungrateful spirit, when applied to the ordinance of baptism. There is not the most remote hint in the

scripture to favor the assertion. What makes it a cross? God has not, and never intended it as such. If man has made it so, with him must rest the blame, and he may well be asked, "Who hath required this at your hands?" God gave it as a privilege: but some basely pervert it into a cross. Far be it from us to do so: we read indeed of a cross which as Christians we are to take up *daily*, Luke ix. 23. But that is not baptism: and if we were to make it so, by any contrivances of our own, it would become that *wil.-worship*, which is abominable to God. Baptism, we believe, was made for man, and not man for baptism. Baptism then being an "easy yoke" and *no cross*, who will find fault with the Christian law-giver for enlarging the privileges, and lightening the yoke of his disciples? Who will say that baptism, if argued from circumcision, ought to apply no farther than circumcision did?

The Old Testament is Christ's first will—the New Testament is his last will. Whatever the latter declares to be done away in the former, is done away—whatever it declares not to be done away, of necessity still remains. Persons through the course of their lives sometimes alter, amend, or add to their wills. If after making a will, they have another child, they alter their will so as to make provision for this additional child. But who is so unreasonable as to suppose, because his effects are distributed among a greater number of persons, those first mentioned are thrown out, or that none of them have any share in his property? The case of infants, in respect of their relation to the church and its initiating rite, appears to us exactly parallel to this just supposed. In Christ's last will, *a greater number of persons are admitted to a sealing ordinance, betokening an interesting privilege*: this however is so far from overthrowing the property of either in it, that it confirms and establishes both.

2. Another difficulty worthy of attention, and demanding solution is, that *all* the male infants among the Jews were indiscriminately circumcised, be the moral character of the parents what it might; and every individual of the nation was required to be a member of the church. This is true. God would not have a single person to belong to that nation, who refused to observe the ordinances of the church. But does it follow from this, that he was content with a mere formal and outward service, while the heart was impure or the life sinful? By no means. While he positively insisted on the observance of the church's ordinances, he as absolutely required, that they should be attended *as religious* ordinances, in a spiritual manner, and with holy and spiritual views. The Israelites knew this—knew they ought to "walk before God and be perfect"—knew "the foreskin of their *heart*" ought to be taken away, and they "be no more stiff-necked." They knew, that in God's sight "he was not a Jew, who was one outwardly," but he who was so inwardly, and had the "circumcision of the heart." If, notwithstanding this knowledge, they chose to approach God in a hypocritical and insincere manner, was God to blame for all this? and must his church be abused and vilified, as a carnal, a ceremonial, a typical church, because there were so many false-hearted professors in it? Most assuredly not. If so, then the Christian churches, even in the purest ages deserve to have the same epithets applied to them.

See the church of Laodicea, which was of so doubtful and ambi-

guous a character, that the Saviour said, it was neither "cold nor hot." See the church of Sardis, which "had a name to live but was dead." See the corruptions, abuses, and improprieties in the church of Corinth. Yet, because there were some genuine and sincere members in them, God calls them all his churches, and owns them, while he severely censures their faults.

It is as much the duty of every individual in a Christian nation, to be a member of Christ's church, as it was in the Jewish community. All ought to be baptized—all ought to commune. The difference between the Christian church now, and the same church under its Mosaic or Abrahamic form, is not, that the terms of admission are different; these are faith, repentance, and holiness in both: it is not, that the members are different; these are adults and infants in both: but the difference is, that God forced men by temporal threatenings to make a profession then, while at the same time he required sincerity in that profession, and would reckon with them, if insincere, at the last day:—Whereas, Christ's kingdom being wholly spiritual, none are now *forced* from temporal considerations to make a profession, while yet *all are commanded* by the express authority of God to do so; and though for neglecting it God calls them not into judgment now, he will hereafter. He will be displeased with us for not observing his ordinances, as well as for violating his command; for the neglect of duty, as well as for the commission of sin; for not having our children baptized, as well as for teaching them to do wickedly, if thus we have done. It is the duty of every person to have his child baptized; "for so hath the Lord commanded us;" as we have seen already. But it is his previous and greater duty, to see that he is himself a believer, as Abraham must be a believer before his children can be circumcised, and as the first converts to Christianity were themselves first believers, before their families were or could be baptized. It is the duty of such an one in baptizing his child to see, that he does it sincerely, conscientiously, in a believing manner; that he is willing to make the required profession, and to fulfil his vows; to see to it, that he performs this holy service, not in a customary, a formal, an irreligious, a trifling and fashionable manner, only because others do the same; but, as a serious and solemn covenant-engagement between the God of Abraham and of Abraham's spiritual seed *forever*; and himself, in behalf of his children.

It is also the duty of those who administer the ordinance of baptism, to refuse it to the children of those parents, whom *he knows* to be infidel in sentiment, or immoral and prophane in conduct. But where there is no known immorality of character, that would of itself destroy all pretensions to Christianity, and where there is along with this a profession of Christian faith, we may, on application, admit to baptism the child of such a person; nor do I see, how we could debar such a person from the Lord's Supper, although in our minds we might doubt his Christianity; doubt whether he had that evangelical faith, which avails to salvation. We cannot know the heart: where persons "witness a good profession," and nothing particularly appears in their lives to contradict it, we must receive them to sealing ordinances.

If our opponents would attack the abuse, the misimprovement of Infant Baptism; if they would argue, that multitudes of those, to

whose children it is administered, do not (judging from their after conduct,) view it as a religious ordinance, but vow, and straightway forget, and are not concerned to fulfil the vows they have made; instead of finding fault with them, we would say, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." That Infant Baptism is *by many* shamefully *abused*, we *must* allow; when its importance is overlooked; when its obligations are disregarded; when, too, instead of being administered in the "house of God," the church, the only proper place, where ordinances ought to be administered (except in a case of necessity, such as the sickness of the parent or child) it is performed in private houses; when, by reason of these things it appears, we ourselves are ashamed of what we are doing.

These things I am not concerned to defend; nay, I will thank them to attack, in the spirit of Christian zeal and charity. Let them then talk as contemptuously as they please of *christening*, and smile at the oddity of a wicked man's extreme solicitude, in case of sickness, to have his child christened before it dies, and we will sit still and calmly say, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head."

But what has all this to do with, or how is it to operate against, *that church-membership of believer's infants*, into which they were formerly introduced by circumcision, and are now admitted by baptism, and which is founded on so immovable a basis, as the *everlasting covenant of grace*. Are we to renounce a true, a scriptural, and therefore good and useful ordinance, because it is abused or misapplied? On this ground what would we not renounce? Were we in some parts of Europe, we would renounce the Lord's Supper too; for that is horribly prophaned, when it is administered to a person of any character; to an infidel, as a qualification for a civil or military office. We would renounce the gospel ministry, when we see it abused, by being committed to ignorant and arrogant persons (called by the Apostle "novices") who would honor their profession as Christians, more at the plough, than in the pulpit.

Nay, farther, some would renounce *believer's baptism* too; for that has been abused, in being administered to persons, whose future lives prove them to have been *unbelievers* at the time of baptism, and who, should they afterwards become real believers, would be received into the church without baptism: for "no faith, no baptism," some preach.

But as we are not to part with any of these things, on account of the abuses which have attended or do attend them, so neither with Infant Baptism. Our duty is, not to renounce it, standing as it does on the authority of God's word, but to labor to correct the abuse, and keep at the greatest distance from it ourselves. It is an astonishing thing, that an infidel, who does not believe the gospel, or an immoral man who does not obey it, should be so superstitious or so insincere, as to wish to have his children baptized. From what motive does he this? or what good expects he from it? *The promise is not to the infidel and his children; it is not to the prophane and his seed.* The "children are holy" when one or both parents believe, but not otherwise: if one is a believer, it is his or her privilege and duty to dedicate the child to the Lord in baptism; if neither believe, where is the

right? where is the privilege? "Who hath required this at your hands?" Be ye holy, and your children will be *relatively* so.

We shall now conclude what we intend to say, at the present time, on the subjects of baptism, by briefly noticing the historical evidence in favor of Infant Baptism. At first I intended to exclude this kind of evidence altogether; from the circumstance, that the Baptists, "thinking more highly of themselves and their system, than they ought to think," are fond of asserting, that while they have the word of God on their side we have nothing to support *our cunningly devised fable (as they call it)* but the traditions of men. Judge for yourselves then on scriptural grounds, and when you find scripture proofs to fail on the subject, go no further. nor be influenced by what follows. But my view in introducing the historical evidence is. that from it I may shew you afterwards another shocking consequence of the Baptist doctrine, from which your judgment and feelings will alike revolt.

It appears from the united testimony of several of the ancient fathers and earliest Christian writers that, very soon after the days of the Apostles, Infant Baptism, whether a scriptural practice or not, was acknowledged to be the universal practice of the Christian church. The testimony of Origen, who lived about 100 years after the Apostles, is to this effect, "that the church had an order from the Apostles to give baptism to infants." Before him, Iræneus had said, using the term *regenerated* as synonymous with *baptized*, that by Christ "are regenerated. (i. e. according to his use of the word) baptized, both *infants* and *little ones*," &c. About the year 250, a council of 66 ministers agreed, that baptism might be administered before the 8th day after the child was born, but none of them nor any body else ever thought of doubting, whether infants ought to be baptized at all. Pelagius, about 300 years after the Apostles, who denied original sin, was pressed by Austin with the argument taken from the baptism of infants. Could he have denied this to be the doctrine of the scripture or the practice of the church, he could have answered the argument; but when charged with denying infant baptism, he calls it a slander, and says, he never heard of any that denied baptism to infants, not even the worst heretics. More testimonies might be produced, but let these suffice.*

Is it not passing strange, that infant baptism, could be introduced into the church after the Apostles and without their authority, and become the universal practice, and yet there be no account of the time when, nor the person by whom it was introduced, nor of any dispute or controversy about it? It is incredible. Things of far inferior moment made a great noise; but there was no noise at all; no disturbance occasioned by infant baptism. Yet *some say now, that it is a cunningly devised fable. We know, however, that it is divinely appointed and scripturally sanctioned.*

It being then a fact, authenticated by the history of early times, that infant baptism was universally acknowledged and practised in the ages next after the Apostles, if adult baptism be the only lawful bap-

* If any are desirous of further satisfaction on this point, let them consult W. WALL's *History of Infant Baptism*: in which they will find the most ample, and indisputable evidence, that *Infant Baptism was universally acknowledged and observed as an ordinance of Christ, in the primitive church from the Apostles' days.*

tism, this only lawful baptism must soon have been entirely done away. And now, my brethren, attend to the consequence. The consequence is, that from the days of the Apostles to the 16th century, God had no church in the world. In the 12th century a small sect arose, denying infant baptism, because they had before denied infant salvation: And in this they were consistent: for it is as true that "he that believeth not, shall be damned," as it is, that "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." But this sect soon expired; and the doctrine of adult baptism *only* expired with it. The origin of the present Baptists is to be found in the 16th century, and whoever reads the account given of this origin and universally owned, will find it not to have been the best. If then Infant Baptism was once the universal practice of the church, and yet this practice is not according to the scripture, then there is *now* no church nor ordinances on earth according to the Scriptures. The first adult Baptists, which sprung up in the 16th century, must and were of course themselves baptized in infancy. They could not obtain believer's baptism: there were no ministers in the church, but who had been baptized in infancy. Baptists say, infant baptism is no baptism: Then, if these ministers had not received baptism themselves, they could have no authority to baptize others: therefore these first adult Baptists continued without believer's baptism; for there was none to be had, there being on their principle no regular minister on earth. All whom they baptized, were of course not lawfully baptized: all who succeeded them down to the present moment are in the same situation. Consequently God has now no church on earth, neither among Baptists, nor Pædobaptists. There can be no church, they say, without baptism: and all the baptisms now administered *must* be traced back to infant baptism, which, they say, is no baptism. And he who possesses nothing can communicate nothing. There is then no baptism now in the world, and if no baptism, then no church. Such is the fatal tendency of error: and the error in particular, which we are now exposing, sweeps the very church of God with "the besom of destruction." It overthrows the ancient church of God, under the former dispensation, by making God's covenant of grace on which it was founded, a merely temporal covenant; and it overthrows the church of God under the Christian dispensation, by making Infant Baptism, which was once universal in the church, no baptism. Judge then, how erroneous that doctrine must be, whose consequences are so fatal!

The Mode of Baptism.

The mode of Baptism shall now come under discussion. Every Christian, I apprehend, in performing religious services and in observing religious rites, will adopt that mode, which is clearly, definitely, and explicitly prescribed, if any such there be. If there be not, he will be guided by that general direction of the Apostle, "Let *all things* be done *decently* and *in order*." (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) Our enquiry is, whether there be or be not, such a definite and ascertained mode of baptism, as would make it unlawful or out of order, to deviate from it or use any other. This, I confess, I have never been able to discover; nay, I hope to prove, that immersion, so far from being the *only* mode, is not the *most proper* mode of baptism.

There are but three ways of ascertaining the mode of baptism—
1. From circumstances; 2. From allusions; 3. From the meaning of the word. We will examine each in order.

1. The circumstances. The Baptists pretend, that nothing can be *more evident* than immersion, from the circumstances attending the baptisms related in the New Testament. I think, on the other hand, nothing can be *less evident*, or more encumbered with difficulties than this supposition. Let the examples speak for themselves.

We shall first attend to the baptism of Christ, as related in Matt. iii. 13. 16. “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of him.” “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.” It is observable here, that we have no account at all of Christ’s going into the water; it is only said, he went to Jordan. The Baptists however *infer* (for they can do nothing here *without inferring*) he must have gone into the water, because it is said, he came up out of the water. Should this construction be admitted, I positively deny their consequence. For he could go into the water, and come up out of the water, without being immersed, as every one must immediately perceive. But as they sometimes refer us to the original language in which the New Testament was written, I have taken the pains to examine through the gospel of Matthew the meaning of the Greek particle *apo*, wherever it occurs, intending at my leisure to pursue the enquiry through the other books. The result, as far as I have proceeded, is, that among the number of places in which this word occurs, there are about *fifty* instances, in which it signifies exclusively *from*, and cannot signify any thing else—there are about *fourteen* instances, in which it signifies indifferently either *out of* or *from*—and (mark) *not a single instance*, in which it signifies exclusively *out of*. Now if this single little word is to determine the mode of baptism, as some wish to make it, what is the consequence? Even from the evidence afforded us by one of the gospels, it is *fifty* times as reasonable to believe, that some other mode was employed for baptizing Christ, as that immersion was. On such a slender thread does immersion hang. The most of you are incapable of judging for yourselves of this argument: but the remark is made to shew you, how wholly unfounded is that arrogance, for which this denomination is particularly remarkable; and that it may be known, these assertions are made, and they are challenged to deny them, if they can.

I proceed to observe, that according to *our* way of baptizing, Christ would have been under the necessity of going either *to* or *into* Jordan, to be baptized by sprinkling or pouring. John was preaching in the wilderness; he lived an austere and mortified life; and the desert was his abode. He must be near a river, that both himself and his audience, with their beasts, if they had any, may be refreshed; nay, he must be near a river, that the people might be baptized by sprinkling or pouring. Any one acquainted with the Old Testament must know, that wells of water in those sultry Eastern countries were both rare and valuable; he must recollect the warm contention that took place between Isaac’s herdsmen, and the herdsmen of Gerar, respecting one or two wells of water. Water was not so plentiful in that country as in ours; so that, whether for the refreshment of the people, or for their baptism by pouring, it was wise in John to keep near the river Jordan. Consider the immense multitude that followed John

into the wilderness, as we are told in the 5th and 6th verses. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and were baptized of him in or at (the original signifies either) Jordan, &c." It was excellent therefore, that this immense multitude, and that Christ too, should go to the edge of the river, or even take a step or two into it, for the greater convenience of having water sprinkled or poured on them.

The remarks now made may furnish a reply also to the argument from John iii. 23. "John was baptizing in Aenon, because there was much water there." And in the original it is "many waters" (*polla udata*.)

The next baptism we have on record, is that of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. We do not believe that all; nay, we are not satisfied that any of this multitude were immersed. Supposing all the twelve Apostles to have been employed in performing these baptisms, there would be two hundred and fifty to each. The immersion of such a number in one day, by one person, is what we cannot believe practicable. The Baptists, however, get rid of the difficulty here, by pretending, that the seventy disciples aided the twelve Apostles on this occasion. But we are not disposed to take their confident assertions for scripture proof; we call upon them to prove, that any besides the Apostles were concerned. They alone were present, when the commission was given, as recorded of Matthew xxviii. 19, 20. "Go ye therefore," or as related in Mark xvi. 15, 16. "Go ye into all the world," &c. It was only to "Peter and the rest of the Apostles," that these convinced Jews cried out, saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Not a shadow of evidence appears, that any but the Apostles were engaged in this transaction. But—

2. Even if the seventy disciples were present, which remains to be proved, the difficulties attending the supposition of the immersion of so great a number of persons, are still very considerable. The preaching of Peter did not commence till nine o'clock, the third hour of the day; his sermon was to be preached, the confession of faith of three thousand persons was to be made; a place or places for immersion to be sought—the pools about the temple belonged to the Jews, and it is incredible, that the priests would suffer them to be appropriated to what they would consider a prophane purpose—and thirty-six persons to be immersed by each of the twelve Apostles and seventy disciples!—What a hard struggle for immersion! But—

3. Removing all difficulties out of the way, it remains to be proved, that they were immersed.

The next baptism to be noticed is that of the Eunuch, related Acts viii. 36, 39. In the circumstances of this baptism there is nothing to prove or even favor immersion: "As they went on their way, they came into a certain water," or (*epi ti udor*) upon or to some water: what it was, how much or how large, we are not told—the expression sounds rather diminutive, "some water." But the Baptists find immersion in these words: "they went down both into the water"—"and when they were come up out of the water." This they could do, however, and neither be immersed! Besides the words in the original signify also to and from (*eis ek*.) So that no immersion is provable here; and if there was, it would prove Philip immersed as much as the Eunuch. Both went in and out.

As to Paul's baptism, Acts ix. 18. I see nothing like an immersion; nothing tending that way at all. He was in the house of Judas, when Ananias came to him; had neither eaten nor drank for three days; weak therefore in body as well as distressed in mind, "he arose and was baptized," but not immersed.

Let us next attend to the circumstances of Cornelius, the centurion's baptism, related Acts x. 47, 48. Peter preached in the house, and, without a syllable being said about going out of the house to a pond or river, we hear him saying, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" &c. What a curious expression to come out of the mouth of a Baptist! What an odd way to express immersion! If Peter baptized by sprinkling or pouring, as we believe, the expression was proper enough; for water was to be brought into the house for the purpose. But if he baptized by immersion, as the Baptists assert, he could not have known how to speak with propriety. Nothing like and every thing unlike immersion here.

All the circumstances of the Jailer's baptism, Acts xvi. 33. are against immersion. Paul preached the word, had his own and Silas' wounds washed, and baptized the Jailer and his family, all in "the same hour of the night." We have no account of their going to a river, nay, it would have forfeited the Jailer's life to the civil authority had he been known to have brought the prisoners into the street, and thus given them an opportunity to escape. Besides the prisoners refused to leave the jail in the morning, till they were brought out by the appointed officers. It is not credible that they left it of their own accord in the night.

So impossible is it to prove immersion from the circumstances attending the baptisms on record in the New Testament.

Let us next enquire, what can be determined with regard to the mode of baptism from the allusions made to it in the New Testament. Of these the Baptists produce one, occurring in two places: first in Rom. vi. 3, 4. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." From the beginning to the end of this chapter the Apostle is upon one of the most serious and spiritual subjects which our holy religion embraces, viz. the obligation all Christians are under from their profession, to die to all sin and live to all righteousness. Let any unprejudiced person read the chapter thro' and say, whether the Apostle's mind was not employed in an infinitely nobler manner, than in settling the mode in which a ceremony is to be performed. The subject throughout is deeply spiritual. But the Baptists in one verse turn aside from the whole tenor and strain of the Apostle's argument, to lay hold of a single expression, which, by the help of a lively imagination, may be so construed as to countenance their favorite system. We believe that the Apostle is on the same subject in this verse, that he is upon, in the verses before and after it to the end of the chapter. We therefore believe, that as his subject in every other verse is spiritual, so to be of a piece it is spiritual here. We cannot think the Apostle was such a trifler, as the supposition of the Baptists would make him. He set too little value upon mere

moder and forma, to turn aside from a deep subject in divinity, to tell us how they are to be performed.

The Apostle therefore tells us, that by our baptism, let it be administered in what mode it may, "we are buried," not into water (he says no such thing) but "into death," that is, a death to sin, and as Christ was raised from the dead, so we should walk in newness of life. It is a *spiritual burial* and a *spiritual resurrection*. But it is the good fortune of the Baptists both here and elsewhere to hit upon one particular expression in a passage, and there to keep in spite of every thing. But one passage or expression is a very different thing from the whole word of God, and that consistently interpreted. If they had gone in search of truth, instead of something to prop up their unscriptural and erroneous system, they would not hang upon this one verse as they do, but would pass on to the next, and explain that to us also. "For if we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Why do they not fulfil this verse too, and *plant* those *proselytes* whom "they compass sea and land to make," as well as bury them: there is just the same authority for the one as for the other; and they are as negligent and remiss in *burying without planting*, as they would be in planting without burying. If the *one expression* is to be understood of a *literal burial into water*, why is not *the other* to be understood of a *literal planting*? They should do all their duty, and not do it by halves.

According to the Baptist construction of the passage in question, it must read thus, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into water, that like as Christ, &c. even so we should be raised out of the water." But such an idea as this was very remote indeed from the Apostle's mind.

It would be well, if they would inform us, when they found an argument in favor of immersion on this passage, what authority they had for wresting the word of God in such a manner, as to interpret the single expression "buried" *literally*, and leave every other in the verse to stand in the *spiritual sense*, in which it is evidently the Apostle's design they all should be understood. Carry the literal interpretation throughout the verse, which you have as much right to do, as they have to use it on one word,—buried, &c. "into death?" Now do the Baptists keep their *proselytes* under water till they are literally dead, that is, drowned? And do they raise them out of water, and out of a state of natural death, at the same time, to newness of life?—To such inconsistencies and follies do they verge in attempting at all events to support an unscriptural sentiment. But give this passage a consistent, uniform, and spiritual interpretation throughout, and this fanciful allusion vanishes at once. I will therefore paraphrase the verse, and leave you to judge of its correctness. "Therefore we are buried with him, *professedly* by water baptism, and *really* by the baptism of the spirit, into a death to sin; that like as Christ, &c. even so we should be raised to newness of life." Thus baptism obliges us, and grace enables us, to be buried or separated from sin, and to be made alive to God.

Let us now see what we have on the score of allusion in our favor. While they have only, in their opinion, an *allusion* to the mode, we have *the mode itself*. They have a *resemblance*: we the *thing itself*. They assert that there is but *one* mode of baptism, and that there can

be no other. We will therefore take them on their own ground. Now if we can find clearly and evidently a known and certain mode, then all other baptisms must be according to that mode. We have seen that the Baptists can find *nothing express in favor of immersion, no, not in one instance.* They reason and infer it out from such expressions as *into* and *out of*, which we have remarked on, and from *one sanctified allusion*, the fallacy of which has been sufficiently exposed. But we can produce a baptism, the mode of which is known by every one, and denied by none. Matt. iii. 11. John says, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Here is *baptism*, and *baptism*, and *baptism*; viz. with water, with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. We want to know how water baptism is to be administered, and what is its mode. Now, as it is said, there is but *one mode of baptism*, if we can ascertain how either of these three baptisms was performed, we must judge of the other two by that which can be certainly known. The baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, we have an account of in the second chapter of Acts, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Here was the baptism with fire—Instead of their being immersed into the material of the baptism, it sat upon them. We ask any person who is not an absolute idiot, whether there was any immersion in fire here; whether the Apostles were covered all over with fire? It will not be pretended. Now the mode of this baptism is certainly known, and if there is but one mode, then it is clear, immersion is *not* that mode.

What was the baptism of the Holy Ghost? "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost;" then surely not immersed in it. Compare this with other places which mention the way in which the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit (for they are terms of the same meaning in scripture) is conveyed to man. "The Holy Ghost," says the angel to the mother of Christ, "shall come upon thee." In this same chapter of Acts, the Apostle tells the multitude, that what they now witnessed, was the accomplishment of that ancient prophecy by Joel, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." If the baptism of the Spirit was performed by the pouring out of the Spirit, and there is but one mode of baptism, then every baptism of water ought to be performed by pouring water upon the subject. We will produce to any Baptist innumerable passages, where the Spirit is represented as poured out on persons, in order to baptize them with it. And we defy any Baptist to produce even one passage from Genesis to Revelation, which says, persons are immersed in the Holy Spirit. When shall vain words have an end?

The last way of proving the mode of baptism is, by ascertaining the meaning of the word. We shall confine ourselves to the scriptural use of the term. Its primary meaning is to wash; its secondary meanings are, to wash by certain ways, as dipping, pouring, sprinkling. But the Baptists roundly assert, without the shadow of proof, nay, directly in the face of scripture authority to the contrary, that it means immersion or dipping only, an assertion they will never be able to prove, while the Bible exists or the world stands. I do know to an absolute certainty from the scriptures, that the word means a partial and not a total washing, which I shall prove from the following passages. Mark vii. 4. "And when they come from the market

except they wash (*baptizontai*, be baptized) they eat not." What is meant here by washing or being baptized: we learn from the verse preceding, to be the washing of hands, not the immersion of the whole body; so that washing the hands and being baptized, mean, in this passage one and the same thing: in other words *a partial washing is baptism.*

Luke xi. 38. "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner." This passage is of a similar kind with the former, and used on the like occasion. The wonder of the Pharisee was excited, because Christ had *not washed his hands* before dinner. Now the word in the original is *ou ebaptisthe*, the literal meaning of which is, "he was *not baptized*:" so that had he *washed his hands*, the Pharisee would have considered him as *baptized*. Thus the word undeniably signifies here again a partial washing.

I next turn your attention to Heb. ix. 10. where Paul says, the Jewish service consisted of "divers washings," (in the original *baptismois*, *baptisms*). This means either different kinds or modes of baptism, as sprinklings, pourings, dippings—or baptisms of different persons or things. The Baptists may take their choice—if by *divers baptismis* they suppose different kinds or modes of baptism to be meant, then their *immersion only*, as the mode of baptism, *falls to the ground at once*—if they suppose baptisms of *different things* to be intended: then every person acquainted with the Old Testament, and the Jewish ceremonies there recorded, well knows that the far greater part, nay, almost the whole, of *these washings or baptisms* were performed by *sprinklings*. Nay, he need go no further than to the 13th verse of this chapter to satisfy himself. Consequently *sprinkling is baptism*, an Apostle being judge. Having brought them *three passages decidedly against immersion*, we now defy them to bring one *decidedly in its favor*.

I have now done with the subject in a controversial view; and hope to take a practical survey of it some time hereafter.

No one will fall into the errors against which these discourses have been designed to guard you, who will examine the subject fully in the light of the word of God. They may be ensnared by craft; they may be seduced by guile; they may be hurried by impulse into the vortex of bigotry; but if they take the scripture for their guide, they will see that the errors we have opposed, arise, either through ignorance or intention, from corrupting the scripture.

A P P E N D I X,

TO THE

REV. BENJAMIN M. PALMER'S THREE DISCOURSES

ON

INFANT BAPTISM,

SUPPLIED BY A FRIEND;

CONTAINING

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON CLOSE COMMUNION,

ADDRESSED

**TO ALL PERSONS, AND PARTICULARLY TO ALL WHO LOVE THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST IN SINCERITY.**

EXTRACTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF DIFFERENT AUTHORS.

APPENDIX.



Extract from Sermons by the Rev. Caleb J. Tenny, of New-Port (N. I.)

" CLOSE communion is altogether unchristian in principle and practice. Close communion, or communion with none excepting those who have been plunged, is solemnly forbidden by the design of the Christian church; by the bestowment of promised and special blessings on Pædobaptist churches; by the gospel term of Christian communion; by the nature and duty of brotherly love; by the schism produced among Christians by close communion; and by the tendency of revivals in religion.

" By the design of the Christian church. In establishing his Church, the undoubted design of Christ was, by them to preserve in the world the great doctrines and duties of religion. Accordingly, by the spirit of inspiration, he has represented his church as the PILLAR, and the GROUND of the truth. But can the Baptists pretend that their church has been the main support of the truth and worship of God in the world? Certainly the other Christians have adopted and maintained the truth and the worship of God. Certainly, other Christians have been, and still are far more numerous, equally prayerful and faithful, and far more eminent as the pillar and the ground of the truth, than the Baptists. In the long period from the Apostles to the days of Luther, Christians were not Baptists. To introduce and carry the great reformation from Popery, the instruments chosen, and used by God, were not Baptists. Nor did the subjects of the reformation become Baptists. The most able defenders of the faith, and the most eminently faithful churches whom God has raised up in later ages, have not been Baptists. And although in some places, the Baptists at this day are numerous, and some of them distinguished for their abilities and piety, yet it is certain, the main pillar of the truth, or the largest number of faithful Christians are not Baptists. Hence close communion is forbidden by the very design of the church, which is to maintain, not the Baptist peculiarities, but the truth and worship of God; and by the absolute facts, that other Christians and churches, whom they reject, have been more than they, the pillar and ground of the truth—Also by the bestowment of promised and special blessings on Pædobaptist churches. To Zion God has made promise, that as she shall be the support of the truth; so of her it SHALL be said, this and that man was born in her; and, I will pour my spirit on thy seed, and my blessings on thy offspring; I will give her pastors and teachers after mine own heart; I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. These promises have been fulfilled principally to

the Pædobaptist church. If then the Baptists pretend they are the only church, they must go in the very face of God's promises, which are made to Zion in general, and of the fulfilment of these promises to our churches. Close communion then is clearly forbidden by the bestowment of special blessings on those, who deny the opinion of the Baptists.—And by the gospel term of Christian communion. The term of communion established by Christ, is undeniably this; that *we and the Baptists are bound to commune with all those, with whom there is evidence to believe that Christ communes.* Would it not be presumption, and the height of arrogance for us to say, though we believe Christ communes with certain persons, yet we will not commune with them; or that we have the right, and are determined to make the rules of our churches such, that we will have no communion with them? But all this the Baptists implicitly say, and in reality do. If persons have been *plunged*, they welcome them to their communion. If they have been only sprinkled, but yet manifest in the highest degree the very spirit of Christ, they absolutely forbid them a seat at their table. This is making *plunging*, and not evidence of faith in Christ, the term of their communion; it is to make a bare mode, a mere rite, as essential to communion as an interest in the blood and righteousness of Christ. It is to reject the most prayerful and most eminent servants of Christ, merely because they have not been *plunged*. But are such, my brethren, the laws and rules of Christ's church? Go ask the Lord of Glory. Go see him in the midst of his people, communing with multitudes whom the Baptists reject; and then you may believe them the people, who arrogantly and wickedly say to others: *stand by thyself; I am holier than thou!*—Close communion is forbidden by the nature and duty of brotherly love. Christians are brethren by the nearest and strongest ties. They have all one father; one heart, and one spirit; one interest, and one heaven. In short, they are brethren for eternity. They are commanded by their Lord, *to live in peace, to be of the same mind*, and to be perfectly joined together. But is it not matter of deep astonishment, that such brethren will not commune together; will not sit together at their father's table?—Close communion is forbidden by the schism, which it produces among Christians. The church of Christ is represented as a kingdom united against one enemy; one king, one system of laws, one interest, one hope, one rest: as a body perfectly compacted and joined together; as one temple; as one united family; and as the house of God, in which he presides. But this one kingdom, this one body, this one temple, this united family, and house of God, close communion rends—It divides brethren; grieves the disciples of Christ; wounds him in the house of his friends; and gives the enemy occasion to doubt, or deny the nature, reality, and importance of Christianity. Add to these effects of close communion, the tendency of revivals in religion. Let but a solemn and general revival of religion take place in purity and power among the Baptists, and our order intermingled, and all party feelings and interest will be almost buried; the Baptists will hardly say to us, *stand by thyself*; but calling us *Brethren*, they would, were it not for deep-rooted prejudices, hold open church communion with us. For, this their feelings both dictate and urge. Did the spirit of Christian candor, meekness, and love, triumph in the hearts of all Christians, an event which has been realized more than

once in London, would only in a lower degree, be constantly realized by the Baptists and us. For several years past there has been annually holden in London a grand convention and communion of serious Christians throughout England. At one meeting of their Missionary society, *two thousand five hundred* Christians of *different denominations* assembled, buried their party distinctions, and united together in divine worship, in commemorating the death of their common Lord; and in making collection to spread the gospel to the distant corners of the world. Then was there presented one of the most solemn and interesting events which has occurred since the days of Pentecost. Then was presented the power of that love, and union of kindred souls, which is inspired by the spirit of Jesus. Were but the power of religion thoroughly felt, it would slay and bury close communion; it would bring us and the Baptists together; it would harmonize us and them in the one glorious temple of Christ. From this view, we cannot, if we possess the temper of heaven, prevent the deepest regret, that the Baptists should rend and wound the church of God by contending for *immersion*, the mere external mode of an ordinance, and for close communion, which is so evidently built upon unchristian principles."

*Extract from Letters on Baptism and mixed Communion,
by a Pædobaptist.*

"In pleading for mixed communion I do think there is great weight in what the venerable old Pilgrim urged in the following manner—
"When we attempt to force our brother beyond his light, or to break his heart with grief, to thrust him beyond his faith, or to bar him from his privilege, how can we say, I love? Strange! Take two Christians equal in all points but this, nay, let one go far beyond the other, for grace and holiness; yet this circumstance of water shall drown and sweep away all his excellencies, not counting him worthy of that reception that with heart and hand that shall be given to a novice in religion, because he consents to water." See *Bunyan's Works*, vol. i. p. 143.

"It cannot be well denied, that however circumspect any church may be as to the admission and standing of members in fellowship, if they allow to none but such as are baptized "after their notion of it," they must exclude many that are, at least, equally distinguished as themselves for firmness in all other Christian principles, and amiableness of moral character. Such a conduct requires, I think, strong ground to support it. Nothing short of some express warrant from plain precept, or apostolic example. As I cannot see that the New Testament affords either, I must bear my testimony against it as unwarrantable and injurious. Moreover my objections are increased when I consider the light in which it is viewed by some bystanders, who fail not to make their own reflections, and eagerly catch at any thing which may seem to justify to them the determination to keep their distance, and maintain their separation from us in common."

"Under these ideas I will venture to solicit your attention to one quotation more from this venerable Witness"—And now I say again, the world may well wonder, when they see you deny the holy men of God that liberty of the communion of the saints, which you monopolize to yourselves; and though they do not understand the grounds of

profession or communion, yet they can both see and say, these holy men of God, in all visible acts of holiness, are not one inch behind you. You, I will put it to yourselves, if those many, yea, very many, whom thus you severely deny communion with, are not of as good, as holy, as unblameable a life, and as sound, if not sounder in the faith, than many among ourselves. Here only they make a stop; they cannot without light be driven into water baptism; *I mean, after our notion of it*. But what if they were? It would be little sign with me that they were sincere with God. To conclude this: when you have proved water baptism essential to church communion; and that the church may, by the word of God, bolt, bar, and forever shut out, those far better than ourselves, that have not, "*according to our notion,*" been baptized with water; then it will be time enough to talk of ground for so doing. In the meantime I must take leave to tell you, there is not in all the Bible one syllable for such a practice; wherefore your great cry about your order is wordless, and therefore faithless, and is a mere human invention." *Ibid.* p. 185.

Such were the sentiments of the Christian Pilgrim. Nor was Mr. Bunyan single in maintaining the doctrine of mixed communion. It had other "betters also among some of the first and ablest of our antipædobaptist brethren in this kingdom (England). The learned and very amiable Mr. Jessey, pleaded strongly for the practice; and his judgment in the case is printed with Mr. Bunyan's. He argues from these words of the Apostle, in Rom. xiv. 1. "Such as are weak in the faith receive ye," &c. Mr. Jessey considered that weakness of faith must mean either being weak in the graces of faith, or in the doctrine of faith; and though he conceives the *first* is included, yet he thinks the *second* is principally intended; and according to this idea, apprehending it is a weakness, not so much in the doctrine of justification, as in gospel institutions, he concludes that the sense of the passage amounts to a command, that such ought to be received, not only into mutual affection, but into church fellowship. Mr. Jessey also further arguing on this subject, meets and answers sundry objections which I forbear to detail, because I wish to be brief. I will take the liberty, however, to state his reply to what some objected against his sentiments, from 1 Cor. xii. 13. *for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles*. "Some there are," says he, "who affirm this to be meant of water baptism, and that particular churches are formed thereby, and all persons are to be admitted and joined to such churches by water baptism." To which he answers, "that the baptism intended in the text is the Spirit's baptism, and not water baptism; and that body mentioned is not principally the church at Corinth, but all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, being baptized into one mystical body, as Eph. iv. 4. "There is *one body and one spirit*, wherein there is set out the *unity*, and the *unity*;" therefore in verse 3, they are exhorted to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The united are all the faithful in one body: Into whom? verse 5 says, *in one Lord Jesus Christ*. By what? *one faith, one baptism*—for water-baptism doth not unite this one body." Further on, he says, "By which mistake of setting up water baptism in the Spirit's place, and assigning it a work which was never appointed unto it, of forming the body of Christ, either in general, or as to particular churches, that instead of being

the means of uniting as the Spirit doth, it has not only rent his seamless coat, but divided his body, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

"What benefit, you ask, would result from mixed communion being generally practised? I think much every way. It would certainly not militate against the spirit of free enquiry, nor damp the ardor of its researches after truth; but it might contribute to soften down the asperities which too often sour the dispositions of angry polemics. It is founded on the doctrine of mutual forbearance, a principle the gospel every where inculcates. But as this duty is reciprocal, it can never be exercised where one only is disposed to give way. Whilst then the claim of being exclusively right, and every one else *fundamentally* wrong, is maintained with unyielding confidence—no fellowship, no union can be effected." "I might name the peace of many individuals, and the harmony and union of many Christian churches. These are interesting and important objects to the happiness of society, and the honor of the gospel." "It would contribute much to give a right direction to Christian zeal. It would make that truth which humbles the mind, purifies the heart, and forms the soul after the image of Christ, more entirely the object of our common pursuit. The pride of party would abate in proportion as the fuel that feeds it was diminished. The minds of young professors would be kept more upon the weightier matters of eternal life. The fond distinctions which swell their fame, or increase their numbers, would lose their fascinating influence. The salutary admonition of St. Paul would be felt in all its bearings." "Having begun in the spirit, are ye made perfect by the flesh? The end of the commandment which is *charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned*, would I think be more effectually promoted, as one great cause of disaffection, and distance would subside; *envy, strife, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings* would give place to something more worthy of the gospel and its professors. It might greatly contribute to call forth that antient observation, so honorable to the disciples of Christ—" *behold how these Christians love one another.*"

The following historical sketch from the same writer may not be unworthy of notice—

Neal says, that Mr. Jessey was minister of the *first* Baptist congregation he had met with in England. *Hist. Purit.* vol. 1. p. 663.

The late Rev. Robt. Robinson, however tells us, that in the year 1457, there was a congregation at Chesterton, part of which denied the baptism of infants. Six of the congregation were accused of heresy, and it seems, very roughly handled, according to the ecclesiastical tyranny of the times. Mr. R. shews that these six men, although all in one community, did not all hold the same articles—Does not this prove, says he, that thus they held a mixed communion? *Vide Essay on Claude.* vol. 2. Pref. 54.

Mr. Crosby, in his history of the English Baptists, states that "it was not until the year 1639, that they discriminated themselves from other dissenters, and formed themselves into *distinct societies.*"

Hist. of the Works of the learned. vol. 1. p. 75.

"It seems to me very evident, that previous to this, mixed communion was practiced, where no other distinction of sentiment prevailed, except that which related to Baptism.—Crosby names one

which he styles a Baptist and an Independent Church, constituted in the year 1621, whose first pastor was a Mr. Hubbard; the second, Mr. John Cann; the third, Mr. Saml. Howe, who was a Baptist, although his predecessors were not." *Ibid.* p. 79.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

First Discourse.

Page 4, line 2nd from bottom, for "practized" read *practised*.

11,	13th	do	for "disciplining" read <i>discipling</i> .
--,	---	do	for "disciple" read <i>disciple</i> .
12,	21st	do	for "inserted" read <i>asserted</i> .

Second Discourse.

Page 7, line 16th from top, for "7th" read *17th Genesis*.

9,	21st	do	for "snpper" read <i>supper</i> .
11.	23rd	do	for "saying" read <i>saying</i> .